

CRITICAL MOMENTS IN THE GERMAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT:
A DRAMATISTIC ANALYSIS

by

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Submitted to the Department of Speech and
Drama and the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Kansas in partial ful-
fillment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation Committee:

For we struggle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of darkness in this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:12

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THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

Justification

Thirty years after Colonel Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg planted the bomb that failed to kill Hitler, the German resistance to National Socialism remains largely unexamined as a movement.¹ A review of theses and dissertations in speech communication, for example, reveals that no work has been done to analyze or interpret the rhetorical structure of the members of the "decent Germany."² Even more surprising, only a little work has been done to explain the rhetorical interface of movements in general, the whole amounting to fewer than thirty theses and dissertations,³ and a dozen essays in scholarly journals.⁴ And this in the face of Edwin Black's

¹Terms like "German Resistance," "German Resistance Movement," and "German Opposition" are often used interchangeably and include all types of anti-Nazi activity in Hitler's "New Order." In this study, the terminology will be the same but the resistance with which it deals will be limited to those groups which aimed at eliminating the Nazi regime and which had some hope of obtaining support from the necessary agencies of force. Of necessity, then, the study will deal with individuals who held military or civilian offices, or who had held such offices under the regime, and who maintained contact with it.

²A Review of Dissertation Abstracts International (Ann Arbor, 1938-1973), I-XXXIII, disclosed no studies in speech on the German opposition to Hitler. Similarly, a review of "Graduate Theses--An Index of Graduate Work in Speech," Speech Monographs, XVII-XXXVI (1950-1969), as well as "Graduate Theses and Dissertation Titles: An Index of Graduate Research in Speech Communication," Bibliographic Annual, I-II (1970-1972), disclosed no studies on the German Resistance Movement.

³Ibid.

⁴This count was arrived at by reviewing Quarterly Journal Of Speech,

equation of movement studies with neo-Aristotelian and psychological studies as the "three distinct approaches to the practice of rhetorical criticism."⁵ At the least, then, another movement study would help to fill the thin ranks of one of the three major genres of speech criticism, while at the most, it could provide some of that mutual influence between theory and practice called for by critical scholars from Thonssen and Baird⁶ to the Wingspread Conference.⁷

In addition to this lack of interest in movements within the field of speech communication, a review of dissertations in other fields reveals only two bearing directly upon the German Resistance Movement.⁸ The first, The Crisis of Political Direction in the German Resistance to Nazism, by George K. Romoser, is limited to an interpretation of the political motives and programs of Hitler's opponents. As such, it encompasses only half of

XXXVI-LVIII (1950-1972); Speech Monographs, XVII-XL (1950-1973); Speech Teacher, I-XXII (1952-1973); Central States, II-XXIII (1950-1972); Western Speech, XVI-XXXVIII (1950-1973); and Southern Speech Journal, XVI-XXXVIII (1950-1973).

⁵Edwin Black, Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method (New York, 1965), p. 18.

⁶Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, Speech Criticism (New York, 1948), p. 16.

⁷The Prospects Of Rhetoric, ed., Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs, 1971), p. 222.

⁸Dissertation Abstracts International, in which subject areas were reviewed (Modern History, Religion, and Political Science), themes (Germany, Movements, Nazi, Resistance, and War), and individuals (Ludwig Beck, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Carl Goerdeler, Adolf Hitler, Helmuth Moltke, and Claus Stauffenberg), revealed other studies: Carolsue Holland, The Foreign Contacts Made By The German Opposition To Hitler; David Riede, The Official Attitude Of The Roman Catholic Hierarchy In Germany Toward National Socialism; Richard Peters, Nazi Germany And The Vatican: July 1933 -January 1935; Larry Rasmussen, Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reality And Resistance, Christology And Conspiracy; and Fred Casimir, Hitler: A Study In Persuasion. In each case, a reading of the abstract disclosed no information which would be of use in this study.

the area in which movements occur.⁹ More importantly, Romoser's judgments are open to serious criticism--criticism which will be specified in the course of this study. And finally, Romoser says nothing about the form of movements--the dialectical enjoiment between the German resisters and Hitler's "New Order," and it is this enjoiment which identifies rhetorical movements.¹⁰ The second, German Resistance To Hitler: Ethical and Religious Factors, by Mother Mary Alice Gallin, is limited to an interpretation of the moral motives of Hitler's opponents. As such, it encompasses the other half of the area in which movement occur, so perhaps a study combining both politics and morality would be more than the sum of the parts. Also, while Mother Gallin's judgments are not open to criticism similar to Romoser's, she does place a disproportionate emphasis upon the church as an agency of change--an emphasis which will be criticized in the course of this study. And again, she says nothing about dialectical enjoiment between the German resisters

⁹Leland M. Griffin writes that "movements are essentially political, concerned with governance or dominion, 'the wielding and obeying of authority'. . . /and/ movements are essentially moral--strivings for salvation, perfection, the 'good.'" Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," in Critical Responses To Kenneth Burke, ed., William H. Rueckert (Minneapolis, 1966), p. 456.

¹⁰Robert S. Cathcart writes: "On the one hand. . .there must be one or more actors who, perceiving that the 'good order' (the established system) is in reality a faulty order full of absurdity and injustice, cry out through various symbolic acts that true communion, justice, salvation cannot be achieved unless there is an immediate corrective. . . . On the other hand there must be a reciprocating act from the establishment or counter rhetors which perceives the demands of the agitator rhetors. . .as direct attacks on the foundations of the established order. It is this reciprocity or dialectical enjoiment. . .which defines movements. . . ." Robert S. Cathcart, "New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically," Western Speech, XXXVI (Spring, 1972), 87. And Griffin adds: "The development of a counter-movement is vital: for 'it is the bad side that produces the movement which makes history, by providing a struggle.'" Griffin, p. 464.

and Hitler's "New Order," the reciprocating acts by which rhetorical movements are distinguished.

There are, of course, many published accounts of the anti-Nazis, but they too are partial in the sense of a complete rhetorical movement. For example, some of them deal with dialectical enjoinment, but only within a single frame, as a focus on one act, the narrowness of which diminishes the quality of dynamism, the sense of action chronologically, the progress of a movement from the "stasis of indecision. . .[to] the stasis of decision persevered in. . .[from] Guilt and the dream of salvation. . .[to] achievement and maintenance of a state of redemption."¹¹ Typical in this respect is Harold Deutsch's The Conspiracy Against Hitler in the Twilight War¹²(which covers the period from September 1939 to May 1940), or William Bayles' Seven Were Hanged¹³(which covers the period from May 1942 to February 1943), or Constantine Fitzgibbon's July 20¹⁴(which covers the movement's penultimate moment.) Excellent as each of these works are, they are still partial views. Thus, there would seem to be a problem of fragmentation to which the rhetorical critic could make a synthesizing contribution. If nothing else, an integrated approach to the German Resistance Movement--a dramatic presentation of it as a series of acts "a fronte, futuristically"¹⁵--would have the merit of a complete performance.

¹¹Griffin, p. 461.

¹²Harold C. Deutsch, The Conspiracy Against Hitler in the Twilight War (Minneapolis, 1970).

¹³William Bayles, Seven Were Hanged (London, 1956).

¹⁴Constantine Fitzgibbon, July 20 (New York, 1956).

¹⁵Griffin, p. 458.

The other kind of partiality is to be found in the many secondary sources which treat the German opposition from the perspective of biography--the single conspirator or "great figure" within the movement. Representative of such studies are Joachim Kramarz's Stauffenberg,¹⁶ Gerhard Ritter's The German Resistance: Carl Goerdeler's Struggle Against Tyranny,¹⁷ and Michael Balfour and Julian Frisby's Helmuth von Moltke.¹⁸ These profiles are certainly valuable. For one thing, the authors have had access to documents--to the remaining private papers and letters of the individuals involved. And they have been able to interview and correspond with families and surviving friends. But having said this, the fact remains that such works are incomplete in terms of a movement.

From a practical standpoint, members of a secret movement do not always know who their fellow-conspirators are or what they are doing.¹⁹ Also, police pressures may become so severe that even the leaders of a movement are forced to go into hiding. This is what happened to Ulrich von Hassell, the designate foreign minister in the resistance movement's provisional cabinet, during the summer of 1942.²⁰ And it also happened to

¹⁶Joachim Kramarz, Stauffenberg, trans., R. H. Barry (New York, 1967).

¹⁷Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance To Hitler: Carl Goerdeler's Struggle Against Tyranny, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1959).

¹⁸Michael Balfour and Julian Frisby, Helmuth von Moltke (London, 1972).

¹⁹In a letter smuggled to friends in Britain, Moltke specified the nature of opposition in a police state. "Can you imagine what it means to work as a group when you cannot use the telephone, when you are unable to post letters, when you cannot tell the names of your closest friends to your other friends for fear that one of them might be caught and divulge the names under pressure?" Quoted in Ibid., p. 217.

²⁰Hassell wrote on August 1, 1942: "For several months I have not been able to write in my diary because certain information I received

Carl Goerdeler, the designate chancellor, in the weeks just prior to the attempt of July 20, 1944.²¹ Finally, leaders in the early phases of an opposition movement who, by virtue of their actions, draw attention to themselves, may be placed under surveillance or arrested, and new leaders replace them.²² Thus, any study viewing a movement through the eyes of one man must be necessarily fragmented.

From a theoretical standpoint, it can also be argued that it is not enough for an individual to voice his alienation from an existing order; that he is not a member of a movement until he joins with others—becomes part of a "saving Remnant,"²³ as Griffin puts it. Illuminating in this respect is the journal of the poet Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen, an opponent of the Nazis, who belonged to no resistance group. In his loneliness, he was compelled to vent his anger and despair in a diary. "My life in this pit will soon enter its fifth year. For more than forty-two months, I have thought hate, have dreamed hate and awakened with hate. I suffocate in the knowledge that I am a prisoner of a horde of vicious apes. . . ."²⁴ Count

toward the end of April made it imperative to exercise more caution." Ulrich von Hassell, The Von Hassell Diaries, trans., Hugh Gibson (Westport, 1971), p. 258.

²¹Gerhard Ritter, Goerdeler's biographer, writes that "Stauffenberg advised him strongly to disappear as quickly as he could, and not endanger the whole conspiracy by staying. . . in Berlin." Ritter, p. 286.

²²Hans Oster, Hans Dohnanyi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Josef Mueller were leading members of the resistance until a chance discovery of incriminating evidence by the Gestapo put an end to their activities in early 1943. See Roger Manvell & Heinrich Fraenkel, The Canaris Conspiracy (New York, 1969), p. 191ff.

²³Griffin, p. 462.

²⁴Friedrich Percyval Reck-Malleczewen, Diary of a Man in Despair, trans., Paul Rubens (London, 1970), p. 22.

Malleczewen was executed in February 1945 in the Dachau concentration camp. He died never having joined the German resistance, and today his frustrated testimony is witness to the fact that the individual is not a movement--that he is largely helpless in his isolation. Moreover, all of the opposition figures mentioned previously achieved much of their significance in terms of others: their fellow-conspirators, those they attempted to persuade to join them, and their opponents, Adolf Hitler and his henchmen. Put differently, no man is a movement by himself, even if he would play a leading role since movements, like most human dramas, not only have protagonists but antagonists and lesser players. As Kenneth Burke observes: "A character cannot 'be himself' unless many others among the dramatic personae contribute to this end, so that the very essence of a character's nature is in a large measure defined, or determined, by the other characters who variously assist or oppose him."²⁵ Thus, once more, there would appear to be some warrant for a rhetorical study of the German Resistance Movement, if only to transcend the singularity of its individual members and tie together the strands of their internal dialogues and external dialectics.

Methodology

To study a movement dramatically²⁶(defined as merger, division,

²⁵Kenneth Burke, "Coriolanus--and the Delights of Faction," in Language As Symbolic Action (Berkeley, 1968), p. 84.

²⁶The titular term "dramatism" is Kenneth Burke's, but the methodology comes primarily from Leland M. Griffin, author of the movement study, who, together with Robert S. Cathcart, has developed a model for the rhetorical structure of a movement, drawn almost entirely from the theory of Burke. Insofar as possible, the model will serve for this study except where conditions alter categories or concepts from Burke or some other contemporary theorist are needed to fill in gaps.

and transcendence),²⁷ is to study the concepts of dialectic and rhetoric through the frame of critical moments, viewing actors in hierarchies that are political and moral, concerned with "the wielding and obeying of authority. . . and strivings for salvation, perfection, the 'good.'"²⁸ Thus, to study a movement is to study Order, Secret, and the Kill, for to study the "relation between rhetoric and dialectic, and the application of both to human relations in general, is to circulate around these three motives."²⁹

The first moment is a state of merger in which the men who make movements identify with the existing order, "accepting the 'mystery,' striving to keep the Secret, preserving the hierarchy. . . energized and sustained by the motive of piety."³⁰ The endurance of a good order depends upon this—Secret or mystery being "that point where different kinds of beings or classes are in communication. . . there must be strangeness; but the estranged must be thought of in some way capable of communication."³¹ And piety being "a discipline of the will through respect. . . admitting the right to exist of things larger than the ego,"³² as well as a "system builder, a desire to round things out, to fit experiences into a unified whole."³³

²⁷Kenneth Burke, A Grammar Of Motives (Berkeley, 1969), p. 402.

²⁸Griffin, p. 456.

²⁹Ibid., p. 458.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 458-459.

³¹Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric Of Motives (New York, 1955), p. 115.

³²Richard Weaver, Ideas Have Consequences (Chicago, 1948), p. 172.

³³Kenneth Burke, Permanence And Change (Indianapolis, 1965), p. 74.

Inevitably, however, any order becomes evil,³⁴ as witnessed by its "verbal corruptions, vile error in the use of language. . . the growth of absurdity and injustice, the increasing loss of communication and identification."³⁵ And because men desire perfection, because their hierarchies are reflections of their language's entelechical or abstractive impulse, they work to reform the system from within, applying "correctives. . . to the established order. . . cry[ing] out through various symbolic acts,"³⁶ hoping to purge it of corruption, error, and injustice. But orders are resistant to change,³⁷ and as communication grows ever more malign, "piety yields to the temptation of impiety,"³⁸ merger turns to division, and the reformers come to "reject the 'mystery,' cease to identify with the hierarchy, the prevailing system of authority. . . [and] rise up and cry 'No!'"³⁹

The second moment is a state of division, merger, and dialectical reciprocity. The division is the distance now separating the reformers --the "pivotal. . . group"⁴⁰ from the corrupt establishment. With some, the gap may not be great, for even having said "No," the origin of a movement is a time of indecision, of silence before speech, of "the

³⁴On the inevitability of imperfection in social orders, see Kenneth Burke, The Rhetoric of Religion (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 4-5.

³⁵Griffin, pp. 459-460.

³⁶Cathcart, 87.

³⁷On the resistance of social orders to change, see Permanence And Change, p. 179.

³⁸Griffin, p. 459.

³⁹Ibid., p. 460.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 462.

heart-conscious kind of listening. . .that precedes expression."⁴¹ This is a variation on the agency-scene ratio, defined as "custom, usage, manner. . .[and] right."⁴² And to the extent that men explain themselves in terms of it, all the symbols presumptively associated with existing hierarchies--loyalty, obedience, law, order, and the like, serve as "trained incapacities," measures which prevent their full support of the incipient movement's "Negative. . .announcement of a stand, a standing together, an understanding."⁴³ In response to the increasing perversions of the corrupt system, these incapacities may change, allowing them by slow degrees, or in part, to reach the agent-act ratio where men will their acts, for "an act is by definition 'free'. . .and a will, to be a will, must be free."⁴⁴ But in this moment, they have not yet progressed beyond "pathema. . . 'a suffering, misfortune, passive condition, state of mind.'"⁴⁵

With others, the gap is greater and they begin to work for merger among the "saving Remnant," those who have said "No" to the established order's "perversion of reason and justice."⁴⁶ Also, they will undertake the construction of a counter-statement based upon their "No." Their motives for this will be moral and political, dialectic purifications of the evils

⁴¹Griffin, pp. 461-462.

⁴²Grammar, p. 15.

⁴³Griffin, pp. 462-463.

⁴⁴Burke, "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language," in Symbolic Action, p. 463. This categorical imperative is qualified in Grammar: "In reality, we are capable of but partial acts, acts. . .that produce but partial transformations." p. 19. Thus, the critic can account for some men performing a few acts but not others, while other men perform still more acts.

⁴⁵Griffin, p. 461.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 462.

that drove them into opposition. And though their terms will be imprecise at first (for programs, like movements, are refined across time, as actions against changing exigencies), they will still identify, albeit vaguely, "the heaven of the movement as well as its 'hell'; its . . . god, as well as its devils. . . [and thus these terms] prefigure. . . the lineaments of the 'perfecting myth' that draws the movement forward futuristically, a fronte."⁴⁷ Finally, the reformers will try to influence those still in the system-- "the potentially alienable. . . the uncommitted. . . [even parts of the 'power structure!'] . . . with attitudes of rejection toward the hierarchy,"⁴⁸ dividing them from it in order to merge them into the ranks of the incipient movement.

There is a danger here, however, for as the movement grows, so too does the possibility that it will "splinter--fail to achieve solidarity, merger; that the myth which prefigures the Purpose of the movement, imperfectly conveyed or received. . . will yield in the minds of a crucial number of converts. . . to an impious new vision of Order."⁴⁹ Also, "most movements, as they develop, acquire a complex of issues."⁵⁰ Thus, the need for dialogue among the members, a sort of conflict between "spokesmen whose ideas are an extension of special interests [and who] remain somewhat unconvinced by any solution which does not mean the complete triumph of. . . [their] interests, [but who] compromise, putting through some portion of [their]

⁴⁷Griffin, p. 463.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 465-466.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 466.

program making concessions to allies."⁵¹ This is part of the refinement mentioned earlier--a merger which is less than ultimate (an impossible condition for men anyway), but more than dialectic (which "would leave the voices in jangling relations to one another.")⁵²

The dialectical reciprocity is the challenge--"the creation of . . . tension growing out of moral [and political] conflict"⁵³ as the leaders of the incipient movement and the priests of the existing order vie in rhetorical thrust and parry with the fate of their hierarchies at stake. As previously noted, this enjoinder identifies movements in the dramatic construct, distinguishing them from other groups which are merely alienated from the establishment.⁵⁴ But depending upon the kind of scene--whether it is more or less threatening--the nature of this dialectic interchange will vary.⁵⁵ Thus, in a democracy, there might be direct conflict, as when minority groups demonstrate violently and the government mobilizes to protect itself. In a totalitarian scene, however, the interchange is more likely to be mediated, as the leaders of the opposition strive to influence agencies within the existing hierarchy to overthrow it, while the priests of that hierarchy, sensing the potential alienation of these agencies, strive equally to maintain their loyalty.⁵⁶

⁵¹Rhetoric, p. 187.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Cathcart, 87.

⁵⁴See p. ix.

⁵⁵Burke explains the relationship between scene and act: "Using 'scene' in the sense of setting or background, and 'act' in the sense of action, one could say that the . . . scene is a fit 'container' for the act." Grammar, p. 3.

⁵⁶This is a departure, particularly from Cathcart's interpretation

Again, we are confronted with the agency-scene ratio and the traditions that prevent its agents from acting freely. For in a totalitarian state, established orders do not crumble at the sound of the rhetorician's voice. Instead--but in a way no less rhetorical⁵⁷--violence must be employed, and that means agencies with arms, and that means an army, and that means a revolution, and for armies in which mutiny is low among the terminology of motives, "that sort of thing just isn't done."⁵⁸

Thus, the dialectic interchange becomes a kind of *déjà vu*, extending through as many frames or moments as it takes the leaders of the incipient order, speaking *sotto voce*, "to promote decision, to convert. . .the undecided to turn from their hellish state of indecision. . .toward the movement."⁵⁹ And the agents of the agency, explaining themselves in terms of their traditions, may make certain demands the price of their action--a form of dialectic within a dialectic.

Some may ask for the support of other hierarchies, "orders. . .extrinsic. . .considered from the standpoint of the specialized activity alone [the dialectical enjoinder]. . .but not extrinsic to the field

of the construct, since he argues that "the new order, the more perfect order, the desired order, cannot come about through established agencies of change." Cathcart, 87. However, his own examples of the abolition movement and the women's suffrage movement are at odds with his argument because both employed existing agencies--churches, schools, and press--in their dialectic opposition to the system. And in a totalitarian scene, an opposition movement requires a fulcrum, an Archimedean point, if it is going to overthrow the existing order.

⁵⁷Burke makes the link between the non-verbal and the verbal: "For non-verbal conditions or objects can be considered as signs by reason of the persuasive ingredients inherent in the 'meaning' they have for the audience to which they are addressed." *Rhetoric*, p. 161.

⁵⁸*Grammar*, p. 15.

⁵⁹Griffin, p. 464.

of moral action. . .considered from the standpoint of human activity in general."⁶⁰ For a totalitarian order is an evil establishment which extends the scope of the dialectic through "administrative rhetoric. . . provok[ing] war."⁶¹ And for the agents of an army, war places "national motives. . .in a hierarchy. . .graded from personal and familial, to national."⁶² Even the least rigid among them--those who have begun to make the transformation from "pathema through poiema. . .from 'a suffering, misfortune, passive condition, state of mind,' [toward] 'a deed, doing, action, act,'"⁶³ may fear for the nation's survival during the moment of crisis as the incipient movement supplants the existing order. Thus, the dialectic becomes triple-tiered (between the movement and the agency; between the establishment and the agency; and between the movement and the extrinsic orders) as the leaders of the opposition send envoys to these other hierarchies, seeking identification of interests. On occasion, this third level dialectic will be successful; more often, however, it will not because "once a national identity is built up, it can be treated as an individual"⁶⁴ with no distinctions made between competing orders.

Others, tied by "magical decree and religious petition"⁶⁵ to the

⁶⁰Rhetoric, p. 27.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 158.

⁶²Ibid., p. 156.

⁶³Griffin, p. 461.

⁶⁴Rhetoric, p. 165.

⁶⁵Burke discusses the influence of "oath" as a variation of the magical decree and religious petition in Philosophy Of Literary Form (New York, 1957), pp. 5-6.

establishment ("obligations of order. . .even when we [want to] revolt against order"),⁶⁶ may ask for a killing as the price of action--a rhetorical act "for men may murder. . .in the name of the movement."⁶⁷ Though these agents are ready to say "Yes" to the incipient order--although "by reason and justice [they] ought to be in it. . .[although they know] that the movement. . .constitutes a Saving Rebellion--a striving for salvation, perfection, the 'good' "⁶⁸--they cannot bring themselves to say "No" to the establishment and its "magical decree."

The kill they ask for is the last of the major motives in the dramatic construct, and as such, it represents the crisis period of a movement: a progress from "an original state of merger in [that] the iniquities are shared. . .[to] a principle of division, in that the elements shared are being ritualistically alienated."⁶⁹ If the leaders of the movement have transformed their own attitudes as the dialectic spirals toward its climax; if they "see through. . .the errant symbols of the existing order ('faulty principles,' 'vile beasts'). . .[then they will] slay them,"⁷⁰ and the movement will have reached its object, its state of Redemption, its "new principle of merger, this time in the unification of those whose purified identity is defined in dialectical opposition to the sacrificial offering."⁷¹

⁶⁶Griffin, p. 467.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 465.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 464.

⁶⁹Grammar, p. 496. For an act to be ritualistic, it must first be committed in the mind and speech; Literary Form, p. 41.

⁷⁰Griffin, pp. 464-465.

⁷¹Grammar, p. 406.

Tragically, however, seeing through the "errant symbols" of the evil order is not always enough. For men are not products of a single order but of many orders,⁷² and not just simultaneously but temporally. Thus, their orientations from earlier hierarchies--patterns of experience that "prepare [them] for some functions and against others"⁷³--may inhibit them from "revising their strategies [when] confronted by retrograde or recalcitrant factors in the gradually shifting Scene."⁷⁴ Perhaps the very pieties which the evil order turned impious and which drove them into opposition prevent them from killing, for "killing is impious, in the order of murder."⁷⁵ Or perhaps they believe that the "new order, the more perfect order," ought not come about through a killing."⁷⁶ Caught between this "wavering line of pressure and counterpressure,"⁷⁷ they may try to redefine the problem--call for arrest instead of murder, or shift the burden of proof to the agents of the agency; demand that they act in spite of the "magical decree," without the killing. And so, they fail "to make [their] utterance 'perfect by adapting it in every minute detail to the natural appetites' of [their] hearers,"⁷⁸ and the dialectic is a failure as the leaders of the opposition, unable

⁷²Rhetoric, p. 224.

⁷³Kenneth Burke, Attitudes Toward History (Boston, 1959), p. 4.

⁷⁴Griffin, p. 465.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 464.

⁷⁶This is an extension to Griffin and Cathcart's formulation because neither discusses the possibility of dialectical tensions growing out of competing claims between morality and politics.

⁷⁷Rhetoric, p. 23.

⁷⁸Griffin, p. 466.

at the moment to "'shift their coordinates,' 'acquire new perspectives,' 'see around the corner'. . .err in their efforts to adapt to exigencies unforeseen."⁷⁹

This struggle to separate themselves from the distant past is yet another dialectic in the rhetoric of movements; an internal one, to be sure, but no less important, since men are the makers of movements. And just as a movement has form--from origin through crisis to object, so too, men must progress "from pathema through poiema to mathema: from 'a suffering, passive condition, state of mind,' through 'a deed, doing, action, act,' to 'an adequate idea; the thing learned.'"⁸⁰

To the extent that they are unable to do so, the crisis period of the movement is prolonged, a "problem to the rhetoricians of any cause . . . [since] desired action [should be taken] before the point of alienation is reached and reaction develops."⁸¹ In a totalitarian scene, the difficulties are intensified, in part because of the threat of exposure, and in part because the extrinsic orders, now in conflict of their own with the evil establishment, may be powerful enough to destroy it and its opposition, without respect to character or conviction. Thus, if the movement is to circumvent the dangers confronting it, the early leaders will either make the change--"progress through the act to an adequate understanding," or be replaced by other men "who were quicker to sense new factors in their incipient stages."⁸²

⁷⁹Griffin, pp. 464-465.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 461.

⁸¹Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric Of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, XXXVIII (April, 1952), 186.

⁸²Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 467.

The final moment is really two moments and includes the states of division, merger, and transcendence, centered around the motive of the kill. The first of these moments--the penultimate one--occurs when the new leaders of the movement, together with those of earlier stages who have made the necessary transformation, "who persevere in their assent to the movement. . . say No to the errant negatives that rise up in themselves,"⁸³ undertake a "drastic revision. . . [in] rhetorical strategy and so succeed in irrevocably disturbing the balance between the [movement and the establishment]."⁸⁴

This is the Kill, a purgative act of division, merger, and transcendence: division, because it "affirms the commitment of the converted to the movement--[to] the new understanding, which is an adequate understanding;"⁸⁵ merger, because it "provokes action--move[s] the agents of the agency]. . . to rise up and cry No to the [existing order]. . . thereby saying Yes to the movement;"⁸⁶ and transcendence because "it endows [those who undertake it] with a new condition or 'substance.'"⁸⁷

Thus, the attempt to reach the "salient Victim. . . [the] rhetorical Vile Beast to be slain. . . [the] Negation to be negated."⁸⁸ In a totalitarian scene, this will be the leader of the corrupt order who is "made

⁸³Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 465.

⁸⁴Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetorical Structure of the Antimasonic Movement," in The Rhetorical Idiom, ed., Donald C. Bryant (Ithaca, 1953) p. 155.

⁸⁵Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 465.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 464.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 465.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 464.

worthy legalistically. . .an offender against legal or moral justice. . .
 [who] 'deserves' what he gets,"⁸⁹and whose death is the "death of alle-
 giance to a former system of authority--a time of negation, rejection,
 'the rebel snapping of the continuity.'"⁹⁰ And rhetoric "in the order
 of killing is the rhetoric of 'personal enmity, of factional strife, of
 invective, polemic, eristic, logomachy'; is 'par excellence the region
 of the Scramble, of insult and injury, bickering, squabbling, malice and
 the lie, cloaked malice and the subsidized lie.'"⁹¹

Yet, it must be remembered that rhetoric in the order of killing is
 also in the order of love. This is the dialectic nature between the kill
 and the sacrifice: "In the sacrifice there is the kill; in the kill there
 is the sacrifice."⁹² Thus, depending upon the exigencies of the scene and
 the way they are perceived, the Kill, or Victimage, can merge into its op-
 posite--the Sacrifice, or Mortification, as men begin to realize, imper-
 fectly perhaps, that they may fail practically but succeed symbolically,
 a kind of "pure persuasion,"⁹³or perfect act of martyrdom, a totally vol-
 untary self-sacrifice enacted in expiation for their own and other's guilt.
 This is the ultimate moment of the movement because "Victimage. . .in the
 order of Mortification. . .is at its highest mounting. . .in the order of

⁸⁹Literary Form, p. 35.

⁹⁰Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 466.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 461.

⁹²Literary Form, p. 40.

⁹³Burke describes this as persuasion which "involves the saying of
 something, not for the extra-verbal advantage to be got from the saying,
 but because of the satisfaction intrinsic to the saying." Rhetoric, p.
 269.

love (Greater love hath no man than this, that a man give up his life for his friends).⁹⁴ And while the leaders of the existing system "may murder for the sake of terror, in the name of the [establishment]. . .their Victims, though silenced, may speak: for Death, though the ultimate failure of communication, is nevertheless, being a mode of conduct, in the realm of speech ('O eloquent. . .and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded. . .')."⁹⁵

Organization

A movement critic has a dual responsibility. On the one hand, he needs to preserve the chronology of the movement; to convey the quality of dynamism as it progresses from origin to object. On the other, he needs to explain the movement's rhetoric; specifically, the pattern of dialectic inherent to it. The method most suitable to such conflicting obligations is that of the literary historian,⁹⁶ who, while endeavoring "to present the movement synthetically, in a broad chronological manner . . .turn[s] it as on a spit[. . .]piercing it now from one angle, now from another,"⁹⁷ analyzing those aspects of it which best illustrate its interactive nature.

Since the German opposition to Hitler can best be understood in terms of four critical moments when the resisters succeeded in mastering some of their own incapacities, importuned other powers for help, answered the

⁹⁴Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 461.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 465.

⁹⁶Griffin makes this suggestion in "Historical Movements," 187.

⁹⁷Ibid., 188.

objections of the military, and set in motion plans to strike, the bulk of the study will center on those moments, showing the motives of the resisters, the acts they engaged in as a consequence of those motives, the agencies they utilized for change, and the reciprocating acts of Hitler and his followers. In each moment, a different part of the military establishment provided the necessary instrument of force; thus, these agencies are so important that they are the "representative anecdote"⁹⁸ for each act.

Chapter One is a review of the Third Reich, the dialectically secured position, and its attractions and evils with which the resisters were merged. Chapter Two is the first of the critical moments, the initial division between the resisters and Hitler's order, and their attempt to overthrow his regime through the agency of the Army High Command during the Munich Crisis of 1938. Chapter Three is the second critical moment, the attempt by the resisters to overthrow Hitler's order through the agency of the Army Intelligence Service during the period of the twilight war in 1939-1940. Chapter Four is the third critical moment, the period in which the resisters dialectically merged their moral and political programs and attempted to kill Hitler during a frontline visit to Army Group Center on the Eastern Front. Chapter Five is the fourth critical moment, the attempt of July 20, 1944, organized and executed by officers in the Reserve Army. Chapter Six carries the narrative of the resisters forward through their trials

⁹⁸Burke writes that "One should seek to select, as representative anecdote, something sufficiently demarcated in character to make analysis possible, yet sufficiently complex in character to prevent the use of too few terms in one's description." Grammar, p. 324. For a more complete discussion of the anecdote, see Ibid., pp. 59-61; and 323-325.

and executions, discusses reasons for the failure of their movement, and offers some methodological implications for future study.

Finally, if the chapter heads are viewed superficially, they might appear to follow Griffin's suggestion of studying movements from inception through crisis to consummation. The first and second of these periods are accurately reflected, but with the third, the pattern breaks apart; that is, the German Resistance Movement never achieved fulfillment in the commonly accepted sense of a successfully completed political act --of one hierarchy overthrowing another and taking its place. Instead, the resisters failed in their efforts to topple Hitler and his order, and the price they paid was their lives. Nevertheless, there is consummation present in another, more profound sense, and Griffin hints at it when he writes that the period of consummation can be considered as "a time of redemption: men have been purged of absurdity and injustice."⁹⁹ This was surely the objective of the men of the German opposition who, in the last analysis, acted with the foreknowledge that they might fail, but whose resolve to press on suggests the symbolic sense in which they saw the act--as a gesture of atonement for the evils committed in the name of Germany.

Acknowledgments

In matters of research, special thanks goes to those witnesses whose correspondence is quoted in the text. In particular, the letters of Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, General Franz Halder, General Guenther Blumentritt, General Erich Dethleffsen, General Hermann von Witzleben, Graf Ludwig

⁹⁹Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 467.

von Berg, and Grafin Nina von Stauffenberg are acknowledged. Also, thanks are due to Mrs. Agnes F. Peterson, Librarian for the Central European Section of the Hoover War Memorial Library, and to Mr. Robert Wolfe, specialist in German Language Documents at the National Archives. They provided me with selected bibliographies and unpublished documents relating to the resisters and the Third Reich.

Five agencies of the Federal German Government have also furnished me with bibliographies as well as names and addresses of surviving participants and answers to my many questions. These are: The German Embassy, Washington; Press und Informationsamt, Bonn; Deutsche Verband Soldaten, Bonn; Militararchiv, Koblenz; and Institut fur Zeitgeschichte, Munich.

In matters of theory, grateful acknowledgment goes to the members of my committee. Dr. Karlyn Campbell and Dr. Bobby Patton, who took time away from their busy schedules to participate in my orals, and who offered constructive suggestions for improving the methodology. Dr. Thomas Baisecker who, despite primary interests in other areas, read the dissertation chapter by chapter and struggled valiantly, albeit unsuccessfully, to keep it within manageable boundaries. Dr. Wil Linkugel, who offered valuable comments but even more importantly, helped me regain my sense of perspective in some of my own "critical moments." Dr. Donn Parson, chairman of my committee, who introduced me to the writings of Kenneth Burke, bent my "terministic screens," and succeeded in challenging and provoking me to my best efforts.

In matters personal, much more than customary thanks goes to my daughter Kirsten and my sons Eric and Charles for largely doing without their father during the preparation and writing of this study. And to my wife, Sue Enholm, who not only did the usual things for which wives

are thanked in acknowledgments, but provided a sounding board, proofed the final copy, and encouraged me more than she will ever know.

July 20, 1975
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CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE: ADOLF HITLER AND THE THIRD REICH

"The fact that evil appears in the form of light, or beneficence, of historical necessity, and social justice, is utterly confusing for someone nurtured in our traditional ethical system." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

This chapter seeks to illuminate the nature of the Third Reich--the forces which led to its rise, the figure of its Fuehrer, the thrust of its ideology, the structure of its social order, the instruments of its control. There will be no attempt to make the description detailed. For one thing, many of the features should be familiar.¹ For another, we are not concerned with the Third Reich per se, but with the dialectical relationship between Adolf Hitler's "New Order" and the German Resistance Movement.²

¹Cumulative Book Index (Minneapolis, 1924-1973) lists several hundred titles under National Socialism and related topics.

²This is the formulation of Robert S. Cathcart. "It is. . . reciprocity or dialectical enjoinder in the moral arena which defines movements. . . ." "New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically," Western Speech, XXXVI (Spring, 1972), 87. Leland M. Griffin, the author of movement studies, has discarded the historical placement of movements and now argues "that all movements are essentially concerned with governance or dominion, 'the wielding and obeying of authority'; that 'politics above all is drama'; and that 'drama requires conflict'. . . all movements are essentially moral--strivings for salvation, perfection, the 'good.'" Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke, ed., William H. Rueckert (Minneapolis, 1969), p. 456.

Having made these disclaimers however, it should be emphasized that the drama of the deutscher Widerstand--the motives of its members, the acts they engaged in as a consequence of those motives, and the reciprocating acts of the Fuehrer and his followers, would make little sense without the scene of National Socialist Germany. From an abstract standpoint, enjoiment requires a premise or thesis to work against,³ and the Third Reich supplied that premise. From a circumstantial standpoint, the Zeitgeist in which the resisters moved--the climate of opinion and the particular conditions which prevailed--helped to shape the structure of their movement and the nature of their discourse, and these patterns can only be understood in relationship to the Third Reich. From an individual standpoint, the problem for many men of the opposition was not only one of dissent and division from the Nazi state, but of struggle to separate themselves from areas of agreement with it before they could dissent. Thus, it is important to postulate what Richard Weaver calls the "dialectically secured position"⁴--the attractions and evils of the German dictatorship--against which the resisters, morally and politically, had to justify their positions, and practically, had to execute their plans.

The Third Reich came into being with mutually-exclusive attributes; that is, it belonged simultaneously to the century of the mass man and to the tradition of nationalism. These two forces, as the historian Friedrich Meinecke reminds us, are the most important of

³"Dialectic," in A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World, ed., Mortimer J. Adler, 54 Vols., (Chicago, 1952), ii, p. 346.

⁴Richard Weaver, The Ethics Of Rhetoric (Chicago, 1968), p. 27.

the age.⁵ On the one hand, an ever-increasing population, made possible by advances in medical science, but dislocated by industrialization and technology, created a work force of many millions, most of whom looked to labor unions to help them safeguard their precarious standard of living and to socialism for hope of a better future. On the other, an educated upper-middle class and an aristocracy, enriched by the work of the masses, but no less disoriented by the defeat in World War I and the Versailles Diktat, looked back to a golden time when the Kaiser still ruled at Potsdam and Prussian officers moved through the world like "demi-gods."⁶

Only once in the past century had these two forces united. This was during the political "Burgfrieden" or truce of August 1, 1914. On that day the Kaiser had declared: "When it comes to war all parties cease and we are all brothers."⁷ Then Socialists had joined Nationalists in voting war credits and cheering the Feldgrauen off to Paris. Like most belligerents, the Germans believed that the war would be over before the leaves fell and that the unity gained in the face of a common danger would solve all their problems--political, economic, social, and even moral.⁸ It turned out differently. Four years of trench warfare, nearly two-million dead, and a homefront where food supplies finally ran so short that turnips were the staple diet, not only broke

⁵Friedrich Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, trans., Sidney B. Fay (Boston, 1969), see esp., Chapter One, "The Two Waves of the Age."

⁶This is Gordon Craig's characterization, in The Politics Of The Prussian Army, 1640-1945 (Oxford, 1955), p. 204.

⁷Wilhelm's statement to the Reichstag is quoted in Koppel S. Pinson, Modern Germany (New York, 1968), p. 313.

⁸Meinecke, p. 25.

the fragile bonds of unity but placed the two forces into increasingly antagonistic positions.

Nor did the Weimar Republic reunite them. If anything, it made them even greater enemies than before. While the socialists and their allies now became the government, and the nationalists and their allies became the opposition--the climate was so poisoned by the aftermath of war, by conspiracy theories of defeat and accusations of blame for the peace, that democracy as mutual cooperation never took hold. Instead, Interessenpolitik and its counterpart, demagoguery, became the order of the day--at the polls, in the Reichstag, and even inside the many coalition governments. In such a heated political atmosphere, it is little wonder that character assassination bred political assassination, that coups were attempted from both right and left, and that rival gangs battled each other for control of the streets.

The multiple political causes of the collapse of Weimar are not the concern here. What is the concern is that Hitler was able to take these two forces--the nationalist and the socialist, and all their many factions, and unite them into a new political order which was predicated not on the victory of one side or the other, but on the cooperation of both. This was the "Volksgemeinschaft," or "People's Community," whose origins date to the German philosopher turned nationalist, Johann Fichte,⁹

⁹For Fichte's doctrine of a Volkish state, see Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Addresses to the German Nation, trans., R. F. Jones and G. H. Turnbull (Chicago, 1923). It is not my intention to argue that Fichte was a Nazi, or that Nazism can trace its origin to German ideas exclusively. Nazi genealogy is a game some have played badly, as witness Rohan D'O Butler, The Roots of National Socialism (New York, 1942); and William McGovern, From Luther to Hitler (Boston, 1941). However, in Fichte's ideology the notion of a state as more than a political entity appears for the first time.

and whose principles the Nazis employed as a merger of an apparent socialist future and an apparent nationalist past.

It is important to look closely at the principles underlying the construction of this new order because in many respects it represents Hitler's greatest achievement.¹⁰ He began with the assumption that the basis of society was race, or as he put it, "the folkish philosophy finds the importance of mankind in its basic racial elements."¹¹ This meant, of course, the Aryans, the "founders of culture"¹²--and while all Nordic peoples were part of its biological development, the German was pre-eminently its finest product. There are negative implications to this assumption, but let us put them by for the moment and stress positive features. To race, Hitler added the notion of soil. As he wrote in Mein Kampf, the policy "of the folkish state must be to safeguard the existence. . .of the race embodied in the state by creating a healthy, viable natural relation between the nation's population. . . and the quantity and quality of soil."¹³

Rasse und Boden: in reducing distinctions to a matter of race and soil,¹⁴ Hitler had devised a means by which individual Germans could

¹⁰Even his future opponent, Carl Goerdeler, credited Hitler with having taught the German people that "we have to help one another." Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1958), p. 29.

¹¹Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, trans., Ralph Manheim (Boston, 1962), p. 383.

¹²Ibid., p. 290.

¹³Ibid., p. 643.

¹⁴Hitler's use of race and soil as essences corresponds somewhat to Burke's suggestion that substance, in its most complete sense, is both intrinsic and extrinsic. Kenneth Burke, A Grammar Of Motives (Berkeley, 1969), pp. 24-28.

discover a sense of identity¹⁵--a membership in a community which required an awareness of who you were and where you were. This was the essential Nazi definition of society and we will have cause to return to it again. For our immediate purpose however, the point to be made is that this reduction erased the old divisions between employers and employees, professional and non-professional, producers and consumers, industry and craft--in short, all the factions that saw themselves as adherents of one or the other of the two major forces. In saying this, there is no intention to suggest that these groupings no longer existed. An employer was still an employer and an employee was still an employee. But these were occupational designations and nothing more. Hitler's egalitarian community was meant not so much to change relationships as to change the manner in which the relationships were perceived¹⁶--and to a large extent he succeeded.

In part, Hitler's ideology succeeded because many Germans wanted it to. The expectation that the state was finally developing into a

¹⁵This is, of course, the amalgamative use of identification. Its counterpart, the divisive, will be discussed later. Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric Of Motives (New York, 1955), p. 45.

¹⁶Hitler explained this distinction in one of his early speeches. "In Germany where everyone who is German at all has the same blood, has the same eyes, and speaks the same language. . .there can be no class . . .there can only be a single people and beyond that nothing else. Certainly, we recognize. . .that there are different occupations and 'professions' /Stände/ --there is the Stand of the watchmaker, the Stand of the common laborers, the Stand of the painters and technicians, the Stand of the engineers, officials, etc. Stände there can be. But in the struggle which these Stände have amongst themselves for equalization of their economic conditions, that conflict and division must never be so great as to sunder the ties of race." Adolf Hitler, My New Order, ed., Raoul de Roussy de Sales (New York, 1941), p. 23. This explanation illustrates Burke's argument that man's attempts to name things are "not because they are precisely as named, but because the name is a hortatory device, designed to take up the slack." Burke, Grammar, p. 54.

more open society impressed them. This was part of the new socialist future mentioned earlier and it needs to be examined in some detail. Among the twenty-five points in the National Socialist Party Program, twelve were proposals for social and economic reform,¹⁷ and with Hitler's accession to the Chancellery, the signs of their implementation, economic and otherwise, seemed to be everywhere. Hitler's requirement of "Kamerad" as the official form of address was one.¹⁸ The Volkswagen project, undertaken at a time when automobile ownership in Europe was largely for the rich, was another.¹⁹ The slogan, "Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz" ("Common welfare before individual welfare"), was a third.²⁰ A fourth was the establishment of required training camps for those entering the professions.²¹ A fifth was government pressure on fraternities and corps, long strongholds of class privilege, to adopt volkish principles in place of feudalistic ones.²² A sixth was the Winterhilfe, or Winter Relief Campaign, whose declared aim was aid for the less fortunate and whose collectors included not only the rank and file

¹⁷The National Socialist Party Program can be found in The Nazi Years: A Documentary History, ed., Joachim Remak (Englewood Cliffs, 1969), pp. 28-30.

¹⁸Mein Kampf, p. 478.

¹⁹The cost of the Volkswagen, as announced by the government in 1938, was 900 marks, or \$235 at the then rate of exchange. Nazi Years, p. 76.

²⁰For the significance of this slogan, particularly at a time when the country was disunited, see the autobiographical excerpts in Theodore Abel, Why Hitler Came Into Power (New York, 1938), p. 137ff.

²¹For an unfavorable description of life in the camps, see the letter of Helmuth von Moltke, quoted in Michael Balfour and Julian Frisby, Helmuth von Moltke (London, 1972), pp. 54-55.

²²See the directive of Gerhard Krueger, leader of the Nazi students' union, in Nazi Culture, ed., George L. Mosse (New York, 1966), p. 307.

but the leadership as well. Thus, Propaganda Minister Goebbels took his turn on a Berlin street corner collecting coins from by-standers, and so did Hermann Goering and a host of other officials.²³

To intrude a bit on chronology, the German Workers' Front decreed that everyone within its organization (and that included all trade and white collar employees and their employers) had to wear the same blue uniform on public occasions, thereby concealing all marks of social status.²⁴ In purely economic terms, the cost of living index advanced only 7.2 percent during the first four years of the Third Reich, and that increase was pegged to 1933 as a base, probably the worst year of the depression.²⁵ Moreover, fringe benefits played an important role, and the story of an old worker's reaction to a concert given by the Reich Symphony Orchestra at his factory in Wurttenburg, speaks volumes: "Who would have dared think that the Kaiser would send his orchestra to us here in the plant? Now the Fuhrer himself has sent us his orchestra; we can never thank him enough."²⁶ Finally, there are Milton Mayer's interviews, conducted after the war with a group of former Nazis in a hypothetical town he called Kronenberg. Among those he talked to was Heinrich Hildebrand, a middle-class democrat and teacher, whose answer to the question of why he joined the party reveals the motive of Mystery, one of the fundamental impulses to

²³Sven Hedin recounts these scenes in his German Diary, trans., Joan Bulman (Dublin, 1951), p. 8.

²⁴Richard Grunberger, The 12-Year Reich (New York, 1971), p. 51.

²⁵The price index is quoted in Nazi Culture, p. 360.

²⁶Grunberger, p. 50.

maintaining social order:²⁷

For the first time in my life I was really the peer of men who, in the Kaiser time and in the Weimar time, had always belonged to classes lower or higher than my own, men whom one had always looked down on or up to, but never at. In the Labor Front--I represented the teacher's association--I came to know such men at first hand, to know their lives and to have them know mine.²⁸

The young also wanted the system to work. In part, their response was idealistic, and in part, it was a rebellion against the "bourgeoisie" prejudices of their parents--another manifestation of the classless socialist hope for the future. Inge Scholl, whose book, Die weisse Rose, tells the story of the resistance group organized by herself, her brother and sister at the University of Munich, still acknowledges in the opening pages the enthusiasm they all felt for the new Volkish community. "We believed ourselves to be members of a great, well-ordered society which embraced and esteemed everybody. . . . We felt we were part of a process, of a movement that created people out of a mass."²⁹ Ilse McKee, who wrote about her schooldays in Nazi Germany from the vantagepoint of life in England, is derogatory in her references to Hitler's promises as "bait" and pointed in her remarks about "pressure" put on her father

²⁷Burke identifies mystery, or "The Secret," as one of the three central motives in human relations. Rhetoric, p. 265. Briefly, mystery occurs where "different kinds of beings are in communication. In mystery, there must be strangeness; but the estranged must also be thought of as in some way capable of communion." Ibid., p. 115. As noted above, the Volksgemeinschaft retained the old classes, but by redefining and recombining them, particularly on the lower levels, the "little men," as Milton Mayer calls them, had the impression that they were part of a less divisive society. We shall see that this impression proved increasingly false as one moved up the Nazi hierarchy.

²⁸Milton Mayer, They Thought They Were Free (Chicago, 1955), p. 105.

²⁹Inge Scholl, Die weisse Rose (Frankfurt am Main, 1952), p. 10.

to join the party, but at the end of her account of a youth rally held at Weimar, the old fervor comes to the surface: "the leader stepped forward and shouted: 'Adolf Hitler!' We replied: 'Sieg, Heil! Sieg, Heil! Sieg, Heil!' We yelled these words with all the strength our lungs could muster, and they sounded enormously powerful."³⁰ And Hermann Stresau quotes the response of a leader of the Bund deutscher Madel, or German Girl's League, to her middle-class mother's complaints that the body odor of her lower-class troop was offensive: "Do you think people like us smell any better?"³¹

Still another group which welcomed Hitler's Volksgemeinschaft was the mass of unemployed. In one sense, their reason was economic since they were out of work and hungry and wanted jobs and food. But in another, more profoundly human sense, their attraction to Hitler transcended economics.³² "Der Hitler der sorgt fur uns!" ("Hitler he is our provider!") was a common utterance heard among the lower classes in those years,³³ and the word "provider" with its connotation of "Providence" has a certain ideological flavor. Also, in 1930, when unemployment rose by three millions, the National Socialist delegation in the Reichstag

³⁰Ilse McKee, Tomorrow The World (London, 1960), p. 10.

³¹Hermann Stresau, Von Jahr zu Jahr (Berlin, 1948), p. 80.

³²Burke explains this transcendence: "Man qua man is a symbol-user. In this respect, every aspect of his 'reality' is likely to be seen through a fog of symbols. And not even the hard reality of basic economic facts is sufficient to pierce this symbolic veil (which is intrinsic to the human mind)." Rhetoric, p. 136. Hitler, too, makes much the same point in Mein Kampf: "economics is only of second or third-rate importance. . .the primary role falls to factors of ethics, morality, and blood." Mein Kampf, p. 227.

³³Pinson, p. 483.

increased from twelve to one-hundred and seven and rose or fell thereafter in proportion to the number of unemployed--certainly an ideological transformation of an economic goad. And the swelling ranks of the SA in the same period is another indicator.³⁴ Of the original Storm Troops, some were criminals and some were veterans who had never made the adjustment back to civilian life. The new recruits, however, were largely jobless and joined for a free meal at the organization's soup kitchens. But the SA gave them more: it offered not only food but meaning to their lives, a brown shirt as a sign of identification, and the comradeship of a crowded hall or a column of marching men.

Admittedly, the spectacular decrease in unemployment during the first years of Hitler's government--from almost five million in 1933 to less than five-hundred thousand in 1938³⁵--cannot be credited to the principles of the Volkish community. But it does belong in part to the socialist future of job security and a full lunch bucket. Backed by the post-depression upturn in the business cycle, the Nazis undertook a massive job-procurement program--public works like the Autobahnen, subsidized housing projects, and land rehabilitation--which added to the Kraft durch Freude, or "Strength-Through-Joy" Project³⁶ with its cheap theater tickets, plans for better working conditions, and pre-arranged inexpensive vacation tours, must have suggested to the workers

³⁴Between 1928 and 1930, the SA expanded in size from twenty-eight hundred to nearly one-hundred thousand. See, Heinz Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, trans., Richard Barry (New York, 1970), pp. 26; 63.

³⁵Unemployment figures are quoted in Nazi Years, p. 75.

³⁶The "Strength-Through-Joy" organization, for all the jokes about its name, was one of the government's most popular undertakings.

that the millenium was at hand. Also, the decrease in unemployment can be credited in part to Hitler's rearmament program and his re-introduction of compulsory military service. But these are features which properly belong to the nationalist tradition mentioned earlier--the second force which Hitler used to make his Third Reich--and it is to this force that we now turn.

It is outside the scope of this study to trace the history of Germany's power elite from the halcyon days of the Kaiserreich to the shattering defeats of August 1918. Perhaps a statement which Wilhelm Liebknecht once made to a visiting Englishman can serve to point up the extent of this group's dramatic reversal:

If you want to understand Germany you must grasp the fact that Germany, particularly Prussia, is an inverted pyramid. Its apex, firmly embedded in the ground, is the spike on the top of the Prussian soldiers' helmet. Everything rests on that. One day, unless people are very careful, it will topple over smashing itself and much else in the process.³⁷

That day came on November 9, 1918, when Germany sued for an armistice, and the full realization of what toppling over meant was made clear a year later with the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles. As Liebknecht predicted, much was smashed in the process. Germany had to sign a confession of war guilt, surrender thirteen percent of her land, all of her colonies, promise to pay thirty-eight percent of her wealth in reparations, allow part of her territory to be demilitarized, and reduce her army to 100,000 officers and men, equipped only with light arms.³⁸

³⁷W. H. Steed, Through Thirty Years, 2 Vols., (London, 1924), i, p. 28.

³⁸These terms are listed in Gordon A. Craig, Europe Since 1815 (New York, 1966), pp. 543-546.

Undoubtedly, the group most smashed was the power elite--the Junkers, rich industrialists, and conservative upper-middle-class--from whose ranks the leadership of the nation, military and bureaucratic, was largely drawn. For them, as well as for those soldiers who felt themselves undefeated in battle, and for other millions at home who had heard nothing but stories of triumph through a regulated press, the reality of the armistice and surrender were too much to bear. Ludendorff's invention of the Dolchstoss,³⁹ or stab-in-the-back myth, gave them a means of coping and they seized it. In Frontkämpfer and Herrenklub, in soldaten Verbände and Direktorium, these people embraced the myth, first to shield themselves against defeat and loss of national pride, and later to justify their attacks on the men who had signed the peace treaty and formed the new government--the "November Criminals" as Hitler called them.

Whether the Versailles Treaty was just or unjust is not the issue here. The important point is that many Germans believed it was unjust. "We prefer to sacrifice everything and fight to the last man rather than accept as cowards a peace that is against our honor."⁴⁰ Thus, a resolution adopted by the faculty and students of the University of Breslau, which was representative of the thousands of protests and petitions sent to the government. In such an atmosphere, the leitmotifs of Hitler's

³⁹The invention of the Dolchstoss dates from November 1918. In that month, Ludendorff was visited in Berlin by the British General Sir Neill Malcolm. After Ludendorff had inveighed against the government and people, both of whom, he claimed, had left him in the lurch, Malcolm asked, "Do you mean, General, that you were stabbed in the back?" Ludendorff seized the phrase. "Stabbed in the back? Yes, that's it, exactly. We were stabbed in the back." Quoted in John Wheeler-Bennett, Wooden Titan (New York, 1936), pp. 236-237fn.

⁴⁰The Breslau resolution, as well as other examples of protest, are included in Abel, pp. 29-34.

nationalistic appeal--revanchism for the war, restoration of military power, and a return to the glories of the Bismarck Reich--struck responsive chords, particularly with the power elite. We cannot make a detailed account of these themes, but three samples may serve to illustrate their attraction. First, retribution for the war: "It cannot be that two million Germans should have fallen in vain, and that afterwards one should sit down as friends at the same table with traitors. No, we do not pardon, we demand--Vengeance."⁴¹ Second, promises to the military: "We shall see to it that, when we come to power, out of the present Reichswehr shall rise the great army of the German people."⁴² Third, the vision of the Bismarck Reich:

The very founding of the [Bismarck] Reich seemed gilded by the magic of an event which uplifted the nation. After a series of incomparable victories, a Reich was born. . . a reward for immortal heroism. . . . This unique birth and baptism. . . surrounded the Reich with a halo of historic glory such as only the oldest states--and they but seldom--could boast.⁴³

It might have been possible to resist such blandishments in normal times, but as Meinecke writes, "the times were out of joint."⁴⁴ The inability of the Weimar Government to secure changes in the terms of the treaty; the economic crisis which made the Nazis the largest party in the Reichstag; the threat of a Red Revolution from the Left or a Brown Revolution from the Right--in short, the failure abroad and the instability at home in the years just prior to 1933 led the

⁴¹Hitler, New Order, p. 45.

⁴²The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, ed., Norman H. Baynes, 2 Vols., (New York, 1942), i, p. 552.

⁴³Mein Kampf, pp. 225-226.

⁴⁴Meinecke, p. 58.

nationalist power brokers who surrounded President Hindenburg to press for Hitler's appointment as Chancellor.

Their motives were varied. In part, they were simply reverting to type, the whole trend of German history having been a shift to a more extreme nationalism whenever the fabric of social order seemed to be unraveling,⁴⁵ and the most fanatical nationalists were the Nazis. And in part, they hoped to control Hitler and his movement for their own, less radical nationalistic purposes,⁴⁶ to which end they tried to hedge him on all sides with safeguards, extracting from him pledges to respect the rights of the president, the legislature, and the press, and forcing him to accept eight of their own number for the eleven cabinet positions.⁴⁷

It cannot be said that their choice of Hitler was completely bad, at least in the short run. Although the brokers themselves--Papen, Hugenburg, Seldte, and the others--soon discovered that they were without much personal power, Hitler's behavior toward their cherished agencies--industry, civil service, the judiciary, and above all, the army, was deferential. Thus, to take the example of the Staatsakt, or opening of the Reichstag in March 1933, the nationalists could find no reason to fault Hitler. At the Potsdam garrison church, the frock-coated,

⁴⁵Pinson, pp. 503-504.

⁴⁶Thus, Franz von Papen to Ewald von Kleist: "I have Hindenburg's confidence. In two months we will have Hitler pushed into such a corner that he will squeak." Quoted in Joachim C. Fest, The Face of the Third Reich, trans., Michael Bullock (New York, 1970), p. 232.

⁴⁷In his memoirs, Papen lists the safeguards which he and the other conservative leaders used to try and check Hitler. Franz von Papen, Memoirs, trans., Brian Connell (New York, 1953), pp. 238-240.

top-hatted Chancellor spoke of celebrating the "union between the symbols of the old greatness and the new strength,"⁴⁸ and he made public obeisance to Hindenburg in front of the coffin of Frederick the Great and before the uniformed ranks of the Prussian nobility. Further, he largely refrained from interfering in army affairs, leaving promotion selection, courts martial verdicts, and planning operations in military hands.⁴⁹ Finally, while he did secure the suspension of personal and civil liberties in order to proscribe the Communist Party after the Reichstag fire,⁵⁰ the power elite had little sympathy with the "Bolshevists" anyway since they represented a threat to stability which Hitler's appointment had been designed to prevent, and if a few heads were cracked in the process, as Hugenburg put it, "Wo gehobelt wird, fliegen Späne" (You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs).⁵¹

To move past the early months of 1933, several other events need to be recounted because, unlike Potsdam, they represented more than a gesture on Hitler's part to lay claim to nationalist support. The first was his declaration on October 14, 1933 that the Reich was withdrawing from the League of Nations. This revisionist act met with widespread approval in Germany,⁵² not only because the League was inextricably

⁴⁸Baynes, i, p. 263.

⁴⁹Friedrich Hossbach, Zwischen Wehrmacht und Hitler (Hanover, 1949), pp. 45-46.

⁵⁰Bullock quotes the justification for the decree as a "defensive measure against Communist acts of violence," although, of course, all citizens lost their liberties. Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study In Tyranny (New York, 1961), p. 222.

⁵¹Hugenburg is quoted in Fest, p. 223.

⁵²Bullock notes that a subsequent plebiscite expressed ninety-five percent approval. Bullock, p. 279.

linked with the Versailles Diktat, but also because the concept of a transcendent community of nations clashed with the traditional German view that the state, as Ranke claimed, was "not a subdivision of something more general--but a living, individual, unique self."⁵³

The second and third events followed from the first. On January 15, 1934, Hitler announced that Germany intended to rearm, and two months later, he decreed a three-fold increase in the size of the army. Once more, these acts were welcomed, particularly by the nationalists and the military, who saw them as redress for national grievances, one of the few exceptions being General Ludwig Beck, the Army Chief of Staff, who wrote that the trebling was "not a building up of a peacetime army but a mobilization."⁵⁴ However, Beck's voice of protest was lost amid the activity with which the "Nur-Soldaten," or "soldiers-only" tuned up the military machine,⁵⁵ while others--still very few in number--dreamed of decorations, promotions, and perhaps even Marshal's batons as in the days of the Emperor Bonaparte.⁵⁶

The fourth event took place in the summer of 1934. This was the Nazi Party's Sicilian Vespers in which Hitler used his Gestapo to put down what he and the military perceived as a revolt by the leadership

⁵³The position of Leopold von Ranke, nineteenth-century German historian, is quoted in Hans Kohn, The Mind of Germany (London, 1961), p. 264.

⁵⁴Beck is quoted in Wolfgang Foerster, Generaloberst Ludwig Beck (Munich, 1953), pp. 23-24.

⁵⁵Heinz Guderian, a "Nur-Soldat" of "Nur-Soldaten," notes the acceleration in work on the armored forces; Panzer Leader (New York, 1967), pp. 18-27.

⁵⁶These aspirations are attributed to Alfred Jodl by John Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis Of Power (New York, 1954), p. 430.

of the SA.⁵⁷ At base, the conflict between Hitler and his Storm Troop Command was over matters of tactics, not principle. Ernst Roehm, the SA Chief, wanted to absorb the armed forces into the brown shirts, thereby creating a great "People's Army" for the conquest of Germany. He thought in terms of battles on barricades, of the smoke of gunpowder, and bloodshed, as the Nazi movement destroyed the old forms, replacing them with a revolutionary order embodying the values of the political fighter.⁵⁸ In his simplicity, Roehm was unable to grasp the clever tactics for consolidating power which the Fuehrer meant to employ. Direct assaults on important state agencies were scrapped for what Hitler, in his own words, sought "by slow and determined degrees."⁵⁹ Thus, Roehm and his lieutenants were liquidated in a blood purge, and Hitler was able to offer an earnest of his promise that the army was to be the sole bearer of arms in the nation.⁶⁰

Liberty, it has been said, is seldom ravished, but often seduced. So it was in the beginning with Adolf Hitler and the majority of the German people.⁶¹ Workers, attracted to the prospect of a regular

⁵⁷An exceptionally well-documented account of the army's role in the SA massacre appears in Robert J. O'Neill, The German Army and the Nazi Party, 1933-1939 (New York, 1966), see esp., Chapter Three, "The Army and the S. A."

⁵⁸Roehm's view on the direction of the Nazi revolution and the construction of a "People's Army" are given in Hermann Rauschning, The Voice Of Destruction (New York, 1940), pp. 151-154.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 158.

⁶⁰For Hitler's pledge to the military, see below, p. 51.

⁶¹Otto John, who was to become a member of the resistance, specifically refers to the Germans as being "seduced by Hitler." Otto John, Twice Through The Lines, trans., Richard Barry (London, 1969), p. 20.

income or a better house, or to the promise of a car or vacation in Madeira, did not trouble themselves greatly with the fact that they had lost their civil liberties. Industrialists, who preferred to see their factories operating at full capacity, only gradually became aware that government regulations of commerce were leading to total state control.⁶² The young, in their enthusiasm for the Volkish community and the sense of national rebirth, hardly realized that their education was becoming less substantive, or that the organizations to which they belonged--the Hitlerjugend and the Bund deutscher Madel--were totally regimenting their lives. The nationalists, blinded by their desire to recapture the golden age they had known in the Kaiserreich, could not foresee that within a few years, their once-proud land would be truncated and divided, no longer even a sovereign state. And the army, dazzled by visions of rearmament and satisfied with its tacit involvement in crushing the SA, could not understand that in ridding itself of one rival, it had acquired in the SS another, more dangerous one, or that for Hitler, armies did not exist for the maintenance of peace, but for the victorious fighting of wars.⁶³

It is important to bear these facts in mind as the discussion now turns to the transformation of Hitler's government from a coalition to a dictatorship: the extension of his power, the darker side of his ideology, and the means he used not only to sustain public support but to coerce it as he proceeded, almost imperceptibly, to eliminate or severely

⁶²Fritz Thyssen makes this point; I Paid Hitler, trans., Caesar Saerchinger (New York, 1941), p. 147.

⁶³This paraphrase has been made from a statement in Hitler's Secret Book, trans., Salvator Attanasio (New York, 1961), p. 83.

restrict those elements within the state which might have been able to oppose the final form of his regime.

The first step has been mentioned already. This was the emergency decree under Article 48 of the Constitution which Hitler obtained from President Hindenburg as a result of the Communist burning of the Reichstag.⁶⁴ Such decrees were not uncommon, chancellors having had recourse to them in the early days of Weimar when times were unsettled, and more frequently, since 1930 when the impossibility of forming any sort of parliamentary coalition made government by decree a necessity.⁶⁵ The significant difference between this decree and its predecessors, however, was that it suspended civil liberties irrevocably, the arrested person having no recourse to counsel or courts. But Hitler assured the President and the people that the decree was temporary and would only be used to ward off the "Red Peril." In fact it was never revoked through the whole period of the Third Reich, and more than a few socialists were swept into the dragnet intended for communists.

The second step took place on March 23, 1933. This was the so-called "Enabling Act," or "Law for Terminating the Suffering of the

⁶⁴The only suspect was a half-witted Dutch Communist, Marinus van der Lubbe. Hans Gisevius notes that even in police headquarters, they "never succeeded in getting hold of any tangible evidence or even obtaining any ideas of where such evidence might be lurking" to link the Nazis with the fire. Hans Gisevius, To The Bitter End., trans., Richard and Clara Winston (Boston, 1947), p. 54. Research suggests that the first public statement that anyone had been involved besides van der Lubbe did not appear until 1940 and Hermann Rauschning's account of Goering's boasts of "how 'his boys' had entered the Reichstag building by a subterranean passage. . .and how he regretted that the 'whole shack' had not burned down." Rauschning, p. 77.

⁶⁵All Chancellors since Heinrich Bruning had used Article 48 of the Constitution. Pinson, p. 469.

People and Nation," which the Reichstag passed by a two-thirds majority and which gave Hitler unrestricted powers to by-pass the Reichstag and to promulgate decrees deviating from the Constitution, although no laws were to "affect the position of the Reichstag" and the prerogatives of the President were to "continue unchanged."⁶⁶ Again, Hitler gave assurances that the powers conferred on him would be used only "insofar as they are essential for carrying out vitally necessary measures,"⁶⁷ and a clause in the act limited these powers to four years. But the act was renewed at appropriate intervals, dying only with the Third Reich, and the essential measures included "Gleichschaltung," an almost untranslatable word which means "leveling" or "synchronization" or "coordination."

It is beyond the scope of this study to recount the details by which all individuals and all agencies in the state were "coordinated" into a new order which was meant to reflect Hitler's ideology.⁶⁸

⁶⁶The full provisions of the act are in Nazi Years, pp. 52-53.

⁶⁷Baynes, i, p. 246.

⁶⁸While the motive of order has been present in much of the discussion to this point (and indeed, will recur again), an examination of "Gleichschaltung" provides an opportunity to begin to treat it methodologically. Burke writes that "order is not just 'regularity.' It also involves a distribution of authority. . . /and/ takes roughly a pyramidal or hierarchical form (or, at least, it is like a ladder with 'up' and 'down')." Kenneth Burke, Permanence And Change (Indianapolis, 1965), p. 276. Later, the discussion on "Fuhrerprinzip" will have more to say about the "distribution of authority." For the moment, however, it is enough to note that "Gleichschaltung" was designed to accomplish the structural integration of all individuals and agencies within the state --to make them aware of their common identity, and more importantly perhaps, to subordinate them to the demands of Hitler's "New Order." In theory, this would seem somewhat similar to Burke's description of ultimate order as an "evaluative series [that goes] by a fixed progression . . . the members of the entire series being arranged developmentally with

Suffice to say that some organizations like the paramilitary Stalhelm and the Industrial League cooperated willingly;⁶⁹ others like the Socialist and Christian Trade Unions offered to cooperate and were spurned by the government, which then proceeded to destroy the structure of these organizations and reconstitute them as the "German Workers' Front;"⁷⁰ and still others like the churches and the army were never fully adjusted to the proper point of view, though not through lack of effort. Also, party organizations like the Gestapo gradually enveloped existing law enforcement agencies, and new structures like Goebbels' Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda were created. In sum, a whole network of Nazi agencies was established which embraced all political professional, and workers groups, and in addition, individuals and families were organized into other groups which extended Nazi influence into the private areas of society; thus, the "German Mothers" and the "National League of the German Family."

This was the outline of the "New Order" by the end of Hitler's first six months as Chancellor. If it bears a totalitarian imprint, that was certainly the intent, although many Germans did not necessarily see it as such. To explain, the "Enabling Act" and the first decrees based on it were only the scaffolding to control the state

relation to one another. . . [with] a 'guiding ideal' or 'unitary principle' behind the diversity." Rhetoric, p. 187. In practice, however, it meant that the Nazis closely supervised everything, penetrating the private as well as the public sector, making certain that nothing interfered with Hitler's intention to direct German life in its entirety.

⁶⁹Eliot Wheaton, Prelude to Calamity: The Nazi Revolution 1933-35 (Garden City, 1968), pp. 298; 304.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 281; 291.

and society, the edifice itself requiring several more years to be completed.⁷¹ Beyond this, the "coordination" of agencies, particularly those which had divided the nation during Weimar, was viewed by many as a step toward necessary order.⁷² Also, some of the early protests that the state was becoming a dictatorship were answered by counter-protests that the state was becoming German.⁷³ And the influx of "Marzgefallene," or "March violets" as the Nazis sarcastically dubbed latecomers to the party, proved to be a militating factor since these individuals were more adept than the old Nazis at getting government jobs.⁷⁴ Finally, even if some of the conservative members of the coalition had lost their influence or left the government--Papen to negotiate the Concordat with the Vatican⁷⁵ and Hugenburg to retire to

⁷¹Fest writes that the "whole of national existence could not be reshaped overnight. Part of Hitler's keen tactical sense was a sure feeling for tempo." Joachim C. Fest, Hitler, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1974), p. 18.

⁷²For the importance of discontent with the divisive institutions of Weimar, see the autobiographical excerpts in Abel, pp. 127-136.

⁷³Thus the exchange between Romain Rolland and the "Kolnische Zeitung." For details, see Appendix VIII in Henri Lichtenberger, The Third Reich, trans., Koppel S. Pinson (New York, 1937), pp. 364-368.

⁷⁴Rauschnig recounts examples of the unhappiness of some of the "alte Kampfer," or "old fighters" over their inability to wrest government jobs away from the "March violets." Rauschnig, pp. 98-99.

⁷⁵While Papen provides plausible reasons for negotiating the Concordat (Memoirs, pp. 278-282), he begs the question of the treaty as another factor in blurring the harsh features of the regime. As the first international agreement of Hitler's Chancellorship, it provided legitimacy to the Nazi government. Also, while the Catholic Church secured some rights within the state, Hitler reaped all the advantages in prestige and public opinion.

private life⁷⁶--President Hindenburg still had the final say and he controlled the army.

To this point, the emphasis has been on those Germans who were Volks-genossen--members of the People. But thus defined, some individuals were excluded since Hitler's "New Order" did not automatically comprise all Germans.⁷⁷ As members of the wrong race, the Jews were excluded. So were the communists who preached the Revolution of the Proletariat. The same can be said for the officials of the trade unions who were to blame for class warfare, and their political arm, the leaders of the Social Democratic Party. The place in the hierarchy of the two major churches--Lutheran and Catholic--is less clear. Almost certainly, to judge from

⁷⁶Hugenburg's return to private life was prompted by his belligerent attitude at a World Economic Conference in London where his demands for a colonial empire and German economic expansion in the Ukraine provided Hitler with an easy opportunity to appear reasonable and a peacemaker by dismissing him. Fest, Hitler, p. 414.

⁷⁷Incipiently, at least, this divisive use of identification--the union of Germans on the basis of enemies shared by all--reveals the "Kill," which, together with "Mystery" and "Order" comprise the trinity of motives in a dramatic study of movements. Griffin, p. 458. What is involved in the "Kill" is authoritative control of the masses through expiation of guilt. The guilt, of course, was the German defeat in World War I and the failure of the Weimar Republic to overcome that defeat, either at home or abroad. The expiation, as Burke puts it, was the "projection device of the scapegoat, whereby the 'bad' features can be allocated to the 'devil' and one can 'respect himself.'" Kenneth Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," in The Philosophy of Literary Form (New York, 1957), p. 168. In this chapter, the concern is merely to trace the presence of these motives and to begin to describe how the order they created turned "faulty. . .corrosive. . .malign"--the characteristic invitation to a new movement. Subsequent discussion will detail the specific corruptions, usually in a dialectic comparison between the existing system and the resister's plans for a new Germany.

Hitler's table talk,⁷⁸ or Goebbels' Diaries,⁷⁹ or Bormann's directives,⁸⁰ the churches were to be excluded in a kind of ecumenical excommunication on grounds of ideology or sedition after the final victory, although until that millennium was reached, Hitler was willing to tolerate them as necessary evils, confining his displeasure to the arrest and murder of individual clerics.

What happened to these asocial elements of the Third Reich can be explained best by looking at the Jews. In singling them out, there is no intention to suggest that they represented any real threat to the state. Rather, the fact of their elimination from the Volksgemeinschaft discloses an important negative part of Hitler's ideology, and the manner of their elimination discloses the method by which Hitler, the seducer, separated his enemies from the rest of the members of his social order without unduly disturbing them. First, his warning to the Aryans:

All great cultures of the past perished only because the originally creative race died out from blood poisoning. The ultimate cause of such a decline was their forgetting that all culture depends on man and not conversely; hence, that to preserve a certain culture the man who creates it must be preserved. This preservation is bound up with the rigid law of necessity and the right to victory of the best and strongest in this world. Those who want to live, let them fight, and those who do not want to fight in this world of eternal struggle do not deserve to live.⁸¹

Next, the enemy to be struggled against:

⁷⁸Hitler's Table Talk, intro., H. R. Trevor-Roper, trans., Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (London, 1953), pp. 15; 90; 189; 304; and 410.

⁷⁹Joseph Goebbels, The Goebbels Diaries, ed., and trans., Louis P. Lochner (New York, 1948), pp. 115; 118; 173-174; and 328-329.

⁸⁰For Martin Bormann's directives, see Trial of the Major War Criminals, 42 Vols., (Nuremberg, 1947), xxxv, pp. 7-17. Hereafter abbreviated as TMWC.

⁸¹Mein Kampf, p. 289.

The mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew. The Jew possesses no culture-creating force of any sort since the idealism, without which there is no true higher development of man, is not present in him and never was present. . . . The Jew is and remains the typical parasite who, like the malign bacillus, spreads more and more as long as he finds some favorable feeding ground. And the consequences of his existence, too, resembles that of a parasite: when he appears, the host nation will. . . die.⁸²

In view of their importance as the archenemy of the Aryan--the adversary against whom Germans of good blood had to continually struggle in this world of Social Darwinism--it is surprising to learn that out of the fifty million inhabitants of Germany when Hitler came to power, only five-hundred thousand were Jews, and that half of these had emigrated by the time war broke out in 1939.⁸³ In part, this discrepancy between the size of the forces of good and evil can be attributed to Hitler's capacity for simplification⁸⁴--his reduction of all opponents to the single hyphenated pejorative of Jew; thus, Jewish-liberals, Jewish-Marxists, Jewish-Social Democrats, Jewish-revolutionists, Jewish-intellectuals, and so on. But in part, the discrepancy can be traced to the fact that Hitler, for all his inveighing against the Jews, invariably kept his attacks impersonal so that actual Jews became more of an abstraction or principle to the average German than a devil made flesh and blood.⁸⁵ Add to this the

⁸²Mein Kampf, pp. 300-327.

⁸³These figures are given in Karl Bracher, The German Dictatorship, trans., Jean Steinberg (New York, 1972), p. 235.

⁸⁴H. R. Trevor-Roper calls Hitler one of the "terrible simplifiers" of history. Table Talk, p. xxxv.

⁸⁵This is, of course, contrary to Burke's argument that Hitler "materialized the Jew into a 'visible, point-to-able form.'" Burke, "Hitler's Battle" in Literary Form, p. 167. This counter argument rests on two points: first, the small number of Jews in proportion to the total population; and second, Hitler's own statement to Hermann Rauschnig that the Jew was a "principle." Rauschnig, p. 233.

fact that there were so few Jews living in Germany and the inference seems inescapable that Hitler's portrayal of the struggle between the Aryan culture-creators and the Semitic culture-destroyers was never meant to be a battle which each German waged personally; that in strictly quantitative terms, there were insufficient Jews to go around, and that the real intention was to create a state of mind in the Herrenvolk whereby they not only would not struggle but would be able to refrain from paying attention to whatever struggle there was.⁸⁶

Such a hypothesis certainly accords more closely with Hitler's stated policy of indirection,⁸⁷ and it also accords more closely with his gradual method of eliminating Jews from his "New Order." For despite his eventual decision on genocide, Hitler acted very discretely in weeding out Jews from the different sectors of the German economy. Thus, while Jewish teachers, civil servants, and lawyers were driven from their jobs within the first few weeks of the Nazis coming to power,⁸⁸ doctors, merchants, and technicians were untouched until the passage of the infamous Nuremberg Laws of 1935,⁸⁹ and some Jewish businessmen were on occasion actually prevented from liquidating their businesses because of the economic dislocation which

⁸⁶Mayer quotes an unnamed university professor on this same point: "all that was required of most of us [was] that we do nothing." Mayer, pp. 171-172.

⁸⁷Thus, Hitler to his circle of listeners after the evening meal at the "Wolfsschanze" in 1941: "When I was younger, I thought it was necessary to set about matters with dynamite. I've since realized that there's room for a little subtlety." Table Talk, p. 143.

⁸⁸Nora Levin, The Holocaust (New York, 1968), p. 60.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 71.

might result.⁹⁰

In describing the treatment of the Jews through the pre-war years of the Third Reich, the point has not been to excuse the mass of German people for their responsibility in the events leading up to the "final solution to the Jewish question."⁹¹ Instead, it has been to try to understand that their's was more a sin of omission than commission--of weakness predicated on the path of least resistance rather than active participation in the execution of a pre-meditated plan of murder. Moreover, as noted above, the methods by which Hitler first began to eliminate the Jews--the generalizing of them to an abstract level and the gradual elimination of them beyond the pale--tended to create a separation between thought and referent which made the process all the easier for the Burgertum.

Extending the discussion still further, it can be argued that Hitler followed variations on this theme in psychologically conditioning the Herrenvolk to accept the elimination of other, more numerous and potentially dangerous enemies of his regime like the communists and the trade unionists. For one thing, he had them excluded

⁹⁰Levin, p. 73.

⁹¹This phrase, whose documentary origin can be traced to an order from Hermann Goering to Reinhard Heydrich, dated July 31, 1941, is another example of the deliberate use of abstraction by the Nazis. In this case, the sensibilities they wanted to avoid offending were not only the mass of Germans but their own. To those who subscribe to the Burkean notion that symbol systems structure reality (Language As Symbolic Action (Berkeley, 1968), p. 5.), there is support in Yehudi Menuhin's argument that the German language is particularly susceptible to such ambiguity. "The German language is an abstraction. . . . In English. . .emotion and thought go together. In German, they're divorced. Everything is abstract. That was how they made abstractions of the Jews. They didn't kill them as individuals, the way we shot our Indians, but as abstractions." Quoted in Otto Friedrich, Before The Deluge (New York, 1972), p. 344.

physically. Hans Gisevius, an early recruit to the resistance movement, recounts the difficulty which he as a police official had in trying to enter one of the SA "bunkers" on the Prinz Albrechtstrasse in Berlin where strong-arm Nazis first took their opponents for beatings and murders after Hitler became Chancellor.⁹² And of course, when Himmler got the first concentration camps established at Dachau and Oranienburg in April 1933, the physical separation became even more pronounced as did the opportunity for imprisoning greater numbers. Thus, the four-thousand communists who were arrested in the first days of the regime⁹³ only amounted to one-seventh of the total being held in protective custody six months later,⁹⁴ and this figure probably does not include other captives imprisoned in "wild" or temporary camps which the SA located in twenty remote sections of the country,⁹⁵ nor does it include the thousands of communists and socialists who fled Germany in anticipation of what Hitler had in store for them.⁹⁶ Finally, there remains to be added the conditioning which prisoners underwent before they were allowed to return to the fellowship of the Volksgemeinschaft. Alexander Scholtz, a Social Democrat, describes the end of the journey:

The bitterest road after such an experience was the homecoming, from prison through the streets to one's home, past coffee houses,

⁹²Gisevius, pp. 43-44.

⁹³Wheaton, p. 427.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 429

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶This early and effective destruction of the socialist and communist organizations led Theodore Haubach, a Christian Socialist, to decide that resistance activity could not exist except on a personal basis. Hermann Graml, et. al., The German Resistance To Hitler (Berkeley, 1970), p. 59.

cabarets, and other places of amusement from which the noises of merriment were penetrating. What did they know, they who lived happy-go-lucky lives, of the sacrifices exacted by the tyranny? They did not see and they did not want to see. Those who had suffered could nowhere rise and give testimony of those days. Their mouth had to be kept closed, even with the closest relatives.⁹⁷

Besides making it easy for the Volksgenossen to ignore the unpleasant features of the regime through gradualism and secrecy, Hitler and the party leadership distracted their attention in other ways. The most important was by making the Reich dramatic and giving every citizen a role to play, even if it only amounted to being an extra with thousands of others in one of the many "Front" organizations which the government created under its policy of "Gleichschaltung." This was largely the responsibility of Dr. Goebbels' Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, one of Hitler's two main instruments of control, which turned Germany into a stage with massed flags, ceremonial bunting, searchlights, smoking torches, uniforms, and pylons.

The spectacles were the massive party rallies held annually in Nuremberg, or the Day of National Labor which, in terms of numbers alone, was the largest event on the calendar.⁹⁸ Medium sized productions included the Summer Solstice Festival with its night-time bonfires, massed bands, and incantations,⁹⁹ or the Harvest Day where Hitler himself presided and

⁹⁷Scholtz is quoted in The Struggle For Democracy In Germany, ed., Gabriel A. Almond (Chapel Hill, 1949), p. 48.

⁹⁸Albert Speer tells of Hitler's unhappiness with the sizable paunches and disorderly ranks of middle and minor party officials during an early "Workers' Front" Rally. Fortunately, Speer had the idea of a night rally with searchlights blazing not on the marchers but into the sky, thereby merging everyone into a general glow and sparing Hitler's sensibilities. Albert Speer, Inside The Third Reich, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1970), pp. 96-97.

⁹⁹An account of the activities at the Summer Solstice Festival

awarded a harvest crown before a harvest altar laden with fruit of the harvest.¹⁰⁰ Minor pieces were ubiquitous. The "German Greeting" was one.¹⁰¹ The continual marches of para-military units, "fahnen halt hoch" was another, as William Shirer discovered when he had to keep ducking into buildings to avoid saluting passing standards.¹⁰² A third was the singing which seemed to accompany every procession, the song being "a montage of slogans [which] gradually transforms reality in favor of the expressed idea provided it is sung often enough and gradually assimilated by the psyche."¹⁰³ A fourth was the never-ending rallies, meetings, and demonstrations where the faithful were addressed either by Hitler himself or by one of a host of lesser speakers, many of whom were trained in the Nazi Schools of Oratory.¹⁰⁴ A fifth was Goebbels' success not only in building a wall of censorship around the nation but also in disseminating only that information which the government wanted

is given by Gudrun Streiter, "The Diary of an SA Man's Bride," in Nazi Culture, pp. 122-126.

¹⁰⁰For a description of the Harvest Festival, see Andre Francois Poncet, The Fateful Years, trans., Jacques LeClercq (New York, 1949), pp. 87; 208.

¹⁰¹Frau Ballestrom-Solf, a member of the opposition, relates how she always carried a shopping bag in each hand whenever she went out in order to avoid the "German Greeting." In Erich H. Boehm, We Survived (New Haven, 1949), p. 132.

¹⁰²William Shirer, Berlin Diary (New York, 1941), p. 15.

¹⁰³Hans Gamm quotes a party directive in Der braune Kult (Hamburg, n. d.), p. 73.

¹⁰⁴On the party speaker system, see Derrick Sington and Arthur Weidenfeld, The Goebbels Experiment (London, 1942), pp. 41-48.

the citizens to know.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the average German was provided with a continual barrage of announcements, news bulletins, special communiques, and direct hook-ups to stadiums like the Sportspalast which made it possible for him to take part at one-removed in those events where he was unable to participate directly.

The result of all this activity was inevitably a state of mind bordering on the hyperactive and a body moved by the viscera, which is another way of describing the Nazis' essential view of mass man.¹⁰⁶ In such an atmosphere, time to think, as one of Mayer's interviewees observes, was the first casualty.¹⁰⁷ Closely behind, destroyed amid the muffled thud of blows and screams of pain, were the early centers of potential resistance, which were swept away, almost unseen, in the Zeitgeist of collective drama and restless emotionalism which marked the early years of the Third Reich.

Consideration of Nazi Germany as theater brings us to the protagonist of this drama, Adolf Hitler himself, the figure around whom

¹⁰⁵In executing Hitler's principle of propaganda: "the basically subjective and one-sided attitude it must take. . . ." (Mein Kampf, p. 182), Goebbels' banned the undesirable, as in the case of book burnings, the earliest of which occurred in May 1933 when twenty-five thousand publications were consigned to the flames.

¹⁰⁶For Hitler's view, see Rauschnig, pp. 210-211; for Goebbels' view, see Diaries, p. 22.

¹⁰⁷Mayer quotes Heinrich Wedekind, a baker in Kronenberg; p. 167. Another interviewee, an unnamed university professor, makes the same argument: "I was plunged into all the new activity, as the university was drawn into the new situation; meetings, conferences, interviews, ceremonies, and, above all, papers to be filled out, reports, biographies, lists, questionnaires. And on top of that were the demands of the community, the things in which one had to, was 'expected to' participate, that had not been there before. It was all rigamarole, of course, but it consumed all one's energies, coming on top of the work one really wanted to do. You can see how easy it was, then, not to think about fundamental things. One had no time." Ibid.

the supporting actors--the practitioners, technicians, and functionaries of the totalitarian state--played their parts; and against whom, in later scenes, the antagonists--the leaders of the resistance movement--acted in dialectical opposition. In examining the life of Adolf Hitler, there is no need to involve ourselves at great length with the historical debate over his character. By the third decade since his suicide, the early verdicts that his ideas lacked either "profundity of mind or spirit,"¹⁰⁸ or that he was "uncreative and unoriginal"¹⁰⁹ have given way to more discerning assessments that he was a "systematic thinker"¹¹⁰ and had an "extraordinary capacity. . . [for] mingling reality and dreams."¹¹¹ Taken together, these last two evaluations suggest the development of a man who, unable to discover his own identity or place in society, resolved his problem by inventing his own world and his place in it--a kind of mythopoeic dream¹¹²--that was at once both an expression of personal

¹⁰⁸Pinson, p. 481.

¹⁰⁹Sir Lewis Namier, Personalities and Powers (New York, n. d.), p. 144.

¹¹⁰H. R. Trevor-Roper, Table Talk, pp. viii-ix.

¹¹¹Ernst Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism, trans., Lelia Vennewitz (New York, 1966), p. 288.

¹¹²The idea of Hitler's ideology and its expression in his "New Order" as being products of a personally systematized myth is relatively new in historical thinking. A few authorities comment on it, as in the case of Dean Nolte, cited above, and even more complete is the psychological analysis of Walter C. Langer, The Mind of Adolf Hitler (New York, 1972). Left undone, however, is any effort to relate Hitler's mythic ideology to a theoretical formulation of myths in general. Here, definition provided by Susanne Langer seems particularly appropriate. "Myth. . . is a recognition of natural conflicts, of human desires frustrated by. . . hostile oppression. . . . It presents, however metaphorically, a world picture, an insight into life generally. . . . The mythic hero is not the subject of an egocentric daydream, but a subject greater than any individual. He is always felt to be super-

need and an attack upon the existing system; and that by sheer force of willpower, he imposed this dream, or Weltanschauung, as he called it, upon others, at first in small numbers, and later in hundreds and thousands, until at last the myth became reality and the Weltanschauung stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Vogla River, and from the Arctic Circle to North Africa.

Certainly, neither Hitler's followers nor his opponents, in the last analysis, made the mistake of underrating his intellectual capacity or the force of his mythic ideology, although they differed, of course, as to the merits of the man and the Weltanschauung. Thus, Hans Frank could assert in retrospect, "Everything came exclusively from Hitler himself."¹¹³ Joseph Goebbels, whose own mental abilities have been amply documented, declared himself content to serve a genius.¹¹⁴ And Hermann Goering, probably the most pragmatic and least ideological of Hitler's hierarchs, wrote: "for us the Fuhrer is infallible in all political and other matters which touch the national and social interests of the people."¹¹⁵

If the opinions of these men, who admittedly served Hitler, are dismissed, then perhaps statements by some of those who tried to assassinate him in order to destroy his Weltanschauung provide more

human, even if not quite divine. . . . The material of myth is, indeed, just the familiar symbolism of dream-image and fantasy. . . . /It is used/ for understanding actual experience." Susanne Langer, Philosophy In A New Key (New York, 1951), pp. 151-152.

¹¹³Frank is quoted in Fest, Face of the Third Reich, p. 433.

¹¹⁴Goebbels, Diaries, p. 166.

¹¹⁵Goering is quoted in Charles Bewley, Hermann Goering and the Third Reich (London, 1962), p. 156.

credible evidence. Thus, Gisevius' paraphrase of Ludwig Beck's determined argument for tyrannicide. "An unsuccessful Putsch with a dead Hitler would be better than a partially successful uprising in which that master of the black arts would be alive."¹¹⁶ Elizabeth Guttenberg assessed the motives of her cousin, Claus von Stauffenberg: "he became convinced that Hitler. . .was indeed controlled by a diabolic power. He was sure at last in his own mind that in the assassination of Hitler he would be removing a creature actually possessed, body and soul, by the devil."¹¹⁷ And finally, there is the terse answer of Peter Yorck, co-founder of the Kreisau Circle, before the "People's Court." When Judge Freisler accused him of disagreeing with Hitler's ideology--his concept of justice, his extermination of the Jews--Yorck replied: "The essential point is the connection between all these questions; the claim by the state to total power over the citizen with the elimination of his religious and moral obligations before God."¹¹⁸

At the point where we cut in, the man and the myth are nearly one. Although Hitler is still Chancellor, he is Fuehrer in all but title¹¹⁹--the leader of the people, the focal point of expectations and desires, the ideology made flesh. In terms of the earlier dis-

¹¹⁶Gisevius, p. 532.

¹¹⁷Elizabeth von Guttenberg, Holding the Stirrup (New York, 1952), p. 194.

¹¹⁸Yorck is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, trans., Erich Zimmerman and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, trans., Allan and Lieselotte Yahares (Bonn, 1964), p. 199.

¹¹⁹With the death of President Hindenburg on August 2, 1934, he would formally claim the title.

cussion on equality of race and soil, it may appear paradoxical to call Hitler "Leader." Yet, he himself saw no paradox nor did he intend for the German people to see one. In Mein Kampf, he carefully united the concepts of racial equality and hierarchical inequality:

The folkish philosophy is basically distinguished. . .by the fact that it not only recognizes the value of race, but with it the importance of personality, which it therefore makes one of the pillars of its entire edifice. . . . Accordingly, the folkish state must free all leadership and especially the highest--that is, the political leadership--entirely from parliamentary principles of majority rule--in other words, mass rule--and instead absolutely guarantee the right of personality.¹²⁰

This was leadership based not on class or wealth or majority votes, but on disposition--the right of "able men. . .[to] struggle through for themselves" to the pinnacle of social order.¹²¹ Hitler referred to the government of the Third Reich as a hierarchy of leadership, from the local leaders up to himself as Fuehrer of all the people. He called it "Fuehrerprinzip" and described it as the "authority of every leader downward and responsibility upward" with the ultimate responsibility being "borne by only one man [who] alone possesses the authority and right to command."¹²²

¹²⁰Mein Kampf, pp. 448-449.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 449. Hitler's clearest statement on the will to struggle to the top of the hierarchy was made as part of his concluding speech to the court at his trial in 1924. "The man who is born to be a dictator is not compelled; he wills it, he is not driven forward, but drives himself. The man who feels called upon to govern a people has no right to say: If you want me or summon me I will cooperate. No it is his duty to step forward." Quoted in Bullock, p. 89.

¹²²Mein Kampf, p. 450. From an ideal standpoint, Fuehrerprinzip is similar to Burke's notion of mystic order as a "chain or ladder or pyramid of mounting worth, each kind striving towards the perfection of its kind, and so towards the kind next above it, while the strivings of the entire series head in God as the beloved cynosure

Whatever the purpose of this unusual definition, it resulted in the inversion of the democratic principle. For the mass of Germans, a gap would begin to widen between themselves and their government. Although they were told it was a "People's Community" and were allowed an occasional plebiscite, the fact is that the government began to accustom them to decisions made in secret and presented as accomplished facts, the justification being that the situation was so complex that they could not understand it, or so dangerous that, even if they understood it, they should not know for reasons of national security.¹²³ And because they identified with Hitler and his "New Order," or because they were so distracted, or because they lacked what Bismarck said they lacked--"civil courage"¹²⁴--the courage which makes men want to govern themselves, they accepted the gap, or reassured themselves with concepts like "Artgleichheit," which the government invented to explain the gap between Fuehrer and Volk.¹²⁵

For those higher up in the order, Hitler deliberately kept lines of authority ill-defined and channels of communication blocked except

and sinecure, the end of all desire." Rhetoric, p. 353. Of course, once again, the reality was a good deal different, with most Germans having no worth in terms of power, while higher up, there was a complex of rival leaders and patronage which Hitler, from the top, was able to control by keeping everyone in competition.

¹²³This is how one of Mayer's more perceptive "little people" retrospectively described the relationship; Mayer, p. 166.

¹²⁴For Bismarck's views on "civil courage," see Kohn, pp. 158-159.

¹²⁵"Artgleichheit [literally, "identity of species"] stipulated that while people and Fuehrer were equal in kind, the latter was different in degree by virtue of his ability to embody the will of the people, to make them aware of their peoplehood and lead them to its fulfillment. For details, see Carl Schmitt, "Public Law in a New Context," in Nazi Culture, pp. 323-326.

where they concerned him.¹²⁶ And though he often spoke of plans for developing a new "Fuehrer Class" to lead the nation,¹²⁷ Hitler's intention was to hold the reins of power firmly in his own hands. Thus, Papen discovered early on that the Nazi cabinet, unlike his own which had always proceeded from group discussion and majority votes, operated on the basis of private conversations between individual ministers and Hitler.¹²⁸ The Nazi leadership, too, would find that elite status in the Third Reich, while it provided an opportunity for carving out personal empires, was still subject to competition from other empires.¹²⁹ Thus, Speer notes that when he was made Minister of Armaments during the war, "there was no precise statement of my assignments or jurisdiction,"¹³⁰ and Guderian writes that before he accepted the post of Inspector-General of the

¹²⁶Griffin writes that when a good order turns faulty, "the symptom of its turning is the growth of verbal corruption--vile error in the use of language, the inappropriate use of symbols." Griffin, p. 459. While Hitler's Reich is best remembered for the application of its corruptions in matters such as genocide and conquest, a symptom or cause of these corruptions can certainly be traced to its blocked lines of communication and grotesque methods of decision making. Some of these are noted above; others will be discussed in the next chapter where the chronology is more appropriate.

¹²⁷A representative declaration appears in Rauschnig. "The selection of the new Fuehrer class is my struggle for power. Whoever proclaims his allegiance to me is, by this very proclamation and by the manner in which it is made, one of the chosen. This is the great revolutionary significance of our long, dogged struggle for power, that in it will be born a new Herren-class, chosen to guide the fortunes not only of the German people, but of the world." Quoted in Rauschnig, pp. 40-41.

¹²⁸Papen, p. 290. Confirmation can be found in Hjalmar Schacht, My First Seventy-Six Years, trans., Diane Pyke (London, 1955), p. 304.

¹²⁹Hitler justified the competition to SS leader Walter Schellenberg thusly: "People must be allowed friction with one another; friction produces warmth, and warmth is energy." Quoted in Fest, Hitler, p. 420.

¹³⁰Speer, pp. 277-278.

Armored Forces in 1943, he demanded certain conditions because he did not want to waste his "strength in such fruitless struggles for authority as those in which I had previously been involved when holding similar appointments"¹³¹--typical situations in an order where Hitler's policy of "divide and conquer" guaranteed him the position from which he could supervise, balance, and dominate everything.

This hierarchic tangle was largely concealed by the aura of divinity surrounding Hitler which was already a feature of the Germany of 1934. In part, it was the result of Goebbels' propaganda machine which devoted much of its efforts to the task of picturing Hitler as superhuman.¹³² Instructions were issued to the press on the proper approach to be used in reporting Hitler's activities. For example, he was always to be described as a man of incredible energy and endurance whose day consisted of sixteen to eighteen hours of uninterrupted work, when in reality, Hitler hated the discipline of the Chancellor's office; "a single idea of genius is worth more than a whole lifetime of conscientious office work," was the way he put it.¹³³ Other fabrications included his being portrayed as always in control of his emotions, as a former soldier who abhorred the shedding of blood, as a man of the people unawed by the powers of

¹³¹Guderian, p. 225. Interestingly enough, even though Hitler was desperate for Guderian's help, he still refused to grant all the conditions.

¹³²Speaking to aides one night in December 1941, Goebbels told them that one of his greatest contributions to National Socialism was his creation of the Fuehrer Myth. Rudolf Semmler, Goebbels--the Man Next to Hitler, trans., G. S. Wagner (London, 1947), p. 57.

¹³³Hitler is quoted in Fest, Face of the Third Reich, p. 73.

his office, and as being the world's greatest architect and one of the world's greatest music and art critics.¹³⁴

From this beginning, it required no great leap to add Messianic elements to the picture, and Goebbels did so. One was the religious terminology he used in talking about Hitler.¹³⁵ Another was the format of rally he designed with its religious motifs and grand entrances for Hitler, more befitting a god than a man.¹³⁶ A third was the kind of pictures he approved for publicity, one depicting Hitler in armor as a Knight of the Grail, and another showing Hitler addressing an audience with the caption reading: "In the beginning was the word."¹³⁷ Last, and perhaps most important, was Goebbels' attempts to make Hitler appear infallible, as in General Instruction No. 674, which went to the press some hours before it was clear whether Hitler would decide on war or peace with Poland. "In the next issue there will be a lead article, featured as prominently as possible, in which the decision of the Fuhrer, no matter what it will be, will be discussed as the only correct one for Germany."¹³⁸

¹³⁴These instructions are cited in Henry Phillips, Germany Today and Tomorrow (New York, n. d.), pp. 40-41.

¹³⁵Typical of Goebbels' hymnic praise is this statement: "If ever the German nation felt itself united in one thought and one will then it is in this: to serve Him [Hitler, not God] and to follow His commandment." Quoted in Helmut Heiber, Goebbels, trans., John K. Dickinson (New York, 1972), p. 237.

¹³⁶See Shirer's description; Diary, pp. 18-19.

¹³⁷Reproductions of both pictures appear in Hanna Vogt, The Burden of Guilt, trans., Herbert Strauss (New York, 1964), pp. 161; 169.

¹³⁸General Instruction No. 674 is quoted in Nazi Years, p. 88.

In part, however, the Messianic persona of the Fuehrer was Hitler's own invention. His ability as a propagandist is fully documented in several sections of Mein Kampf,¹³⁹ and even the phraseology of the book, commencing with the opening passage--"In this little town on the river Inn, Bavarian by blood and Austrian by nationality, gilded by the light of German martyrdom, there lived at the end of the late eighties of the last century, my parents"¹⁴⁰--is more suggestive of the poetic form by which the birth of the mythic hero is prefigured than it is the style of a serious autobiography or political broadside.¹⁴¹ Also, there was Hitler's rhetorical ability, which even his critics concede as his strongest accomplishment,¹⁴² and which helped to establish the image. Tirelessly, often traveling by plane, he would descend like a Savior to the crowds of people, exhausting himself on their behalf with his oratorical exertions. Providence, honor, greatness, sacrifice--these were some of the main themes of his speeches. And they cost him physically. As he said, after his major addresses, he was "soaking wet and had lost four to six pounds in weight."¹⁴³ Finally, there was his private life which required little more than straight reporting. A non-drinker, vegetarian, non-smoker, simple dresser, not particularly interested in wealth (he declined his official salary), a man

¹³⁹Mein Kampf, see esp., Vol. One, Chapter IV, and Vol. Two, Chapter IV.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴¹This is the judgment of Dr. Langer; p. 55.

¹⁴²Bullock calls Hitler "the greatest demagogue in history." Bullock, p. 44.

¹⁴³Table Talk, p. 572.

without a family, without a wife, an anonymous corporal of the Great War --in short, a half-ascetic, half-soldier who denied himself in the service of Germany, Hitler's personal selflessness acted as a public goad on the Burgertum and their Gemutlichkeit.

One result of this campaign to deify Hitler was the outpouring of religious fervor in Germany which can only be described as pietistic.¹⁴⁴ Limitations of space make it impossible to detail the many expressions of this phenomena, but perhaps a series of instances can serve to demonstrate its magnitude. William Shirer's description of the faces of a mob of women outside Hitler's hotel in Nuremberg in 1934:

They reminded me of the crazed expression I saw once in the back country of Louisiana on the faces of some Holy Rollers who were about to hit the trail. They looked up at him as if he were a Messiah, their faces transformed into something positively inhuman.¹⁴⁵

Hans Gamm's observation that churchgoers, who grieved at Hitler's refusal to attend services, prayed for the forgiveness of his sins and for God to reach his erring soul.¹⁴⁶ Horst Kruger's statement that

¹⁴⁴"Piety," Richard Weaver writes, "is a discipline of the will through respect. It admits the right to exist of things larger than the ego. . . [and includes] nature, our neighbors. . . and the past." Richard Weaver, Ideas Have Consequences (Chicago, 1948), p. 172. Taken together, the evidence suggests that piety, as it was revealed in the early years of the Third Reich, did not involve any special respect for nature, but did include pietas toward the past, as indicated by the pagan sort of fervor described by Shirer and the Christian prayers noted by Gamm, as well as respect for neighbors in the sacrifices mentioned by Kruger. Also, the recollections of the resident of Eichkamp suggest another sense of piety--as a "system builder," a desire "to round things out, to fit experiences into a unified whole," as Hitler provided people "a sense of what properly goes with what" in exhorting them to a value system. Burke, Permanence And Change, pp. 71-76.

¹⁴⁵Shirer, Diary, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴⁶Gamm, p. 160.

the "one-pot meal"--the officially designated Lenten fare, the savings from which went to the Winterhilfe--did not fail to elicit the appropriate response: the feeling that if the Fuehrer could sacrifice for Germany, the least the Volk could do was sacrifice for each other.¹⁴⁷ And an Eichkamp resident's recollection that in the early thirties "It was only Hitler who brought it to Eichkamp--the knowledge that such things as providence, eternal justice, and the Lord Almighty exist. There was a lot of talk about these invisible powers at the time. An age of piety had dawned."¹⁴⁸

The other result of the campaign to deify Hitler--and one which will become increasingly important in subsequent chapters--was that it succeeded. The man became the symbol of his social order and its motivating force. Call him the Weltanschauung's god term, or the representative anecdote of the Third Reich, or the myth made manifest, but whatever the rubric, the fact remains that Hitler was the power which held the "New Order" together, even to the end of the war. Thus, Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen records in his diary in the fall of 1944, the declaration of a woman praising the Fuehrer because "in his goodness, he has prepared a gentle and easy death by gas for the German people in case the war ends badly."¹⁴⁹ Albert Speer writes that in March 1945, he was forced to reconsider his assassination plans when he overheard a group of farmworkers whose faith

¹⁴⁷Horst Kruger, Das Zerbrochene Haus (Munich, 1966), p. 145.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 151.

¹⁴⁹Friedrich Percyval Reck-Malleczewen, Diary of a Man in Despair, trans., Paul Rubens (London, 1970), p. 199.

in Hitler was still strong. "The Fuehrer is still holding something in reserve that he'll play at the last moment. Then the turning point will come. Its only a trap, his letting the enemy come so far into our country."¹⁵⁰ And H. R. Trevor-Roper adds that at the very end

Besieged in the shattered capital, cooped up fifty feet below ground, cut off from ordinary communication, a physical and mental wreck, without power to enforce, or reason to persuade, or machinery to execute, Hitler still remained. . . the sole master. . . . Goering, imprisoned under S. S. guard at Mautendorf, now had leisure to reflect on the dangers of anticipating that fatal inheritance. Soon Himmler was to learn the same lesson. The power of the Fuehrer was a magic power, and no profane hand might reach out to touch it until the reigning priest was really dead.¹⁵¹

By the late summer of 1934, Hitler had eliminated all potential centers of opposition to his regime except one--the army. As we have said, it was not the only agency to preserve its identity in the face of Gleichschaltung--the churches and the bureaucracy being two others. But relative to the churches, Hitler was willing to bide his time,¹⁵² and concerning the bureaucracy, State Secretary Weizsacker's remark--that it was impossible to "shoot with one's files"¹⁵³--reveals the powerlessness of the civil service.

Hitler was deferential to the army, in part because he thought of its General Staff as a sort of "witch's cave in which schemes for the

¹⁵⁰ Speer, p. 564.

¹⁵¹ H. R. Trevor-Roper, The Last Days Of Hitler (New York, 1968), p. 228.

¹⁵² Thus Hitler in 1941: "I have numerous accounts to settle with the church, about which I cannot think today. But that doesn't mean I forget them. I write them down. The time will come to bring out the big book." Table Talk, p. 90.

¹⁵³ Ernst von Weizsacker, Memoirs, trans., John Andrews (Chicago, 1951), p. 144.

wildest kinds of aggressive wars were continually on the brew,"¹⁵⁴and that prospect accorded quite well with his future foreign policy plans (which will be discussed shortly); and in part because President Hindenburg controlled the army and insisted that it remain outside politics, a fact which was brought home forcibly to Hitler when he attempted indirectly to have an officer sympathetic to him appointed Army Commander-in-Chief.¹⁵⁵ So Hitler bided his time, following a policy of circum-spection mixed with friendly gestures and signs of favor including re-armament, the three-fold increase in military strength, and the purge of the SA leadership, an act which cost him greatly, but one which he performed in the interest of maintaining the good will of the army and its backers, the president and the conservative power brokers who surrounded him.¹⁵⁶

In War Minister Werner von Blomberg and his chief assistant, Walther von Reichenau, Hitler discovered two partisans of his movement. Blomberg was an enthusiast by nature. He had in turn subscribed to

¹⁵⁴Walter Goerlitz, History of the German General Staff, trans., Brian Battershaw (New York, 1954), p. 311.

¹⁵⁵This was General Walther von Reichenau, who Hindenburg rejected on the grounds that he was a "National Socialist" general. See, Wilhelm Keitel, The Memoirs Of Field-Marshal Keitel, ed., Walter Goerlitz, trans., David Irving (New York, 1966), p. 19.

¹⁵⁶The extent of Hitler's anger about the SA purge can be judged by his statement to Rauschning afterwards. "They underestimated me because I've risen from below; because I haven't had an education, because I haven't the manners that their sparrow brains think right. . . . But I've spoiled their plans. They thought I wouldn't dare; they thought I was afraid. They saw me already wiggling in their net. They thought I was their tool, and behind my back they laughed at me and said I had no power now, that I had lost my Party. I saw through all that long ago. What I have lost in the trial of the S. A., I shall regain by the verdict of these feudal gamblers. . . . I stand here stronger than ever before. Forward Meine Herren Papen and Hugenberg! I am ready for the next round." Rauschning, pp. 171-172.

monarchy, democracy, communism--this after a trip to Russia in 1928¹⁵⁷--and finally to nazism. Combined with his enthusiasm was a "romantic knight-errant idealism"¹⁵⁸which, in the beginning at least, led him to perceive Hitler's "New Order" as the means to Germany's "national re-birth," while blinding him to those aspects which he did not want to see. Reichenau was of a different stamp. A cold and calculating individual,¹⁵⁹he saw advantages in National Socialism, both to himself personally and to the army as a whole. And he was not opposed to the form of Hitler's regime since he believed that the breakdown in social order could be stemmed only by dictatorship.¹⁶⁰ As a result, then, of impulsiveness and ambition, both officers reciprocated Hitler's gestures with gestures of their own. In the spring of 1934, Blomberg ordered the army to adopt the party emblem (the swastika) as a part of its uniform, and in the early summer, he and Reichenau issued a new directive describing the "Duties of the German Soldier"¹⁶¹which combined traditional platitudes with some of Hitler's ideology.

At the time, neither of these steps seemed significant, since the emblem was only one decoration among many and the directive was

¹⁵⁷John Wheeler-Bennett quotes Blomberg as saying, "I was not far short of coming home a complete Bolshevik." Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis Of Power, p. 296.

¹⁵⁸This is the description of B. H. Liddell-Hart, who draws a sympathetic but accurate portrait of Blomberg after talking with him at the 1932 Disarmament Conference in Geneva. B. H. Liddell-Hart, The Liddell-Hart Memoirs, 2 Vols., (New York, 1965), i, p. 84.

¹⁵⁹Ulrich von Hassell's comment on Reichenau is revealing: "He always hears the grass grow." Ulrich von Hassell, The Von Hassell Diaries (Westport, 1971), p. 84.

¹⁶⁰Fest relates Reichenau's belief; Hitler, p. 453.

¹⁶¹O'Neill lists these steps; pp. 38; 172.

issued over Hindenburg's signature. But the important point is that each of these gestures created ties between the army and Hitler and accustomed the soldiers to thinking that they were identified with his "New Order." Thus, the directive allowed Nazi vocabulary to seep into the army's language: "sword-bearer of the German people . . .the people united in National Socialism, and its living-space (Lebensraum). . .strength rooted in German soil and German toil" --etc., etc., all jumbled up with cliches current in older times: "confidence, on which discipline rests. . .upright and loyal, God-fearing and truthful. . .a pattern of manly strength."¹⁶² And with the emblem, the traditional German eagle now held within its claws a tiny swastika, and soon this sign began to appear in larger scale --on regimental colors, on flags, over the arches to barracks, and stenciled on the turrets of armored vehicles¹⁶³--all of which had to have an effect.¹⁶⁴

Probably the most important steps were taken on August 2, 1934, with the death of President Hindenburg. At noon of that same day,

¹⁶²The directive is included as Appendix 33 in Karl Demeter, The German Officer-Corps, trans., Michael Howard (New York, 1965), p. 363. This combination of old and new terminologies is somewhat similar to Burke's argument that one way in which symbols function is by "manipulating values in our code" thereby shifting our terms in such a way as to begin our adjustment to the new situation. Kenneth Burke, Counterstatement (Los Altos, 1965), p. 156.

¹⁶³Alan Clark notes the extension of the swastika sign. Alan Clark, Barbarossa (New York, 1965), p. 30.

¹⁶⁴Non-verbal signs are certainly a means of achieving identification. Thus Burke: "persuasion cannot be confined to the strictly verbal. . .non-verbal acts and material instruments themselves have a symbolic ingredient. . . . For [they] can be considered as signs by reason of the persuasive ingredients inherent in the 'meaning' they have for the audience to which they are addressed." Rhetoric, p. 161.

it was decreed that the offices of President and Chancellor had been united in the person of Adolf Hitler, and that he would assume their functions as "Fuhrer und Reichskanzeler"--functions that made him in one moment de jure Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Further, it was decreed that the officers and men of the army would swear an oath of allegiance to the Fuehrer, and this was done, beginning with the highest ranking generals, that same evening.¹⁶⁵

It has been alleged by some commentators that Hitler's claim to being Head of State and the swearing of the oath were parts of a secret quid pro quo worked out between the Fuehrer and Blomberg during a cruise on the battleship Deutschland in April 1934; that in return for the purge of the SA, the War Minister agreed to support Hitler as Hindenburg's successor and pledged him the army's allegiance.¹⁶⁶ The truth, unfortunately, is more prosaic, although the results were the same. Insofar as Hitler's becoming Fuhrer und Reichskanzeler, the fact is that he was the only real candidate for the position, as demonstrated by the last presidential election in which he received the second highest number of votes (thirty-seven percent to Hindenburg's fifty-three percent), and by virtue of the subsequent plebiscite in which almost nine out of ten voters confirmed his right to the two

¹⁶⁵"Letter of General a. D. Erich Dethleffsen," January 25, 1966.

¹⁶⁶See John Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis Of Power, p. 312ff. Robert O'Neill has subjected this claim of the "Deutschland Pact" to scrupulous examination and has concluded that there is no real evidence that it ever took place. O'Neill, Appendix F, pp. 245-246. Correspondence with General Hermann von Witzleben corroborates this finding. Witzleben writes: "There never existed a 'Pact of the Deutschland'. . .which would have been completely unnecessary with a War Minister like Blomberg." "Letter of General a. D. Hermann von Witzleben," May 23, 1966.

offices.¹⁶⁷ And the formulation of the oath can be traced to Blomberg and Reichenau who, perhaps with Hitler's prior consent,¹⁶⁸ succeeded in creating an almost unbreakable bond between the Fuehrer and his soldiers.

The practice of oath-taking was not new in German military tradition, soldiers having sworn oaths to their sovereign since the beginnings of Germany's recorded history.¹⁶⁹ But the binding quality of the vow had survived far longer in Germany than anywhere else. The Flag Oath, or "Fahneneid" as it was called, historically "derived from the 'vassals oath' and bound the oath-giver to the person of the monarch who embodied the state."¹⁷⁰ The period of the Weimar Republic had represented a break in the personal nature of the oath. No longer did the soldier swear obedience to a Friedrich Ebert or Paul Hindenburg. Instead, it was to the Constitution that the military pledged its allegiance.¹⁷¹ But with the promulgation of the "Fuhrereid," this formulation changed and the soldier was

¹⁶⁷Bullock, p. 267.

¹⁶⁸Papen, who was still a member of the government, was convinced that Hitler played a role in the formulation of the oath, arguing with some merit that it would have been impossible for the swearing-in to have taken place so quickly unless the Fuehrer had given prior approval. Memoirs, p. 335.

¹⁶⁹As early as the Third Century, the Roman historian Tacitus wrote of Germanic warriors: "To preserve their Prince, to defend him, and to ascribe to his glory all their own valorous deeds, is the sum and most sacred part of their oath." Tacitus, Germania, trans., Thomas Gordon (New York, 1910), p. 103.

¹⁷⁰"Letter of General a. D. Franz Halder," August 17, 1965.

¹⁷¹The formulation of the Weimar Oath can be found in Eberhard Zeller, The Spirit Of Freedom, trans., R. P. Heller and D. R. Masters (London, 1967), p. 13.

confronted again with an oath of personal fealty, at once made more impressive and credible by its call to God as Witness of its sacred quality:¹⁷²

I swear to God this holy oath: That I will give unconditional obedience to the Fuehrer of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht and that, as a brave soldier, I will be ready at all times to give my life for this oath.¹⁷³

In an age and culture like our own, the compelling nature of the oath is likely to be passed over far too casually. In point of fact, it was one of the most important motivating forces in the German soldier's life, encrusted as it was with the weight of centuries of tradition and equally buttressed by its renewed personal element. In states where constitutions are lengthy and ambiguous, most soldiers do not even know what the document contains, and Weimar Germany was such a state. But an oath to a man, and particularly one of super-human proportions as Hitler was coming to be, further enhanced the oath's persuasive impact.

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to document the reactions of all the officers to the swearing of the oath, but perhaps statements by two of them--interestingly enough, generals who would come to take opposing positions on breaking their vows--will be sufficient to indicate the seriousness with which they approached the oath and the moral dilemma involved in breaking it. On the eve of the swearing ceremony, Heinz Guderian wrote his wife: "Tomorrow

¹⁷²The Weimar Oath made no reference to God; Zeller, p. 13.

¹⁷³This formulation of the Hitler Oath is taken from Germans Against Hitler, p. 294.

we swear the oath to Hitler. . . . Pray God that both sides abide by it equally for the welfare of Germany. The army is accustomed to keep its oaths. May the army, in honor, be able to do so this time."¹⁷⁴ And Ludwig Beck, whose first negative response to Hitler's war policies has already been noted, and who was later to head the resistance movement, is quoted by Gisevius as saying that the undertaking of the oath had at the time caused a grave searching of heart.¹⁷⁵

Hitler was quick to show his appreciation to Blomberg and the military for their oath of allegiance. In late August, he wrote a letter in which he thanked them and promised to regard it as his "highest duty to intercede for the existence and inviolability of the Wehrmacht" and he repeated his pledge to maintain the "Army as the sole bearer of arms in the nation."¹⁷⁶ But as the officers (and indeed, the rest of the world) would finally learn, the Fuehrer followed a policy of never meaning what he said when he gave his word.¹⁷⁷

From the moment he became Chancellor, Hitler undertook a program whose aim was the close supervision of the population, the rationale being that those whose conformity could not be guaranteed by faith in the ideology or by the influence of propaganda, could be coerced through force. Under the supervision of the party, Germany was divided into

¹⁷⁴Guderian, p. 23.

¹⁷⁵Gisevius, p. 19.

¹⁷⁶The full text of Hitler's letter appears in Germans Against Hitler, pp. 289-290

¹⁷⁷This paraphrase of Wheeler-Bennett's verdict (Nemesis Of Power, p. 461), is yet another example of "verbal corruption--vile use of language, the inappropriate use of symbols" as practiced in the Third Reich. Griffin, p. 459.

administrative units or Gaue. Each was governed by a party leader, a Gauleiter, who was directly responsible to Hitler for his area. The Gaue were further divided into districts, localities, cells, and blocks. It was on the local level of control--that of the block and its Blockwart--that most Germans felt the visible presence of state authority. The Blockwart, despite the modesty of his position, was an important cog in the control mechanism. A paragraph in a party manual reveals why:

The Blockwart must not only be a preacher and defender of National Socialist ideology toward the members of the Nation and Party entrusted to his political care, but he must strive to achieve the practical collaboration of the Party members within his block. . . . He must keep a dossier on each household.¹⁷⁸

Party supervision was only part of the mechanism. Even more important than the office of the functionary was the apparatus of the police state, the second instrument of control. As early as 1929, Hitler had appointed Heinrich Himmler to command the Schutzstaffeln, or Nazi Party Troops. The membership was small--less than three-hundred men¹⁷⁹--but Himmler proceeded to build upon this base and by the time Hitler became Chancellor, the SS had grown to number more than fifty-thousand.¹⁸⁰ There was no doubt regarding their raison d'etre. Himmler spelled it out quite clearly:

¹⁷⁸The instructions to the Blockwart are quoted in Lord Russell of Liverpool, The Scourge of the Swastika (New York, 1954), p. 6.

¹⁷⁹Edward Crankshaw, Gestapo (New York, 1956), p. 16. This figure is based on evidence given at Nuremberg by Otto Ohlendorf, a ranking member of the organization.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., p. 17.

We shall unremittingly fulfill our task to guarantee the security of Germany from within. . . . We shall take care that never again in Germany, the heart of Europe, will the Jewish-Bolshevistic revolution of subhumans be kindled from the interior or through emissaries from the outside. Without pity we shall be a merciless sword of justice to all those forces whose existence and activities we know, on the day the slightest attempt is made, be it today, after a decade, or a century hence.¹⁸¹

The SS did not comprise the entirety of Nazi Germany's police state. Like most of Hitler's lieutenants, Himmler was an empire builder, and he added to his power, enveloping existing police departments by means of the authority provided in the "Enabling Act," and creating new ones as the opportunity arose. Thus, there came to be, in addition to the SS, the Sicherheitsdienst, or Security Service, the Ordnungspolizie, or Uniformed Police, the Geheime Staatspolizie, or Political Police, and the Verfugungstruppe, the forerunner of the Waffen SS, or Weapons Police. Against such an apparatus, a mass uprising would have been impossible, even if the mass had wanted to rise up. So let Fabian von Schlabrendorff's statement--that "only the army had the weapons and the power to overthrow the firmly-entrenched Nazi regime, which was supported by thousands of SS troops"¹⁸²--stand as surrogate for the many "Onkel Emil" groups which opposed Hitler but were forced to limit their resistance activities to shielding individual Jews, or helping young men evade the draft, or forging ration cards.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹Himmler is quoted in Liverpool, p. 8.

¹⁸²Fabian von Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler (New York, 1947), pp. 14-15.

¹⁸³"Onkel Emil" was the code name of the resistance group to which Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, an anti-Nazi newspaperwoman belonged. The group contained about two dozen members, and by Miss Friedrich's own account, played no part in the various attempts to overthrow Hit-

It was Himmler's creation of the Verfugungstruppe in March 1933 which rendered false at the moment he made it the first of Hitler's promises to the army. Admittedly, the force was small--only a body-guard of about one-hundred men. But in less than two years, Himmler had expanded it, over military objections, to the size of a division, and by the early summer of 1934, the Verfugungstruppe, or "asphalt soldiers" as they were called, had their own training schools, a ration strength of eight-thousand officers and men, and a formation structure of three detachments which would in due course form the nucleus of the Waffen SS--the Liebstandarte Adolf Hitler, and the regiments Deutschland and Germania.¹⁸⁴

The second of Hitler's promises--that he would respect the "inviolability" of the army--was rendered false less than one month after he wrote the letter. In mid-September, he ordered the Wehrmacht to participate in the annual party rally at Nuremberg, and while the actual duties the soldiers performed--marches, drills, equipment displays, and the like--were hardly ideological, Goebbels' propaganda machine exploited the event as a demonstration of military support for the "New Order."¹⁸⁵ In breaking this promise, Hitler was aided by Blomberg who, in his continuing zeal, was unable to distinguish between military virtues and party ideology. Thus, the War Minister

ler, the threat of the Gestapo restraining their activities to those noted above. Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, Berlin Underground, trans., Barrows Mussey (New York, 1947), pp. vii-viii.

¹⁸⁴Hohne, pp. 439-442.

¹⁸⁵Hamilton T. Burden, The Nuremberg Party Rallies: 1923-39 (New York, 1967), pp. 79-90.

decreed the introduction of political indoctrination for the soldiers, the voluntary nature of religious affiliation and instruction (both had been obligatory), the banning of military trade with Jewish merchants, the dismissal of officers who were Freemasons (a special hate of Hitler's), and the restructuring of post life into cells and blocks for the purpose of propagating Nazi ideology into home and family.¹⁸⁶

Hitler's announcement of compulsory military service (and a corresponding budget increase) provided another impetus to his program of bringing the army under the influence of his ideology. The call to the colors summoned a mass of Germans who believed in the Weltanschauung: adolescents from the Hitlerjugend, transferred police officials, reactivated mercenaries from the Freikorps, and SA members --in short, Volksgenossen who rejected the position that the army should remain an independent agency. In part, Blomberg and the military leadership welcomed these conscripts because they felt the army was the right school in which to teach them the proper orientation: obedience, patriotism, loyalty, mastery of weapons, and the like; and in part because the added money gave them sufficient resources to develop their technical ideas. But some thought the Fuehrer was forcing the pace; as General Fritsch, the Army Commander-in-Chief said, Hitler was "overdoing everything, rushing everything far too much."¹⁸⁷ And even Blomberg worried about the objections of Germany's neighbors--France, Britain, Italy, and the

¹⁸⁶These steps are listed in O'Neill, pp. 62-83.

¹⁸⁷Fritsch is quoted in Fest, Face of the Third Reich, p. 353.

others--to the reintroduction of the draft.¹⁸⁸ Making soldiers out of civilians and developing weapons like the panzer and the 88 mm. anti-aircraft gun were commendable undertakings, and perhaps even regaining the territories lost in the Great War was within the realm of the possible. But the increases in the army--from one-hundred thousand in 1933 to three-hundred thousand in 1934 to almost one-million in 1935¹⁸⁹--these were increments which made even Blomberg lose some of his enthusiasm, and caused officers like Erich von Manstein to wonder "where all of this would lead."¹⁹⁰

What the generals should have realized was that from Hitler's perspective, an officer corps that approved of Wehrhoheit (rearmament) but not of war was bound to appear contradictory. For the Fuehrer's Weltanschauung contained foreign policy objectives: one was short-range and tactical; the other long-range and strategic. The minimal objectives might be achieved without fighting and included the annexation of Austria and the incorporation within the Reich of all German speaking peoples:

German Austria must return to the great German mother country. One blood demands one Reich. . . . Only when the borders of the Reich include every last German, and the ability to insure his food supply no longer exists, will there arise. ^{the} right to acquire foreign soil and foreign territory.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸Hossbach, pp. 95-96.

¹⁸⁹Army increases are given in Ibid., p. 125. Hossbach also notes that in the same period, the number of general officers jumped from 44 to 275.

¹⁹⁰Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, trans., Anthony G. Powell (London, 1958), p. 23.

¹⁹¹Mein Kampf, p. 1.

The maximum objectives envisioned the acquisition of Lebensraum, or living space, to guarantee Germany's place in the sun:

To secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled on this earth. . .is the only action which before God and our German posterity, would seem to justify an investment in blood. . . . If we speak of soil. . .we can primarily have in mind only Russia and her vassal border states.¹⁹²

This was the "exaltation" of what Alan Bullock calls the "Machtstaat, the Power State"¹⁹³--a Grossdeutscher Reich stretching from Middle Europe to the Ural Mountains, in which the Germans were to be the Herrenvolk, or master race, while the Slavs--the Poles, Russians, Czechs, and all the rest were to be the Untermenschen, or subhumans, who had no right to live except as some of them might be needed to toil in the factories or fields as helots for their German masters. It was for this dream that Hitler had placed the metals of the state into the hands of his officers and he expected them to mould it into an axe of war and blood it in combat.

In discussing the response of the officers to the Fuehrer's plans for conquest, it is difficult to generalize. For despite the historical judgments passed against him,¹⁹⁴ it is not quite accurate to speak of the German officer as though there was a stereotype any more than it is to talk about the officer corps as though it had existed as a single entity. Bruce Catton's description of the amount of stress which

¹⁹²Mein Kampf, pp. 652-654.

¹⁹³Bullock, p. 269.

¹⁹⁴Typical in this respect is Barbara Tuchman, whose otherwise excellent book on the first month of World War I is marred by its division of all German officers into two groups, "the bullnecked and the wasp-waisted," both of which were "militaristic" in the worst sense of that term. Barbara Tuchman, The Guns Of August (New York, 1963), pp. 33-44.

soldiers can bear in combat seems appropriate here. There were some, he writes, "the skulkers and the unabashed cowards who always ran in every battle at the first chance they could get"; there were others who fled later, "men who could stand some things but not everything"; and there were still others, "men who had stood fast in all previous fights but found this one too terrible to be borne"; until at last, the thin battle lines held only the "stout-hearted," the long-dying men, who "fought themselves out beyond the limits of endurance."¹⁹⁵

Similarly, the army officers held differing points of view on Hitler's ideology of Drang nach Osten and the implications it contained. For some, like Wilhelm Keitel and Alfred Jodl, the Fuehrer was the "greatest genius that Germany ever had" and it was up to the army to "seek to reconcile itself with this new force of the age."¹⁹⁶ For others, like Ludwig Beck, the idea of an aggressive war against even one nation, to say nothing of the whole Slavic world, was ethically reprehensible. Thus, in 1935, when he was directed to prepare an operational plan of attack against Czechoslovakia, Beck did so but added in a preface that he considered it to be purely hypothetical and if Hitler ever felt impelled to put it into effect, he would be forced to tender his resignation.¹⁹⁷ Finally, there was that large

¹⁹⁵Bruce Catton, Mr. Lincoln's Army (New York, 1961), p. 275.

¹⁹⁶Jodl is quoted in Goerlitz, p. 294.

¹⁹⁷The preface read: "After thorough consideration, I hold it to be my duty to declare this very day that if the memorandum. . . is not solely concerned with the purpose of operational studies, but is aimed at the practical introduction of preparations for war, then I must express the most dutiful request to be removed from my position . . . because I do not feel myself fitted for this latter task." Beck is quoted in O'Neill, p. 120.

middle group of officers who conceived of themselves as technicians and who, in the Reich of the mid-thirties, were able to concentrate on their specialties--training, tactics, tanks, and the like, to the exclusion of where these specialties might lead. For this group, Dietrich von Choltitz's statement, written in retrospect, that the "majority of the officers were grateful to Hitler for entrusting to them the purely objective tasks of the service,"¹⁹⁸ may be taken as representative.

The difficulty, of course, not only for men of high resolve like Beck, but also for these "technicians" was the Fuehrer's determination to tolerate non-believers in the army only as long as he had to depend upon them to fashion and arm an effective instrument of war. Identification with the Volksgemeinschaft did not mean that one was free to follow an autonomous course of action,¹⁹⁹ to pick and choose between the evils and attractions of the "New Order," to support the rebuilding of military strength while opposing plans for its use. Thus, the cooperative years in which the military and political leadership of the Third Reich had little cause for complaints were gradually replaced by disagreements and tensions.

In one sense, the quarrel was a matter of outlook. Austrian revolutionary and dreamer confronted the ethos of the German military establishment and neither particularly like the view.²⁰⁰ For Hitler,

¹⁹⁸Dietrich von Choltitz, Soldat unter Soldaten (Zurich, 1951), p. 63.

¹⁹⁹This is a characteristic of hierarchies. Burke writes: "Any specialized activity participates in a larger unit of action. 'Identification' is a word for the autonomous activities place in this wider context." Rhetoric, p. 27.

²⁰⁰An excellent exposition of the German military ethic can be found in Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (London, 1957),

"reason and knowledge. . .considerations of time and space, and the careful calculation of the strength of one's own forces in relation to the enemy's" were as nothing compared to "mystical speculation. . .the unbending will to victory, and the relentless pursuit of the goal."²⁰¹ Then there was the negative reaction of some of the leading generals to what was going on behind the scenes in the Third Reich. Fritsch, for instance, had a strong religious orientation which led him to fight against National Socialist incursions in military religious matters,²⁰² and even Blomberg, when he was pressured by Hjalmar Schacht, went to

see esp., Chapter Three, "The Military Mind," and Chapter Five, "Germany and Japan: Civil-Military Relations in Practice." Philosophically, the ethic emphasizes conservative realism--the view of man as evil, the need for order in society, the continuity and value of history, and the dependency of state security on strong military forces, without however, undertaking bellicose or adventurous policies. Instrumentally, the ethic holds that the military is autonomous in methods but subordinate in ends to the state's civilian authority, with the soldier a partner to the statesman, albeit a junior one, with responsibility for advice. For our purposes, the ethic is important because it suggests an extension to Griffin's formulation. Briefly, men do not come to a hierarchy without a past. To the extent that the new order mirrors their orientations, their "terministic screens," they will accept the mystery, strive to keep the secret, preserve the hierarchy. Domestically, the visible Third Reich represented many of the proper orientations to the soldiers and the conservative upper-class whose philosophic pieties or schemata of orientations were quite similar. Thus, it was only when Hitler began to insist on implementing his foreign policy--his hidden vision--that doubts began to creep in. Subsequent chapters will show how these orientations also served as "trained incapacities. . .whereby one's very abilities can function as blindnesses." For a discussion on orientation, see Burke, Permanence And Change, pp. 5-18.

²⁰¹This is the verdict of General Dittmar, made after the war to B. H. Liddell Hart; The German Generals Talk (New York, 1948), p. 44.

²⁰²Harold Deutsch, who notes several examples of Fritsch's defense of religion in the military, describes the Army Commander's attitude as one of "undemonstrative piety." Harold Deutsch, Hitler and His Generals (Minneapolis, 1974), p. 40.

Berchtesgaden to plead with Hitler for better treatment of the Jews.²⁰³ And there was the growing competition between the army and the SS--competition which the Fuehrer with his policy of fostering rival authorities could only have approved--as Himmler attempted to undermine the independence of the military, in part on grounds of ideology and in part because the soldiers represented a rival agency.²⁰⁴

On the question of long-term goals, it should be noted that Hitler had made several straightforward attempts to make ardent followers out of his generals and to get them to share his mythopoeic Weltanschauung. As early as February 1933, and again a year later, he had tried to tell them about his dreams of a millenium--of the conquest of new living space in the East and its relentless Germanization. But his speeches had failed to evoke the enthusiasm necessary for the foundation of a vigorous partnership dedicated to the achievement of Lebensraum. Some of the officers had not understood,²⁰⁵ some had not taken his warlike prophecies seriously,²⁰⁶ and even the most zealous of them, War Minister Blomberg, had panicked when Hitler ordered the military reoccupation of the Rhineland, demanding that

²⁰³Deutsch, p. 40.

²⁰⁴Hohne notes some of the signs of rivalry between the SS and the army: brawls between members of the Verfugungstruppe and Wehrmacht, slanderous gossip in SS messes against high ranking generals, and incidents between the army and SS when sharing manoeuvre areas. Hohne, p. 447.

²⁰⁵Beck, for example, became lost in the first hour of general preamble and never did grasp the point of the speech. O'Neill, p. 126.

²⁰⁶In his memoirs, General Maximilian Weichs writes that while Hitler did indeed "set forth his complete foreign policy programme. . . one did not take at face value these warlike prophecies." Quoted in Ibid., p. 127.

the troops be withdrawn because he feared the French.²⁰⁷

The Fuehrer thereupon resolved to try once more. On November 5, 1937, he assembled a group of military and political leaders including War Minister Blomberg, the heads of the three armed services, Fritsch, Goering, and Admiral Raeder, and the Foreign Affairs Minister, Konstantin von Neurath. Uninvited, though also present was Hitler's army adjutant, Colonel Friedrich Hossbach, whose notes on the meeting led to the assignment of his name to one of the most important councils ever held in Germany.²⁰⁸

The conference was held in the Reich Chancellery. There, in his study, sitting behind a desk whose inlay, appropriately enough, represented a sword half drawn from its sheath,²⁰⁹ Hitler spoke again of his vision. "The only, perhaps dreamlike solution as it appears to us, lies in winning a greater amount of living space, an endeavor which at all times has been the cause of the building of states and the movements of peoples." And he proceeded to translate this vision into terms which even a technician could understand, developing his fundamental position on the place Germany should occupy in the world and the requirements this would entail.

The dictator used economic difficulties as the rationale for

²⁰⁷Hossbach, p. 98.

²⁰⁸Hossbach's memorandum, prepared from the notes he made, appears in his book, pp. 207-220. The best English text is in Documents on German Foreign Policy, 10 Vols., (Washington, D. C., 1949-1966), i, pp. 29-33. Hereafter cited as DGFP. The narrative above has been taken from Hossbach's book and will not be cited hereafter.

²⁰⁹Speer writes that Hitler was especially pleased with the inlay because when people sitting in front of him saw it, "they'll shiver and shake." Speer, p. 164.

conquest. Germany was not self-sufficient in foodstuffs. Thus, there was no choice but to enlarge greatly the living space currently available. Unoccupied land did not exist which meant that it would be necessary to crush the resistance of those presently holding it, the only real questions being the most advantageous time and place. Then, as Hossbach's account shows, the Fuehrer presented his listeners with three alternatives. The first was to delay for several years, until all preparations were complete, down to the last gaiter button. But that would mean a full scale war since the other nations of Europe, particularly France and Britain, would catch up to Germany in armaments, thereby blocking her path to conquest. The second and third choices, both of which Hitler favored, involved striking soon, either against Austria or against Austria and Czechoslovakia at the same time. France was weak, embroiled in internal political complications. Britain too was unprepared and had quietly written off Austria and Czechoslovakia. Poland and Russia were bound to move slowly and, if Germany acted with great speed, they would be presented with a fait accompli. Thus, the time to gain a foothold in the East--the first step to empire--was now.

When he finished, Hitler allowed his listeners to respond, and they did so, Goering defending the dream and its most radical applications, while Blomberg and Fritsch attacked them. Hossbach recorded his impression of the exchange, and his description is significant, not only because it reveals the attitudes of those who spoke but also of him who did not speak.

The discussion took a very sharp form at times, above all the differences between Blomberg and Fritsch on the one hand and Goering on the other. . . . Hitler participated mainly as an

attentive observer. . .but I do remember that the sharpness of the opposition, both in content and form did not fail to make its impression on Hitler, as I could see from his changing expressions. Every detail of the conduct of Blomberg and Fritsch must have made it plain to Hitler that his policies had met with only plain impersonal contradictions, instead of applause and agreement. And he knew very well that both generals were opposed to any warlike entanglements provoked from our side.

From the moment they opposed his Weltanschauung, the days of the two officers were numbered. Although Hitler did not dismiss them then and there (a habit he acquired later), he must surely have decided that they were not made of the stuff which he required for his dreams of conquest. With his uncanny "finger-tip" feeling,²¹⁰ he would wait to seize the proper moment and replace them with men who, if they were not more ardent in their expression of his ideology, were more compliant to his will. That moment came at the end of January 1938, when Blomberg's misalliance of a marriage provided Hitler with the opportunity not only to rid himself of his War Minister, but his Army Chief and sixteen other high-ranking generals whose views did not accord with his own. With this stroke, Hitler probably believed that he had finally eliminated the last agency power base capable of overthrowing his regime. What he could not realize was that he had also created a rift in his social order; that some of the officers were turning at last "from acceptance to rejection of the 'mystery,'" ceasing to "identify with the hierarchy, the prevailing system of authority,"²¹¹ and that this impiety was to become the starting point

²¹⁰Perhaps the best description of Hitler's "Fingerspitzengefühl," or "sixth-sense," was his own statement to Rauschning: "Unless I have the inner, incorruptible conviction. . .I do nothing. . . . I will not act; I will wait, no matter what happens. But if the voice speaks, then I know the time has come to act." Rauschning, p. 181.

²¹¹Griffin, p. 460.

for the first of the attempts to overthrow his dictatorship--the subject of Act One of the German Resistance Movement.

CHAPTER II

ACT ONE: OBERKOMMANDO DES HEERES AND THE FIRST ATTEMPT: 1938

"Movements begin when some pivotal individual or group--suffering attitudes of alienation in a given social system. . ./from/ the impious dream of a mythic Order--enacts, gives voice to, a No." Leland Griffin

It may be idle to inquire, as Hans Rothfels writes, "about what moment active political resistance to Hitler in fact began,"¹since in many respects opposition to National Socialism developed long before the Machtubernahme or seizure of power. Thus, students like Fabian von Schlabrendorff were arguing with Nazi speakers at mass meetings as early as 1928,²socialists like Carlo Mierendorff were working to make the Weimar system more responsive to the needs of the people,³and conservatives like Ewald von Kleist were penning broadsides warning against the evils of Hitler's ideology.⁴

However, we can inquire into when these overt activities largely ceased. That was after the Machtubernahme. The imprisonment or exile

¹Hans Rothfels, The German Opposition To Hitler, trans., Lawrence Wilson (Chicago, 1962), p. 45.

²Fabian von Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler (New York, 1947), p. 8.

³Mierendorff's governmental activities are recounted in Ger van Roon, German Resistance To Hitler, trans., Peter Ludlow (London, 1971), pp. 88-89.

⁴The full text of Kleist's essay, "Der Nationalsozialismus eine Gefahr," is in Fabian von Schlabrendorff, The Secret War Against Hitler, trans., Hilda Simon (New York, 1965), Appendix II.

of the leaders of the political left, the satisfaction or agreement of the leaders of the political right, the conformity of the majority, the effects of Gleichschaltung, and the rise of the police state, combined to limit negative responses to minor infractions,⁵ fragmented and often ineffective underground cell work,⁶ and personal acts of opposition, most of which were either so innocuous as to be unapparent to the regime,⁷ or visible enough to be ferreted out quickly and destroyed by the Gestapo.⁸

Opposition in such forms was ineffective because it lacked what Gisevius called an Archimedean point⁹--a fulcrum for action or a power base within the state from which to mount a serious threat to the Nazi Government. We have already witnessed the elimination of nearly all such possible agencies through the regime's policy of "coordinating" institutions into a hierarchy reflecting Hitler's ideology. And we have

⁵Telling anti-Nazi jokes is an example, especially since they contained little hostility toward the regime; thus, when Hitler justified the murder of Ernst Roehm on grounds of his homosexuality, jokesters inquired: "What will he do when he finally discovers Goebbels' club foot?"

⁶Referring to communist and socialist underground activity, Gabriel Almond and Wolfgang Krause note that the "effect of Gestapo terror was to atomize the organizations. Liaison became difficult if not impossible." The Struggle For Democracy In Germany, ed., Gabriel A. Almond (Chapel Hill, 1949), p. 69.

⁷Ruth Andreas-Friedrich recalls chalking up anti-Nazi slogans in obscure locations. Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, Berlin Underground, trans., Barrows Mussey (New York, 1947), p. 137.

⁸Karl Bracher mentions "Neu Beginnen" as an example of a group which tried to create an underground popular front and was discovered and destroyed by the Gestapo. Karl Bracher, The German Dictatorship, trans., Jean Steinberg (New York, 1970), p. 137.

⁹Gisevius is quoted in Ulrich von Hassell, The Von Hassell Diaries (Westport, 1971), p. 87.

seen how only one or two agencies--notably, the churches and the army--managed to preserve their identity in the face of this policy.

For purposes of this study, the institutional activities of the churches, Lutheran and Catholic, will be dismissed from further consideration as agencies of opposition.¹⁰ The reasons for doing so are three-fold. First, as Karl Bracher writes, "only rarely did [the Catholic Church] go over from the defense of its own concerns and interests to political resistance,"¹¹ and this seems more like the maintenance of the status quo than it does an agency proclaiming that "true communion, justice, salvation cannot be achieved unless there is an immediate corrective applied to the established order."¹² Similarly, the Evangelical Church was reduced to the defensive, for despite Martin Niemöller's "Confessing Church," established to counteract the Nazi's "German Christians" (a sect which sought to unite Christianity with Aryan doctrines of race), the fact is that the Lutherans too "were concerned solely with the preservation of autonomy and the freedom to teach."¹³ Second, both churches had a long tradition of rendering to Caesar the coin of the

¹⁰This in spite of Mother Mary Alice Gallin who asserts that "the churches--both Catholic and Protestant--'resisted'" while conceding that "there were repeated admonitions [by church leaders] to avoid violence." Mother Mary Alice Gallin, German Resistance To Hitler (Washington, D. C., 1961), see esp., "The Church and Political Resistance," pp. 203-229. As this study will show, successful resistance; that is, resistance aimed at eliminating the Nazi regime, had to employ the necessary instruments of violence to achieve this goal.

¹¹Bracher, pp. 371-372.

¹²Robert S. Cathcart, "New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically," Western Speech, XXXVI (Spring, 1972), 87.

¹³Bracher, p. 381.

realm. Thus, Martin Luther: "It is in no wise proper for anyone who would be a Christian to set himself up against his government, whether it acts justly or unjustly."¹⁴ And while the Catholics had more of a rebellious heritage, it was only a difference in degree, not in kind. Thus, Father Antony Koch in one of the best known texts on moral theology:

To employ illegal means is tantamount to sedition. No matter what the provocation, revolution against a legitimate government is forbidden, because revolution by its very concept is an attack upon actually existing and divinely sanctioned rights. Pius IX solemnly condemned the proposition that "It is permitted to withhold obedience from legitimate rulers, nay even to rebel against them."¹⁵

Third, there is the question of how closely these doctrines were followed. And here, a scene drawn from the files of the Gestapo may help to illustrate the churches retreat from political resistance. Prior to the attempt of July 20, 1944, Major Ludwig von Leonrod, who was designated to be the resister's liaison officer to the Munich Army District, discussed the question of political disobedience with his confessor, Chaplain Hermann Wehrle. Although the priest agreed that it would not be a sin to keep the plot secret, he nevertheless warned Leonrod not to take an active part in it,¹⁶ a theological distinction that escaped the judges of the "People's Court," since they duly condemned both men to death.

¹⁴Luther is quoted in Preserved Smith, The Age of the Reformation (New York, 1920), pp. 594-595.

¹⁵Antony Koch, A Handbook of Moral Theology, ed., and trans., Arthur Preuss, 5 Vols., (St. Louis, 1918-1921), i, p. 168.

¹⁶Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung, ed., Karl Peter (Stuttgart, 1961), pp. 262; 288; 321.

In thus eliminating the churches as agencies of opposition, there is no intention to deny the importance of men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Father Alfred Delp, Pastor Eugen Gerstenmaier, and a number of other clerics who joined the ranks of the anti-Nazis. Rather, it is to suggest that their presence in the resistance movement, like that of socialists such as Wilhelm Leuschner and Julius Leber, conservatives like Carl Goerdeler and Hjalmar Schacht, nobles like Helmuth von Moltke and Yorck von Wartenburg, and police officials like Hans Gisevius and Arthur Nebe, can be ascribed to individual decisions, based partly on ethical considerations and partly on political determination to overthrow Hitler's dictatorship.

So we come at length to the army, the only agency within the state that possessed the necessary strength to break the power of the Gestapo and topple the regime.¹⁷ And while its freedom too had been weakened--the influx of conscripts having transformed it into a "blunt sword" as

¹⁷While there is no mention in Griffin's formulation of an agency in the existing order serving as an instrument for the incipient movement to use in replacing the old (and in Cathcart's definition, status quo agencies are expressly denied such a role), Griffin himself, in applying his construct to the "New Left" Movement, makes specific references to "groups of long lineage" like the American Friends Service, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the War Resisters League, which the radicals employed in attempting to change the political system. Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetorical Structure of the 'New Left' Movement," Quarterly Journal of Speech, L (April, 1964), 113-134. Also, if the opposition's use of the army constitutes a change in the formulation, the point should be made that the scene of Nazi Germany necessitated such use, and the hope expressed that conditions sometimes alter categories. Finally, it might be added that even at this early date, resistance plans were developed to where they included a military takeover only as a transitional phase. Gerhard Ritter cites General Halder as saying that he and Witzleben, two of the major military figures in the climactic stage of this act, "had pledged themselves to resign immediately after the putsch." Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1958), p. 103fn.

General von Leeb wrote,¹⁸and the oath and other indoctrinary measures having brought it closer to Hitler's ideology--it still possessed sufficient independence to have successfully resisted two major efforts by Himmler (who fancied himself the party theorist) to further permeate its ranks with Nazi dogma, once when it rejected a campaign to deprive chaplains of their military status,¹⁹and again when it refused to form a "National Socialist Soldiers' Ring" which officers and men would join upon discharge and where they presumably would become imbued with the proper spirit.²⁰ Moreover, the army still provided a form of sanctuary for those who wanted to escape the more pervasive Nazi influences in civilian life as well as the continual threat of the Gestapo--a kind of "inner emigration" as it was called, because within the army Hitler continued to prevent some kinds of SS interference, and thus the writ and dossier of the Gestapo literally stopped at the front door of the War Ministry, a fact which will become increasingly important as the discussion turns to the resistance center located in the Abwehr or Army Intelligence Service. Finally, there was the officer corps itself, "verwassert," or "watered down," as General von Schweppenburg put it,²¹since expansion had led to the lesser levels of command becoming increasingly Nazified, and even the

¹⁸Leeb is quoted in Richard Grunberger, The 12-Year Reich (New York, 1971), p. 139.

¹⁹Alan Clark, Barbarossa (New York, 1966), p. 41.

²⁰John Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis Of Power (New York, 1964), p. 357.

²¹Geyr von Schweppenburg, The Critical Years (London, 1952), p. 202.

higher levels were becoming gradually infiltrated with party officers like Reichenau and Busch and opportunists like Keitel and Jodl.

Yet, despite these incursions, the General Staff still possessed a high degree of social cohesiveness, a considerable amount of prestige with the Burgertum, and something no other potential resistance group could boast--weapons, and the opportunity to use them if the need arose. The difficulty, of course, was that most of the officers had not yet perceived any need, either for an obstacle to Hitler's plans of conquest, or for an institutional power base to overthrow the regime. Certainly, some shift in attitude had occurred within the high command after the clarity of Hitler's exposition at the November conference,²² but it would take an even greater shock--say, an attack upon their agency--for more of the generals to realize that the Fuehrer intended to fully "coordinate" them into his "New Order" with all that that implied. As noted at the close of the last chapter, that shock came in the form of the Blomberg-Fritsch crisis, the opening scene of this act.

The affair began in early January 1938 when War Minister Blomberg, a widower, "married a child of the common people," as Gisevius delicately puts it.²³ Others, less delicate, called the new Frau Feldmarschall a

²²General Fritsch in particular exhibited a strong negative attitude toward the Fuehrer's dreams of conquest. After meeting with Neurath and Beck, it was agreed that Fritsch would speak personally to Hitler in order to impress the military impossibilities of his plans upon him, while Neurath was to seek a later meeting to present objections based upon foreign policy considerations. Fritsch met with Hitler on November 9. Unfortunately, no record of their conversation has survived, but the force of the Army Chief's arguments can be judged by Hitler's refusal to see Neurath for another two months.

²³Hans Gisevius, To The Bitter End, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (Boston, 1947), p. 219.

"whore,"²⁴and in fact, Erna Blomberg, nee Gruhn, had a police record of soliciting and posing for pornographic pictures that were obscene enough to sell briskly. In any event, when her dossier reached Hitler, he decided that Blomberg would have to go, and the issue of his successor arose. The obvious choice would have been General Fritsch, the Army Commander-in-Chief, whose post had supplied all German and Prussian War Ministers in the past. But at this point, intrigue, in the somewhat unlikely shape of Goering and the more sinister figure of Himmler, entered the scene. An old collection of documents, purporting to incriminate Fritsch for homosexuality, was resurrected from Gestapo files and placed before the Fuehrer. The fact that the same dossier had been presented to Hitler two years earlier, and that he had rejected it then, ordering the documents to be destroyed and the case closed,²⁵provides almost inescapable proof that his acceptance of them on this occasion was motivated less by his fear that Fritsch was a little strange than by his hope that the accusations would provide him an opportunity to rid himself of a man who was becoming a stumbling block and to undercut the army as a semi-autonomous power factor.

This is in fact what happened. Goering, who had ambitions of becoming War Minister himself, and Himmler, who had ambitions of making the army ideologically sound, combined forces to discredit

²⁴Hossbach refers to telephone calls to the War Ministry from members of the world's oldest profession who were celebrating the social rise of their sister. Friedrich Hossbach, Zwischen Wehrmacht und Hitler (Hanover, 1949), p. 106.

²⁵Gisevius recounts this earlier episode; pp. 227-228.

the Army Chief sufficiently to enable Hitler to exploit the situation and suspend Fritsch from duty.²⁶ Even worse, on the day of his leave-taking, Blomberg, whose misery needed company, made no effort to defend Fritsch against Hitler's accusations of perversion, and in fact supported them by agreeing that the Army Chief, who was a middle-aged bachelor, might indeed be homosexual.²⁷ With Fritsch's candidacy thus dismissed, Blomberg suggested Goering for War Minister, and when the Fuehrer turned down that nomination on grounds of Goering's idleness, Blomberg then recommended that Hitler take the post himself²⁸--a solution that must have struck the Fuehrer as fortuitous since it gave him the opportunity to become actual as well as legal commander of the armed forces by abolishing the War Ministry and establishing in its place a Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht), with himself as its head and fuehrtreu men like Keitel and Jodl as its Chief of Staff and Director of Operations.²⁹ Also, Hitler took the opportunity to rid

²⁶The French Ambassador, Andre Francois-Poncet, who was an astute observer of the Nazi leaders, writes that "Hitler never lost his gift of profiting by circumstances." Andre Francois-Poncet, The Fateful Years, trans., Jacques Le Clercq (New York, 1949), p. 152.

²⁷Thus Hitler to Hossbach; p. 114.

²⁸Otto John quotes Field Marshal Rundstedt on the conversation between Hitler and Blomberg. Twice Through The Lines, trans., Richard Barry (London, 1972), p. 29.

²⁹From henceforth [ran the decree] I exercise personally the immediate command over the whole armed forces. The former Wehrmacht office of the War Ministry becomes the High Command of the Armed Forces and comes immediately under my command as my military staff. At the head of the staff of the High Command stands the former chief of the Wehrmacht office [Keitel]. He is accorded the rank equivalent to that of Reich Minister. The High Command of the Armed Forces also takes over the functions of the War Ministry, and the Chief of the High Command exercises, as my deputy, the powers hitherto held by the Reich War Minister." Quoted in Wheeler-Bennett, p. 372.

himself of sixteen additional high ranking generals who were retired, and forty-four other senior officers who were sent to lesser commands --men who in almost every instance had supported Fritsch in his opposition to the Fuehrer's war-making proposals.³⁰ Further, as a result of Neurath's objections to the November tour de horizon--objections which the Foreign Minister had raised on January 14 when he finally had obtained an interview with Hitler³¹--the Fuehrer also decided to retire his Foreign Minister (replacing him with Ribbentrop), as well as several inconvenient ambassadors who had opposed his diplomatic maneuverings as he attempted to construct an alliance system preparatory to war.³² And for good measure, Hitler dismissed Hjalmar Schacht, his Minister of Economics, who had been bombarding him with memoranda complaining about the regime's treatment of the Jews and the churches, and about the financial cost to the country as more and more resources were being diverted into rearmament programs.³³ Finally, Hitler replaced Fritsch as Commander of the Army with General Walther von Brauchitsch, an officer who was not a particular advocate of Nazi ideology, but whose impending divorce was being eased by a financial

³⁰Telford Taylor argues that the wholesale dismissal was an attempt to remove "outspokenly anti-Nazi officers" as well as a "desire to 'loosen up' the top of the ladder and make possible the promotion of several generals with definite pro-Nazi sympathies." Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika (New York, 1954), p. 170

³¹See footnote 22, page 7.

³²This is the conclusion of Herbert von Dirksen, Ambassador to Japan, and one of the men effected. Herbert von Dirksen, Moscow Tokyo-London (Norman, 1949), pp. 181-182.

³³Hjalmar Schacht, Account Settled, trans., Edward Fitzgibbon (London, 1949), pp. 87-88.

settlement provided by the Fuehrer,³⁴ and whose second wife, whom he married a few months later, was described by Hassell as being "150 percent Nazi."³⁵

Fritsch's supporters (and they included military men and civilians, many of whom saw him as the ultimate guarantor of army intervention if Nazi abuses exceeded all limits),³⁶ were determined to resist the machinations of Goering and Himmler. When they discovered that the documents incriminating Fritsch had been fabricated and that the major witness--an ex-convict named Schmidt--had been pressured by the Gestapo into perjuring himself (he had been "persuaded" to change the name of Frisch, an officer he had blackmailed for sexual peccadillos, to Fritsch), they assumed there was sufficient evidence to expose Goering and Himmler's intrigues and perhaps even Hitler's role in the frame-up.³⁷ To Beck and through him to Brauchitsch, they pressed for action: a counter-coup against the Gestapo, or Fritsch's immediate reinstatement, or at the least, a Court of Honor to clear the former Army Chief's name and unmask his false accusers.³⁸

They got the minimum. Fritsch himself could not perceive the larger implications of an attack in which he was only the immediate

³⁴Milton Shulman quotes a Canadian Army intelligence report on Hitler's financial help to Brauchitsch. Milton Shulman, Defeat in the West (New York, 1948), p. 10.

³⁵Hassell, p. 228.

³⁶John makes this point concerning a number of anti-Nazis; p. 26.

³⁷Evidence of Hans Gisevius before the International Military Tribunal, April 25, 1946. Trial of the Major War Criminals, 42 Vols., (Nuremberg, 1947), xii, p. 203. Hereafter abbreviated as TMWC.

³⁸Gisevius mentions all these possibilities; pp. 248-254.

and observable target.³⁹ Rundstedt, the army's senior officer, was convinced that the military could take care of its own affairs.⁴⁰ Brauchitsch, the new Army Commander, favored the judicial approach as the best guarantee that Fritsch would not be railroaded on trumped-up charges.⁴¹ And even Beck was opposed to "mutiny," preferring to believe that National Socialism still had "possibilities of development."⁴²

With understandably great reluctance, the Fuehrer agreed to a military court martial, although he insisted that it be held in camera to avoid offending public sensibilities. Also, he exercised his right to appoint judges, choosing Brauchitsch, Admiral Raeder, two magistrates from the federal supreme court, and as presiding judge, the highest ranking active officer in Germany--Field Marshal Hermann Goering.⁴³ Behind the scenes, Hitler tried to prejudice the court's investigations by instructing Franz Guertner, the Minister of Justice, as to "which end of the rope to pull."⁴⁴ But most importantly, the Fuehrer

³⁹Hossbach relates Fritsch's incapacity in this regard; p. 141.

⁴⁰Gisevius writes that when Schacht visited Rundstedt in early February, he was told that the military leadership would know what to do if and when it chose to act; p. 238.

⁴¹Beck's biographer states that Beck's "repeated use of his influence" with Brauchitsch contributed greatly to Hitler's giving up his resistance to a military court martial. Wolfgang Foerster, Generaloberst Ludwig Beck (Munich, 1953), p. 91.

⁴²Beck is quoted by General Halder in Peter Bor, Gesprache mit Halder (Wiesbaden, 1950), p. 113.

⁴³Goering's elevation to Field Marshal was a consolation prize for not being named War Minister.

⁴⁴Guertner, who knew which end of the rope he preferred to pull, made his assistant, Hans von Dohnanyi, his representative in the case. Dohnanyi, who was Dietrich Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law and an ardent anti-Nazi, obtained the help of Dr. Karl Sack, the Army's Judge Advocate General, and with the assistance of other Fritsch supporters,

decided to divert attention from this internal crisis to an external one.

Admittedly, the annexation of Austria had always been one of Hitler's aims, as he himself stated in Mein Kampf, and more recently in the secret conclave of November 1937. But there are indications that he accelerated the pace of events so that the Austrian situation could serve as an escape from the ever-increasing dangers of the proceedings against Fritsch. The first evidence of this came on January 31 when Jodl noted in his diary: "Fuhrer wants to divert the spotlight from the Wehrmacht. Keep Europe gasping and by replacements in various posts not awaken the impression of weakness but of a concentration of forces. Schuschnigg [the Austrian Chancellor] should not gain courage but tremble."⁴⁵ The next evidence comes from Papen, one of the just dismissed ambassadors, who reported to Hitler at Berchtesgaden on February 5. Papen had been working in Vienna to improve relations between the two countries, to which end he had repeatedly suggested that Hitler meet with Schuschnigg in an attempt to resolve their differences. As his last official act, Papen made the recommendation once more. The Fuehrer, who until then had acted distraught and weary, suddenly became enthusiastic. "That is an excellent idea," he said, "please go back to Vienna and arrange for

made available to the Army Chief's lawyers much evidence helpful to their case. Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, trans., Eric Mosbacher, et. al. (New York, 1970), pp. 531-532.

⁴⁵Jodl's diary for the period January 4, 1937 to August 25, 1939, appears in Nazi Conspiracy And Aggression, 10 Vols., (Washington, D. C., 1946), iv, pp. 345-390. Hereafter abbreviated as NCA. This particular entry can be found on page 369.

us to meet within the next few days."⁴⁶

There is no need to recount the details of the well-known story of Schuschnigg's trip to Berchtesgaden--of Hitler's tirades about Austrian provocations, or his threats of immediate German military intervention.⁴⁷ Suffice to say that the Fuehrer forced the Austrian Chancellor into a position from which he saw no escape short of his fatal announcement of a plebiscite which Hitler was then able to use as an excuse to march. And that brings us to the final pieces of evidence --Goering's interventions, if such they can be called, first to push the indecisive Hitler forward when he hesitated in issuing the final orders,⁴⁸ and second to pressure the reluctant Nazis in Vienna to demand a new government and the dispatch of German troops to "prevent bloodshed."⁴⁹

Goering, perhaps even more than Hitler, was in an exposed position in the Fritsch affair, and while there is only circumstantial evidence linking him to the interplay between the crisis over the former Army Chief's trial and the mounting pressures on Austria, it would be naive to discount his ability to understand that military action would at least furnish an excellent reason for interrupting the proceedings of

⁴⁶Franz von Papen, Memoirs, trans., Brian Connell (New York, 1953), pp. 407-408.

⁴⁷Probably the most accurate account of Schuschnigg's visit to Berchtesgaden is in his Austrian Requiem (New York, 1946), p. 12ff.

⁴⁸Jodl's diary refers to Goering's intervention on the evening of March 9-10; NCA, iv, p. 362.

⁴⁹The transcript of Goering's twenty-seven telephone calls to Vienna, recorded ironically enough by his own wiretaps, appear in Ibid., v, pp. 629-654.

the court, and at most, provide an entirely different climate for the trial if the attack against Austria was successful.⁵⁰ Thus, the court had hardly assembled on the morning of March 11 when it was adjourned by Goering's dramatic announcement of a delay "for reasons touching on the interests of the Reich."

Germany resounded with triumph and the noise echoed through the military court when Fritsch's trial resumed on March 17. Vienna had capitulated, the Wehrmacht had achieved another bloodless victory, and Hitler's reputation, at least in German eyes, was enhanced immeasurably. Plebiscites in the two countries registered ninety-nine percent approval of the annexation,⁵¹ another Versailles restriction had been broken, and at least for the younger soldiers, who had never known the specter of the trenches in 1914-18, the act of war must have seemed like General Elfeldt's description to Otto John: "It was a walk-over."⁵²

Reflecting the new mood, Goering could not have been more helpful in obtaining "justice" for Fritsch. He badgered the prosecution witness unmercifully, extracting from him the admission that his earlier accusation was a lie. And if he failed to press Gestapo officials as closely on the matter of the falsified documents, at least Fritsch himself was satisfied with Goering's assistance. As he said

⁵⁰This is the conclusion of Joachim Fest, Hitler, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1973), pp. 546-547; and Harold Deutsch, Hitler And His Generals (Minneapolis, 1974), pp. 341-343.

⁵¹Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study In Tyranny (New York, 1953), p. 382.

⁵²John, p. 30.

to Rundstedt later, Goering "had behaved very decently."⁵³ The verdict, of course, was a foregone conclusion: "Proven not guilty as charged, and acquitted."⁵⁴ But it was meaningless as far as repairing the damage to the independence of the army, or securing Fritsch's reinstatement. The former Army Commander received a telegram from the Fuehrer congratulating him on the recovery of his health, but he was not returned to his post, Hitler rehabilitating him only to the extent of restoring his rank and later appointing him as honorary colonel to the artillery regiment in which he had first served as a lieutenant. Brauchitsch, when he was approached by some of Fritsch's supporters, complaining about the inadequacy of the results, replied that in the changed circumstances, he could no longer be responsible for further action.⁵⁵ And Rundstedt, who agreed to deliver Fritsch's challenge to Himmler for a pistol duel, carried the note for some time, and finally let the matter drop.⁵⁶

Surprise has been expressed in some quarters as to why the army did not revolt at the time of the Blomberg-Fritsch crisis.⁵⁷ As the foregoing narrative shows, part of the reason must be attributed to Hitler's mastery of the scene. For one thing, there was his achievement in confining knowledge of the affairs to the smallest possible

⁵³Fritsch is quoted in Wheeler-Bennett, p. 378.

⁵⁴The court documents for the Fritsch case appear as Appendix IV in Schlabrendorff, Secret War Against Hitler.

⁵⁵Wheeler-Bennett, p. 378.

⁵⁶John, pp. 28-29.

⁵⁷See for example, William L. Shirer, The Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich (New York, 1960), p. 314ff; and Wheeler-Bennett, p. 378ff.

circle, as Gisevius discovered when he tried to recruit General von Kluge, the District Commander at Meunster, who was wholly unaware of what was taking place in Berlin.⁵⁸ For another, there was Hitler's ability to mask his real design, as indicated by the fact that he made such sweeping changes in so many state agencies, thus reducing Fritsch's dismissal and the further "coordination" of the army to one act among many.⁵⁹ For a third, the combination of scandals--Blomberg's real one and Fritsch's contrived one--tended to confuse the issue even for those soldiers who had knowledge,⁶⁰ as did the fact that Fritsch was a life-long bachelor; thus, it is not difficult to imagine that some people, officers among them, were prepared to think the worst. For a fourth, the Fuehrer's decision to aggravate the Austrian crisis demonstrated his capacity to seize opportunity on the wing, and his, and more importantly, Goering's determination to see the annexation through to a successful conclusion meant, as Alan Bullock observes, "the fulfillment of a German dream older than the Treaty of Versailles."⁶¹ Thus, Hitler's popularity, especially with soldiers who had just returned from what Manstein calls a "Blumenkorso,"⁶² or "floral war," might have been extremely difficult to counteract, and a general staff

⁵⁸Gisevius, pp. 205; 208; confirmation for this state of affairs can be found in Jodl's diary where he quotes General Viebahn, who had just come to Berlin from a post in the provinces, to the effect that if the troops there learned of what was going on, there would be a revolution; NCA, iv, p. 368.

⁵⁹This is Schacht's opinion; p. 112.

⁶⁰Guderian confirms this; Panzer Leader, trans., Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York, 1957), p. 30.

⁶¹Bullock, p. 382.

⁶²Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, trans., Anthony Powell (London, 1958), p. 22.

leading a revolt without troops is hardly a sign of a successful uprising.

Partly, however, Meinecke's verdict on military professionals provides part of the reason for the army's failure: "A full understanding of the totality of historical experience was lacking in these technicians of war. Therefore they could commit fatal blunders in their estimation of such matters as lay beyond the grasp of technical-military comprehension."⁶³ Again, the narrative has shown numerous examples of the officers' "trained incapacities." Blomberg's inability to recognize what a disastrous thing he had done in recommending that Hitler become his own War Minister;⁶⁴ Fritsch's mistaken view that he and not the army was the target of Nazi intrigues; Brauchitsch's unwillingness to seek justice beyond the letter of the law; Rundstedt's insensitivity to what was at stake--these and other errors in judgment, many of which can be ascribed to military tradition, demonstrate the vulnerability of men who would have had to do violence to the thought patterns of a lifetime to compete successfully with their Fuehrer.⁶⁵ Carl Goerdeler found this out when he spoke in Leipzig to the staff of the Dresden Command, among whose members was Friedrich Olbricht, later to become one of Hitler's chief opponents. On this occasion, however, Olbricht refused to

⁶³Friedrich Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, trans., Sidney B. Fay (Boston, 1969), p. 42.

⁶⁴It was only after the war, when Blomberg recounted his conversation with Hitler to Fritsch's attorney, that the implications of his recommendation dawned on him, and then he begged his listener not to repeat what he had said. Hossbach, p. 115.

⁶⁵Cathcart writes that "two Burkean ratios--agency-scene and agency-act" are essential to explain the inception of a movement. Cathcart, 87. Modifying his choices somewhat, let me suggest that two

act without directives from the War Ministry.⁶⁶ And even Ludwig Beck, who was to become head of the resistance movement, is quoted by Franz Halder in these troubled times as saying that "mutiny and rebellion are words not to be found in the German soldier's dictionary."⁶⁷ In sum, then, Hitler had taken the measure of his officers, "these antique knights with their dusty conceptions," as he called them.⁶⁸ But his underhanded blow against their commander and the independence of their agency had cracked old forms, changed some habits, and started the political education of more than a few of them. As General Thomas wrote in 1945, "The Fritsch affair entailed the beginning of my inner-break with the system."⁶⁹ And Karl Sack described the scandal as the point of departure for many of those officers who would engage in resistance activities for the next six years.⁷⁰

ratios--agency-scene and agent-act--are central to the whole German Resistance Movement. The agency-scene ratio involves those instruments within any social order which have the potential to change it, as for example, the army. The trouble, however, is that agents within an agency usually act in terms appropriate to it--its customs, usage, caste codes, and the like, thereby making it difficult for them to employ the agency for change if such employment is not in harmony with these traditions. The agent-act ratio, by contrast, is not so extrinsically defined; instead, the agent has freed himself from the shibboleths of agency, becomes the "author of his acts," and possesses the capacity to redefine the scene in which he finds himself. Kenneth Burke, A Grammar Of Motives (Berkeley, 1969), pp. 15-16.

⁶⁶Ritter, p. 78.

⁶⁷Bor, p. 113.

⁶⁸Siegfried Westphal, The German Army in the West (London, 1951), p. 79.

⁶⁹Georg Thomas, "Gedanken und Ereignisse," Schweizerische Monatshefte, Heft 9 (December, 1945), 538.

⁷⁰Deutsch, p. 416.

For purposes of this study, perhaps the most important result of the Blomberg-Fritsch crisis was the linking up of resistance circles, largely conservative, which now took place for the first time⁷¹--a drawing together of a "saving Remnant ('prophets,' aggressor rhetors, who 'see through' the existing order). . .[and whose] enactment of the Negative [is] precipitated by some. . .cluster of events and attitudes that symbolize the unacceptable. . ."⁷² Of primary importance was the group led by Carl Goerdeler, the commonly acknowledged "motor" or the opposition.⁷³ Like so many other members of the "decent Germany," Goerdeler "as little as most Germans fathomed from the beginning the full demonic nature of the National Socialist Movement."⁷⁴ As Lord Mayor of Leipzig, he accepted the job of Price Commissioner in the Nazi Government (a position he had held under Chancellor Bruening), in part because he thought the post would provide him a forum from which he could "exert a moderating influence,"⁷⁵ and in part because he "shared in that general yearning of Germans of that period. . .that the split within the nation which had become

⁷¹There is no mention in resistance accounts of left-wing political groups joining up at this time, probably because the leadership of the Social Democratic Party was still imprisoned in concentration camps.

⁷²Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," in Critical Responses To Kenneth Burke, ed., William H. Rueckert (Minneapolis, 1969), p. 462.

⁷³Schacht quotes Joseph Mueller, another resistance member, as saying that Goerdeler "was a motor which made too much noise." Schacht, p. 257.

⁷⁴Ritter, p. 29.

⁷⁵Rothfels, p. 84.

so intolerable. . . might be healed by the new comradeship of all classes and parties."⁷⁶

Certainly, Goerdeler was a patriot. A Prussian by birth and a nationalist by disposition, he opposed the Versailles Diktat as much as the Nazis, although the means he advocated for its revision differed significantly from those employed by Hitler, as subsequent discussion will reveal. It was, therefore, only by degrees, that Goerdeler discovered, as he wrote in 1944, that "the signs of degeneration" were not "counterbalanced by more hopeful inclinations."⁷⁷ Probably, his personal Rubicon was crossed in 1936 when he was asked to prepare a report on Germany's economic future. Using finances as a wedge, he argued that only by being more conciliatory to the Jews, the churches, and the Freemasons, could the Reich hope to win foreign confidence and economic aid. Also, in keeping with his conservative bent, he added that strict fiscal policies would have to be followed, even at the cost of rearmament.⁷⁸ Goering, who was Hitler's Commissioner for Four Year Plans, called the report "entirely useless" because of its many suggestions for moderation, economic and otherwise, and Goerdeler was thereafter largely excluded from any part in the decision-making process, although given his characteristic optimism, he "continued in spite of everything to try to influence at least those ministers with whom he was personally friendly."⁷⁹

⁷⁶Ritter, p. 29.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 31-32.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 34.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 35. This pattern of trying to work within the

The rebuff at the federal level had its consequences locally. As Lord Mayor of Leipzig, Goerdeler had been able to forestall many of the worst excesses by party leaders because of his national office. But now this changed. The symbol of his difficulties was a statue of the Jewish composer, Felix Mendelssohn, which stood before the city's concert hall. Since the Machtubernahme, local Nazi officials had been pressing for its removal, a demand Goerdeler was able to resist with help from Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry.⁸⁰ But when he went to Helsinki for a speaking engagement in the fall of 1936, these officials seized the opportunity to remove the statue, and when Goerdeler returned and ordered that it be put back at the threat of his resignation, his demand was met with a flat refusal. The next day, he resigned.⁸¹

Upon leaving Leipzig, Goerdeler looked for an administrative job outside government. A proposal from Krupp was vetoed by Hitler who probably sensed the potential danger of a man with Goerdeler's views serving in the

system, of being rebuffed and forced outside, is one that reoccurs with many of the conservative resistance figures. And while it is not explicitly included in the dramatic formulation, it is at least implicit in Cathcart's examples. "The abolition movement began, not when individuals became aggrieved over the fact of slavery, but when, perceiving that slavery would never be abolished under the Constitution, they demanded the release of all slaves, and when the spokesmen of the established order responded in turn that the abolitionists' real desire was to destroy the system of private property and free enterprise. The women's suffrage [sic] movement began when women, perceiving that they would never get the vote through the evolution of the existing order, demanded the ballot, and when most men, and a few women, responded in their turn that the suffragists' real purpose was to destroy the family and defy the laws of God." Cathcart, 87-88.

⁸⁰Ritter, p. 35.

⁸¹The details of Goerdeler's difficulties in Leipzig are recounted by Eberhard Zeller, The Flame Of Freedom, trans., R. P. Heller and D. R. Masters (London, 1967), p. 49.

councils of heavy industry.⁸² But no objection was raised when the Stuttgart firm of Robert Bosch offered him a post as financial adviser. Bosch had gathered around himself a little group of men who had come to oppose the Nazi dictatorship--some of his top executives, the city's retired police chief, several local church leaders, and a man who will become more important as the drama of the resistance movement reaches denouement in the months prior to July 1944--Dr. Carl Stroelin, the Lord Mayor of Stuttgart.⁸³

Within this circle, Goerdeler found attitudes in common with his own: revulsion at the treatment of the Jews, support for persecuted members of the Confessing Church, and above all, inquiry into ways and means to avoid the impending catastrophe of war.⁸⁴ Perhaps most important from Goerdeler's standpoint was the job itself. With its ill-defined responsibilities and its opportunities for travel, the position afforded him the necessary cover to journey all over the Reich, and Western Europe and the United States too, until the outbreak of war limited these broader horizons. Speaking to potential dissidents, appealing to men's consciences, demanding rebellion from those in positions to undertake it, writing endless letters and reports--in short, pursuing "a strategy designed to infuse increasing numbers of hearers. . .with attitudes of rejection toward the hierarchy"⁸⁵--he crisscrossed the country in a whirlwind of activity. And while it may

⁸²This is Schacht's opinion; p. 114.

⁸³Carl Stroelin would be Field Marshal Rommel's contact in the early months of 1944. See Hans Speidel, Invasion 1944 (New York, 1968), p. 68ff.

⁸⁴Ritter, pp. 80-81.

⁸⁵Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 463.

be true, as Eberhard Zeller writes, that in his quest for support, "he was so carried away with his own wishes for what ought to be that he oversimplified reality. . .tending sometimes to sketch the future in black and white, like a Utopian,"⁸⁶ it is equally true that without his work in recruitment, agitation, and tying together fragmented sectors there would often have been little movement in resistance affairs.⁸⁷

Goerdeler's association with Ludwig Beck dates from 1936.⁸⁸ The Army Chief of Staff, in keeping with the tradition of Moltke,⁸⁹ saw his role not only as an expert technician but also as an advisor with responsibility for his advice.⁹⁰ As we have seen, in Hitler's scheme of authority, such a function was almost impossible to achieve, largely because of the Fuehrer's insistence on keeping government experts in different fields carefully separated⁹¹--a sort of divide and conquer

⁸⁶Zeller, p. 51.

⁸⁷Gisevius makes this point; pp. 437-438. Goerdeler's name in resistance circles was "Der Wanderprediger," or "circuit rider," a title he earned both by his indefatigable journeys and the inspirational burden of his messages.

⁸⁸Ritter writes that a copy of Goerdeler's economic report to Goering was found in Beck's papers, initialed in his own handwriting and dated November 1936. Ritter, pp. 33-34.

⁸⁹On Helmuth von Moltke's philosophy of co-responsibility, see Walter Goerlitz, History Of The German General Staff, trans., Brian Battershaw (New York, 1954), p. 76.

⁹⁰Goerlitz notes that as early as 1935, Beck called upon the Department of Military Science to study the question of whether the theory of co-responsibility between soldier and statesman could be upheld in an authoritarian state. Although he received a negative answer, he gave orders for the principle to be re-established. Ibid., p. 288.

⁹¹Albert Speer recounts a time in 1943 when he broke this restriction, and his Fuehrer's exceedingly wrathful response. "What

strategy which allowed him to coordinate all information himself,⁹² and thus be in a position to answer military objections with economic arguments, political objections with military arguments, economic objections with political arguments, and so on.⁹³ In order to counter this division, Beck had organized contacts with officials in the Foreign Office and with other government bureaucrats, and he used their information to support his not always pleasant advice. Thus, he met Goerdeler, who provided him with economic data such as the memorandum which he had prepared for Goering in 1936.

At this time, the former mayor was more visionary than the staff officer, since Beck was still trying to work for change within the system. But both men agreed as far as ends were concerned, opposing the

was the idea of your giving the Chief of Staff your memorandum? If you have some information, kindly give it to me. You've put me in an intolerable situation. . . . It makes me out a liar. . . . I forbid you once and for all"--his voice rose to a scream--"to address memos to anybody but myself. Do you understand that? I forbid it!" Albert Speer, Inside The Third Reich, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1970), pp. 409-410.

⁹²Nothing so clearly illustrates the relationship between order, secret, and communication than the manner by which Hitler isolated individuals who might have militated against his policies. His separation of underlings, with himself occupying the position where all lines of communication converged, is reminiscent of Griffin's description of a corrupt order in which "an adequate understanding. . . ('the understanding which is active in that it performs the act of unification')," no longer exists since the division or mystery between "different classes" or "kinds of beings" is nearly insurmountable, thereby resulting in "misunderstanding, the growth of absurdity and injustice, the increasing loss of communication and identification." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 458; 460.

⁹³Manstein comments on this "shift of ground" strategy. "Whenever Hitler perceived that he was not making any impression with his opinions on strategy, he immediately produced something from the political or economic sphere. Since he had knowledge of the political and economic situations with which no frontline commander could compete, his arguments were generally irrefutable." Manstein, p. 256.

extension of German "living space" at the cost of aggressive war,⁹⁴ and attempting to mitigate, if only in individual cases, the Nazi persecution of the Jews.⁹⁵ Also, Beck's efforts on behalf of General Fritsch (he had importuned Brauchitsch to obtain a Court of Honor from Hitler, and he had, with difficulty, persuaded Fritsch to challenge Himmler to a pistol-duel), had not gone unnoticed by his fellow officers, and a small group of them, including his deputy, Franz Halder, Halder's assistant, Heinrich von Stulpnagel, Carl Sack, the Judge Advocate General, Georg Thomas of the War Economy Department, and a number of officers in the Abwehr--younger men like Colonel Hans Oster, and a group whose "inner emigration" had led them to the ideal cover provided by the Military Intelligence Service--Helmuth Groscurth, Justice Delbruck, Franz Liedig, and Theodore Struenck⁹⁶--now began to look to Beck for leadership.⁹⁷ We will put aside for the moment any further discussion of

⁹⁴As soon as Beck learned of the details of the November 5 conference, he sent a memorandum opposing it to Fritsch. Foerster, pp. 80-82.

⁹⁵O'Neill notes that Beck was one of those who attempted to assist Jewish officers who had been dismissed from the Wehrmacht to find new positions in foreign armies. Robert J. O'Neill, The German Army and the Nazi Party, 1933-1939 (New York, 1966), p. 76.

⁹⁶Struenck's wife, Elisabeth, is one of the few women who played a prominent role in the resistance movement. During the Fritsch crisis, she was a courier for the general's supporters, and later, when she and her husband rented an apartment in Berlin, they turned it into a meeting place for members of the opposition. Goerdeler made it his headquarters whenever he was in the capital, and it was where the ex-Mayor first met with Claus von Stauffenberg. Theodore was executed by the Nazis after the failure of July 20, 1944. Elisabeth, although treated harshly by the Gestapo, survived. Gisevius, pp. 420; 428-429.

⁹⁷Wheeler-Bennett, pp. 395-396.

Ludwig Beck since his personal opposition and turning point are more appropriate to the crisis over the Sudetenland in the late summer of 1938. But concerning the problem of information, both he and Goerdeler agreed that the General Staff needed to be made aware of what was going on, and to this end they arranged a series of informal meetings between opposition experts and the officers. One of the main speakers was Hjalmar Schacht, the ex-Minister of Economics, and the burden of his message was that no such thing as a quick and easy Blitzkrieg was possible, and that Germany was vulnerable in any other kind of conflict.⁹⁸

Schacht is another conservative who was initially attracted to National Socialism. He believed "that despite his violent methods, Hitler was out to do the best he could for the German people, to give them peace and bread,"⁹⁹ and he accepted the Fuehrer's offer to become Minister of Economics because it provided him the "use of a fulcrum. . .inside the Government from which it might be possible. . .to prevent the adoption of false or unethical measures."¹⁰⁰ Unlike Goerdeler, Schacht was listened to, at least in the beginning. For one thing, his program of reducing imports while increasing exports closely accorded with Hitler's notion of autarky--of making Germany economically self-sufficient.¹⁰¹ For another, Schacht knew how to raise money, as indicated by his system of Mefo-Bills, an economic scheme by which the Reichbank dispensed credit

⁹⁸Schacht, p. 90.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 69.

notes, largely to army contractors, redeemable with interest after five years.¹⁰² By 1938, notes totaling twelve billion marks had been issued and Schacht was insisting that these must be honored,¹⁰³ a point he could never make Hitler understand since the Fuehrer's knowledge of economics was rudimentary at best,¹⁰⁴ and because Hitler's intention was to make good on government debts with booty won in conquest, a point which made little sense to Schacht since such a credit entry does not appear on ledger sheets.

Schacht also won some initial victories in areas other than economics. He was able to protect employees of his ministry from being replaced by "alte Kampfer," or "old fighters," who were clamouring for government jobs,¹⁰⁵ he prevented Robert Ley, Hitler's Labor Minister, from "coordinating" apprentices into the "German Workers' Front,"¹⁰⁶ and at a conference called by the Interior Ministry to discuss the racial calibration of "mischlings," or Germans of mixed Semitic-Aryan blood, the initial proposal of seventy-five percent Jewish blood as the dividing line between humanity and subhumanity was defeated when Schacht, not without some irony, suggested that within one generation the quarter Aryans would be half Aryans, and within two generations, three-quarter Aryans, and surely a Thousand Year Reich had time for

¹⁰²For a complete account of the Mefo-Bill scheme, see Hjalmar Schacht, My First Seventy-Six Years, trans., Diana Pyke (London, 1955), pp. 317-318.

¹⁰³Schacht, Account Settled, pp. 53-55.

¹⁰⁴Bullock, p. 119.

¹⁰⁵Schacht, Account Settled, p. 73.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 73-74.

sixty years to pass.¹⁰⁷ But Schacht gradually made himself persona non grata with his Fuehrer. The many memoranda admonishing Hitler about acts of violence against the Jews and churches, the complaints about Gestapo terror tactics, and the warnings that excessive armaments were dislocating the economy,¹⁰⁸ all played a part in the Fuehrer's decision to dismiss him.

While he was still a minister, but in the final period of his discontent, Schacht was instrumental in arranging for Goerdeler to obtain a passport and letters of introduction to friends abroad,¹⁰⁹ the aim being to contact foreign politicians and financiers in order to convince them that another Germany existed besides Hitler's Reich.¹¹⁰ It is beyond the scope of this study to detail all of Goerdeler's meetings, but

¹⁰⁷Schacht, Account Settled, pp. 75-77.

¹⁰⁸These complaints are detailed in Ibid., pp. 87-92. See also, First Seventy-Six Years, esp., Schacht's memorandum to Hitler of May 3, 1935, and his "Koenigsberg Speech" of August 18, 1935; pp. 347-348; 349-351. That Schacht spoke out directly to Hitler is confirmed by Speer who writes of hearing the Fuehrer "shouting at his Finance Minister, evidently in extreme excitement. We heard Schacht replying firmly in a loud voice. The dialogue grew increasingly heated on both sides and then ceased abruptly. Furious, Hitler came out on the terrace and ranted on about his disobliging, limited minister who was holding up the rearmament program." Speer, p. 145.

¹⁰⁹Ritter, pp. 81-82.

¹¹⁰These contacts abroad constitute another departure from Cathcart and Griffin's explicit formulations, both of which leave the reader with the impression that only two hierarchies--an existing one and its incipient opponent--are involved in dialectic conflict at any given moment. Based on Kenneth Burke's treatment of orders of motivation, it is possible to argue that more than two hierarchies can be involved in the struggle of one movement trying to supplant another. "As regards 'autonomous' activities, the principle of Rhetorical identification may be summed up thus: The fact that an activity is capable of reduction to intrinsic, autonomous principles does not argue that it is free from

two in particular need to be recounted, the one because it suggests the nature of political contacts between the opposition and the Western Powers, the other because it illustrates the carelessness of many of these early resisters.

Goerdeler's political contact was with Sir Robert Vansittart, the British Diplomatic Advisor and a man whose dislike of all things German is revealed by the fact that his name subsequently became the rallying cry for anti-appeasers in Britain.¹¹¹ To him, Goerdeler spoke as a nationalist, stressing the need for concessions in the Sudetenland and the Polish Corridor, and urging that some sort of agreement be worked out between the German Opposition and the British Government which could then be followed by mutual cooperation among all the European states.¹¹² Vansittart, who was distressed by the recent annexation of Austria, replied that the most which could be granted was a degree of

identification with other orders of motivation extrinsic to it. Such other orders are extrinsic to it, as considered from the standpoint of the specialized activity alone. But they are not extrinsic to the field of moral action as such, considered from the standpoint of human activity in general." Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric Of Motives (New York, 1955), p. 27. And despite his formulation, one of Griffin's application essays, the "New Left" Movement, makes specific reference to "alliances" between liberals in America and socialists in Europe. Griffin, "Rhetorical Structure of the 'New Left,'" 113. Resistance attempts to gain support from other countries, beginning in this period, are an important feature of the movement's dialectic struggle; thus, the need to establish a place for it now in the theoretical framework.

¹¹¹The reference, of course, is to the term "Vansittartism." Those who doubt the extent of Sir Robert's Germanophobe are directed to his conclusions in Bones of Contention (London, 1945).

¹¹²Ritter, whose account is based on Goerdeler's memorandum, notes these points; pp. 83-84. For a similar view of the meeting from the British side, see Ian Colvin, None So Blind (New York, 1965), pp. 149-154.

autonomy for the Sudeten Germans, that any change in the status of the "Corridor" was out of the question, and he disapprovingly referred to Goerdeler's activities as "treasonable."¹¹³

It is unfortunate that the conversation was determined largely by each man's incapacities¹¹⁴--that neither could really understand what the other was trying to say. For Vansittart, Goerdeler's claim to the "Corridor" was an issue which not even Hitler had raised. And for the British to throw in with the resisters over the Sudetenland would have meant in effect conceding to a group as yet unorganized, to say nothing of being in power, what might be granted to Hitler as the price of ending his expansionist acts. For Goerdeler, the proposals were conditioned largely by the requirements of Germany's internal situation, and though premature, were not unlike that policy which later took Chamberlain to Munich. Thus, his point that while London had the right program, the choice of partner was wrong; that the resisters, unlike the Fuehrer, could be trusted and would, after their territorial claims had been

¹¹³Ritter, p. 84.

¹¹⁴An orientation, according to Burke, is an interpretation of the world that either trains or incapacitates us. Discussing Veblen's "trained incapacities," Burke explains it as "that state of affairs whereby one's very abilities can function as blindnesses." Goerdeler's thinking on foreign policy, for example, was dominated by his concern for the restoration of a decent Germany which would then become the center of a stable Europe, and the means he advocated for achieving it involved a reasonable imperialism by which Germany's neighbors would in some measure stand to gain. Vansittart, by contrast, accurately foresaw Hitler's crude power plays as a menace to Europe, but his arguments for force against Germany failed to distinguish Nazi from anti-Nazi, thereby reducing the possibility of foreign assistance in achieving Hitler's domestic overthrow. Means selection and trained incapacity are so important that Burke concludes: "Faulty means selecting, on the basis of an inadequate orientation, would seem to account for everything." Kenneth Burke, Permanence And Change (Indianapolis, 1965), pp. 7-17.

satisfied, enter into a close alliance with the Western Powers and return to the League of Nations. Thus, each man talked by the other with the result that their common purpose of opposing Hitler was lost in misplaced overtures and misunderstandings.

Goerdeler, in keeping with his optimism, and perhaps to provide an earnest of opposition intentions, spoke far too openly with his financial contacts at the Bank of England. Specifically, he said that a major government change was in prospect and that officers with whom he had been meeting during the Fritsch crisis would take the lead in it. Unfortunately, part of this filtered back through intermediaries to Hitler who demanded explanations and directed an investigation to be made by the Ministry of Justice.¹¹⁵ Largely through the help of Schacht, who pulled wires among his British friends, the inquiry was steered into safe channels and the Fuehrer was satisfied.¹¹⁶ But the near disaster left the former Economics Minister with a depleted fund of excuses and a determination to be more cautious in the future. As he put it, "Whoever makes up his mind to follow the dark path of the conspirator should have one capacity above all others: he should be able to keep his mouth shut"¹¹⁷ --and this, as we have seen, was precisely the capacity Goerdeler lacked. Thus, while Schacht joined forces with the ex-mayor's growing number of anti-Nazis, and even added to it by recruiting General Witzleben, the Commander of the Berlin Military District,¹¹⁸ it was to be a short-lived

¹¹⁵Gisevius, pp. 259-260.

¹¹⁶Schacht procured dementis from his friends in London.

¹¹⁷Schacht, p. 116.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 253-254.

alliance, lasting only through the first critical moments of the resistance movement.

It was at the time of the Fritsch crisis that Goerdeler made the acquaintance of Hans Gisevius, a former Gestapo official, and through him, SS Colonel Arthur Nebe,¹¹⁹ the Chief of the Reich's Criminal Police, Count Wolf Helldorf, the Police President of Berlin, and his deputy, Fritz von der Schulenburg. Helldorf and Nebe are important, in part because they provided a pipeline directly into the enemy camp,¹²⁰ and in part because they controlled armed men.¹²¹ Schulenburg is less important for the information he supplied or the men he commanded than for the ideas he conceived. While he more properly belongs to the Kreisau Kreis, of which he was a leading member, or to Stauffenberg's circle, whose political planner he was, Schulenburg was also part of Goerdeler's conservative group which was organizing in this period. Barely thirty when Hitler came to power, Schulenburg, like so many of his generation, welcomed the Nazi movement with its drive and revolutionary spirit. Young enough to be idealistic, he wanted to help the National Socialists make Germany a better place to live.¹²² Two years of government service in

¹¹⁹Goerdeler never knew the name of the SS Colonel who supplied him with information and the promised support of armed men. Nebe, who was accustomed to covering his tracks, was appalled at the ex-mayor's talkativeness and refused to attend meetings where Goerdeler was scheduled to appear. Heinz Hohne, The Order of The Death's Head, trans., Richard Barry (New York, 1970), p. 511.

¹²⁰Much of the information about Gestapo duplicity in the Fritsch case came from Nebe and Helldorf. Gisevius, p. 220ff.

¹²¹As a result of Gleichschaltung, the Criminal Police were nominally a part of Himmler's Gestapo. In reality, however, they were just a group of hard-bitten detectives similar to those found in large cities all over the world.

¹²²Zeller, p. 124.

East Prussia under Gauleiter Erich Koch, one of the most corrupt of the Nazi leaders,¹²³ soon disillusioned him, and when an opportunity came to join the police department in Berlin, he took it. According to later Gestapo reports, the impact of the Fritsch crisis marked Schulenburg's complete break with the regime.¹²⁴ For him, as for others, the army was the last foundation upon which a "decent Germany" could rest, and now the military too had been "gleichgeschaltet." In the police department, Schulenburg saw the possibility of working from inside to destroy the system. As he said to August Winnig in 1938, "I had to decide whether I should leave the service or become Hitler's Fouche. I chose the latter."¹²⁵

Gisevius too, is an important figure in the drama of the resistance movement, not least because he was one of its few members to survive and write about his experiences. Of more concern to us, however, is the fact that from his vantage point in the Gestapo, he had early on begun to collect documents on Nazi crimes--"instances of extortion, torture, and killing"¹²⁶--and such material would make interesting reading to the mass of Volksgenossen who were largely unaware of what was going on behind the scenes, or as evidence for the prosecution of Hitler, which, as we shall see, was the plan of the resistance leaders at this

¹²³Koch, who had originally made his way from the Rhineland to East Prussia by cycling--a margarine carton holding all his moveable assets--had within a decade control of a "foundation" with assets of more than 300 million marks. Grunberger, p. 95.

¹²⁴Spiegelbild, p. 87.

¹²⁵August Winnig, Aus 20 Jahren (Hamburg, 1948), p. 79.

¹²⁶Gisevius, p. 141.

time. In any event, Gisevius added his collection to the growing pile of evidence being gathered by Helmuth Groscurth, who was in charge of collating such material at the Abwehr, the agency to which Gisevius, though still a civilian outsider, had virtually attached himself.¹²⁷

The head of the Abwehr from 1934 until the agency's final demise ten years later was Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, a man described by his contemporary, Ernst von Weizsacker, as a type "particularly rare in Germany. . . as wise as a serpent, as pure as a dove."¹²⁸ Certainly, Canaris needed these qualities in dealing with Hitler, who, with his "Fingerspitzengefühl," or "finger-tip feeling," had an uncanny instinct for sensing how people felt about him.¹²⁹

¹²⁷Gisevius was removed from the Gestapo in 1934 because of his ill-concealed distaste for its activities. He found another position in the Ministry of the Interior, but his continuing opposition did not escape the notice of Reinhard Heydrich, who pressed for his dismissal. In 1935, Gisevius was again relieved and sent to police headquarters in Berlin. Then, in 1936, when Himmler gained control of all German police agencies, Gisevius was transferred from Berlin to a regional office of the Price Control Administration in Muenster. Contacts with Schacht, whose home and office telephones Gisevius had checked for wiretaps, led the Economics Minister to obtain a sinecure for him with a Bremen factory in which Gisevius never set foot. Until the outbreak of the war, Gisevius was informally part of the Abwehr the result of an earlier acquaintance with Hans Oster, Canaris' Chief of Staff. Finally, in the fall of 1939, Gisevius was attached to the Abwehr as a civilian agent. Gisevius, pp. 45-46; 133-134; 194-199; 212; and TMWC, xii, p. 195.

¹²⁸Ernst von Weizsacker, Memoirs, trans., John Andrews (Chicago, 1951), p. 143.

¹²⁹Percy Schramm, who kept Hitler's war diary from 1943 until the end, writes that there "was only one person whom Hitler was not able to see through, and this was Admiral Canaris. . . [who] was so perfect an intelligence officer that in his dealings with Hitler he was able to dissimulate successfully enough to deceive Hitler's intuitive sense about people being with him or against him." Percy Schramm, Hitler: The Man and the Military Leader, trans., Donald S. Detwiler (Chicago, 1971), p. 34.

Canaris is yet another of the conservatives who believed it was possible to work with Hitler. As he told his adjutant in the mid-thirties, "He is reasonable and sees your point of view, if you point it out to him properly. Man kann mit ihm reden."¹³⁰ Canaris had devoted his service to the Fuehrer because he regarded him as the restorer of national sovereignty and German hopes for the future.¹³¹ But his sensitivity--he has been described as a man who "hated violence"¹³²and was "too humane"¹³³--at length placed him at odds with the leaders of the Reich--their cruelty, their contempt for established law and order, and especially their inhumanity.¹³⁴ Though he seldom could bring himself to participate directly in coup planning--"Just get on with the job" was the way he would put it to subordinates¹³⁵--his outwardly good relations with Hitler served to cloak the real resistance work done in the Abwehr by Hans Oster, the motivating force of the agency on the Tirpitzufer and a group of kindred spirits who were as dedicated as he to the goal of ridding Germany of the Nazi plague.

¹³⁰Canaris is quoted in Ian Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence (London, 1951), p. 39.

¹³¹Zeller, pp. 23-24.

¹³²Erich Lahousen, quoted in Gisevius, p. 439.

¹³³Walter Schellenberg, Hitler's Secret Service, trans., Louis Hagan (New York, 1958), p. 342.

¹³⁴Lahousen writes about Canaris' "complete psychological breakdown under the impression of smoking and devastated Belgrade, where the stench of unburied corpses still lingered." Gisevius, p. 441.

¹³⁵Canaris is quoted in Karl Abshagen, Canaris, trans., Alan Brodrick (London, 1956), p. 221.

Hans Oster has been described by Schlabrendorff as "a man such as God meant men to be, lucid in mind, imperturbable in danger."¹³⁶ Staff Chief of the Abwehr, Head of its Central Division, organizer of conspiracy planning, and contact man between Goerdeler's circle and many other groups, Oster needed every strength for the number of parts he played.

Unlike so many of the conservatives whom we have talked about, Oster had never gone through a period of illusion about National Socialism and where it might be leading Germany. Gisevius writes that he was rather indifferent in his early attitudes toward Hitler's movement,¹³⁷ a not uncommon stance for an officer schooled in the tradition of avoiding politics. The murder of a former superior, General von Bredow, who was killed during the Roehm Putsch, was probably the first cause which moved him from neutrality toward disobedience,¹³⁸ and the dismissal of Fritsch, who was the man he most revered, was undoubtedly the final cause which carried him all the way to active political resistance. As he told Gestapo investigators after his arrest in 1944, "I have made Fritsch's case my own."¹³⁹

Quite early, Oster recognized the possibilities inherent in the Abwehr. With its protection from the Gestapo, its multitude of covert activities, its potential for contacts that cut on the bias across the hierarchy of the Fuhrerstaat, and above all, with its chief, his tacit acceptance and, on occasion, outright help, the Military Intelligence

¹³⁶Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, p. 15.

¹³⁷Gisevius, p. 143.

¹³⁸Zeller, p. 20.

¹³⁹Spiegelbild, p. 430.

Service offered a well-placed center from which to keep informed about events in the Reich and foreign countries too.

Oster himself never aspired to lead an uprising against the Fuehrer. That was a role for some officer with troops, or for a general who could claim the respect of the entire army. And for all the soldiers he could command, Oster might as well have been an Oberstleutnant ausser Dienst (Colonel, retired). And relative to his popularity, a number of his colleagues muttered "Helle Sachse" in reference to him, a term reserved for Saxons who seem a little too opinionated.¹⁴⁰ Thus, Oster contented himself with the backstage part of technician, mobilizing every effort to construct an intelligence net whose lines ran to police officials like Nebe and Helldorf, to officers like Beck and Halder in the Army High Command, to men like Dohnanyi and Sack in the Ministry of Justice, to the brothers Theo and Erich Kordt in the Foreign Office, and to allies like Schacht and General Thomas in the Reich's economic leadership.¹⁴¹ "Of course you are coming with us," was Oster's standard invitation to those he wanted to recruit for the resistance.¹⁴² And while there might have been doubts about his style or manner, there were none about his motives and integrity.

¹⁴⁰This is the verdict of Halder, who thought Oster too "undisciplined" and too sure of himself. Quoted in Harold Deutsch, The Conspiracy Against Hitler In The Twilight War (Minneapolis, 1970), p. 52fn.

¹⁴¹Gisevius describes Oster standing at his desk looking down at four or five telephones whose secret lines connected him with various authorities. "This is what I am," he quotes Oster as saying. "I facilitate communications for everyone everywhere." Gisevius, p. 424.

¹⁴²Oster is quoted in Deutsch, Hitler And His Generals, p. 420.

The last group to become associated with Goerdeler's efforts was a small opposition cell of career diplomats in the Foreign Office. Their leader was State Secretary Ernst von Weizsacker who, like Admiral Canaris, tolerated and even encouraged these men in their work against Hitler. In trying to assess Weizsacker's motives, it is difficult to generalize. In his memoirs, the ex-diplomat makes no claim to having been one of the extremists in the resistance--men who would have accepted war or even defeat as "the means to the end of removing Hitler."¹⁴³ Instead, Weizsacker worked to prevent war--to avert the catastrophe toward which the Fuehrer's policy was driving Germany. Perhaps the best characterization of the role the State Secretary chose was made by Bernardo Attolico, the Italian Ambassador to Germany, in a conversation with Carl Burckhardt, the High Commissioner for Danzig. It should be cited at some length because it highlights the difficulty resisters had in working within the system, and it provides an insight to the carelessness of these early anti-Nazis which we have already mentioned.

The Germans are not conspirators. Conspirators require everything they lack: patience, knowledge of men, psychology, tact. No, they will be locked up, disappear into camps. There can be no insurrection against governments of force which are ready at all times to fully employ the force at their command. To deal with such conditions as those here requires an endurance, a gift for dissimulation, a dexterity of a Tallyrand. . . . Where between Rosenheim and Eydtukenen can you find a Tallyrand!

There is one. . .one man. . .^[who] tries to play this difficult game. He is a German patriot and also in his way a European. He does everything to prevent war with a dedication worthy of admiration. The one thing that could become dangerous for him is the carelessness, the naivete, and the indiscretion of the so-called conspirators. . . . Yes, these people are dangerous for the man I have in mind; you know him, Weizsacker. . . .

¹⁴³Weizsacker, p. 215.

His aim. . .is the same as mine: prevent, prevent, prevent. . . everything else is easier. The easiest is to emigrate and protest; but also to start an insurrection, to make plots requires less strength and courage than to wring the most from hard reality, without pathos, again and again defeated, always starting anew, apparently sanctioning things one loathes, tough and without selfish gain, prudent, with constant watchfulness and tension.¹⁴⁴

The question has been raised as to how much "prevention" could be wrung from the "hard reality" of Hitler's New Order.¹⁴⁵ Certainly, there is no easy answer, and particularly not the simplistic one frequently advanced by Western historians who approach the issue "in a manner. . .akin to aesthetic criticism."¹⁴⁶ That is, they examine the choice, so difficult for opposition figures in government to resolve, of whether the advantages of remaining in the regime were worth the costs in what was unachieved, from the standpoint of a "Gods-eye view" which treats the timebound, spacebound issues confronting the resisters as "frozen statues of statements. . .like those of the Winged Victory of Samothrace or the David of Michelangelo,"¹⁴⁷ and conclude, to no one's surprise, that it was better to go than stay.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴Attolico is quoted in Carl J. Burckhardt, Meine Danziger Mission 1937-1939 (Munich, 1960), pp. 63-64.

¹⁴⁵Paul Seabury, The Wilhelmstrasse: A Study of German Diplomats under the National Socialist Regime (Berkeley, 1954).

¹⁴⁶This is Stephen Toulmin's charge against logical positivists who try to measure dialectic arguments with syllogistic rules. However, it seems equally applicable to historians who try to assess dialectic tensions from the vantagepoint of hindsight. Stephen Toulmin, The Uses Of Argument (Cambridge, 1955), p. 181

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸See for example, Wheeler-Bennett, pp. 385-389; Seabury, p. 150ff; Louis Namier, Conflicts: Studies In Contemporary History (New York, 1969), pp. 84-85; and Eliot Wheaton, Prelude to Calamity: The Nazi Revolution, 1933-1935 (Garden City, 1963), pp. 407-408.

In the stress of the times and circumstances, Hitler's opponents would find no such perfect solution. One of Canaris' biographers writes that the question of whether the Admiral could serve the regime and yet oppose it "robbed him of his peace of mind and inner poise." At last, Canaris decided to stick it out because he "knew that only those in high position could hope to bring down the regime. . . [and because] he felt a deep sense of responsibility for maintaining the protective screen behind which Oster and the younger officers who relied on him engaged in important and relentless sabotage against the Party."¹⁴⁹ Gisevius recalls that he and Oster had many arguments over whether Schacht or Beck should resign. On the one hand, there was the futility of "holding on to a position which no longer had any real validity or power;" on the other, there was the "weight a name carried" in impressing potential converts.¹⁵⁰ And Eberhard Bethge adds that Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who up to this time had been looking eagerly for people who could "summon up the courage to say No publicly, and were willing to accept dismissal from their posts in consequence. . . [now saw] the use of camouflage as a moral duty."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹Abshagen, pp. 119-120.

¹⁵⁰Gisevius, p. 381.

¹⁵¹Bethge, p. 527. Bonhoeffer's change in attitude illustrates another variation from the dramatistic formulation. Griffin writes that "Movements begin when some pivotal individual or group. . . gives voice to a No." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 462. The implication is that this expression of the Negative is publicly uttered, with the results which Bonhoeffer envisaged. However, in a totalitarian scene, the issue of effective resistance is more frequently a matter of working from within. Paul Scheffer wrote a description of Adam von Trott's basic position which could be used to sum up many of the men of the resistance. "The problem was this. The Leviathan, the monster of the state apparatus, had assumed a particularly dreadful and evil form. If one

In Weizsacker's case, the decision to remain in government was dictated mainly by his desire to keep the peace.¹⁵² If that meant that his moral fiber was not as strong as Oster's, who repeatedly warned foreign diplomats of the dates for attacks on their countries,¹⁵³ neither does it mean that the State Secretary's political innocence approached that of Goerdeler's, who wrote in 1943 that "I am ready to do all I can to get an interview with Hitler. I would say to him what has to be said, that his withdrawal is asked as a vital necessity for the nation."¹⁵⁴

were unwilling to allow it full freedom and unable to take a pistol in hand, the only alternative was to attempt to gain control of one of its tentacles and use it against itself. . . . A people cannot live without certain institutions. These institutions have to be maintained even if they have to be perverted. Opposition can only take place within the Leviathan itself. The whole thing is like a race: Am I doing more to destroy the Nazis by staying in my job than I am assisting them by helping to keep the machine running? This was Adam's basic dilemma, and it was on this point that we came to agree. . . . What it comes to is that the state is. . . so overpowering that one is compelled to play according to its rules, even if one is out to destroy it." Quoted in Margret Boveri, Treason In The Twentieth Century, trans., Jonathan Steinberg (New York, 1963), p. 190.

¹⁵²Weizsacker, p. 63.

¹⁵³See for example, Gisevius, pp. 454-455.

¹⁵⁴Goerdeler is quoted in Ritter, p. 242. Neither Griffin nor Cathcart make any reference to the potential conflict between ethics and politics. But an individual can become so driven by his moral impulses that his political judgment becomes impaired (and of course, the reverse is equally probable). The excerpt from Goerdeler's letter is a case in point. Another, more important one, took place on July 20, 1944. Gisevius writes that late in the afternoon, Beck was dictating a radio speech to him. "The basic idea was of the simplest: that it did not matter at all whether Hitler was dead or still living. Any leader whose immediate entourage included those opposed to him to the extent of attempting assassination must be considered morally dead." Ibid., p. 557. To recast Beck's argument, we could say that the failure to kill Hitler was unfortunate politically, but of no consequence ethically.

Whatever the mix between Weizsacker's ethical and political motives, the fact remains that in 1938, his goal of keeping the peace did not differ significantly from that of Goerdeler and his allies. Thus, identification was reached at the point of ends.¹⁵⁵ The State Secretary expressed his willingness to take part in resistance plans, and equally important, he directed the work of his subordinates in the movement: Adam von Trott zu Soltz; Albrecht von Kessel, Hans-Bernd von Haeften, and the brothers Erich and Theodore Kordt. For Erich, who was Chef de Cabinet to the Foreign Minister, the assignment was to serve as liaison to the officers and to keep them informed about diplomatic developments;¹⁵⁶ for Theodore, who was Counsellor of the Embassy in London, the assignment was to be ready to convince the British Government that a resolute opposition group really existed in Germany.¹⁵⁷

With the annexation of Austria a reality, half of the preliminary steps in his vision of Drang nach Osten which the Fuehrer had outlined at the November 5 conference was now completed. There remained only Czechoslovakia, the last barrier to the Balkans and the final staging area for his dream of "Lebensraum." In keeping with his penchant for

¹⁵⁵Agreement in one area at the expense of another is a function of Burke's pair-terms. "The members of the pair can be treated as in apposition." Grammar, p. 419. In "Rhetoric--Old and New," he lists a series of these pairs, including means and ends. "Are things disunited in 'body?' Then unite them in 'spirit.'" Would a nation extend its physical dominion? Lets talk of spreading its 'ideals.' Do you encounter contradictions? Call them 'balances.' Is an organization in disarray Talk of its common purpose. Are there struggles over means? Celebrate agreement on ends." Kenneth Burke, "Rhetoric--Old and New," in The Art Of Rhetoric, ed., Francis Connolly and Gerald Levin (New York, 1968), p. 455.

¹⁵⁶Ritter, p. 100.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

quick action once he had made up his mind, Hitler summoned Keitel, his new Military Chief of Staff, to a meeting on April 20, only eleven days after the Austrian plebiscite, to discuss the possibilities for a preemptive attack against Czechoslovakia. The upshot was dissatisfaction on the Fuehrer's part. The original plan had been drawn up prior to the rearmament program and was therefore out of date. It would have to be re-written.¹⁵⁸ Thus, Ludwig Beck, Staff Chief of Oberkommando des Heeres, or the Army High Command, was made aware of the immediacy of Hitler's next step, and he set about trying to stop it.

On May 7, Beck sent a memorandum to the new Army Commander, General Brauchitsch, which he intended for Brauchitsch to use in opposing the attack. In it, Beck condemned the Fuehrer's political assumption that an attack on Czechoslovakia would not lead to a general European war. "France," he warned, "has drawn closer to Britain. . .and it is to be accepted that if France on her own initiative marches against Germany for the sake of Czechoslovakia, Britain will side with France." Russia, he continued, who was also pledged to defend Czechoslovakia, "must be regarded as an increasingly more outspoken enemy of Germany. It must be accepted that she will take part in any war. . .with her air force and navy. . . ." Finally, Beck referred to the geographic, economic, and military weaknesses of the Reich and concluded that Germany lacked the "pre-requisite conditions. . .to withstand a major war."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸The events of this meeting are confirmed by Keitel; The Memoirs Of Field Marshal Keitel, ed., Walter Goerlitz, trans., David Irving (New York, 1965), p. 62.

¹⁵⁹The full text of Beck's memorandum is in Foerster, p. 82ff.

There is evidence that Brauchitsch made no use of these arguments,¹⁶⁰ but in the third week of May, an international crisis in which the Czech Government, alarmed over reports that German troops were massing on her borders, ordered partial mobilization, while the British, French, and Russian Governments delivered sharp diplomatic notes of protest,¹⁶¹ set the stage for Beck's second attempt. On May 29, Hitler, obviously angry at having been accused of something he had intended to do but had not yet done, called his military leaders, including Beck, to a conference at the Reich Chancellery. There, he spoke of his "unshakable will that Czechoslovakia shall be wiped off the map" while he offered assurances that Britain, France, and Russia would not intervene; after all, they had done nothing at the time of the reoccupation of the Rhineland or the annexation of Austria.¹⁶² The next day, a formal order was issued, the opening lines of which reflected the extent of the Fuehrer's unhappiness: "It is my unalterable resolve to crush Czechoslovakia in the near future by military action." The generals were instructed to make preparations "as quickly as possible."¹⁶³

The same day as the conference, Beck responded with a second memorandum. Again, he pointed to the relative weakness of Germany compared

¹⁶⁰Keitel writes that Brauchitsch showed him Beck's memorandum and that he advised the Army Chief not to take it to Hitler because the Fuehrer "would at once reject its political and military arguments out of hand." Keitel, p. 65.

¹⁶¹Goerlitz, pp. 327-328.

¹⁶²Hitler's statement is included in Nazi Conspiracy And Aggression, 10 Vols., (Washington, D. C., 1946), i, p. 521. Hereafter abbreviated as NCA.

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 522.

to a coalition of Great Powers. Certainly, the Czech Army might be defeated if the conflict could be kept localized, but that was not possible, and the "success of Hitler's foreign policy in the period 1933-38 was no guarantee that similar decisions would be successful in the future."¹⁶⁴

It was not Beck's specific memorandum which prompted the Fuehrer's next reply, although the fact that other generals were aware of, and in many instances, agreed with the Chief of Staff's arguments, certainly had something to do with it. On May 30, Hitler summoned his army leaders to a conference at Juterbog where he told them of his decision to deal with Czechoslovakia by force and he accompanied this with a general order fixing the date of the attack for "no later than October 1."¹⁶⁵ That there was division between the Fuehrer and his generals is revealed by Jodl's diary entry for that day: "The whole contrast becomes acute once more between the Fuehrer's intention that we must do it this year and the opinion of the Army that we cannot do it yet, as most certainly the Western Powers will interfere and we are not yet equal to them."¹⁶⁶

On June 3, Beck prepared yet another memorandum. In it, he repeated all his earlier contentions, but on this occasion, he insisted that Brauchitsch personally make these arguments to Hitler. That the Army Commander did so is indicated by two pieces of evidence, one

¹⁶⁴Beck's second memorandum is in Foerster, p. 90ff.

¹⁶⁵NCA., i, p. 522.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 527.

direct, the other indirect, but both dialectical.¹⁶⁷ To Brauchitsch, the Fuehrer responded with a blunt rebuff. "What kind of generals are these which I as head of state may have to propel into war? By rights, I should be the one seeking to ward off the generals' eagerness for war." And he succinctly defined the nature of the relationship he wanted with his officers. "I do not ask my generals to understand my orders, but only to carry them out."¹⁶⁸

In public, Hitler was more conciliatory. On June 13, he called a second meeting of his officers, ostensibly to announce the honorary colonelcy for Fritsch, but actually to reply obliquely to Beck's memorandum.¹⁶⁹ After announcing his "shock" over the Fritsch affair and his pleasure at the former Army Chief's exoneration, the Fuehrer assured his audience that the real villains of the piece had been the blackmailer (who he had ordered

¹⁶⁷Beck's memoranda and Hitler's rejoinders are nearly perfect examples of two parts of the dramatistic formulation. First, they represent Beck's attempt to work for change within the system; to be an advisor with responsibility for his advice. Second, they illustrate the nature of the dialectical relationship, although in this case, the ratio is not symmetrical since Brauchitsch's unwillingness to use Beck's first and second memoranda and the Fuehrer's own indirect methods created some refraction. In any event, Cathcart describes both parts of the model. "On the one hand, for a movement to come into being there must be one or more actors who, perceiving that the 'good' order (the established system) is in reality a faulty order full of absurdity and injustice, cry out through various symbolic acts that true communication, justice, salvation cannot be achieved unless there is an immediate corrective applied to the established order. On the other hand there must be a reciprocating act from the establishment or counter rhetors which perceives the demands of the agitator rhetors, not as calls for correction or re-righting the prevailing order, but as direct attacks upon the foundations of the established order." Cathcart, 87.

¹⁶⁸Hitler is quoted in Foerster, p. 97.

¹⁶⁹Keitel writes that Hitler's real aim, as he put it, was to "counteract. . ./the/ defeatest talk of Beck's memorandum on the military potential of our prospective enemies and ourselves." Keitel, p. 65.

executed) and some overzealous "subordinate officials" who would find themselves working in the provinces before long. Concerning Fritsch, Hitler admitted that legal vindication was not enough, but after all that had passed between them, the officers should appreciate that he and Fritsch could not work together in the future. Thus, the honorary post which the Fuehrer promised as only the first step in the public rehabilitation of a man he greatly revered. Hitler went on to praise his audience for the army's excellent showing in its march into Austria, and he assured them that he would jealously guard the military's independence against "external influences." Then, according to one of the participants, the Fuehrer concluded by pleading with the officers "not to desert the flag in this serious crisis" which impended over Czechoslovakia. He placed his entire confidence in the army and he begged them to reciprocate that confidence.¹⁷⁰

Factually, the misrepresentations about the Fritsch affair stand out sharply today,¹⁷¹ but could not be readily perceived by an audience which, with few exceptions, understood only the outline of the case.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰Hitler's speech has been taken from four sources: the accounts given to Beck by Halder and Stulpnagel, which appear in Foerster, pp. 94-96; Admiral Raeder's version, which is included in his memoirs, My Life, trans., Henry W. Drexel (Annapolis, 1960), p. 249; and the deposition of General Wilhelm Adam, TMWC, xxi, p. 425.

¹⁷¹To take just one instance, Fritsch never received any other honors. In the fifteen months of life remaining to him, the former Army Commander lived in seclusion at Achterberg. When war broke out in 1939, he accompanied his regiment to Poland and was killed by a sniper before Warsaw on September 22.

¹⁷²Even Admiral Raeder, who was a member of the court and had access to some of the secret information in the Fritsch case, wrote in his memoirs that he was "convinced that Hitler spoke the truth" at the June 13 meeting. Raeder, p. 249.

Fortunately for Hitler, Beck, who was the one officer who knew the most about the forces at work against Fritsch and who had taken sharp issue with the Fuehrer over the impending Czechoslovakian "crisis," was not present at the meeting. Psychologically, then, the skein of lies, woven into a fabric of tacit admissions, generous praise, and promises for the future, had no one to unravel it by saying no. And the appeal to the flag, which at once contains an implicit reminder of the oath Fahnen-
eid and an explicit call to patriotism, had its desired effect. As Brauchitsch later told some of his fellow officers, he had intended to resign, but in these circumstances, he felt he could not leave his post, and he urged them to remain at theirs.¹⁷³

In the face of Hitler's success, Beck made one last attempt to carry the issue. In a fourth memorandum, different in kind from any he had yet written, he called for a collective stand on the part of the General Staff against the Fuehrer's war policy, even to the extent of mass resignation. On several occasions through June and July, he urged Brauchitsch to call the senior generals together so that he could place his views before them. Finally, in the first week of August, the Army Chief did so, and Beck read to them a declaration which, in the words of Zeller, "went far beyond the traditions which had been normally binding on a senior German officer."¹⁷⁴ In part, Beck said:

History will burden those military leaders with blood guilt who fail to act according to their professional knowledge and their conscience. Their military obedience ends where their knowledge, their conscience and their sense of responsibility forbid the

¹⁷³Brauchitsch is quoted in Foerster, p. 142.

¹⁷⁴Zeller, p. 3.

carrying out of an order. . . . There is a lack of stature and a failure to recognize one's mission when a soldier in the highest position in such times conceives of his duties and problems solely within the restricted framework of his military assignments and in unawareness that his highest responsibilities are toward the entire nation. Extraordinary times demand deeds that are also extraordinary.¹⁷⁵

It has been alleged by some critics that Beck's memoranda were not concerned with ethical questions but with the chances of success or failure.¹⁷⁶ Admittedly, the first three contained only professional objections. But it should be kept in mind that they were intended to dissuade Hitler from war, and it seems safe to assume that expedient concerns are the best reasons for advocates of morality who hope to persuade their less idealistic audiences. More importantly, however, such criticism ignores the fourth memorandum which can be called "expedient" only by redefining the word. If ever a document was grounded in the "moral arena" and directed toward what Griffin calls "governance or dominion, the wielding and obeying of authority,"¹⁷⁷ it is Beck's final declaration to his fellow-officers. And it is this declaration, as well as Goerdeler's resignation and work in recruitment, and Schacht's agitation, and Gisevius' record keeping, and Oster's information network, and the cover provided by Canaris and Weizsacker, and above all, the incipient ties to the army, the only agency capable of overthrowing the Nazi dictatorship, that signifies the beginning of the German Resistance Movement¹⁷⁸--a beginning which some

¹⁷⁵Foerster, p. 121ff.

¹⁷⁶See for example, Lewis Namier, In The Nazi Era (London, 1952), p. 26.

¹⁷⁷Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 456.

¹⁷⁸Because the theoretical formula has been carried forward in the footnotes, there will be no attempt to re-analyze in detail those features

historians, by their own admission, are unable to identify with any precision.¹⁷⁹

Concerning Beck's personal attempt, the results can only be described as disappointing. While all the officers present agreed with him in opposing the attack,¹⁸⁰ and some, like Wilhelm Adam, Commander of the "West Wall," even publicly spoke on his behalf, Brauchitsch avoided calling for a vote on the crucial issue of mass resignation, dismissing the gathering with the observation that the senior generals were united in rejecting a war. But when the Army Commander took this diluted result to Hitler, the Fuehrer reduced him to such a state that he was prepared to lead the army

that characterize the beginning of the German Resistance Movement. Briefly, and in keeping with the dramatic model, the lives of each of the men discussed thus far reveal "an attitude of alienation in a given social system . . . /which/ gives voice to a No." Reasons for this attitude include the regime's treatment of the Jews, the churches, and other groups marked as asocial, as well as rearmament and Hitler's plans for conquest. The Fritsch affair is something of a catalyst since it merged previously scattered opposition elements, a "saving Remnant" as Griffin calls them, which had often been only vaguely aware of each other's existence and goals. *Ibid.*, p. 461. Beyond this, however, and perhaps unique to a totalitarian scene, was the factor of access to information, necessitated, as Gisevius writes, because of the "cordon of silence /which/ was one of the Nazis' most dangerous weapons." Gisevius, p. 282. And there was the need for places in significant sectors of the governing hierarchy, for decent people staying "in the lions' den," as Bethge puts it, and keeping a "foothold there." Bethge, pp. 532-533. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there was the possibility in this army-related opposition for obtaining the necessary instruments of force to use in eliminating the Nazi system since, as Allen Dulles writes, "In a police state equipped with machine guns, tear gas, tanks and aircraft, revolutions are not made by aroused masses with their bare hands." Allen Dulles, Germany's Underground (New York, 1947), p. 21.

¹⁷⁹See Rothfels, p. 66.

¹⁸⁰Wheeler-Bennett writes that two of the generals, Reichenau and Busch, objected to Beck's memorandum. Wheeler-Bennett, p. 403. However, O'Neill, quoting one of the officers who was present at the meeting, notes that the objections raised by the two generals were tactical, Reichenau warning, for example, that individual visits by the officers would be more effective than a mass confrontation. O'Neill, p. 159.

in an action which, by his own admission, would have meant the end of German "Kultur."¹⁸¹

It is not unfair to characterize Brauchitsch as something of a man of straw. We have already discussed his financial obligation to Hitler and the fact that his wife was a zealous Nazi. But in addition to this, Manstein writes that Brauchitsch "often appeared slightly inhibited [and] he was certainly rather sensitive"¹⁸²--qualities that hardly provided him the armor he needed in his dealings with the Fuehrer.¹⁸³ "Particularly," Manstein adds, "he was no match for Hitler dialectically."¹⁸⁴ A confession which Brauchitsch made to Halder during the crisis in the fall of 1939 is worth quoting now because it suggests something of what might have happened on this occasion. "Please do not hold it against me. I know you are dissatisfied with me. But when I confront this man, I feel as if someone were choking me and I cannot find another word."¹⁸⁵ And Walter Warlimont, Jodl's deputy, observed the same difficulty. He writes that when Brauchitsch spoke with the Fuehrer, he "often appeared practically paralyzed."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹Brauchitsch is quoted in O'Neill, p. 159.

¹⁸²Manstein, p. 76.

¹⁸³Some credit should go to Hitler for his ability to measure subordinates, as revealed in a statement he made to Frau von Dirksen, after she had heard him rudely berate and dismiss an official. "I know exactly with which people I can allow myself this and with whom I cannot." Quoted in Deutsch, Hitler And His Generals, p. 272.

¹⁸⁴Manstein, p. 76.

¹⁸⁵Deutsch interview with Halder, quoted in Conspiracy In The Twilight War, p. 34.

¹⁸⁶Walter Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, trans., R. H. Barry (New York, 1964), p. 61.

Hitler's tirade at his Army Commander did not constitute all of his response to Beck's declaration and the senior generals opposition to war, although typically, he reacted in an indirect manner. First, he tried to circumvent the generals by inviting their chiefs of staff to a dinner at the Berghof on August 10. Jodl, who was present, records in his diary that Hitler spoke for three hours on his general political theories, but that even these lower-ranking officers seemed opposed to the "genius of the Fuhrer," and one of them, von Wietersheim, Adam's G1, or operations chief, went so far as to tell Hitler that it was his commander's opinion that the "West Wall" could not be held against French attacks for more than three weeks. At this, the Fuehrer became "very indignant and flamed up," to use Jodl's description. Launching into another harangue, he informed his listeners that German soldiers were superior to French, that German weapons were superior to French, and that German fortifications could be held indefinitely against the French, finishing with the words: "Ein Hundsfott wer diese Stellung nicht halt,"¹⁸⁷ which, being one of his less urbane remarks, is best left untranslated. Second, Hitler ensured that no further military attempts would be made to claim co-responsibility by ordering changes made in the General Staff Handbook. Thus, the new edition "laid it down that the role of the General Staff officer was that of an adviser, helper and executive, but that he did not participate in the Commander's responsibilities."¹⁸⁸ In this way, the Fuehrer closed off the possibility that another Beck might try to gain a voice in the decision-making process.

¹⁸⁷Jodl's diary entry is in NCA, iv, p. 364.

¹⁸⁸Goerlitz, p. 342.

Between Hitler's rebukes and Brauchitsch's weakness, Beck was left with no alternative but to tender his resignation, which the Fuehrer accepted on condition that it not be made public for reasons of foreign policy.¹⁸⁹ Beck agreed to these terms, withdrawing from office without attracting any of the speculation that might have been expected of such an event at such a time. Thus do men, even in change, come up against the limits forged by training and reinforced by habit.¹⁹⁰ Gisevius, who was more politically astute, asked Beck why he had not insisted on a public announcement. The ex-Staff Chief could only reply that an officer was not accustomed to "thrust[ing] his own personality into the foreground."¹⁹¹ Under the force of events, Beck would outgrow many of these limitations and become what Schlabrendorff has called the "head" of the resistance movement.¹⁹² But he had, as he admitted, made a "mistake," allowing the traditions of his caste to dominate what should have been a political

¹⁸⁹Gisevius, p. 282.

¹⁹⁰Drawing upon Burke's "Dialectic of Tragedy" in Grammar, pp. 38-41, Griffin discusses change in those who make a movement as "a progress from pathema through poiema to mathema; from 'a suffering, misfortune, passive condition, state of mind,' through 'a deed, doing, action, act,' to 'an adequate idea; the thing learned.'" Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 461. For many leaders of the German Resistance, this progress was extremely difficult, as indicated by Beck's unwillingness to make a public issue of his resignation, even though he had just called for a collective stand by the generals against Hitler's war policy. Griffin suggests that the inability to move completely from one state to the next means a failure "to 'shift. . .coordinates,' 'acquire a new perspective,' 'see around the corner,' and hence prophesy.'" Ibid., p. 464. Freely applied to the anti-Nazis, it meant a prolongation of the movement through a series of crises or critical moments, while they not only had to contend with Hitler's presumptive advantages but also with their own weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

¹⁹¹Gisevius, p. 283.

¹⁹²Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, p. 44.

decision.¹⁹³ It was a choice that was not to be his again.

Hitler was probably glad to see Beck go. For one thing, he could not, as Manstein observed, "let himself suffer compulsion,"¹⁹⁴ least of all by a refusal to obey orders. For another, Beck was a worthy opponent, as even Hitler recognized. "The only man I fear is Beck. That man could do something against me," was the way the Fuehrer had put it during the height of the Fritsch crisis.¹⁹⁵ With his fingertip feeling or sixth-sense, Hitler had accurately identified a man who was to become one of his chief protagonists. What his intuition failed to tell him was that there were others.

Beck's silent exit did not mean that the resistance movement was abandoning the stage to the Fuehrer. Franz Halder, Beck's deputy, was named to replace him, and he too, as we have seen, was a member of the resistance. Before taking the post, Beck had instructed Halder to get in touch with Oster to determine what could still be done to prevent Hitler from going through with his plan of attack against Czechoslovakia.¹⁹⁶ Time was running short, only a month remaining until the final deadline date. Thus, Halder contacted Oster and the opposition reached the point of its first formal plot against the Nazi dictatorship--the climax of this act.

¹⁹³Gisevius, p. 283.

¹⁹⁴Manstein is quoted in Ritter, p. 92.

¹⁹⁵Zeller quotes Guertner on Hitler's statement; p. 19.

¹⁹⁶Ritter, p. 99.

From the group at the Tirpitzufer, Halder obtained the script which has come to be known as the "Oster Study."¹⁹⁷ Briefly, it envisioned the arrest of the Fuehrer by an ad hoc formation of soldiers, workers, and students (a mixture designed to show the broad scope of resistance support), under the command of Captain Friedrich Heinz of the Abwehr. It was Oster's intent to take Hitler alive because the plan called for a subsequent show trial before the "People's Court"—an irony the plotters could not resist since the Fuehrer himself had created these agencies of "justice" for the protection of the Volksgenossen. The basis for the prosecution's case was to be the pile of documents collected by Groscurth and Gisevius, the hope being that Hitler would be declared insane. Bonhoeffer had approached his father, the director of the psychiatric clinic at Berlin's Charite Hospital, with a case history of the Fuehrer's mental condition, beginning with his psychosomatic blindness at the end of the World War. While Dr. Bonhoeffer was understandably reluctant to call Hitler a lunatic on the basis of second-hand information, he did agree to arrange for a panel of psychiatrists to examine him once he had been captured. If all else failed, the conspirators were resolved to introduce evidence of Hitler's meeting of the previous November, thereby revealing him as a man bent on starting an aggressive war. Also, some preliminary

¹⁹⁷The various features of the "Oster Study" have been culled from several sources: Bethge, pp. 534-535; Gisevius, pp. 310-311; Halder, NCA, Supp., B, pp. 1552-1553; John, pp. 32-33; Ritter, p. 101; and Schacht, pp. 119-124. Like other resistance documents which followed it, the plan could be equated with what Griffin calls "the announcement of a stand. . . a constitution, manifesto, covenant, program, proclamation, declaration, tract for the times, statement, or counterstatement." Griffin, "Dramatic Theory," pp. 462-463. As subsequent discussion will indicate, the resisters had recourse to many of these forms of expression, although in terms of the scene in which they acted, their war of words had to be uttered sotto voce.

work had been done for a provisional government, and while projections were vague, it was expected that some leading figure from the Weimar period--Otto Gesler, Gustav Noske, or even ex-Foreign Minister Neurath --could be prevailed upon to head a caretaker administration until a National Assembly was convened.

To this plan for capturing the Fuehrer, Halder added military refinements. With the help of his deputy, Stulpnagel, the police officials, Helldorf and Nebe, the local Military District Commander, General Witzleben, the City Commandant, General von Hase, and the Commander of the Potsdam Garrison, Graf von Brockdorff-Ahlefeld, Halder determined to seize Berlin by a coup d'main in order to prevent any countercoup by Hitler's supporters. Also, General Erich Hoepner, the Commander of the Third Panzer Division, then stationed in Thuringia, was alerted to be ready to intercept the Munich SS should they attempt to rescue their leader. Finally, Halder grafted all these plans to Hitler's proposed attack against Czechoslovakia, the assumption being that these maneuvers could best be carried out as part of its execution.

There were three factors upon which the new Chief of Staff felt the success of the plot hinged. The first was timing. He had to know in advance of the Fuehrer's final order to attack so that he could put resistance plans into operation. This Stulpnagel arranged for with an unsuspecting Jodl, and the resisters were promised forty-eight hours notice.¹⁹⁸ The second factor was public opinion. Halder believed that "Hitler still had such strong support among the common people

¹⁹⁸NCA, i, p. 53.

that there was little prospect of overthrowing him successfully. . . . What was needed was a setback such as no propaganda tricks could dissimulate. . . ."¹⁹⁹ For achieving this "setback," Halder depended upon the third factor; namely, that Beck was correct in his assessment of the impending crisis: that France and Britain really would resist an attack upon Czechoslovakia. Certainly, Hitler had been right in the past, but Czechoslovakia, Beck had argued, was different in kind. France had a military treaty with Czechoslovakia and Britain had a military treaty with France.

Behind the Chief of Staff's need for a "setback" lurked the fear of a reverse Dolchstoß, or stab-in-the-back myth by Hitler's followers, just as the civilian politicians had been so accused by Ludendorff and other military leaders after the armistice and surrender of 1918-1919. For Halder, as well as for many other generals, the myth was real.²⁰⁰ Gisevius, who talked with him at this time, writes that Halder was "much intimidated by recollections of the stab-in-the-back. . . . He feared to stand before the people as an individual or as the representative of a class who had brought about the Titan's fall."²⁰¹ Also, Witzleben was worried over the difference of opinion between Hitler and Beck. Gisevius recalls that there was

one point that Witzleben, too, wanted clarified beforehand. Would it actually come to a war? Or were the diplomatic disturbances that were being played up by Goebbels just the usual stage thunder? Were

¹⁹⁹Gisevius, p. 292.

²⁰⁰Beck, for example, believed it. Foerster reproduces one of his letters dated November 28, 1918, in which Beck specifically attributes Germany's defeat to a "long prepared stab-in-the-back." Foerster, p. 16ff.

²⁰¹Gisevius, pp. 294-295.

not the Western Powers actually aiming at something else entirely? Was not some critical shift taking place behind the scenes? Would Hitler be given a clear channel to the East?²⁰²

In order to reassure the generals (and themselves as well), the civilian sector of the resistance undertook to offer them proofs of Allied determination. One such was a visit which Gisevius arranged between Witzleben and Schacht who, with his past success at financing rearmament and his friends in London, was considered an expert on British affairs. As Schacht describes the results of the conversation, "Witzleben was quite convinced. . . that the Western Powers would under no circumstances allow Germany a free hand."²⁰³ Other meetings were held. Halder, for instance, also visited with Schacht, who expressed the same views to the new Staff Chief as he had to Witzleben.²⁰⁴ And Erich Kordt, whom we have previously mentioned, met with Brauchitsch and told him that it was the opinion of the Foreign Office that if there was a German attack on Czechoslovakia, military intervention by Britain and France was absolutely certain.²⁰⁵

Another of the proofs involved sending representatives to London in order to inform the British Government about the situation in Germany and to gain British assurance that the Allies would stand firm.²⁰⁶ The first was Ewald von Kleist, who arrived in late August under a cover prepared

²⁰²Gisevius, pp. 304-305.

²⁰³Schacht, Account Settled, pp. 123-124.

²⁰⁴NCA, Supp., B, p. 1554.

²⁰⁵Erich Kordt, Nicht aus den Akten: Die Wilhelmstrasse in Frieden und Krieg (Stuttgart, 1950), p. 243.

²⁰⁶French guarantees had been ruled out because of domestic political instability. See Kleist's statement to Ian Colvin in Chief Of Intelligence, p. 59.

by the oppositionists in the Abwehr. Kleist spoke to Robert Vansittart and later, to Winston Churchill. To both, he emphasized Hitler's determination on war--"there is only one extremist and that is Hitler himself"--the unanimous opposition of the generals, "all without exception," to war, and their willingness to try to prevent it "if they get encouragement and help from outside." To this end, Kleist urged a firm declaration by Britain to disabuse the Fuehrer of his belief "that the attitude of France and England was utterly bluff," and an appeal to the Germans by "one of your leading statesmen. . .emphasizing the horrors of war and the inevitable catastrophe to which it would lead."²⁰⁷

From Churchill, who was an influential political figure, but not a member of the cabinet, Kleist received a letter which declared as Churchill's personal opinion the conviction that "the spectacle of an armed attack by Germany upon a small neighbor. . .will rouse the whole British Empire and compel the gravest decisions. Do not, I pray you, be misled upon this point." Churchill added that he had the permission of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, to say that the Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons on March 24, 1938, in which he had declared that "where peace and war are concerned, legal obligations are not alone involved, and if war broke out, it would be unlikely to be confined to those who had assumed such obligations,"²⁰⁸ still represented the policy of His Majesty's Government.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷Kleist's conversations with Vansittart and Churchill are reproduced in Colvin, None So Blind, pp. 223-229.

²⁰⁸Chamberlain's declaration of March 1938 is reprinted in Neville Chamberlain, In Search of Peace (New York, 1939), pp. 79-81.

²⁰⁹Churchill's letter is reprinted in Colvin, None So Blind, p. 229.

From official circles, Kleist received nothing, but there were certain results which occurred nonetheless, although they were unknown to him. Vansittart had forwarded his account of the conversation to Chamberlain. The Prime Minister, while acknowledging Kleist's sincerity-- "I take it that Von Kleist is violently anti-Hitler"--still thought his warnings sounded very much like those "of the Jacobites at the Court of France in King William's time." Consequently, "we must discount a good deal of what he says."²¹⁰ Chamberlain's own concern was not with seconding French commitments to the Czechs,²¹¹ much less with offering assurances to Hitler's German opponents.²¹² Instead, the vague idea of a face-to-face meeting between himself and the Fuehrer was already beginning to take shape in his mind,²¹³ and this undoubtedly colored his judgment. In

²¹⁰Chamberlain's reply is in Colvin, None So Blind, p. 228.

²¹¹To indicate the real direction of the Prime Minister's thinking, see his private letter to one of his sisters written four days before his House of Commons speech, in Keith Feiling, The Life Of Neville Chamberlain (London, 1946), p. 348.

²¹²A number of books have sought to analyze the motives which impelled the Prime Minister in his policy of appeasement; among them, John Wheeler-Bennett, Munich: Prologue to Tragedy (New York, 1948); Martin Gilbert and Richard Gott, The Appeasers (London, 1963); and A. L. Rowse, Appeasement: A Study in Political Decline (New York, 1961). Emphases and conclusions, as might be expected, vary considerably. But among the reasons generally agreed upon are: (1) An emotional reaction to the shortcomings of Versailles, especially the failure of that treaty to ensure the right of peoples to self-determination, as promised in Wilson's Fourteen Points; (2) A deeply-held abhorrence to war, particularly in view of Britain's large number of dead and wounded between 1914-1918; (3) A businessman's approach to disputes--quiet, orderly discussion, compromise and conciliation, which he thought could be transferred to the realm of international politics; and (4) A strong inclination to believe uncritically in his own judgment and to act on the basis of it. Taken together, these factors largely explain everything.

²¹³Accounts differ as to the first time Chamberlain mentioned the idea of a meeting with Hitler, the latest placing it on August 29, the earliest around August 15. See, Colvin, None So Blind, pp. 231-232.

any event, while he summoned home the British Ambassador to Germany on August 28, it was more to make preparations for this conference than to suggest strained relations between the two countries.²¹⁴

Kleist returned to Berlin the end of August. To Admiral Canaris, he gave an unfavorable impression of his mission. "I have found nobody in London who wishes to take this opportunity to wage preventive war."²¹⁵ Still, it was decided to use all the evidence available that the British would fight if it came to fighting. On instructions from Oster, Kleist went from one general to another, showing them Churchill's letter as well as a public reaffirmation of Chamberlain's March 24 declaration, made by Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, on August 27,²¹⁶ urging them to accept these as signs of Allied intentions. Ian Colvin, who was with Kleist, reports that he found some officers "keen and excitable, others dubious."²¹⁷

The meager results of Kleist's trip prompted the opposition to send another envoy. This was an Abwehr officer, Hans Boehm-Tettelbach, who journeyed to London on September 2, repeated Kleist's warnings, asked for the same assurances, and met with even fewer results than Kleist had.²¹⁸

²¹⁴Nevile Henderson, Failure of a Mission (New York, 1949), p. 151.

²¹⁵Kleist's statement to Canaris is in Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence, p. 66.

²¹⁶Simon's Lanark speech is reprinted in Sir John Simon, Retro-spect (London, 1952), see esp., p. 245.

²¹⁷Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence, p. 68.

²¹⁸Wheeler-Bennett, who was a junior official of the Foreign Office at that time, reports that no one can even remember the conversations with Boehm-Tettelbach. Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis, p. 414.

A third attempt was made. Theodore Kordt, Counsellor of the German Embassy in London, was sent a message by Weizsacker on September 7.²¹⁹ Kordt was instructed to repeat to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, a statement formulated by Weizsacker and expressly made in the name "of political and military circles in Berlin which desire by all means to prevent war." Only firmness toward Hitler and his policy of force, Kordt stressed, would make it possible to avoid a conflict over Czechoslovakia. "Should Hitler still insist on. . .war, then I am in a position to assure you that the. . .circles for whom I speak will 'take arms against a sea of troubles and, by opposing, end them.'" The quotation from Hamlet was meant to underscore the unusual and dramatic nature of the message. And Kordt's final statement: "The German patriots see no other way out of the dilemma than close co-operation with the British Government in order to prevent the great crime of war,"²²⁰ was intended to leave the British leaders with no doubts that firmness on their part was the "sea anchor" needed by the resisters if they were "to ride out the storm."²²¹

Unfortunately, Kordt, like the emissaries before him, got politeness and little more. The Foreign Secretary listened and replied that he would inform Chamberlain, treating the matter as highly confidential.²²²

²¹⁹For Weizsacker's account, see Memoirs, pp. 145-146.

²²⁰Kordt, pp. 279-281.

²²¹This is Beck's metaphor, quoted in Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence, p. 55.

²²²Kordt, p. 282.

But the decision had already been made.²²³ The Prime Minister was flying to Germany to achieve "Peace in our time."

We need not recount in detail all of the events which took place in the negotiations between the Prime Minister and the Fuehrer at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg, and Munich. But we do need to recount the relationship between those events and the plans of Hitler's opponents for a coup d'etat. For it is in this relationship, as prefigured by resistance missions to Britain, that the real tragedy lies in the climax to this first act of the drama, as well as serious questions about criticisms by some Western historians, criticisms which we will take up shortly.

Chamberlain's meeting with Hitler at Berchtesgaden on September 15 was initially viewed by the conspirators with equal parts of hope and despair. The pessimists, like Canaris, could scarcely believe that the Prime Minister would stoop to play the supplicant's role. Colonel Erwin Lahousen, who was with him when the news arrived, quotes Canaris as saying, "What--he--visit that man!" and repeating the words several times as if reiteration would make them more believable.²²⁴ The optimists, like Gisevius, remembered the lack of clarity in Britain's policy in 1914,²²⁵ and assumed that the trip was only a "tactical gesture. The

²²³It was not, of course, revealed to the members of the resistance. As Halifax said to Kordt a few days after Munich, "We were not able to be as frank with you as you were with us. At the time you gave us your message, we were already considering sending Chamberlain to Munich." Quoted in Rothfels, p. 63.

²²⁴Lahousen is quoted in Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence, p. 69.

²²⁵Historians have frequently alleged that Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, failed to give sufficiently clear warning to Germany that aggression against Belgium would bring in not only France but Britain too. See for example, Barbara Tuchman, The Guns Of August (New York, 1963), pp. 97-98.

British. . . wanted to show Hitler glaringly in the wrong."²²⁶

What neither the optimists nor pessimists could know, of course, was that Hitler had a persuasive weapon of insidious power: Chamberlain's weakness for the principle of self-determination.²²⁷ Thus, the negotiations, which began in acrimony and soon led to the Prime Minister's threat to return home, reached their turning point when Hitler, scaling down his real desire to destroy Czechoslovakia to one of merely dismembering her, said: "If, in considering the Sudeten question, you are prepared to recognize the right of peoples to self-determination, then we can continue the discussion in order to see how that principle can be applied in practice." To which Chamberlain replied: "If I am to give you an answer on the question of self-determination, I must first consult my colleagues."²²⁸ Then, according to Paul Schmidt, Hitler's interpreter and the only other person to witness the meeting, Chamberlain added that "he could state personally that he recognized the principle of detachment of the Sudeten areas. . . . He wished to return to England to report to the Government and secure their approval for his personal attitude."²²⁹

Between the Berchtesgaden conference on September 15 and the Godesberg conferences on the 22-23, Chamberlain succeeded in rallying his cabinet to

²²⁶Gisevius, p. 321.

²²⁷On Chamberlain's weakness for self-determination, see footnote 212, page sixty-one.

²²⁸Hitler's proposal and Chamberlain's reply are quoted in Paul Schmidt, Hitler's Interpreter (New York, 1951), p. 93.

²²⁹Chamberlain's addendum is recounted in Schmidt's shorthand notes, made while he was interpreting, and are reprinted in Documents on German Foreign Policy, 10 Vols., (Washington, D. C., 1966), ii, p. 796. Hereafter abbreviated as DGFP. For corroboration of Chamberlain's attitude, see his letter to one of his sisters, September 19, 1938, in Feiling, p. 367.

his "personal attitude." Also, he prevailed in carrying the French and in pressuring the Czechs.

Word of the Prime Minister's surrender had reached the conspirators by devious channels²³⁰ and they were quite "dismayed," to use Gisevius' description. Still, plans were held in readiness since Goebbels' propaganda campaign against Czech "atrocities" continued unabated and Hitler's secret mobilization orders to the army remained in force.

Chamberlain's meetings with Hitler at Godesberg on September 22-23 were viewed by the conspirators as portending the worst. But their hopes were raised when they learned that Hitler had altered his earlier proposal.²³¹ Although they lacked specific details, Chamberlain did not. At the first meeting, the Fuehrer now insisted that "the occupation of the Sudeten territories to be ceded must take place forthwith"²³²--a plebiscite in which the people voted for their own preferences could come later under German control. This was hardly the program of free elections and planned withdrawal that the Prime Minister had envisaged,²³³ and the

²³⁰Gisevius writes: "Since Hitler and Ribbentrop were not publishing their diplomatic information, we had to keep ourselves informed by our own efforts. . . . We had our spies everywhere--in the war ministry, the police headquarters, the ministry of the interior, and especially the foreign office." Gisevius, p. 324. Still, to anyone who has ever played "Gossip," it should be evident that such a communications network, although necessitated by circumstances, was not the most accurate.

²³¹General information about some change in the proposal and a resulting deadlock was not difficult to come by. William Shirer reports in his diary for September 23: "It seems that Hitler has given Chamberlain the double-cross." William Shirer, Berlin Diary (New York, 1941), p. 111.

²³²Schmidt, p. 97.

²³³In describing Chamberlain's proposal, Schmidt writes: "he had drawn up a plan. . .whereby the territories inhabited by the Sudeten

only concession he gained from Hitler in a second meeting on the 23 was a short extension of the Czech's final evacuation date from September 28 to the 30th.²³⁴ Still, Chamberlain was willing to offer his services "as a mediator" and transmit the Fuehrer's new terms to the French and their allies, the Czechs, although he had little hope that either would accept.²³⁵

News of the deadlock spread gloom over most Europeans but filled the conspirators with hope. William Shirer recounts in his diary for September 27 the reactions of Berliners to a military show of strength:

A motorized division rolled through the city streets just at dusk this evening in the direction of the Czech frontier. I went out to the corner. . .where the column was turning down the Wilhelmstrasse, expecting to see a tremendous demonstration. I pictured the scenes I had read of in 1914 when cheering throngs on this same street tossed flowers at the marching soldiers, and the girls ran up and kissed them. The hour was undoubtedly chosen today to catch the hundreds of thousands of Berliners pouring out of their offices at the end of the day's work. But they ducked into the subways, refused to look on, and the handful that did stand at the curb in utter silence, unable to find a word of cheer for the flower of their youth going away to a glorious war.²³⁶

The march had indeed been meant as a propaganda gesture. Hitler, who was watching from a window of the Reich Chancellery, is reported to have turned in a rage and declared: "With such a people I cannot wage war."²³⁷ And General Witzleben, who led the division, said later that "he had felt

Germans were to be transferred to Germany. Even the details of the new frontier were provided for in the plan. Chamberlain then outlined a comprehensive and complicated system of agreements providing for relatively protracted handing over periods." Schmidt, p. 101.

²³⁴Ibid. As we have seen, this was no concession at all.

²³⁵Ibid., pp. 99-100.

²³⁶Shirer, Diary, pp. 114-115.

²³⁷Gisevius, TMWC, xii, p. 219.

very much inclined to unlimber there and then in front of the Chancellery.²³⁸

Notwithstanding these evil portents (of which, admittedly, the Fuehrer was only aware of one), there was always the chance that Hitler could get what he wanted diplomatically. He had not yet heard from Chamberlain officially²³⁹ on whether the French and the Czechs would yield to his latest demands. Thus, late in the evening of the 27, the Fuehrer wrote a letter to the Prime Minister in which he reiterated his Godesberg claims and underscored the fact that for him the initiative still belonged to Chamberlain, although time was running out. The closing sentence read: "I leave it to your judgment whether in view of these facts, you consider that you should continue your effort. . .to bring the Government in Prague to reason at the very last hour."²⁴⁰

The conspirators, who were still unaware of the exact nature of the Godesberg demands, saw a copy of the letter on the morning of the 28. Gisevius notes that it was "insulting in its insistence that territory already promised must be handed over punctually on September 30."²⁴¹ Halder, who until then had not been informed of the precise date for the

²³⁸Witzleben is quoted in Goerlitz, p. 338.

²³⁹Hitler had had an unofficial visit from Sir Horace Wilson, Chamberlain's special foreign policy advisor, on the afternoon of September 27. Wilson largely counseled the Fuehrer to be patient, assuring him that he "would try to make these Czechs sensible." Schmidt, p. 105.

²⁴⁰The full text of the letter is reprinted in DGFP, ii, pp. 966-968.

²⁴¹Gisevius, p. 325.

attack,²⁴² grasped the significance of the September 30 deadline and urged that the moment had arrived for issuing the orders to seize Hitler and cor-
don off Berlin.²⁴³ He went to see Brauchitsch and returned to say that the
Commander-in-Chief would probably take part in the operation, but wanted to
reserve his final decision until after he had visited the Chancellery.²⁴⁴
Technically, there were some problems since the parade of the previous day
had greatly reduced Witzleben's command, now on its way to the Czech fron-
tier, and Hoepner's panzers, the strongest body of dependable troops, stood
two days march from Berlin.

At midday, Brauchitsch went to the Chancellery for a final look at the
lay of the land before deciding whether to order troops to move on the cap-
ital. While he was there, he learned what Hitler had learned even earlier
--that the Prime Minister was ready to grasp at any straw and had acceded
to the Fuehrer's demands. The previous night, after reading Hitler's let-
ter, Chamberlain had replied immediately:

. . .I feel certain that you can get all essentials without war,
and without delay. I am ready to come to Berlin myself at once

²⁴²For proof of Hitler's secrecy in this matter, there is Jodl's
diary entry for September 6: that the Fuehrer had ordered that absolutely
no hint of the moment of the attack on Czechoslovakia was to be given to
anyone involved. NCA, i, p. 534.

²⁴³Gisevius, p. 325.

²⁴⁴Ibid. Brauchitsch, whose character has already been discussed,
was a hesitant but peripheral member of the plot. In his interrogation
at Nuremberg, Halder explained the degree of the Army Chief's involvement.
"I had never talked expressly to Brauchitsch about this. But he knew my
attitude and he had a notion of what was going on. Once he came to see
me while von Witzleben was with me, and von Witzleben spoke in such a
way that Brauchitsch could not help but understand unless he was deaf.
May I say why I did that. It is clear that such an opinion of the state
of Adolf Hitler could be betrayed at any moment. It might not succeed.
In this case, I had to keep apart my commander-in-chief. . . . I may
play with my own head, but not someone else's." NCA, Supp., B, p. 1553.

to discuss arrangements for transfer with you and representatives of the Czech Government, together with representatives of France and Italy, if you desire. I feel convinced we can reach agreement.²⁴⁵

A telegram was also sent to Mussolini, asking him to urge the Fuehrer's acceptance of the plan and to agree to being represented at the proposed meeting. To make a long story short, the Duce, who, despite his war-like utterances, did not want to fight either, welcomed the Prime Minister's proposal and undertook to secure Hitler's acceptance as well, a feat that was accomplished with no great difficulty by the Italian Ambassador, Attolico, just before noon on September 28. The rest was anticlimactic. The Munich conference began on the 29.

This was the information which Brauchitsch learned while at the Chancellery. Goerlitz writes that he "immediately knew that a coup d'etat was out of the question. One really could not arrest a man and have him tried as a war criminal when he was on the point of winning a completely bloodless victory."²⁴⁶ When he heard the news, Halder is reported to have said, "What can we do? He succeeds in everything he does."²⁴⁷ Gisevius confesses that for a few hours he imagined that "we could revolt anyway. But Witzleben soon demonstrated that the troops would never revolt against a victorious Fuehrer."²⁴⁸ And Schacht concludes: "The intervention of foreign statesmen was something I could not possibly have taken into account."²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵Chamberlain, p. 197.

²⁴⁶Goerlitz, p. 338.

²⁴⁷Ibid.

²⁴⁸Gisevius, p. 325.

²⁴⁹Schacht, Account Settled, p. 125.

Such a narrative seems straightforward enough, and indeed, with only one documentary exception which we shall discuss shortly, historians are generally agreed upon it. Yet, agreement upon sequence-of-events does not necessarily mean agreement upon interpretation of sequence-of-events, and a group of Western critics, basing their arguments upon the chronology just cited, have reached the conclusion: (1) That Chamberlain's surrender was only an excuse for the resisters to cancel their plans; that the generals ought to have acted regardless of what the Prime Minister did since all the elements for a successful coup should have been present;²⁵⁰(2) That the plotters were confused in their reading of Hitler's letter to Chamberlain on September 27; that the message should not have led them to believe that the moment to strike was at hand;²⁵¹and (3) That there was no guarantee that the coup, had it been initiated, would have been successful.²⁵²

Taking these points in reverse order, there is, of course, no guarantee that an incipient act--particularly one as serious as an insurrection in a police state--can ever be fully guaranteed. Such an absolute is not to be found in the probable affairs of men, and to paraphrase a rebuke Winston Churchill once made to a British officer who demanded such a prohibitive condition, it only exists in heaven and critics who

²⁵⁰For proponents of this position, see Terence Prittie, Germans Against Hitler (Boston, 1964), pp. 65-68; Namier, Nazi Era, pp. 9-10; Shirer, Third Reich, pp. 404-414; and Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis, pp. 414-424.

²⁵¹Ibid., except Namier, Nazi Era.

²⁵²Ibid.

require it run a grave risk of never getting there.²⁵³ Furthermore, neither then nor after the war did any member of the resistance movement ever suggest such a guarantee. At the Nuremberg Trial of the Major War Criminals, Halder was questioned on this very point by Captain Sam Harris, attorney on the staff of the American prosecution. Halder, noting the effect of the Prime Minister's surrender, said:

We were firmly convinced that we would be successful. But now came Mr. Chamberlain, and with one stroke the danger of war was averted . . . the critical hour for force was avoided. /Harris/: Do I understand you to say that if Chamberlain had not come to Munich, your plan would have been executed, and Hitler would have been deposed? /Halder/: I can only say, the plan would have been executed. I do not know if it would have been successful.²⁵⁴

Finally, in arguing about the moot point of no certainty for the success of the operation, these critics miss the substantive rhetorical problem inherent in the failure of the plot. That is, they miss the gamble taken by resistance members, not only with their heads if they were found out, but with their credibility if they were proved wrong in trying to persuade the generals that the British and French would fight for Czechoslovakian sovereignty. The weakness of Brauchitsch has already been mentioned. Never again would the Army Commander be so close to cooperating with the resisters. In what will be Act Two of the German Resistance Movement, the best that could be hoped for was Brauchitsch's neutrality. "I myself shall do nothing," he said to Halder during the climax of the struggle in the fall of 1939, "but I will not oppose anyone who does do something."²⁵⁵ And the worst that could be feared was to

²⁵³Winston Churchill, The Grand Alliance (Boston, 1951), p. 339.

²⁵⁴NCA, Supp., B, p. 1558.

²⁵⁵Gisevius, p. 389.

act in spite of Brauchitsch. "I'll lock him up and throw the key into the W. C.," was the way a frustrated Stulpnagel would later put it to Halder.²⁵⁶ Moreover, Halder himself would never be as prone to mutiny as he was in September 1938. During that month he had been prepared to order up part of the army as shock troops for a resistance uprising. And he had acted on the 28, only to see the results of his action come to nothing as Chamberlain surrendered at Munich and opposition arguments were proved false. Another decision of this kind would come much harder, as events of the following year were to prove. Looking briefly at some other officer reactions, we can safely conclude that the Munich agreement had to be scored heavily against the resisters. Lahousen told Colvin that he had heard a senior officer describe Canaris and his friends as "the people who undermined the influence of the General Staff" by opposing Hitler on the wrong issue.²⁵⁷ And General Rundstedt, who had a brief meeting with Kleist at the end of September, became extremely annoyed when Kleist pursued the idea of action against Hitler.²⁵⁸ It was as if the generals had been hoaxed and the Fuehrer right all along.

The second point concerns the famous Hitler letter of the evening of September 27. What is involved here is that these critics are unable to understand how the plotters could have mistaken such a moderate communication as insulting, and what is more of a mystery, been prepared to act on the basis of it. In order to avoid prejudicing the issue, let

²⁵⁶Deutsch interview with Halder, in Conspiracy In The Twilight War, p. 208.

²⁵⁷Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence, p. 70.

²⁵⁸Ibid.

them state their own position:

But either the text of the letter had been altered in the copying or the generals misunderstood it, for. . .it was so moderate in tone, so full of promises to "negotiate details with the Czechs" and to "give a formal guarantee for the remainder of Czechoslovakia," so conciliatory in suggesting to Chamberlain that he might continue his efforts, that the Prime Minister, after reading it, had immediately telegraphed Hitler suggesting a Big-Power conference to settle the details, and at the same time wired Mussolini asking his support for such a proposal.²⁵⁹

Now documents are important to all writers of history, but for the rhetorical critic, they are more than a record of ideas.²⁶⁰ Put differently, documents are not only significant in their own right as persuasive artifacts, but also as the center of "complex. . .relationship[s]" that exist between a writer or speaker and his audience. . .of which both. . .are a part, and on which they exert an influence."²⁶¹ With this in mind, a closer look at the so-called "moderate" letter, so "full of promises" and "so conciliatory," reveals that only the closing passage cited earlier constituted any change in Hitler's position.²⁶² In matters of substance, the Fuehrer still insisted on "the immediate occupation [of the Sudetenland] by German contingents"; on the unavoidability "that Czechoslovakia should lose part of her fortifications [in fact, her whole defense system was lost]"; and on the continued threat of war

²⁵⁹Shirer, Third Reich, p. 407.

²⁶⁰Charles Lomas, "Rhetorical Criticism and Historical Perspective," Western Speech, XXXII (Summer, 1968), 195.

²⁶¹James T. Boulton, "The Criticism of Rhetoric and the Act of Communication," in Essays On Rhetorical Criticism, ed., Thomas R. Nilson (New York, 1968), p. 30.

²⁶²This is not my interpretation only. Alan Bullock writes, "The letter contained no hint of modification." Bullock, p. 412.

if he did not get his way: "I regret the idea of any attack on Czechoslovak territory."²⁶³

We are left, then, with two alternatives: either the letter was not conciliatory, or the demands at Godesberg were not demands. And this choice is easily resolved by Prime Minister Chamberlain and Ambassador Henderson's own words, uttered at Godesberg, when they were first given copies of Hitler's proposal. Interpreter Schmidt writes:

The effect on Chamberlain and the other Englishmen was devastating. "But that's an ultimatum," exclaimed Chamberlain, lifting his hands in protest. "Ein Diktat," interjected Henderson, who always liked to introduce German words into a discussion.²⁶⁴

In terms of his own orientations, it is certainly possible that the Prime Minister, who was looking for a way to avoid what he perceived as impending disaster, was influenced by the civility of the letter,²⁶⁵ as well as by the fact that Hitler had troubled to write him and suggest that he continue his efforts. But this in no way militates against the accuracy of the interpretation given the letter by the Fuehrer's opponents, who might be styled an unintended if not tougher minded audience. Recall that they did not know the precise nature of the Godesberg ultimatum. Recall further that the British Government had deliberately misled them in their every contact prior to Munich. Thus, while their perceptions may have been understandably faulty with regard to Western treaty

²⁶³DGFP, ii, pp. 966-967.

²⁶⁴Schmidt, p. 100.

²⁶⁵Arguments based exclusively on the tone of diplomatic messages are not too impressive. As Churchill observed in a similar situation, "when you have to kill a man, it costs nothing to be polite." Winston Churchill, The Grand Alliance (Boston, 1951), p. 611.

obligations, they could still recognize a demand for the instant surrender of territory when they saw it. This was the issue that had in fact deadlocked the Godesberg negotiations, and the conspirators thought it meant war, as did nearly everyone else except for a Prime Minister bent on appeasement, or a few critics writing from the perspective of twenty years or more. Winston Churchill, speaking at the time, described the whole series of conferences for what they really were, and his interpretation comes much closer to that of the resisters than it does to recent writers of history books.

We really must not waste time after all this long debate upon the differences between positions reached at Berchtesgaden, at Godesberg, and at Munich. They can be very simply epitomized, if the house will permit me to vary the metaphor. One pound was demanded at pistol's point. When it was given, two pounds were demanded at pistol's point. Finally, the dictator consented to take £1, 17s. 6d and the rest in promises of good will for the future.²⁶⁶

Finally, we come to the first and perhaps the most important issue rhetorically: that Chamberlain's concessions at Munich were only an excuse for the plotters to cancel their plans; that they ought to have acted in spite of the Prime Minister's surrender since all of the prerequisites for a successful coup should have been present. In support of this position, these writers quote Halder's testimony at Nuremberg, in which he laid down a variation of the three conditions cited earlier which he considered essential for carrying out the operation: "clear and resolute leadership. . .readiness of the masses of the people to follow the idea of a revolution. . .[and] the right choice of time."²⁶⁷ These

²⁶⁶Winston Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston, 1948), p. 327.

²⁶⁷NCA, Supp., B, p. 1557.

critics claim that the second and third of these factors existed, and that the absence of the first can only be blamed on the conspirators. William Shirer writes, "one can doubt that General Halder's first condition was ever fulfilled."²⁶⁸ Terrence Prittie adds, "popular support might have been forthcoming at any time. . . assuming that the coup was carried out successfully."²⁶⁹ And John Wheeler-Bennett concludes: "they could have struck at any moment during the last half of August and the first weeks of September."²⁷⁰

Again, taking these points in reverse order, the last half of August and the first weeks of September did not constitute a period in which the conspirators could act. For one thing, Halder had not even taken his post until September 1. For another, all Hitler had ordered was secret mobilization: he had not given his officers the final order to march--and that was the vital requirement. Frankly, it is difficult to follow the reasoning of those who assert that generals can move military units willy-nilly through the streets of a capital, under the eyes of the curious, and more importantly in this scene, the Gestapo, as casually as they might order reveille or taps. Someone will surely question their actions. As we shall see, this is exactly what happened on the afternoon of July 20, 1944, before any body of troops appeared on the streets of Berlin. A mistaken belief by a zealous political officer who thought he saw a retired field-marshal riding in a car to the War Ministry helped

²⁶⁸Shirer, Third Reich, p. 413.

²⁶⁹Prittie, p. 66.

²⁷⁰Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis, p. 423.

trigger the defection of the commander of the Wachbataillon Grossdeutschland and effectively ended the Berlin part of the revolt.²⁷¹ When Halder spoke of the right choice of time, he was referring to that brief moment after Hitler had ordered the attack but before the troops had actually crossed the frontier; a moment when, under the cloak of legality, it would be possible to muster soldiers, draw live ammunition, issue orders, and strike. And any historian who writes about time frames of days and weeks has simply failed to grasp two cardinal rules of a secret movement in a police state: that it must remain hidden until it strikes, and not attract attention even as it strikes.²⁷²

The second point about popular support is correct only if it is conceived of statically as a public which thought there was going to be war over the Sudetenland. But by the time the resisters learned of the precise attack date, they no longer had such a public. Hassell notes in his diary for September 29: "One of the few certainties today is the overwhelming and tremendous relief of the whole nation that war has been averted."²⁷³ And one day later, William Shirer, traveling on the press train between Munich and Berlin, wrote in his journal: "Most of the leading German editors on the train are tossing down champagne and not trying to disguise

²⁷¹This was Lieutenant Hans Hagen. For the full account of his activities that day, see "The Hagen Report" in Germans Against Hitler, ed., Erich Zimmerman and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, trans., Allan and Lieselotte Yahraes (Bonn, 1964), pp. 151-155.

²⁷²Hitler certainly became aware of the potential danger in unregulated troop movements. In what could be called another dialectical response, he had OKW, in the period immediately after Munich, create a timetable system whereby he was informed of the whereabouts of each division. Bor, p. 124.

²⁷³Hassell, p. 7.

any more their elation over Hitler's terrific victory over Britain and France."²⁷⁴ In this reversing Zeitgeist--a mood of popular opinion changing from fear to relief to anticipation of a great national triumph at no cost in blood or treasure--the public would not have looked with any great favor upon a military revolt against the man who had accomplished it.

Third, and most critical, is the point about irresolute leadership. These commentators blame the generals for indecision, and John Wheeler-Bennett, the most knowledgeable among them, even offers a reason: "The conspirators hesitated to strike, just as [General] von Lossow had hesitated in November 1923 [at the time of Hitler's Munich Putsch], looking vainly for that 51 per cent chance of success without which a General Staff will not operate."²⁷⁵

It may be true that German officers are not anxious to act in the face of unfavorable odds, although there are enough exceptions to make the British historian's proposition somewhat less than universal.²⁷⁶ But to attribute the general's hesitation to a theory of probability requires an insensitivity to a central motif in the Germany of the recent past as well as an unwillingness to use available evidence. To explain, the irresolution on the part of the officers can be ascribed to some statistical predictor as a surface manifestation only.

²⁷⁴Shirer, Diary, p. 142.

²⁷⁵Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis, p. 423.

²⁷⁶Examples that come readily to mind include Frederick the Great's battles at Rossbach and Leuthen, Francois' attacks at Staluponen and Gumbinnen, Rommel's first and second campaigns in North Africa, and Manstein's counterstroke at Kharkov.

On a deeper level--and one which none of these critics probe--the generals hesitated because they feared a myth, or more accurately, a reversal of a myth.²⁷⁷ What frightened Halder, as Gisevius' testimony clearly shows,²⁷⁸ was that he would have to stand before the German nation as the man who had destroyed Hitler at the height of his success. To assign causes to odds ignores a reality Germans had lived with for nearly a quarter of a century. No officer, or political figure for that matter, could neglect the lesson of Weimar. It represented neither Friedrich Ebert's steadfastness of purpose in domestic politics, nor the foreign triumphs of Gustav Stresemann. Instead, it stood for defeat, and defeat of the most abject kind. Its leaders, as many believed, had stabbed in the back the victorious army in the field,²⁷⁹ and the burden of that belief lay like a weight upon all subsequent undertakings, whether in the period of Weimar or after it. To establish the bona fides of the myth, it is only necessary to point to the hag-ridden politicians of Weimar--lacking for friends, lacking for loyalty, and always on the edge of ruin because of agitators who could give popular voice to the myth.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the generals, one of whose number had created the myth, and who lived it, more fully perhaps, than any other group, so feared its impact; not surprising that Halder wanted

²⁷⁷The importance of myth as a symbolic form was discussed in Chapter One, pp. 33-34, fn. 112.

²⁷⁸See p. 58.

²⁷⁹Although he was one of the chief targets of the myth, President Ebert himself contributed to its growth by publicly describing the German Army as returning "unvanquished from the field of battle." Friedrich Ebert, Schriften, Aufzeichnungen, Reden (Dresden, 1926), p. 128.

assurances that the Anglo-French Powers would stand firm on the issue of Czechoslovakia; not surprising that Witzleben wanted to know if it would actually come to war. There had to be a defeat, or the potential of a defeat, in order to justify the insurrection and nullify the possibility of a new myth at the outset.²⁸⁰ Equally, the anti-Nazi civilians knew that they could not form a post-Hitler government, enjoying even minimum support, in the face of another Dolchstoss. Matters would be difficult enough without the onus of a new myth. As Weizsacker put it, "The action would only in a certain degree have been understood and approved in Germany if it had been obviously taken to spare the people the misery of war."²⁸¹ For the sake of the new government, then, as well as for the sake of the generals with whom they were identified, the civilian members of the resistance repeatedly attempted to obtain the necessary pledge. And they were humbugged by a British leadership bent on appeasement.

The Munich settlement, which settled nothing, concludes the first act of the German Resistance Movement. Appropriately, it left few, if any, of the major characters satisfied. Goerdeler, who had been out of the country from August to mid-October, writes to a friend in America. "A brilliant opportunity has been lost. The German people did not want a war. The Army would have done anything to avoid one. . . . If Britain

²⁸⁰How right these fears were was to be proved later by the defamation heaped upon the men of July 20. For example, Hitler's speech at 1 A. M. on July 21 ran in part: "At an hour in which the German armies are committed to the hardest fighting, a small group existed in Germany. . .that believed it could deliver a stab in the back as in the year 1918." Quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 180.

²⁸¹Weizsacker, p. 183.

and France had only taken on themselves to risk war. . .it would have been the end of Hitler."²⁸² The Fuehrer too is unhappy. He had wanted all of Czechoslovakia [and he would get it in the early spring of 1939]. As he complained to a member of his SS entourage, "That fellow Chamberlain has spoiled my entry into Prague."²⁸³ Finally, there is Schacht, Oster, Witzleben, and Gisevius, sitting "around Witzleben's fireplace and toss[ing their] plans and projects into the fire."²⁸⁴ Perhaps, as Karl Bracher observes, they "were marginal plans. . .risky, hurriedly improvised plans for a rapidly deteriorating situation."²⁸⁵ If so, it is fitting that they were burned--fitting that the men of the "decent Germany" would laboriously begin again to create the stuff for a new attempt. Despite numerous setbacks, they had the beginnings of a movement.

²⁸²Goerdeler's letter is quoted in Ritter, p. 113.

²⁸³Hitler is quoted in Bullock, p. 147.

²⁸⁴Gisevius, p. 326.

²⁸⁵Bracher, p. 398.

CHAPTER III

ABWEHR AND THE SECOND ATTEMPT: 1939-1940

"The task that falls to us is like the tragic conflict of the classical drama. Hitler must be destroyed and, at the same time, the German people must be saved from disaster. How can we few, with an eye to reality, bring this about?" Theodore Haubach

The beginning of war, when it finally came in the autumn of 1939, brought with it a Zeitgeist that both favored and hindered the cause of the German Resistance Movement. In terms of military demands, the adjustments and improvisations that always accompany wartime conditions provided the resisters the opportunity to further infiltrate the Nazi hierarchy with more of their own members and, at the same time, provide them with the "cover" so necessary for a secret movement. Thus, in the Army's Counter-Intelligence Service, Hans Oster was able to secure the reactivation of reserve officers like Ludwig Gehre, Werner Schrader, and Rudolf Marogna-Redwitz,¹ and simultaneously, obtain military commissions for civilians like Hans Gisevius, Hans von Dohnanyi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Hans John, and a man who will play a major role in this act, the Munich attorney, Josef Mueller.² Also, Oster detached some of his own loyal subordinates to serve as contacts with

¹Hans Gisevius, To The Bitter End, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (Boston, 1947), p. 425.

²Otto John, Twice Through The Lines, trans., Richard Barry (London, 1972), pp. 51-52; 60.

the General Staff and a number of field commanders. As subsequent discussion will show, the most important of these was Lieutenant Colonel Helmuth Groscurth, who was transferred from his post as Head of Abwehr II (Sabotage)³ to the Army High Command where he became the connecting link between the two agencies as well as the moral fiber for some of the staff officers who, as we shall see, were beginning to show a distressing tendency to waver in their commitments.

A parallel attempt to unite various opposition sectors was initiated in the Foreign Office. By taking advantage of Ribbentrop's typical Nazi penchant for empire building, State Secretary Weizsacker was able to place his men in favorable positions for the task of strengthening connections between resistance groups. Thus, Otto Kiep, who had been German Consul General in New York during the Weimar Republic, was appointed to the Abwehr, Albrecht von Kessel was posted to General Witzleben's staff, and Hasso von Etdorf was sent to the Army High Command.⁴ Further, Weizsacker regrouped his foreign service personnel to take best advantage of the remaining diplomatic posts from which the resistance movement could re-establish contact with the Allied Governments. The key assignment went to Theodore Kordt who became Legation Counselor in Berne, one of the major diplomatic crossroads in Europe, and other appointments included the posting of opposition members to Stockholm, Madrid, Lisbon, Brussels, and the Hague.⁵ This wide-spread dispersal of

³Groscurth was replaced by another loyalist, Erwin Lahousen, who had been Chief of Austrian Military Intelligence prior to the annexation. See Ian Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence (London, 1951), pp. 28; 49-50.

⁴Ernst von Weizsacker, Memoirs, trans., John Andrews (Chicago, 1951), p. 217.

⁵The principle source for this diplomatic realignment is Albrecht

anti-Nazi diplomats left the State Secretary rather shorthanded at the Wilhelmstrasse, but until 1940 he was able to keep Erich Kordt in his position as Chef de Cabinet to Ribbentrop, and Kordt was thus available to serve as Weizsacker's main assistant as well as a "most important source of information. . . about the plans of the Nazi leaders."⁶

Perhaps the State Secretary's greatest failure in his attempts to strengthen the resistance structure within the foreign service was the case of Ulrich von Hassell. Hassell is another of the conservatives who had been initially attracted to National Socialism. As a member of the diplomatic corps, he had served in Denmark, Spain, and Yugoslavia, before becoming Ambassador to Italy in 1932. In this last post, Hassell had seconded Hitler's attempts to create closer ties between Berlin and Rome, but he had opposed turning the alliance into a military pact, and was, for this reason, dismissed by the Fuehrer in the purge of ambassadors that accompanied the Fritsch crisis.⁷ Once marked by Hitler's disfavor, Hassell was unable, despite his and Weizsacker's best efforts, to obtain a new foreign service assignment or even secure a meeting with Ribbentrop so that he could make a final report concerning his work in Italy.⁸ Thus, Hassell was obliged to

von Kessel's testimony, cited in Proceedings of the Ministries Case, No. 11 (Weizsacker, et. al.), U. S. Military Tribunal IV (Nuremberg, 1947-1949), p. 9675,

⁶Erich Kordt, Nicht aus den Akten: Die Wilhelmstrasse in Frieden und Krieg (Stuttgart, 1950), pp. 61-62.

⁷Much of Hassell's work for and against Hitler is recounted in Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, ed., Malcolm Muggeridge, trans., Stuart Hood (London, 1948); and Ciano's Hidden Diary, ed., Malcolm Muggeridge, trans., Andreas Mayor (New York, 1953).

⁸Ulrich von Hassell, Diaries, trans., Hugh Gibson (Westport, 1971), p. 20.

seek camouflage elsewhere, a problem he resolved by joining the Central European Economic Conference, an organization whose branches in all the capitals of middle Europe provided him with an excuse for spending time in Berlin, Switzerland, and the Balkan countries.

Hassell's diaries, which he began in September 1938, are a valuable source of information on the resistance movement and will be cited frequently throughout the remainder of this study. More importantly, the entries reveal his doubts, his critical rejection of the prevailing system, and his search in the many talks he had with other anti-Nazis for ways of bringing about a change. From them emerges a man not only of great intellect and broad interests but also a sensitive human being who recoiled in horror and shame at the Nazi regime's denial of human values. Surely, the number of conspirators are few who could claim membership in the Dante Society, or write of Werner Jaeger's Paideia that it "yields surprising insights into antiquity and the future."⁹ And Hassell's moral indignation at the Nazi's crimes--"I am writing under crushing emotions evoked by the vile persecution of the Jews during the Kristallnacht of November 1938. . . . My chief concern is not with effects abroad. . . but with the effect on our national life, which is dominated ever more inexorably by a system capable of such things"¹⁰--is a recurrent theme.

Gisevius writes that Hassell "cannot be assigned to any circle,"¹¹ and in a technical sense, this is probably correct since his diary brings

⁹Hassell, p. 319.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 14.

¹¹Gisevius, p. 431.

to light many disagreements between resistance factions and his own role in trying to mediate them (a subject that we will return to in the next chapter). Yet, like Goerdeler and Beck--the men with whom he was most closely associated, Hassell was a nationalist and a conservative. To cite just one example of this, there is his diary entry of July 10, 1944, in which he movingly describes an era which he preferred and understood, but one whose time was past.

I have already mentioned our visit to [the Bismarcks]. . . . Everything receded before the memory of the great man, in the house, in the mausoleum, in the little museum. It was almost unbearable. I was close to tears. . . at the thought of the work destroyed. Germany, situated in the middle of Europe, is the heart of Europe. Europe cannot live without a sound, strong heart. . . . I have studied Bismarck and. . . it is regrettable what a false picture of him we ourselves have given the world--that of the power politician with cuirassier boots. . . . In truth, the highest diplomacy and great moderation were his real gifts.¹²

We can make this placement differently by looking at another organization to which Hassell belonged. This was the Mittwochgesellschaft, or Wednesday Society, which afforded the conservatives one of their few forums from which to discuss ways of overthrowing Hitler's dictatorship and to prepare plans for the kind of government which would follow it. The society had been founded in 1863 by Wilhelm von Humboldt as a meeting place of ideas for men who had distinguished themselves in their particular fields. It contained eighteen experts and counted among its members such noted figures as Dr. Ferdinand Sauerbruch, Head of Surgery at Berlin University (and ironically enough, the surgeon for both Hitler and Beck), Professor Johannes Popitz, Prussian Minister of Finance, Jens Jessen, Professor of Economic History and the former Head

¹²Hassell, p. 353.

of the Institute for World Trade, Ludwig Beck, and Hassell himself.¹³

Beck, Popitz, Hassell, and Jessen formed the resistance core within the society, and through Beck, Goerdeler was initiated into the group on an informal basis.¹⁴ Like other conservatives in opposition, Popitz and Jessen had been drawn at first to National Socialism. Eberhard Zeller writes that Popitz "welcomed the Hitler regime and was convinced that the good elements among the Germans would prevail over the wrongs and defects of the new movement. . . .^[that] they would help to make something lasting out of it. But he saw this goal constantly recede. . . ."¹⁵ And Jessen, who had the right-winger's typical fear of Communism, initially considered National Socialism the only counter-weight to Bolshevistic pressures in Europe. Perceptive enough to recognize the potential dangers in Hitler's movement, Jessen argued that it should not be "encumbered with elements which did not really belong to it, and that rigidity imposed by party bosses should not divert it from its path or cripple it."¹⁶ To encourage this "purification," Jessen had originally directed some of his most brilliant students like Otto Ohlendorf and colleagues like Dr. Franz Six into the Sicherheitsdienst, or Security Service,¹⁷ acts which Jessen would

¹³Not all members were advocates of resistance. Hassell mentions a debate in which he and Saurbruch argued with Wilhelm Pinder (Art Historian) and Eugen Fisher (Biologist), "who both represented official viewpoints." Hassell, p. 197.

¹⁴John, p. 35.

¹⁵Eberhard Zeller, The Flame Of Freedom, trans., R. P. Heller and D. R. Masters (London, 1969), pp. 61-62.

¹⁶Jessen is quoted in Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁷Ohlendorf and Six became leaders in the Gestapo, the one as head of an Einsatzgruppe in Russia, the other as chief of an SS department in Berlin. For Jessen's part in recruiting them, see Heinz Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, trans., Richard Barry (New York, 1970), p. 213.

later regret, but which were to help provide the resisters with access to the very center of Himmler's Gestapo.

Popitz, too, had contact with the top of the Nazi hierarchy. His appointment as Prussian Minister of Finance had been "at the express wish of the Fuhrer and Reichsmarshal Goring,"¹⁸ and if Hitler was not within reach, Goering certainly was, especially to the money which Popitz withdrew from the state treasury in order to bribe him, and, to a lesser extent, to the arguments which Popitz used to encourage him in his opposition to war.¹⁹ But after the attack on Poland, Goering became less amenable to reason, and the Finance Minister was forced to turn to other means. Thus, he worked closely with Goerdeler, Beck, and Hassell during this period, and even helped draft the first resistance program. In time, however, Popitz was to fall out with the conservative leadership, largely over the role of labor unions in the new state. The Finance Minister, a traditional economist, was opposed to the creation of a nation-wide union with its potential for financial and political influence, while Goerdeler, who was in contact with socialists for the first time during this period, favored strengthening the unions.²⁰ Neither man could convert the other to his point of view, and thus, while Popitz would formally remain part of Goerdeler's circle, even to the extent of being designated as Minister of Culture and later as Minister of Finance in the resistance cabinet, he would take an independent approach to overthrowing the regime.

¹⁸Allen Dulles quotes this from the indictment against Popitz, dated September 24, 1944. Allen Dulles, Germany's Underground (New York, 1947), p. 151.

¹⁹Zeller, p. 62.

²⁰Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1958), p. 189.

As he put it, "One cannot get out of an abnormal catastrophe with normal methods,"²¹ and he would try to force a split within the Nazi leadership-- by attempting to win Himmler over to the idea of a praetorian guard revolt.

The urgency of war also served to bring together for the first time the right and left wings of Hitler's opposition. Earlier, we noted that many socialists and union officials had been imprisoned at the time of the Machtubernahme.²² During the years just prior to the outbreak of war, some of these men were released from the concentration camps.²³ In the altered climate of the Third Reich, it did not take them long to discover that resistance by the working class alone had been made virtually impossible. For one thing, the "coordination" of all unions into the Deutsche Arbeitsfront had destroyed much of the old organizational structure. For another, the material attractions of employment and the emotional attractions of the folk community had turned many workers into an undifferentiated part of Nazi society. Further, the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939 meant that whatever support which might have been expected from the Communists was nullified. And finally, the rise of the police state--"We are prisoners in one great house of correction. To rebel would be just as much

²¹Popitz is quoted in Zeller, p. 408.

²²See Chapter Two, pp. 66-67.

²³We can only speculate as to why the regime decided to let these men go. Probably, the fact that the Gestapo was finally organized into an effective agency of repression is one reason. Another may have been the fact that the period of their release, 1937-1939, corresponds to the best economic years of the Third Reich, and the Nazi leadership could have felt there was little to fear.

suicide as if prisoners were to rise up against their heavily armed guards," as one of them put it²⁴--led the men of the left, Wilhelm Leuschner, Jakob Kaiser, and others, to begin the difficult task of trying to restore an informal network of anti-Nazi cells in the working class,²⁵ while at the same time, searching throughout the Reich for men of like persuasion who possessed the organization and the means of overthrowing Hitler's dictatorship. In this quest, they came at length to Goerdeler's conservative circle and to the members of the opposition in the armed forces.

Gisevius writes that "it was in November, 1939, that Wilhelm Leuschner, the leader of the Social Democrats, and Jakob Kaiser, a leading official of the former Christian Union. . .put out their first cautious feelers."²⁶ The point of contact, according to Otto John, was retired General Kurt von Hammerstein, "known as the 'red general' because before the seizure of power, he had discussed Hitler with socialists and trade union leaders and had little time for German Nationals."²⁷

²⁴Wilhelm Leuschner is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, ed., Erich Zimmerman and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, trans., Allan and Lieselotte Yahares (Bonn, 1964), p. 12.

²⁵Zeller's description of the methods employed by these left-wing leaders to re-establish contacts in the working class should be quoted if only to indicate the difficulties involved in achieving what Griffin calls the "organization of an opposition" in a police state. Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," in Critical Responses To Kenneth Burke, ed., William H. Rueckert (Minneapolis, 1969), p. 462. "Speeches on the shop floor and membership lists, revolutionary meetings and open challenges could no longer help to launch the popular movement that was wanted; no written or broadcast word could be openly expressed. All that remained possible were oral agreements and exchanges in accordance with agreed signs." Zeller, p. 69.

²⁶Gisevius, p. 419.

²⁷John, p. 55.

Through Hammerstein, Leuschner and Kaiser were introduced to Goerdeler and Beck. The captivity of the Third Reich made possible what the freedom of the Weimar Republic had always rendered impossible--"the achievement of solidarity, merger"²⁸ between the two sides. Nor was it merger based on expediency alone. Hassell's judgment that Leuschner and the other socialists "are thinking along clearly national and religious lines"²⁹ is one indication. Another is Gisevius' comment: "It is to Leuschner's credit that he. . .gave Goerdeler precedence as soon as he came to know him better. . .and Kaiser refused to be seduced from his allegiance to Goerdeler."³⁰ And Leuschner's last words to his fellow prisoners after the failure of July 20, 1944: "Tomorrow I shall hang. Unite!" or his silent exhortation made with clasped hands as he went to the gallows,³¹ is evidence that the socialist commitment was more than a marriage of convenience as some writers have claimed.³²

If the conservatives and their allies in the military held the potential means to topple the Nazi regime, the socialists and their

²⁸Griffin, p. 462.

²⁹Hassell, p. 304.

³⁰Gisevius, p. 420.

³¹Leuschner's final statement and gesture of solidarity are cited in Zeller, p. 70.

³²My reference here is to Ralf Dahrendorf, who argues that the alliance between the socialists and the conservatives was "largely negative. . .consist/ing/ in the abolition of the Nazi regime and the end of the war." Ralf Dahrendorf, Society and Democracy in Germany, trans., by the author (Garden City, 1969), p. 392. Full discussion of the question of whether the conservatives and socialists went beyond the technical considerations of a coup is best left to the next chapter in which an examination will be made of resistance social and political reforms.

allies in the unions held the potential to make the resistance a more popular movement.³³ Leuschner had not been idle in the months since his release. Operating behind the cover of a small factory in Berlin, he traveled around the country as a "business man," ostensibly seeking markets for his product, but actually building an underground system of labor cadres which would be ready to support a military uprising whenever it took place. And while Harold Deutsch seems overly optimistic in claiming that the socialists would be able to back a coup with a general strike,³⁴ it is safe to say that enough preliminary work had been done to provide the opposition with an "anti-Nazi left wing nuclei for the time when the Nazis would be overthrown."³⁵ Thus,

³³The extent to which the Widerstand was a mass movement may constitute another possible departure from Griffin and Cathcart's formulation. Griffin does not stipulate any size for a movement in his dramatic model, but his articles on the "New Left" and the "Antimasonic Movement" are certainly applications of mass undertakings. Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetorical Structure of the 'New Left' Movement: Part I," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, L (April, 1964), 113-135; Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetorical Structure of the Antimasonic Movement," in The Rhetorical Idiom, ed., Donald C. Bryant (Ithaca, 1958), pp. 145-159. And Cathcart refers specifically to mass movements like women's suffrage and abolition. Robert S. Cathcart, "New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically," Western Speech, XXXVI (Spring, 1972), 82-88. By contrast, the German Resistance was never a popular movement for reasons that should be obvious. While the conservatives invoked the support of state agencies like the army, they still represented the whole of society only in a synecdochic sense; that is, by virtue of their social position and corresponding political responsibility. And though the socialists could claim to speak for large numbers in the unions, even this amounted to only a part of the whole. The hope, as we shall see in subsequent discussion, was that after Hitler had been overthrown, the non-Nazis, who formed the bulk of German society, would support the new movement. That this hope was not misplaced is indicated by the rapid disintegration of Hitler's "New Order" immediately after his death.

³⁴Harold C. Deutsch, The Conspiracy Against Hitler in the Twilight War (Minneapolis, 1968), p. 47.

³⁵The Struggle For Democracy In Germany, ed., Gabriel A. Almond (Chapel Hill, 1949), p. 51.

Paul Maerker, a former trade union official and member of the opposition, estimates the number of workers organized into the resistance at about 125,000, or three percent of those who belonged to unions prior to 1933.³⁶ The United States Bombing Survey reports that "organized opposition groups were found in most German cities. . . [and] while activities were normally confined. . . to a local scale. . . there were also efforts on a national scale carried out by trade unionists and socialists."³⁷ And Emil Henk, who credits Leuschner with building up an "invisible network" all over Germany, cites the specific area of Kassel-Heidelberg and notes that it contained an organization of key workers, each of whom was responsible for mobilizing ten to twenty more anti-Nazis at any given moment.³⁸

Leuschner's work among socialist labor groups was matched by Kaiser's work among religious labor groups. Otto John recalls how Kaiser established resistance contacts with Bernard Letterhaus, ex-Secretary of the Catholic Workers Union, Nikolas Gross, one of the union's former officials, Max Habermann, the past head of the German National Shop Assistants Association, and Ernst von Harnak, an influential member of the outlawed Social Democratic Party.³⁹ Hermann Schmitt, the postwar President of the Catholic Workers Union, writes that it was Kaiser who "got in touch" with people from the Christian Trades "all over the Reich. . .

³⁶Maerker is quoted in Hans Rothfels, The German Opposition To Hitler, trans., Lawrence Wilson (Chicago, 1962), p. 96.

³⁷United States Bombing Survey, First Report (Washington, D. C., 1947), pp. 101-102.

³⁸Henk is quoted in Rothfels, p. 97.

³⁹John, p. 55.

[and that] thousands worked in the hope that 'the day' would come."⁴⁰ And John notes that it was in the home of Kaiser's fiancée, Elfriede Nebgen, where priests like the Dominican Laurentius Siemer came seeking information about the possibilities of a military uprising and pledging the support of friends in West Germany, where Josef Wirmer, former leader of the Center Party, brought word of "resisters spreading far outside Berlin," and where Klaus Bonhoeffer and John himself, in the autumn of 1939, first drew up a balance sheet of opposition activity and found it "encouraging."⁴¹

If the outbreak of war helped the cause of the resistance in some respects, it complicated it in others. In terms of government control, the machinery of the Gestapo had become concentrated at last into one giant agency, the National Security Office, or RSHA,⁴² which operated under Himmler's supervision in the Ministry of the Interior. One of its main functions was to "suppress and avert any disturbances of . . . order in the Third Reich, even though an infringement of law and order may not yet have taken place,"⁴³ and one of its chief means of doing so was through the compilation of domestic intelligence and morale reports -- "Meldungen aus dem Reich," as they were called, which provided the police and party leadership with increasingly comprehensive and candid

⁴⁰Schmitt is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, pp. 30-31.

⁴¹John, p. 55.

⁴²According to Karl Bracher, this centralization occurred on September 27, 1939. Karl Bracher, The German Dictatorship, trans., Jean Steinberg (New York, 1972), p. 153.

⁴³Werner Best, author of this Orwellian statement, is quoted in Hohne, p. 172.

assessments of what the people were thinking.⁴⁴ At first, the sources of this polling operation were the regional personnel of the SD, or Security Service, aided by Blockwarts, party zealots, and agents provocateurs.⁴⁵ But with the attack on Poland, the whole country became a kind of intelligence gathering agency. Notices went up everywhere: "Vorsicht beim Gespraech--Feind hoert mit!" ("Be careful what you say--the enemy may be listening!"), which were meant to remind the Volksgenossen not only that loose talk was treasonable, but also that denunciation of loose talk was patriotic.⁴⁶ In addition, war meant air raids, which, while they were infrequent at first, still gave wardens the opportunity to exercise their right of entry into people's homes to make certain everyone had vacated the premises--Suppentopfschnuffelei, or prying into cooking pots, as it was called. And the Hitler Youth and German Girl's League were given orders to assist the frontier and railway police in searching for escaped prisoners of war and foreign workers,⁴⁷ thus increasing the chances when a resister might be caught in a spot-check, interrogated, and exposed.

⁴⁴Some of these letters have been preserved and appear in Meldungen aus dem Reich, ed., Heinz Boberach (Newied und Berlin, 1965).

⁴⁵Almond, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁶Richard Grunberger recounts a bizzare instance of patriotic denunciation. A mother in a South-German village who was informed by a neighbor that the name of her missing son had been read out on a Russian POW list, thereupon denounced the neighbor for listening to radio Moscow. Richard Grunberger, The 12-Year Reich (New York, 1971), p. 114.

⁴⁷This was formally accomplished through the Streifendienst, or patrol service, which each of these organizations created to augment regular police security measures. See Lord Russell of Liverpool, The Scourge Of The Swastika (New York, 1954), p. 20.

In the conservative upper-class which formed the basis for much of the opposition, denunciations were the exception.⁴⁸ In part, this was due to the fact that until the war, this class was less exposed to the effects of "coordination" than the middle and lower classes. And in part, it was due to a ready-made network of personal contacts, either direct or indirect, which existed before resistance was ever considered.⁴⁹ Thus, while many individuals were learning about the conspiracy, word of this never reached the Fuehrer. Nevertheless, Hitler's sixth sense or uncanny "feel" for concealed opposition was another of the disadvantages with which the resisters were forced to cope. For whether they wanted to arrest him (as their intention was now), or assassinate him (as events in this act would make plain to a growing number of them), the fact remains that with the outbreak of war, the Fuehrer began to exhibit a wary, almost animal-like instinct for self-preservation, which would make attempts against him increasingly difficult.

As early as a military conference on August 22, 1939, Hitler prefaced his remarks about the attack on Poland with a personal statement which indicates that he was well aware of the importance of his own role in the Fuehrerstaat and of the dangers inherent in it.

Essentially, all depends on me, on my existence. . . probably no one will ever again have the confidence of the whole German people as I have. My existence is therefore a factor of great value. But I can be eliminated at any time by a criminal or a lunatic.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung, ed., Karl Peter (Stuttgart, 1961), p. 393.

⁴⁹Variations of these reasons are offered by Franklin L. Ford, "The Twentieth of July in the History of the German Resistance," American Historical Review, LI (July, 1946), 620.

⁵⁰Hitler is quoted in Nazi Conspiracy And Aggression, 10 Vols.,

Although assassination was one word which the Nazi leadership would have preferred to expurgate from the language,⁵¹ Hitler did discuss it on occasion. Thus, at a midday luncheon on May 3, 1943, he said:

. . .not a soul could cope with an assassin who, for idealistic reasons, was prepared quite ruthlessly to hazard his own life in the execution of his object. I quite understand why 90 per cent of the historic assassinations have been successful

But, the Fuehrer continued, there were steps which could be taken to make assassination more difficult.

The best preventative measure. . .is to live irregularly--to walk, to drive, and to travel at irregular times and unexpectedly. . . . As far as possible, whenever I go anywhere by car I go off unexpectedly and without warning the police. I have also given Ratenhuber, the commander of my personal Security Squad, and Kempka, my chauffeur, the strictest orders to maintain absolute secrecy about my comings and goings. . . .⁵²

More important for our immediate purposes, however, are some other precautions which Hitler took at this time. Gisevius reports that by the fall of 1939, the Fuehrer had largely ceased to make public appearances,⁵³

(Washington, D. C., 1946), iii, p. 582. Hereafter abbreviated as NCA. At another point in the speech, Hitler made a reference to opposition efforts during the Sudeten crisis of the previous year which must have given at least three of his listeners--Brauchitsch, Halder, and Witzleben--an uneasy moment. Noting the more militant stance of the British with regard to German claims on Poland, the Fuehrer declared: "It has done much damage that many reluctant Germans said and wrote to Englishmen after the solution of the Czech question: The Fuehrer carried his point because you lost your nerve, because you capitulated too soon." Ibid., p. 584.

⁵¹Thus Joseph Goebbels: "In wartime. . .there are certain words from which we should shrink as the devil does from Holy Water; among these are, for instance. . .'assassination.' One must not permit such /a/ term to become part and parcel of everyday slang." Joseph Goebbels, The Goebbels Diaries, ed., and trans., Louis P. Lochner (New York, 1948), pp. 114-115.

⁵²Hitler's Table Talk, intro., H. R. Trevor Roper, trans., Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (London, 1953), p. 452.

⁵³Gisevius, p. 404.

a safety measure which by definition denied nearly all the resisters access to him. And Albert Speer recounts one of Hitler's remarks during this same period which suggests that the Fuehrer, like his opponents, had come to the realization that only the army had the strength necessary to overthrow his regime. Referring to the open spaces around his new Chancellery, Hitler said:

"Suppose there should be some disturbances. . . ." And pointing to the four hundred foot-wide avenue: "If they come rolling up here in their armored vehicles the full width of the street --nobody will be able to put up any resistance. We must provide for this eventuality. All the buildings on this square must be equipped with heavy steel bullet-proof shutters over their windows. The doors, too, must be made of steel, and there should be heavy iron gates for closing off the square. It must be possible to defend the center of the Reich like a fortress."⁵⁴

Hitler might have been somewhat less anxious if he had possessed a better understanding of his generals and the difficulties their attitudes posed for the civilians in the resistance. To begin with, there was the matter of the oath, which, while it had always existed, was less apparent in peacetime. To explain, Germans make a distinction between treason (Hochverrat) which, as Halder writes, "is a purely political offense consisting of opposition to a person or party in power at the moment. . . [and is] not prompted by base motives but rather by an attempt to serve the people," and high treason (Landesverrat) which "is committed when vital interests of the people and fatherland are given away to a hostile power. . . [and is] looked upon as one of the most despicable offenses."⁵⁵ Obviously, the ethical dividing line

⁵⁴Albert Speer, Inside The Third Reich, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1971), p. 219.

⁵⁵"Letter of General Franz Halder," August 17, 1965.

between treason within the state and treason in combination with enemies hostile to the state is much easier to draw in wartime when such enemies have identified themselves through declarations of intent. Thus, Brauchitsch, and to a large extent, Halder himself, would begin to hold that moral and military duties coincided now that war had broken out; that it was high treason to "rebel when face to face with the enemy."⁵⁶

Beyond this, there was the mood of the army--its ranks swollen with reserve officers and enlisted men drawn largely from the training schools of the SA and the Hitler Youth, and inculcated with the ethos of the "New Order." Would they obey orders to march against their Fuehrer when they had just returned from the first of his Blitzkriegs, the laurels of victory still on their brows? General Rundstedt, for one, did not think so. As he told Canaris when the Abwehr Chief sounded him out about the possibility of a military revolt: "If I draw this sword it will break in my hand."⁵⁷ Brauchitsch was of the same opinion. John notes that after the victory over Poland, the Army Commander argued that "the majority of the soldiery. . .were more in favor of Hitler than ever."⁵⁸ And even Halder, one of the principle military resisters, doubted the support of the army. Gisevius writes that on several occasions, the Chief of Staff "referred to his four or five sons-in-law, all of whom were serving in the army as captains. Their attitude. . .was fairly representative of the temper of the corps of officers; and that temper

⁵⁶Hassell, p. 93.

⁵⁷Rundstedt is quoted in Deutsch, p. 209.

⁵⁸John, pp. 58-59.

. . .was pro-Hitler."⁵⁹

Finally, there was the hindrance posed by the war itself. Briefly put, soldiers more than any other group are directly involved in the prosecution of war. From them, it demands not only the performance of duty but also the willingness to give something extra--call it elan, or flair, or initiative. And officers working to the limits of their endurance on the battlefield or in the staff room seldom have much energy left to spend preparing and executing a coup d'etat. Thus, Halder writes that "military leaders cannot give political leadership when they are on duty eighteen to twenty hours a day;"⁶⁰ Manstein adds that "there were important considerations which we had to weigh. . .[such as] the responsibility for a heavily engaged fighting front;"⁶¹ and Hassell's comment, that the "nerves of the generals are suffering--Halder's for instance"⁶²--are all indications of the pressures which had built up around the officers since the outbreak of fighting. Equally, there was the soldier's attraction to the art of war as such. Perhaps this is best illustrated by God's description of the battle horse to Job: "Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? . . . The glory of his nostrils is terrible. . . . He saith among the trumpets, Ha, Ha!" Accordingly, Panzer General Guderian could claim that the Kesselschlacht in Poland "had fully proved the value of the armored formations. . .and the work that had gone

⁵⁹Gisevius, p. 293.

⁶⁰Halder is quoted in Ritter, p. 229.

⁶¹"Letter of Field Marshal Erich von Manstein," July 2, 1965.

⁶²Hassell, p. 75.

into building them up;"⁶³ Airforce General Kesselring could assert that "without the Luftwaffe there would have been no Blitzkrieg,"⁶⁴ and Halder, upon whom the operational direction of the campaign had fallen, could summarize the three-week battle as "planmassig,"⁶⁵ or "out of the book," with the justifiable pride of an expert who has fulfilled his responsibilities with a high degree of competence.

Of course, to the skilled eye of the professional, the fighting in Poland had revealed some serious flaws in the Wehrmacht. Guderian notes that while "the troops had fought brilliantly. . . the losses in officers had been disproportionately heavy. . . due to inexperience,"⁶⁶ General Rundstedt reported that the "field artillery and infantry vehicles were much too heavy for the poor roads;"⁶⁷ and General Warlimont complained about the "lack of munitions, efficient heavy tanks, radio and telegraph units. . . and above all. . . a shortage of trained reserves, both officers and men."⁶⁸

Understandably then, the generals looked upon the Feldzug im Polen as a limited engagement. For one thing, there was the pact with Russia

⁶³Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader, trans., Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York, 1967), p. 62.

⁶⁴Albert Kesselring, A Soldier's Record (Westport, 1970), p. 45.

⁶⁵Franz Halder, Kriegstagebuch I: Vom Polenfeldzug bis zum Ende der Westoffensive 14.8.39-30.6.40, ed., Hans-Adolf Jacobsen (Stuttgart, 1962), p. 86. Hereafter abbreviated as War Diary.

⁶⁶Guderian, pp. 53; 56.

⁶⁷Rundstedt is quoted in Hanson Baldwin, Battles Lost And Won (New York, 1966), p. 489.

⁶⁸Warlimont is quoted in Walter Goerlitz, History Of The German General Staff, trans., Brian Battershaw (New York, 1954), p. 348.

which secured the eastern frontier. For another, there was Hitler's assurance that Britain and France would not declare war,⁶⁹ and while this had been proved wrong, there was the Sitzkrieg in the west which, if it did not indicate peace, at least left the officers with the impression that a further campaign, assuming one was necessary, would be fought only after the weaknesses of the military machine had been remedied. And finally, there was the time of year--the beginning of fall--when rain and fog would seriously impede the two most important arms of the service, the panzers and the air force.

Unfortunately for the generals, the Fuehrer had a wholly different impression of the Polish campaign. Elated by the swift victory, unaware as yet of the technical problems disclosed by the fighting, impervious to the elements, convinced that the Allied Governments lacked the will to fight, secretly hopeful that they would reject his "peace proposals,"⁷⁰ and fully aware that their elimination was the final prerequisite to his ultimate aim of carving out Germany's Lebensraum in the east, Hitler decided to attack in the west. Thus, the stage was set for what Gisevius calls a "savage struggle. . .between the generals and their Fuehrer; between the worried civilians and the military. . .between the general's doubts and irresolution and their longing for glory"⁷¹--the second critical moment in the drama of the German Resistance Movement.

⁶⁹NCA, iii, p. 483.

⁷⁰Proof of Hitler's real preference is Warlimont's report that on September 20, the Fuehrer secretly informed General Keitel of his decision to attack in the west, and this was more than two weeks before his October 6 peace speech to the Reichstag. See Walter Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939-45, trans., R. H. Barry (New York, 1964), pp. 36-37.

⁷¹Gisevius, p. 378.

On September 27, the same day that Warsaw fell, the Fuehrer summoned his military leaders to a meeting at the Reich Chancellery. In one of his long but not wholly unimpressive monologues, he offered them a list of reasons for an early offensive against Britain and France if the two Western Powers should refuse to agree to his peace terms. While there are no extant copies of the speech,⁷² Halder's stenographic notes and Brauchitsch's testimony at Nuremberg,⁷³ indicate that among other things, Hitler claimed that the French and British would prove to be weaker adversaries than the Poles, that the neutral Low Countries should not be spared in the attack, that the preparations for the offensive should be completed quickly, and that "If we fail to accomplish this, we deserve to be whipped."

The use of a quid pro quo--of holding out the prospect of peace while urging the preparation of war--was a typical Hitler device intended to confuse those who opposed his projects,⁷⁴ to weaken their resolve by giving them hope and tempting them into procrastination. In this case, however, it appears to have failed in its purpose. As word of the Fuehrer's position became known, the officers responded negatively

⁷²Warlimont writes that as soon as Hitler finished speaking, he threw his notes into the fireplace in his study. Warlimont, p. 37.

⁷³Halder, War Diary, pp. 86-90; Testimony of Walter von Brauchitsch before the International Military Tribunal, August 9, 1949, Trial of the Major War Criminals, 42 Vols., (Nuremberg, 1947), xx, pp. 573-574. Hereafter abbreviated as TMWC.

⁷⁴Andre Francois-Poncet commented on this rhetorical tactic at the time of the Rhineland occupation and the Fuehrer's simultaneous peace offensive. "Hitler struck his adversary in the face, and as he did so declared: 'I bring you proposals for peace.'" Andre Francois-Poncet, The Fateful Years, trans., Jacques LeClercq (New York, 1949), p. 193.

to a man. Hassell records Admiral Raeder, who was at the meeting, as "declar[ing] categorically that the Navy was not in favor of a drive through Belgium and Holland;"⁷⁵ Warlimont (another participant), writes that "even Goering [was] clearly taken aback;"⁷⁶ B. H. Liddell Hart, who interviewed the generals after the war, notes that "all the top ones . . . including Rundstedt. . . admitted that they were full of doubt about taking the offensive in the West," and he quotes General Blumentritt as saying: "Hitler alone believed that a decisive victory was possible."⁷⁷

In opposition circles, the response was equally negative. John writes that at the Army High Command, Halder and Brauchitsch were afraid "an offensive by the Wehrmacht on the Western Front might end in the position warfare of the First World War;"⁷⁸ General Thomas, Head of the Army's Economic Department, "was certain. . . his armament program could not provide for a lengthy war of attrition;"⁷⁹ and Heinrich von Stulpnagel, Halder's Quartermaster General, drew up a report in which he advocated a purely defensive stance along the "West Wall" with no possibility of an attack against the Maginot Line until the spring of 1942.⁸⁰ These were largely technical

⁷⁵Hassell, p. 37.

⁷⁶Warlimont, p. 87.

⁷⁷B. H. Liddell Hart, The German Generals Talk (New York, 1948), p. 108.

⁷⁸John, p. 58.

⁷⁹Thomas is quoted in Gisevius, p. 383.

⁸⁰Stulpnagel's report is summarized in Goerlitz, pp. 361-362.

objections, however, and it was in the other resistance centers--the Foreign Office and particularly the Abwehr--that initiatives were undertaken not only to avoid an offensive against France and Britain but also to overthrow Hitler's regime and restore peace to Europe.

We have already mentioned a few of the steps taken by Hans Oster, Abwehr Chief of Staff, to coordinate resistance operations during this period. Most important in this respect was the transfer of Lieutenant Colonel Helmuth Groscurth to Halder's staff. As "communications facilitator" of the resistance,⁸¹ Oster felt there needed to be a better channel between the Counter-Intelligence Service and the Army High Command. Distance alone made this necessary since the High Command had moved from Berlin to "Maybach I," its secret wartime headquarters at Zossen twenty miles away, and it was no longer an easy matter to get messages back and forth. Also, Oster was aware of the officer's change in attitude since the outbreak of war, and he needed a "clockwinder"⁸² for Halder in particular--someone who could wind the reluctant general up in the morning and make certain he struck the hours correctly for the rest of the day. Groscurth seemed ideal for the assignment. A friend of Halder's as well as a confidant of Oster's,⁸³ he had ready access to both men's agencies. Also, his basic optimism, which is suggested by the fact that after the failure of the 1938 plot, he continued to acquire and store explosives for the

⁸¹This is how Oster described his role to Gisevius, p. 424.

⁸²Fabian von Schlabrendorff uses this term to describe Henning von Tresckow's influence over Field Marshal Kluge. They Almost Killed Hitler (New York, 1947), p. 39. Deutsch has applied it, not inappropriately, to the relationship between Groscurth and Halder.

⁸³Gisevius, p. 386.

day when they might be used against Hitler,⁸⁴ meant that he could be depended upon to lift falling spirits and provide a note of optimism when it was needed.

A second step taken by Oster was the appointment of Hans Dohnanyi to the Abwehr. With his legal background, Dohnanyi had the necessary expertise to take charge of the evidence on Nazi crimes and incorporate it into a "brief" for submission to officers the resisters hoped to persuade. In the last chapter, we discussed the collection of documents started in 1933. By now, the pile was beginning to reach considerable proportions. Most of the new material concerned SS activities in Poland such as the faked attack on the Gleiwitz transmitter (which Hitler had ordered and used as an excuse to launch the invasion), and subsequent atrocities against the Polish people.

Historically, commanding generals had been responsible for areas in which they had troops, but under Hitler this policy changed and occupied territories were turned over to civilian administrators and the SS as soon as the Fuehrer defined them as non-combatant.⁸⁵ At base, the reason for this reversal was Hitler's fear that his generals would not implement the darker aspects of his Weltanschauung, for which Poland was to be a kind of ballon d'essai. Thus, Einsatzgruppen (special

⁸⁴Deutsch quotes General Lahousen on this activity; p. 83.

⁸⁵Goerlitz notes this circumscribing of the general's influence and adds that in January 1940, Hitler issued his "Basic Order No. 1," which laid it down that any person charged with carrying out an order should only be given such information as was absolutely necessary for its execution, and that only at the last practicable moment." Goerlitz, p. 356. Again, this is what Griffin calls a "symptom" of an order turning faulty, "an order marked by misunderstanding, the growth of absurdity and injustice, the increasing loss of communication and identification." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 450-460.

groups which were in effect "murder squads"), were assigned to follow each of the armies, their mission being to start the extermination of social elements which might be considered potential opponents of Germany's Lebensraum as well as asocial elements like Jews.

As long as the fighting continued, friction between the SS and the army had been limited to isolated incidents,⁸⁶ in part because the total number of Einsatzkommandos was less than 600 men, and in part because the SS leaders had the presence of mind to trim their sails carefully.⁸⁷ But with the end of hostilities, the prospects for an increase in SS activities became alarming. One sign of this was Reinhard Heydrich's discussion on September 17 with Colonel Eduard Wagner, one of Halder's Quartermasters, in which the SS Chief talked about plans for the "housecleaning of [P]olish⁷ Jews, intelligentsia, clergy and nobility."⁸⁸ Another was Heydrich's letter of September 21 to the heads of the Einsatzgruppen (a copy enclosed to the Army High Command), informing them of initial steps to be taken for the "concentration of Jews from the country to the larger cities."⁸⁹

It does not speak well of Halder's conscience that his first response was to try to separate the military from these activities by insisting that

⁸⁶The best known instance was Rundstedt's order of September 20, expelling Einsatzgruppe Woyrisch from the operational zone of his army, an order to which the SS acceded. See Hohne, pp. 302-303.

⁸⁷The SS gave the military only the bare minimum of information while the campaign was going on. In an order of September 9, for example, 8th Army described the task of its Einsatzgruppe as the "suppression of all anti-Reich and anti-German elements in rear of fighting troops, in particular counter-espionage, arrest of potentially unreliable persons, confiscation of weapons, safeguarding of important counter-espionage materials, etc." Ibid., p. 298.

⁸⁸Halder, War Diary, p. 79.

⁸⁹NCA, iv, p. 97.

"housecleaning be deferred until Army has withdrawn and the country has been turned over to civil administration. Early December."⁹⁰ But it does speak well of Oster's foresight in detaching Groscurth to Halder's command and in assigning Dohnanyi to prepare what he called his "chronicle of shame."⁹¹ Thus, the Army Chief of Staff was unable to deny his ethical responsibilities so easily. A stream of reports and protests flowed from the Tirpitzufer in Berlin via Groscurth to the Army High Command in Zossen.⁹² To check the accuracy of this material, Halder sent one of his aides to Poland on a fact-finding expedition. This officer's report confirmed the Abwehr's worst accounts and Halder was thereby compelled to try and recover the army's prerogatives for the sake of the army's honor. On October 17, he sent Colonel Wagner to Berlin to present a list of demands to Keitel "for the continuation of military administration." Briefly, these called for (1) supreme administrative authority of the Army Commander-in-Chief, unlimited by any grant of special powers to other agencies; (2) appointment of civil administration officials by the C-in-C on nomination of the appropriate ministries and of a chief administrator; and (3) transfer of populations to be made only in agreement with the C-in-C, giving due consideration to military needs.⁹³

⁹⁰Halder, War Diary, p. 79.

⁹¹Bethge quotes Dohnanyi; Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, trans., Eric Mosbacher, et. al. (New York, 1970), p. 576.

⁹²Ritter writes that in addition to Dohnanyi's chronicles, protests were sent to Halder and Brauchitsch by Goerdeler and Beck. Ritter, p. 148fn.

⁹³Deutsch, p. 183.

On the face of it, the Wagner report appeared to be a technical demand for a return to the occupational policy of the pre-Nazi era. But Hitler correctly saw it as an effort to destroy his "New Order" in the east before it had actually been implemented. Thus, on the evening of the same day, Wagner was ordered to return to Berlin. Bad driving conditions delayed him but Keitel was waiting with the Fuehrer's answer. The army's demand was categorically rejected. As Hitler had put it, the military ought to be happy to avoid being charged with responsibility for what he had in mind:

. . .increased severity of the racial struggle permits no legal restrictions; methods used will be incompatible with military principles. . .the SS will ensure that the Polish intelligentsia cannot throw up a new leader class. . .Jews, Poles, and similar trash to be cleared from the old and new Reich territories.⁹⁴

Before the Fuehrer's horrifying vision of Poland's future, the officers of the High Command renounced any further political role for the army in the east. Although there would be several more repercussions over the treatment of Jews and Poles as helots and worse--once when General Blaskowitz, the nominal commander of the rump Polish state, sent Hitler a memorandum on SS crimes and earned for himself a tirade about the military's "childish ideas" and the difficulty of waging war with "Salvation Army methods;"⁹⁵ and again when Himmler felt constrained to attend a military commander's meeting and defend the "strong" policy against the Poles and Jews, arguing that it was necessary for Germany's

⁹⁴An official summary, much of it in Hitler's own words, was prepared by Keitel and appears in TMWC, xxvi, pp. 378-383.

⁹⁵Hohne quotes Captain Engle, one of Hitler's aides, who was present when the Fuehrer received the memorandum from Blaskowitz. Hohne, p. 306.

survival⁹⁶--the Wagner-Hitler enjoinder represents the last time the General Staff as an agency would ever challenge its leader on exclusively moral grounds,⁹⁷ a passivity which condemns it as an accessory after the fact and makes it "responsible for these acts" in the eyes of the world as Canaris wrote.⁹⁸

If the Abwehr's dossiers failed to achieve the intended effect with the older officers of the General Staff, the crimes they represented served as evidence to recruit other, younger military men who will play leading roles in subsequent acts. One of these was Helmuth Stieff, who became a member of Stauffenberg's circle. On November 21, Stieff wrote his wife: "I am ashamed of being a German. This minority which sullies the name of Germany by murder, plunder and arson will prove to be the disaster of the whole German nation unless we put a stop to these people soon."⁹⁹ Another was Henning von Tresckow, who would lead the attempt in 1943. A divisional staff officer in Poland, he was greatly affected by the crimes committed around him. As he said to a friend, "You and I, also, will be counted among the guilty."¹⁰⁰ Finally, there was Stauffenberg himself. Upon his return from the

⁹⁶Excerpts from Himmler's speech to the Supreme Army Commanders on March 13, 1940, appear in Roger Manvell & Heinrich Fraenkel, Himmler (New York, 1968), pp. 95-96.

⁹⁷This interchange seems to be the type Cathcart is referring to when he writes: "The essential attribute. . . is the creation of dialectical tension growing out of moral conflict." Cathcart, 87.

⁹⁸Canaris is quoted in Karl Abshagen, Canaris, trans., Alan Brodric (London, 1956), p. 144.

⁹⁹Stieff is quoted in Zeller, p. 216.

¹⁰⁰Tresckow is quoted in Ibid.

Polish campaign, he was visited by his uncle, Graf Nikolaus von Uexkull and Fritz von der Schulenburg, both members of the resistance. They gave him an account of SS atrocities and told him it was his duty to act or at least to try and reach a position from which action could be taken.¹⁰¹ Promotion of that magnitude was impossible for such a junior officer, but Stauffenberg was so shaken by the conversation that those around him noticed a change. His earlier willingness to give Hitler and his "New Order" the benefit of the doubt¹⁰² turned to criticism and frustration at his own sense of impotence. For the present, he lacked the means to act, but this meeting in the fall of 1939 marked a reversal in his life.

The third step taken by Oster was the most important and probably the one which has led some writers to identify the Abwehr as the motivating force of the opposition during this period.¹⁰³ This was the creation of a permanent resistance organization or hierarchy. In a sense, the linking together of opposition groups which we have already discussed was part of this process. Another was the nomination, at Oster's urging, of Ludwig Beck to lead the resistance movement.¹⁰⁴ Beck's

¹⁰¹Stauffenberg's meeting with Uexkull and Schulenburg is given in Joachim Kramarz, Stauffenberg, trans., R. H. Barry (New York, 1967), p. 72.

¹⁰²Rudolf Fahrner, one of Stauffenberg's few close friends to survive the aftermath of July 20, notes that the young officer initially tried to judge Hitler's accession to power and the impact of his ideas with fairness and objectivity; in Zeller, p. 184.

¹⁰³See for example, Rothfels, p. 77.

¹⁰⁴Gisevius, p. 435. Interestingly enough, neither Cathcart nor Griffin say anything about the leadership of social movements. Another theorist, Herbert Simons, deals with the issue by noting that the rhetorical requirements of a leader are: (1) to attract, maintain, and mould

election not only provided the opposition with an executive head--someone who could serve as final arbitrator for plans and actions, but also met the anticipated demands of the military--someone whom the officers could acknowledge as leader. Gisevius writes that "Beck was the only general with an unimpaired reputation, the only general who had voluntarily resigned. No one among the military men could surpass him in personal or soldierly capacity."¹⁰⁵

Given these high marks of character and competence, the suspicion remains that the choice was unfortunate in at least one vital respect. To explain, Beck's membership in the Wednesday Society was not based on his rank as a general but on his ability as a historian and his love of ancient Greece. Margret Boveri observes that Beck's "classicism determined in a real sense, everything he did during his last years."¹⁰⁶ And personality sketches by his contemporaries, both within and outside the resistance, support the view that Beck was anything but a revolutionary. Guderian writes, "A man of this type was the very last person suited to

workers (i.e., followers) into an efficiently organized unit; (2) to secure adoption of their product by the larger structure (i.e., the established order); and (3) to react to resistance generated by the larger structure. Herbert W. Simons, "Requirements, Problems, And Strategies: A Theory Of Persuasion For Social Movements," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, LVI (February, 1970), 3-4. Simon's formulation seems inappropriate because his definition of movements "as an uninstitutionalized collectivity that mobilizes for action to implement a program for the reconstruction of social norms or values" ignores the notion of agency as an instrument of change and has connotations of working within the system--an idea reflected, for example, in his second requirement for a leader; thus it is inapplicable to the revolutionary approach of the German Resistance Movement. Nevertheless, the gap in the dramatic model remains, and my hope is to fill part of it in with this study.

¹⁰⁵Gisevius, p. 435.

¹⁰⁶Margret Boveri, Treason In The Twentieth Century, trans., Jonathan Steinberg (New York, 1963), p. 224.

take part in a coup d'etat since he was. . .a philosopher."¹⁰⁷ Schacht adds that Beck was "more of a scholar than a man of action."¹⁰⁸ And Schlabrendorff recalls that Beck made him "think of a sage."¹⁰⁹

These comments suggest that Beck was not the man of excess needed to lead a revolutionary movement, especially in its climactic stages.¹¹⁰ "Thought and contemplation [in which] every step had to be weighed with careful reference to the general conditions obtaining,"¹¹¹ is the way Ritter describes Beck's method. Hassell wrote in his diary that Beck was too soft and reserved at meetings and too weak as a leader, in view of the heated internal conflicts.¹¹² And Gisevius, who was with him on the afternoon of July 20, 1944, refers to Beck's self-control which, at first, was impressive. As the day wore on, however, and the headquarters of the conspirators degenerated to a scene of chaos, Gisevius repeatedly urged Beck to do something. Beck replied, "A good general must be able to wait." Gisevius concludes resignedly, "This might be all very well in the auditorium of a military academy, but uprisings could not be conducted according to the textbooks. . .they required arbitrary decisions, boldness, courage; they required leaders rather

¹⁰⁷Guderian, p. 240.

¹⁰⁸Hjalmar Schacht, My First Seventy-Six Years, trans., Diana Pyke (New York, 1955), p. 389.

¹⁰⁹Schlabrendorff, p. 44.

¹¹⁰This holds for Goerdeler too. Ritter writes: "Goerdeler assuredly did not lack either self-confidence or belief in a mission, but he did lack the demonic ambition of a born revolutionary." Ritter, pp. 153-154.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 75.

¹¹²Hassell, pp. 282-283.

than thinkers."¹¹³

The final part of Oster's organizational plan included analyzing and preparing for the objections of the generals to resistance arguments for action against the Fuehrer. Dohnanyi prepared a summary of these into four statements: (1) As long as Hitler appeared successful, the mass of German people would not support a coup and the result would be civil war; (2) France and Britain would exploit this opportunity to impose an intolerably harsh peace on Germany; (3) Whatever the outcome, a revolt would create a new stab-in-the-back myth in which the resisters would be labeled as traitors; and (4) The oath was an obstacle of considerable proportions--there must be a proper chain of command so the soldiers could act with a feeling of legitimacy.¹¹⁴

¹¹³Gisevius, pp. 533; 566. This argument about revolutionary movement leadership has historical roots and rhetorical implications. Simply put, most revolutionary movements begin in relative moderation and are frequently led by men of temperate character. Thus, Erasmus preceded Luther, Mirabeau came before Danton, Desmoulins, and Robespierre, and Kerensky was the forerunner of Lenin and Stalin. In each case, the former were largely men of talk who did not always have the will to execute the reforms they talked about, while the latter were men of deeds who did not shrink from the execution of reforms, and of men too, if necessary. The parallel does not hold universally, as indicated by a John Adams, or an Adolf Hitler, or a Fidel Castro. But it would seem to be applicable to Beck and Goerdeler and their successors, Tresckow and Stauffenberg. In his dramatistic formulation, Griffin, extrapolating from Burke's discussion of changing orientations in A Grammar Of Motives (Berkeley, 1962), p. 67, makes somewhat the same point when he suggests that ideally, "Every movement. . . has form. It is a progress from pathema through poiema to mathema; from 'a suffering, misfortune, passive condition, state of mind,' through 'a deed, doing, action, act,' to 'an adequate idea; the thing learned.'" Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 461. But he adds that the crisis period of a movement may "mark the time when a class. . . or rank of being that has represented the. . . [movement's] purpose. . . is no longer representative of the new conditions. . . . It is a time when. . . [they may be replaced by] the few who [were] quickest to sense new factors in their incipient stages." Ibid., pp. 466-467.

¹¹⁴This summary is cited in Deutsch, p. 176. Dohnanyi's ab-

These were the problems which Oster, Dohnanyi, and the other resisters in the Abwehr set about trying to resolve. Concerning the climate of public opinion, it was assumed that accounts of Nazi crimes in Poland, even though they had not succeeded in regaining military control of the occupied areas, might still serve to convince the ordinary citizen that the "successes" of the regime were being purchased at too high a price. Beyond this, there was the prospect of an attack in the west, and here too, the fears of those Germans who remembered the Marne, Verdun, the Somme, and Paaschendale, could be put to use in enlisting popular support. Finally, a memorandum was prepared by Otto John and Ernst von Harnak which placed special emphasis upon the fact that the socialists and trade unionists--Leuschner, Kaiser, and the others--"stood shoulder to shoulder behind General Beck in order to overthrow the regime and so save the German people from a catastrophe in which the working class would be the principle sufferers as in the First World War."¹¹⁵

In order to reassure the generals that the Allies would not undertake offensive measures to exploit the revolutionary situation in Germany, and at the same time, to assure themselves that the re-creation

stract of objections comprises a "crystallization of fundamental issues" by the conspirators. Further, the answers they developed to meet these objections as well as the presentation of these answers in reports and memoranda constitute the "emergence of argument and appeal. . .invoked by the rhetoricians" of the resistance. In the narrative which follows, the reader will be able to contrast these with Hitler's "counter-arguments and counter-appeals" as the dialectic interchange moves to its climax. Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric Of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, XXXVIII (April, 1952), 186.

¹¹⁵John, p. 59.

of a constitutional state would "remain a strictly internal affair,"¹¹⁶ Oster, with Beck's approval, devised a plan to enlist Pius XII as an intermediary between the two sides, and equally important, as a sponsor for whatever terms could be worked out. The choice of the new Pontiff was ideal. As an Archbishop, he had served in Munich and Berlin from 1917 to 1929, and his understanding of German affairs as well as his basic good intentions toward the German people were well-known. Also, in a situation where the smallest amount of leakage would be a disaster, the Pope was recognized as a model of discretion and diplomatic skill. And the eminence of his post carried with it an impressiveness which even generals could appreciate. Finally, the Pope was acquainted with several opposition leaders, notably Beck and Canaris, both of whom he had met while serving in Germany.¹¹⁷

The role of envoy fell to Josef Mueller, a Munich attorney and defender of church interests in Bavaria. Mueller was a Catholic (which immediately made him a better choice than the conspirators in the Abwehr, most of whom were Protestants), and even more important, he had an old friend in the Vatican, a German Jesuit from Freiburg, Father Robert Leiber, who was secretary to the Pope.¹¹⁸ Oster contacted Mueller and asked him to join the Abwehr as a reserve officer, his sole assignment being to seek a line of communication to the Western Allies through the Holy See. Mueller agreed, a handshake sealing the

¹¹⁶Goerdeler is quoted in Hassell, p. 108.

¹¹⁷This summary of advantages is taken from Deutsch, pp. 108-111.

¹¹⁸Colvin recounts this list of factors from conversations with Mueller; p. 98.

bargain, and he was provided with passports and a cover story about utilizing his connections in Rome to secure information about Italy's intentions toward her alliance with Germany, a subject of some concern to the Nazi leadership since Mussolini had reneged on his promise of co-belligerency prior to the attack on Poland.¹¹⁹ Thus, in late September, Mueller made his first trip to the Vatican where he sounded out Father Leiber on the possibilities of approaching the Pope and securing his consent as a go-between and guarantor.¹²⁰

Relative to the problem of the Dolchstoss, the resisters were somewhat better off than they had been in 1938. Then, despite their warnings about Hitler's intentions toward the Sudetenland and their pleas to the British to stand firm, Chamberlain had capitulated at Munich and the Nazi regime had achieved another bloodless triumph. Now, however, both Western Powers had declared war, and while this introduced new factors which increased the hesitation of the generals to take part in a coup, it also raised their anxieties about the possibility of defeat or at least a bloody stalemate in the west. For the leaders of the opposition, the problem was delicately balanced. On the one hand, they needed evidence to show the officers "that the opposing armies would not fall upon Germany at the moment. . .of civil war,"¹²¹ thus freeing them from their fears about a new stab-in-the-back myth. On the other, they needed

¹¹⁹Deutsch cites these plans from conversations with Mueller; pp. 115-119.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 119.

¹²¹Gisevius, p. 379.

what Schacht called the prospect of a "defeat"¹²² to sever their bonds of loyalty to Hitler, thus making them ready to lead a coup. For this alternative, the Western Allies did not carry any weight since their armies had been content to remain on the defensive since the invasion of Poland. Instead, it was the Fuehrer himself who would tilt the scales, depending on whether he ordered an attack against Britain and France and how the generals estimated their chances of success in such a venture. And here, as we have seen, the Fuehrer unwittingly aided his opponents by declaring, in the military conference of September 27, that the attack would probably take place, and if so, the sooner the better, in spite of all the professional and technical objections which the officers could muster.

The last issue--the oath of allegiance--was closely related to the prospects of a widening war. For if the generals--particularly Brauchitsch and Halder--were convinced that there was no way to deflect Hitler from his proposed march on Paris, they would have no recourse but to march on Berlin. As Gisevius bluntly put it, "they would be face-to-face with the question of whether an outright overthrow of the government would not be cheaper than the otherwise inevitable carnage."¹²³ And from the resolution of this dilemma, it was assumed that orders would be issued from Zossen, properly headed, explicit, and signed, which required nothing of the recipients but mechanical obedience--apparently the proper kind of communication for a "military mentality which thinks with its hands on its trouser seams,"¹²⁴ as Hassell once wrote in a moment of frustration.

¹²²Schacht is quoted in Hassell, p. 82.

¹²³Gisevius, p. 378.

¹²⁴Hassell, p. 164.

Thus, the conspirators began importuning the generals to act. Groscurth and Etzdorf were already on the scene at Zossen. Halder testified at Nuremberg that Goerdeler and Beck were in contact with him on many occasions during this period,¹²⁵ and Gisevius notes that by October 31, the Army Chief of Staff "would no longer see Oster."¹²⁶ Although no mention is made of what transpired at these "meetings," the pressure on the army leaders must have been intense.

On October 6, Hitler delivered his long-awaited and much-advertised "peace offer" before the Reichstag. For our purposes, what he said is not as important as why he said it. Bullock writes that his intent was to "convince the German people that, if the war continued, it was through no fault of his."¹²⁷ Certainly, in keeping with the thrust of his remarks to his military commanders on September 27, the inference seems inescapable that the Fuehrer had already made up his mind on an offensive and was only waiting for his "intuition" to tell him the proper moment.

In any event, on October 10, two days before Chamberlain replied, Hitler summoned his military leaders to a second conference, and in what was going to be a fall and winter of memoranda production, read them one of his own detailing the political and military reasons for striking swiftly in the West.¹²⁸

I shall limit myself exclusively to. . .the necessity to continue the fight. . . . The German war aim is the. . .destruction of the

¹²⁵NCA, Supp., B, p. 1568.

¹²⁶Gisevius, p. 358.

¹²⁷Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study In Tyranny (New York, 1961), p. 497.

¹²⁸The full text of Hitler's memorandum is in NCA, vii, pp. 801-814.

power and ability of the Western Powers ever again to be able to oppose the state consolidation and further development of the German people. . . .

Then, in what may be interpreted as a reply to Stulpnagel's report of late September advocating a defensive posture in the west until 1942, Hitler said:

In the present situation. . .time may be reckoned more probably as an ally of the Western Powers than of ours. . . . The successes of the Polish campaign have made possible. . .a war on a single front. . . . By no treaty or pact can a lasting neutrality of Soviet Russia be insured with certainty. At present all reasons speak against Russia's departure from this state of neutrality. In eight months, one year, or even several years this may be altered. . . . The greatest safeguard against any Russian attack lies in. . .a prompt demonstration of strength.

Time was important in regard to Italy and whether there were quick "German successes" to entice Mussolini toward the "future of a great imperial Roman Empire. . .[which] is only to be realized at the expense of France and England." Also, with Belgium and Holland, time was of the essence because "both countries are interested in maintaining their neutrality but are incapable of withstanding pressure from England and France." And so it went, whether the geographic area was Scandinavia, the Balkans, Japan, or the United States, "time is to be viewed as working against Germany."

When he reached the military part of his argument, Hitler sought to stiffen the resolve of his generals by dwelling upon the superiority of German men and material as demonstrated by the Polish campaign. "The German soldier is the best in the world. . .the weapons have just proved their war worthiness. . .the tank arm and air force have achieved technical heights unattained by any other state." But here too, "the passing of every further month represents a loss of time unfavorable to the

German power of offensive. . . speed of action betokens a momentum, not to be underestimated, which is favorable to Germany and terrifying to her enemies." And how could these enemies be gotten at most easily? Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland represented "the only possible area of attack [by which] to engage and defeat the opposing forces" thus gaining positions on the channel coast for "the brutal employment of the GAF against the heart of the British will-to-resist." In his eagerness to begin, the Fuehrer minimized the time needed to refit and retrain the forces used in Poland since "the advantages gained from all the training possible will be less owing to the lack of actual battle-usage." As for the time of attack, "It is to take place in all circumstances this autumn." And if necessary, the offensive could continue "right into the severe winter. The weather endurance of the French soldier is no better than that of the German."

If any generals thought that the Allied reply to Hitler's offer of peace would cancel the need for an offensive in the west, they were sadly mistaken. Speaking on October 12, Chamberlain termed Hitler's proposals "vague and uncertain," and noted that they "contained no suggestions for righting the wrongs done to Czechoslovakia and Poland." Reliance could not be placed on the promises "of the present German Government." If it wanted peace, "acts--not words--must be forthcoming."¹²⁹ Thus, just as the resisters anticipated, the officers were caught between the Scylla of organizing a campaign which they thought would be disastrous and the Charybidis of revolting

¹²⁹Chamberlain's reply is quoted in Roger Parkinson, Peace For Our Time (London, 1971), pp. 257-258.

against a man to whom they had sworn unconditional obedience. As can be imagined, they tried to navigate delicately between the two.

On October 14, Brauchitsch and Halder held a lengthy meeting. Halder's diary lists the possibilities the two commanders saw for dealing with their problem: "attack, await attack, basic changes."¹³⁰ Both rejected the first; Brauchitsch rejected the third; thus, by a process of elimination, they agreed upon the second which would buy them some time to try to dissuade the Fuehrer from his oft-stated intent. And while such a choice meant literally what it said for Brauchitsch, for Halder the idea was beginning to take shape that if Hitler remained adamant, he would have to act against him and probably without Brauchitsch.

Brauchitsch saw the Fuehrer on October 16 and 19. Although the Army Commander made the most of the technical arguments which he and Halder had devised--the problem of re-equipment, the risks of a winter campaign, and the strength of the forces opposing them--the results were unsatisfactory. On the first occasion, Hitler tentatively set the date of attack for between November 15 and 20; on the second, he advanced it to the 12, although he did promise that the High Command would receive a week's warning period.¹³¹

At the same time, Halder quietly set about organizing a staff made up of himself, Stulpnagel, Wagner and Groscurth to work out "a forceful solution"¹³²if one was necessary. Again, it speaks well of Oster's

¹³⁰Halder, War Diary, p. 105. After the war, Halder explained that "basic changes" meant the removal of Hitler.

¹³¹Ibid., pp. 107-109.

¹³²NCA, Supp., B, p. 1568.

foresight that Groscurth, who was privy to resistance thinking, was available to serve as part of this group. Because time was running out, November 5 being the day Hitler would issue his final orders, the staff borrowed liberally from the "Oster Study" of the previous year which Groscurth had secured from the Abwehr.

There were, of course, some major differences between the two plans. One involved the military units to be used since Halder, who had control over the Army's Transportation Department, had ordered two reliable panzer divisions to be held near the capital on the pretext of refitting them.¹³³ A second dealt with the press and radio announcements to the nation. Here the material was basically new and largely drawn from the "chronicles" prepared by Dohnanyi. Also, a favorite idea of Gisevius' --that the coup be publicized as an attempt to protect Hitler from corrupt party influences led by Himmler and Goering¹³⁴--was included for the sake of those Germans who believed the best about their leader. And finally, because the strike was to be made before dawn (beginning with the Reich Chancellery, the vulnerability of which Hitler had expressed fears about to Speer), the blackout would be lifted and lights would go on all over Germany to symbolize the end of the war.¹³⁵

The major similarity between the two plans was that Hitler would be captured and not killed. Beck and Goerdeler, whose opinions were decisive at this time, opposed assassination on ethical grounds,¹³⁶

¹³³Goerlitz, p. 364.

¹³⁴Gisevius, p. 309.

¹³⁵Deutsch quotes Mueller on this feature; p. 202.

¹³⁶For Goerdeler's view, see Ritter, p. 293. Beck, though opposed to killing Hitler at this time, would finally change his mind.

and there was also the matter of Hitler's public trial, a carry-over from the earlier plan. Unfortunately, on this vital issue, the conspirators badly misjudged their audience. The key military figure was Halder, and he, perhaps more than any other officer, was deeply troubled by his oath.¹³⁷ Although it seems like a hideous contradiction in terms, his conscience would rest easier with a murdered Hitler than a broken vow. Halder had spoken with the conspirators on several occasions about the possibility of the dictator suffering a fatal "accident."¹³⁸ And it is no real answer to argue, as Gisevius does, that "it was to be expected, above all, that he would openly stand by his act which his intelligence and his conscience made mandatory for him."¹³⁹ Thus, as this scene progresses toward its climax, with Halder hesitant and confused, committed and uncommitted, and running the gamut of emotions from determination to

See Gisevius, p. 532. This early unwillingness to sanction assassination for moral reasons is another example of ethics and politics working at crosspurposes. See Chapter Two, page 106, footnote 154. The cause for this state of affairs, as Griffin notes, lies in the difficulty in moving from pathema to poiema, in getting men "to 'shift their coordinates,' 'acquire a new perspective,' 'see around the corner'. . .move. . .to the negation of the counter-negation; which is to say, to move to the rhetorical killing of the Kill." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 464.

¹³⁷The difficulty of Halder's position is underscored by one of his statements at Nuremberg. "May I make a personal remark. I am the last male member of a family which for 300 years were soldiers. What the duty of the soldier is I know. I know too that in the dictionary of a German soldier the term treason and plot against the state does not exist. . . . You may be assured that this is the worst dilemma that a soldier may be faced with." NCA, Supp., B, p. 1563.

¹³⁸Gisevius, p. 295.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 296.

despair, it should be kept in mind that the blame for what happened does not rest on him alone, but must be shared by opposition leaders who helped to sharpen his dilemma but failed to provide him with what he conceived of as a real choice.

On October 27, Hitler summoned his military leaders to a third conference. After a ceremony in which he invested twenty-four of them with decorations, he informed them that the time had come to settle the business of an attack in the west once and for all. In a last ditch effort, Brauchitsch and Halder argued that the army could not possibly be ready before November 26. The Fuehrer's response was a curt: "That is much too late." The attack would definitely begin on the 12 and final preparations were to be made accordingly. The two generals left the meeting defeated. As Halder put it, they were "worn out and depressed."¹⁴⁰

The mental state of the Army Chief of Staff through the last half of October must have alarmed the conspirators. On October 16, Groscurth wrote in his diary, "Admiral [Canaris] visits Halder. Returns shaken. Complete nervous collapse."¹⁴¹ General Manstein, who met with Halder three days later, described their conversation as "extremely depressing."¹⁴² And Hassell noted, "Halder. . . is not at his best--a matter of nerves."¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰Halder, War Diary, p. 115.

¹⁴¹Helmuth Groscurth, Tagebucher Eines Abwehroffiziers, ed., Helmut Krausnick and Harold Deutsch (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 218.

¹⁴²Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, trans., Anthony G. Powell (London, 1958), p. 71.

¹⁴³Hassell, p. 90.

In an effort to steady Halder and, at the same time, encourage him to make a decision for revolt, the resisters decided to bring their strongest argumentative guns to bear. The first of these persuasive attacks was a memorandum from the Foreign Office drawn up by Etzdorf and Kordt.¹⁴⁴ It opened with a review of the current situation, described as a "threatening catastrophe," and projected that a stalemate was the best that could be hoped for in the west, and that only in the short run. Ultimately, the attack would harden the resolve of the Allies to carry on the war to the bitter end, and reinforced by the United States, which would "send not only material but also men filled with a crusading spirit," the inevitable result would be the total defeat of Germany. The argument then shifted to political concerns. Hitler could no longer achieve a compromise peace: it was only left to him "to burn his boats, blow his bridges, and force his way forward." And what would he leave behind? At home, there was moral and religious degradation and the prevalence of tyranny and corruption. Abroad, to take only the most recent case, the partition of Poland "has succeeded in handing over twenty million people to Bolshevism." Nor did the paper hesitate to deal with the oath, which, it argued, had lost its validity "because Hitler, forgetting his own obligations, is prepared to sacrifice Germany to his diabolic aims." And while it was conceded that a revolt could not count on immediate

¹⁴⁴Kordt, p. 359ff. Internal evidence suggests that while this document was delivered to the headquarters of the High Command at the end of October, it was written before the middle of the month since it contains no reference to November 12 as the date of attack, and more importantly, no mention of Mueller's return from his second trip to the Vatican on October 18.

popular support, that should not deter those who possessed the necessary civil courage. Finally, a section titled "honorable peace" pointed out that only so long as the army was intact was a political solution possible, and that with Hitler removed, the Allies would have every reason to be moderate, probably along the lines of the Munich Agreement with some additional concessions made to bridge the Polish Corridor.

At approximately this same time, reports arrived at Zossen from the three Army Commanders on the Western Front, the result of an earlier request by Halder for a military round robin. All expressed strong opposition to the offensive on technical grounds, and one, from General Leeb, went a step further and added moral objections to an assault on neutral Belgium by a German Government, which only a few weeks before, had solemnly promised to respect it. The closing passage was the important one: "I am prepared in the coming days to stand behind you fully with my person and to draw every desired and necessary conclusion."¹⁴⁵

This combination of documents finally appears to have pushed Halder to the sanctuary of a firm decision. On October 31, he talked with Groscurth and declared his readiness to act if Hitler remained wedded to his attack schedule. November 5 was the crucial day. On it, the Fuehrer was to confirm his final orders and Brauchitsch had arranged for a private meeting with him for one last attempt. If the Army Commander failed, plans for the coup would be initiated. Beck and Goerdeler were to hold themselves

¹⁴⁵Leeb's reply is quoted in Deutsch, pp. 210-211.

in readiness. Maps of the government quarter were to be re-examined. And final checks were to be made of the new Chancellery blueprints so that all possible underground exits could be sealed off.¹⁴⁶

Halder and Brauchitsch were scheduled to make one last tour of the Western Front on November 2-3. It was not, as some commentators have alleged, to drum up support for the coup, which Brauchitsch, for one, did not even know about.¹⁴⁷ Rather, they were looking for additional testimony to reinforce Brauchitsch's arguments in his meeting with Hitler on the 5. In any event, the Army Commanders cannot have been disappointed by what they learned since Halder summarized the responses of the various headquarters as wholly negative: "The attack ordered by OKW is not believed by any high command center to have any prospects of success."¹⁴⁸ Thus, the Army Chief of Staff was in a receptive mood on November 4 when the resisters in the Abwehr mounted their own paper offensive to make certain he would "strike" properly. This was a memorandum prepared by Dohnanyi and Gisevius on November 1, but only delivered to Zossen three days later because of Halder's absence. In his memoirs, Gisevius writes that the document "showed why an offensive in the West would constitute a politically irrevocable mistake. The deliberate violation of the neutral countries would discredit the generals forever." And then, in an important departure from the earlier Foreign Office memorandum, the authors added that a way to

¹⁴⁶This account of Halder's instructions has been culled from Gisevius, p. 386; and Groscurth, p. 222.

¹⁴⁷William L. Shirer, The Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich (New York, 1960), p. 650.

¹⁴⁸Halder, War Diary, pp. 117-118.

a negotiated settlement still existed. Josef Mueller had just returned from his second trip to the Vatican and "on the basis of [his] . . . reports the Allies were willing to consider the question of peace."¹⁴⁹

General Thomas, who delivered this second memorandum, and who buttressed it with economic objections to the attack, must have felt like the bearer of an idea whose time had come. Not only did Halder use the "most energetic phrases" in reference to the coup, but he even asked Thomas to have Oster meet with him that same day so they could coordinate final arrangements. Such a request was a significant departure from the Army Chief of Staff's behavior only a week earlier when he would no longer allow Oster to visit Zossen,¹⁵⁰ probably because he suspected the Abwehr leader as the source of much of the pressure being exerted on him. In any case, Gisevius, who talked with Oster later in the evening, reports that the meeting went extremely well. Stulpnagel "gave him full details and even mentioned the name of the general whose panzer corps was to take care of the most urgent tasks in Berlin," and Halder's resolve had "profoundly impressed" Oster, who thanked the general for coming to a "strong and noble resolution."¹⁵¹

In a high state of excitement, then, the conspirators gathered on the morning of November 5. Goerdeler, according to Gisevius, was already drawing up lists of cabinet ministers. Beck was more reserved, but Popitz and Hassell were almost as optimistic as Goerdeler. Only

¹⁴⁹Gisevius, pp. 384-385.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 383.

¹⁵¹Ibid., pp. 385-386.

Schacht remained cynical: "Just you watch," he said, "Hitler will smell a rat."¹⁵²

There was, as John Wheeler-Bennett observes, "very little rat to smell."¹⁵³ At twelve, Brauchitsch went into his meeting with Hitler, accompanied as far as the reception room by Halder. After first presenting the Fuehrer with memoranda and reports--the results of the trip to the Western Front--the Army Commander began to recite the well-known litany of technical objections to the attack: the problem of re-equipment, the strength of opposing forces, and the effect of bad weather on offensive movements. "Neither is the French Army equipped with umbrellas against bad weather," was Hitler's grim retort. Sensing a stalemate, Brauchitsch turned next to the issue of the Fuehrer's interference with the direction of operations during the Polish campaign. Would it be possible in the future for Hitler to limit his activities in military affairs? This question merited only silence. In desperation, Brauchitsch advanced an objection as yet unknown to the Fuehrer. The fighting in Poland had revealed the aggressive spirit of the infantry to be low, many had been reluctant to advance under fire, a number of officers had been needlessly killed trying to rally them, and carried away by his own momentum, the Army Commander added that there had been breaches of discipline, similar to those in the last war. At this, Hitler "flew into a rage." Brauchitsch's argument was a slur against the fuhreertreu German

¹⁵²Gisevius, pp. 386-387.

¹⁵³John Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis Of Power (New York, 1954), p. 470.

youth. He demanded evidence. Exactly which units had been involved? What action had the Army High Command taken? How many death sentences had been carried out? As far as the troops in the west were concerned, he himself would fly there tomorrow to investigate the situation and provide for proper correctives. And then, Hitler turned his attack on Brauchitsch and gave vent to a rancor that had been building up for a long time—a rancor doubtless aggravated by the events of the past few months. The army had never been loyal! It had never had confidence in his genius! It had deliberately sabotaged his rearmament program! It was afraid to fight! He was at the end of his patience with the "spirit of Zossen," which he was going to ruthlessly "destroy!" Bluntly, he forbade Brauchitsch to go on with the report and dismissed him.¹⁵⁴

It was a stunned Army Commander who left the Reich Chancellery only twenty minutes after entering it. On the road back to Zossen, Halder tried to make some sense out of Brauchitsch's incoherent account. Above all, one phrase had an ominous ring—that Hitler knew about the "spirit of Zossen" and would "destroy" it. To the Chief of Staff, that could only mean that the plot had been discovered and that if the SS was not at headquarters already, they soon would be. Such a thought may well have conjured up memories of the Roehm Purge of 1934 when those whom Hitler had marked as traitors were lined up against the wall and dispatched wholesale. Understandably then, Halder moved like a man with retribution at his heels. Upon returning to Zossen,

¹⁵⁴The account of this meeting has been reconstructed from the following: Brauchitsch, TMWC, xx, p. 575; Gisevius, p. 388; Groscurth, p. 221; Halder, War Diary, p. 126; Halder, NCA, Supp., B, p. 1568; John, p. 61; and Warlimont, p. 58.

he gave Stulpnagel orders to destroy all traces of the plot, and Stulpnagel, in turn, gave Groscurth orders to burn everything.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the plans for the coup went up in smoke: Chancellery blueprints, maps of the city, reports, proclamations, and orders.

For the next few hours the atmosphere at Zossen was extremely tense. Hitler's order confirming the attack was received on teletype at mid-afternoon, but other than that, no evidence of his threat appeared to be forthcoming, and as the day wore on, some of the officers gradually began to regain their composure. Even Brauchitsch, who had been the object of the Fuehrer's diatribe, was feeling resentment over the way he had been treated. Gisevius quotes him as telling Halder that "the offensive would be fatal and must be prevented at all costs." What these costs might be were not his concern: "I myself shall do nothing, but I will not oppose anyone who does do something."¹⁵⁶

To a committed resister like Groscurth, this declaration sounded like the signal to act. In spite of the fact that the plans lay in ashes, nothing was lost if Halder could be rewound so that he would issue the orders to strike. But there was the rub. The tensions of the past month--of organizing a campaign which he opposed and a plot which ran against his convictions, of being whipsawed between the importunings of the conspirators on one side and the demands of the Fuehrer on the other, and above all, of listening to Brauchitsch during the emotionally shattering ride back to Zossen--had left the Army Chief of Staff with a broken mainspring. All desire to lead a revolt against the living

¹⁵⁵Groscurth, pp. 224-225.

¹⁵⁶Gisevius, p. 389.

Hitler had been destroyed and he retreated to his defense of being willing to act only if someone would assassinate the dictator, specifically Canaris and his lieutenants in the Abwehr,¹⁵⁷ a suggestion motivated in part no doubt by his resentment at the ceaseless pressures from the Tirpitzufer,¹⁵⁸ but one which Canaris, who also opposed murder for ethical reasons, rejected that same evening.¹⁵⁹ Thus, the day which saw the climax of a dialectic battle between the Fuehrer and his opponents ended with Hitler in full possession of the field. Not only had he overwhelmed the Commander-in-Chief of the Army by the sheer clangor of his voice, but he had also paralyzed the Army Chief of Staff at one remove and left him incapable of further action except on grounds of tyrannicide. Taken together, it was no mean accomplishment for a man without formal training in the arts of advocacy.

The weeks which followed the crisis of November 5 represented an almost unbroken series of blows to the hopes of the resisters. The only good news came at the outset. On November 7, partly because of unfavorable weather forecasts and partly because of embarrassing offers of peace mediation by the Belgium and Dutch monarchs, the Fuehrer postponed the date of the attack for three days--the first of fourteen

¹⁵⁷Groscurth, pp. 224-225.

¹⁵⁸In discussing the period of a movement's consummation, Griffin writes that "the central problem of the rhetoricians of any cause. . . is to move the public to the desired action before the point of alienation is reached and reaction develops." Griffin, "Rhetoric Of Historical Movements," 186. While this period does not represent the climax of the drama, there does seem to be a parallel between the amount of pressure which the resisters brought to bear on Halder and his negative reaction.

¹⁵⁹Gisevius, p. 389. For Canaris' view on assassination, see Ibid., p. 443.

postponements which he would order throughout the winter of 1939-40, and which would keep alive the plans of the resisters as they worked against the calendar in an effort to rally the defeated generals to action before the offensive destroyed all chances of a negotiated peace.

Typically, it was Oster who made the first attempts. For one thing, he secretly called on an old friend of his, Major G. J. Sas, a military attache at the Dutch Embassy, to give him the first of many warnings about the date of Hitler's proposed attack on Holland.¹⁶⁰ Unfortunately, Sas's account of these warnings was not believed at the Hague, probably because the Germans had avoided Dutch territory in the First World War, and more likely, because the Fuehrer kept postponing the attack date and with each cry of "wolf," Sas's credibility as well as that of his informer went down accordingly.

For another, Oster and Gisevius made a hurried trip to the Western Front in an effort to persuade General Witzleben, then commanding the First Army, to come to Zossen and try to get Halder to "strike." As Gisevius puts it, "Witzleben was a refreshingly uncomplicated man. He had no bent for that kind of political finesse so dear to a bureaucratic general such as Halder."¹⁶¹ Perhaps his directness would provide the motivation needed by the Army Chief of Staff. Unfortunately, Witzleben was in no condition to "motivate" anyone. Physically, his health left much to be desired and in fact, he was taking the local curative waters when the two emissaries arrived. Also, he was mentally depressed and

¹⁶⁰Sas's account of his meetings with Oster is in Roger Manvell & Heinrich Fraenkel, The Canaris Conspiracy (New York, 1969), pp. 120-126.

¹⁶¹Gisevius, p. 304.

"did not believe there was any chance. . .to influence Brauchitsch and Halder. The two were hopeless cases now."¹⁶² Besides this negative result, the meeting with Witzleben involved an incident which gave Halder another opportunity to express his anger at the pressures to which Oster had subjected him. The Abwehr leader had carelessly left some papers lying around First Army Headquarters which included copies of Beck's proclamations and lists of prospective ministers in the provisional government. The officer who found them did not report his discovery to the Gestapo but sent them instead to Halder, since some of the material might have compromised him. As can be imagined, the Chief of Staff was extremely angry and gave Groscurth orders to take the severest kind of reprimand to Oster and to tell him in effect that his presence was no longer appreciated at Zossen.¹⁶³

Oster's final move was to try and free the officers from their obligations to the oath. Although Beck and the other resistance leaders were opposed to killing Hitler on moral grounds, the Abwehr Chief of Staff had no such reservations. Thus, as he watched the generals "retreat to their oath which. . .was sworn on the living Hitler,"¹⁶⁴ he began to look for an "assassin." Such a search was not easy. Of all the members of the resistance, he could find only one who possessed the necessary requirements: access to the Fuehrer and no qualms of conscience about killing him. This was Erich Kordt, Ribbentrop's Chef de Cabinet, who sometimes went to the Reich Chancellery on diplomatic business.

¹⁶²Gisevius, p. 392.

¹⁶³Groscurth, pp. 228-229.

¹⁶⁴Kordt quotes Oster, p. 360.

Kordt could not expect to gain admittance to Hitler's private study, but the Fuehrer occasionally made appearances in the reception room to call in visitors or give orders to aides.¹⁶⁵ In these moments, it might be possible for a person with a bomb hidden in his clothing to trigger the mechanism, move close to Hitler, and both perish together. Kordt was willing to make this sacrifice and Oster arranged to get materials together for a bomb which would be ready on November 11. Meanwhile, Kordt would visit the Chancellery as often as he could in order to accustom the guards, who already knew him by sight, to his presence.¹⁶⁶

On November 8, Hitler, as was his custom, visited the site of his abortive putsch of 1923, and in the evening, delivered his annual commemorative speech to the "alte Kampfer" who had gathered at the Hofbrauhaus in Munich. A dozen or so minutes after he had finished speaking, a bomb which had been planted in a pillar directly behind the lectern exploded, killing seven and wounding sixty-three. The historical controversy over whether Georg Elser, the would-be assassin, was solely responsible for setting off the infernal device, or whether the whole affair had been arranged by the Gestapo as a morale booster with Elser playing the part of catspaw, need not concern us here except to note that for Kordt and Oster, the result was the ruin of their own assassination plan. When Kordt met with Oster on the 10, the Abwehr Staff Chief did not have the bomb. All laboratories that handled explosives were under surveillance and there was no way to get the material without arousing suspicion. Kordt volunteered to use a pistol instead. Oster argued against it:

¹⁶⁵For a description of the room arrangements in the Chancellery, see Speer, esp., Chapter Eight, "The New Reich Chancellery."

¹⁶⁶Kordt, p. 370.

"You do not have one chance in a hundred. You cannot see Hitler alone. And in the anteroom in the presence of adjutants, orderlies, and visitors, you would hardly get a chance to shoot."¹⁶⁷ Anyway, the offensive had been postponed a second time and when the hue and cry died down, it would be possible to get another bomb and try again.¹⁶⁸ Unfortunately, by then, the man and the moment had passed from the stage. In early January, Ribbentrop, who had grown suspicious of Kordt, had him transferred to the diplomatic wilderness of Nanking where he remained until the end of the war.

The day after the attempt in Munich, a second event occurred which was to prove equally ruinous to resistance plans. This was the Venlo incident in which two British intelligence officers, Captain S. Payne Best and Major R. H. Stevens, were lured to the German frontier by Nazi agents posing as conspiring generals, seized by an SS detachment, and dragged into Germany. In this affair, it is a matter of conjecture as to how much the Gestapo knew about the particulars of resistance activities and how much was good guess work. Walter Schellenberg, the security officer responsible for the kidnapping, provides only hints in his memoirs, but even these are enough to suggest that the defeatism of the High Command was well-known in the upper-levels of the Nazi hierarchy.¹⁶⁹ And certainly, Himmler's minions could not have been deaf to the fears which

¹⁶⁷Kordt, p. 374. It is difficult to understand Louis Namier's objections to "curiously dramatic conversations. . .even accepting their historicity." Louis B. Namier, In The Nazi Era (London, 1952), p. 97. Perhaps the dramatic element was inherent in the subject matter.

¹⁶⁸Kordt, p. 374.

¹⁶⁹Walter Schellenberg, Hitler's Secret Service, trans., Louis Hagen (New York, 1971), p. 78.

the Fuehrer himself had expressed about Beck,¹⁷⁰ or to some of the dangerous indiscretions into which the optimistic Goerdeler was always blundering,¹⁷¹ or even to the "divergent views" of a man like Hassell, who was unable to secure a new foreign service post for that very reason.¹⁷² In any event, whatever their degree of consciousness, the Security Service was sufficiently alive to what was going on to have been in contact with Best and Stevens for more than a month. And Schellenberg, who had assumed the identity of a Major Schaemmel, was able to talk quite plausibly about the "forcible removal of Hitler. . .the setting up of a new regime. . .[and the possible terms] of a secret agreement. . .which would lead to a peace treaty."¹⁷³ Then came the assassination attempt at Munich. The Fuehrer insisted that the British Secret Service was behind it, that the two officers were directly involved, and that they should be kidnapped and brought to Berlin for interrogation.¹⁷⁴

For the resisters, the Venlo incident was damaging in two respects. First, they were not certain how much Stevens and Best knew or how much the Gestapo might extort from them. Canaris, who was fully aware of the Abwehr's central role in anti-Hitler activities at this time "took soundings with Heydrich as to whether any German intelligence officers

¹⁷⁰See Chapter Two, p. 120.

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁷²Hassell, p. 20.

¹⁷³Schellenberg, p. 80.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 89.

were compromised by the affair." The SS chief said no, but added that the "loyalty of some senior generals was questionable,"¹⁷⁵ and with this ambiguous response, the resisters had to be content. Second, the kidnapping delayed the Mueller negotiations in Rome for almost six weeks. Deutsch quotes the British Ambassador to the Vatican, Sir Francis d'Arcy Osborne, expressing to the Pope the fears of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, about the credentials of Mueller: "Your Holiness, can you be sure of the matter? Can we rely on this?"¹⁷⁶ Fortunately for the conspirators, they had a staunch ally in the Pontiff, who vouched for Mueller and the men who stood behind him. But the delay, in a period when Hitler was making only short-term postponements, must have been a severe strain, and more importantly, by the time the terms of the negotiations were finally hammered out at the end of January, other changes had taken place which made the British offer less attractive to its intended audience than it might have been earlier.

Whatever his degree of responsibility for the attempt at Munich or the affair at Venlo, Hitler was quick to take advantage of them and drive home his victory over the reluctant generals, and by implication, the conspirators. Guderian writes that "a series of lectures was organized in Berlin. . . in order to strengthen the political attitude of the officer corps." The speakers were Goebbels and Goering, and the Panzer Leader summarizes the theme of their addresses: "The Luftwaffe generals, under the purposeful leadership of party comrade Goering, are entirely reliable; the admirals can be trusted to follow the Hitlerite line; but the Party

¹⁷⁵Colvin, p. 97.

¹⁷⁶Deutsch, p. 137.

cannot place unconditional trust in. . .the army commanders."¹⁷⁷

The climax of the series came on November 23 with a speech by the Fuehrer himself. In many respects, the arguments he used were similar to those he had advanced on October 10, but now he was much more certain of himself and he scored telling points off his adversaries. Thus, he mocked the anxious "prophets" who had seen only catastrophe in all the decisions he had taken since becoming Chancellor, and he recited the entire list of them, from the "hard choice" to leave the League of Nations to the "pressure" involved in deciding to attack Poland. The goal for which he strove was Lebensraum: "the increasing number of people requires a larger living space." And the instrument which would make it possible was the Wehrmacht: "I did not organize the armed forces not to strike." The air force and the navy had performed excellently in Poland and so had the army. But he was "most profoundly pained that the troops would advance only if the officers led the way." The army was the best anywhere and every German grenadier was superior to his French counterpart. Sarcastically, he praised the officers for being better than in 1914-- a very bad year as far as military leadership was concerned:¹⁷⁸"The officers must give an example of fanatical unity from above. There would not be any failures if the leaders always had the courage a rifeman must have." And he demanded that they "pass on the spirit of determination to the lower ranks." As for himself, he would "shrink from nothing and . . .destroy everyone who is opposed to me. . . . I shall stand or fall

¹⁷⁷Guderian, p. 76.

¹⁷⁸During the drive on Paris in August 1914, General Helmuth von Moltke, Army Chief of Staff, suffered a nervous collapse, and some of the field commanders were not too far removed from the same condition.

in this struggle." But there would be no defeat: "we shall come through victoriously--our age will enter into the history of our people. . . . No capitulation to external forces, no revolution from internal forces."¹⁷⁹

The effect of the speech was almost everything the Fuehrer could have hoped for. The taunt of faintheartedness was the kind of challenge meant to rally generals to their guns. As Oster put it, "The charge of cowardice has made the brave cowards again."¹⁸⁰ And the threat against internal revolt--"I will shrink from nothing and destroy everyone who is opposed to me"--must have given a few of the officers--Brauchitsch and Halder in particular--some anxious moments. In case they missed the point, Hitler kept the two Army Commanders behind after the meeting was over and gave them a further lecture on the "spirit of Zossen."¹⁸¹ And whatever their inward thoughts, from that moment on, their outward show was support for the attack in the west.

When word of the Fuehrer's speech reached the resistance leaders, they held a series of urgent conferences to see what could be done.¹⁸² The result appears to have been to send General Thomas, armed with the most factual objections which could be made against the offensive, to see Halder. On November 27, Thomas met with the Chief of Staff and spoke about the risks of an attack in the west leading to a limitless war, about the inadequacy of German resources to support such a war,

¹⁷⁹NCA, iii, pp. 572-580.

¹⁸⁰Oster is quoted in Kordt, p. 377.

¹⁸¹Halder, War Diary, p. 132.

¹⁸²Hassell notes meetings with Popitz, Goerdeler, and Beck; pp. 91-95.

and about the necessity of removing Hitler before these evil circumstances came to pass.¹⁸³

From several sources, we learn that Halder was not wholly unmoved by what he heard. Stulpnagel was dispatched on a hurried trip to the Western Front to sound out the field commanders once more. The results were discouraging. Although Leeb and Witzleben were still ready to help, none of the other generals would act without proper orders. As one of them said, "We could give commands, but we have no idea whether they would be carried out."¹⁸⁴ Stulpnagel was not to be deterred. Upon his return to Zossen, this "magnificent soldier and Prussian nobleman"¹⁸⁵ put the issue squarely to Halder: "If Brauchitsch cannot make a decision. . . then you must play the game across him. . . present him with a fait accompli."¹⁸⁶ But the Chief of Staff was not willing to act alone. Launching a revolt would be difficult enough if Brauchitsch cooperated; without him, it would be impossible. Frustrated over how to short-circuit the Army Commander's influence with Halder, Stulpnagel exclaimed: "I'll lock him in his room and throw the key into the W. C."¹⁸⁷

Halder himself had taken soundings closer at hand. Because he no longer had any forces (the two panzer divisions having long since been released to the Western Front), he inquired of General Fritz Fromm, the

¹⁸³NCA, Supp., B, p. 1569.

¹⁸⁴Ritter, p. 155.

¹⁸⁵This is Halder's description of Stulpnagel, quoted in *Deutsch*, p. 208.

¹⁸⁶NCA, Supp., B, p. 1570.

¹⁸⁷Stulpnagel is quoted in *Deutsch*, p. 208.

Head of the Replacement Army, about the possibility of troop support for a coup d'etat. Fromm is a character whom we shall meet again before the drama of the resistance movement runs its course, and already the most salient feature of his personality--a desire to protect his flanks--is evident. He told Halder that "on his own initiative he would take no such action, but if Brauchitsch would give such an order, he would execute it."¹⁸⁸

It thus came down to the Army Commander once more, and in his case, Hitler's speech had completely nullified even those pangs of resentment which he had felt on the afternoon of November 5. Far from agreeing to issue orders for a revolt, Brauchitsch (perhaps with Halder's assistance)¹⁸⁹ drew up a list of six arguments which deserve to be included in this study if only to show the type of objections with which the resistance leaders had to contend. The rather lengthy quotation comes from Hassell's diary. The first sentence after each number is the military argument; the remaining sentences are Hassell's rejoinder.

(1) Ludendorff had also made a last desperate effort in 1918, and had not thereby damaged his historical reputation. One can hardly believe one's ears. Of what importance to us is the historical reputation of a general! Besides, it is damaged, and above all, the effort did fail.

(2) There is no great man available. Such a man can only reveal himself in the course of action, and if he doesn't show up it simply can't be helped. One cannot, for that reason, let a crime be committed that would plunge Germany into catastrophe. For even if we are victorious it would necessarily be a Pyrrhic victory, quite apart from the necessity of putting a stop to the inner destruction,

¹⁸⁸NCA, Supp., B, p. 1570.

¹⁸⁹In his interrogation at Nuremberg, Halder prefaced these same objections with phrases like, "Brauchitsch very rightly always emphasized that. . . ." Ibid., p. 1571. Thus, the reader is left with the impression that at the least, Halder associated himself with these arguments.

the demoralization, and the unspeakable bestialities in Poland, which are a disgrace to the name of Germany and for which the Army must share responsibility.

(3) We ought to give Hitler this last (sic!) chance to deliver the German people from the slavery of English capitalism. How propaganda has affected the guileless Germans! Now they want to pursue a Realpolitik because their former policy was too "sentimental." Just like a certain type of officer who left the service in 1918, completely ignorant of business methods, and, upon becoming a merchant, thought he had to cheat, although previously he had never so much as stolen a pin. In just this way we have now come to think that a "realistic" policy means we must ignore all decencies and principles, and we do not even see that in doing this we are destroying our own foundations.

(4) One does not rebel when face to face with the enemy. But it is not the Army which is facing the enemy in this age of total warfare, but the entire people, and the issue is whether or not the nation shall be ruined.

(5) Opposition has not yet matured enough. It is interesting, by the way, that the leaders of armies always use this argument. There is some truth in it. But can one wait for this when everything is at stake? Of course, theoretically, it would be better to wait a while, but practically speaking we cannot.

(6) One cannot be sure of the younger officers. This may be partially true. But if the generals are united and give out the correct orders the people and the Army will obey.¹⁹⁰

As with most dialectic exchanges, this one is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. Certainly, Hassell destroys the badly-drawn parallel to Ludendorff and the nonsense about giving Hitler a last chance. Also, he rightly concedes the partial inadequacy of the resistance position relative to its immaturity as a movement and its belief that a "united"

¹⁹⁰Hassell, pp. 92-93. This interchange is typical of a "rhetorical pattern inherent in the movement" which we will meet again. That is, the objections of the generals and the rejoinders of the resisters represent a dialectic within a dialectic--a kind of micro-argument within the framework of the larger macro-argument between Hitler and the resisters. While Griffin and Cathcart do not refer to such a pattern, it would seem to be inherent to any totalitarian scene in which a secret, revolutionary movement is attempting to persuade agents of a power agency to revolt and overthrow the existing hierarchy.

officer corps could expect to be obeyed (although in both cases, the generals had evidenced a willingness to act on other occasions when the same disadvantages obtained). In any event, there was nothing further to be said on either count, Brauchitsch and Halder having already been informed of the resistance movement's new labor support,¹⁹¹ and the risk of deciding whether their orders would be obeyed being an action they themselves would have to take. Interestingly enough, Hassell skirts the argument of the "great man," probably because he was unaware of Oster's attempt to cancel the Nazi advantage by assassinating Hitler. Thus, within the realm of the possible, the issue appeared to hinge on the one remaining point --"that one does not rebel when face to face with the enemy."

As Goerdeler and Hassell reviewed the situation in early December, they posed the problem as a question: "How, without changing Germany's tactical situation for the worse, could the generals get a guarantee that a decent peace was still obtainable, but could no longer be had after marching through Belgium and Holland?"¹⁹² Neither man knew anything about the Vatican exchanges (which were also stalled at this time), and while Hassell would be let in on the secret in March, Goerdeler would not--a lack of knowledge which was to have unfortunate consequences as we shall see in the closing scene of this act. At any rate, the only answer seemed to be to establish contact with the Western Powers and to work out in some detail the terms on which peace could be negotiated.

The basic ideas for such terms had been broadly formulated by Goerdeler in October 1939. They included a return to a rule of law in Germany,

¹⁹¹This was the Otto John-Ernst von Harnak memorandum; see p. 181.

¹⁹²Hassell, pp. 93-94.

a call for general disarmament, a restoration of trade relations, and most importantly, a claim for keeping Austria, the Sudetenland, and the German-speaking parts of Poland.¹⁹³ Viewed in isolation, there is some truth to Wheeler-Bennett's charge that the conspirators "were aiming at the retention by a non-Nazi Germany of the greater part of Hitler's conquests."¹⁹⁴ But placed in a wider context, the foreign policy claims of the resistance appear less sinister. For one thing, the Nazis were not the only Germans who believed that the territorial provisions of the Versailles Treaty were unjust. Goerdeler's secret conversations with Sir Robert Vansittart, which we discussed in the last chapter, is one example.¹⁹⁵ Another is Hassell's diary entry at the time the Fuehrer finally eliminated the remainder of Czechoslovakia in March 1939: "The point has now been reached beyond which Talleyrand left Napoleon."¹⁹⁶ Put differently, there is no doubt that the conservatives in the resistance wanted to restore Germany to a position of prominence among the nation states of Europe, and further, that they were attracted to some of Hitler's conquests, like the Sudetenland, which had never been part of the Kaiserreich, but to which they believed Germany had honest rights. But such similarities should not imply an absence of differences between the foreign policies of Hitler and his opponents. Certainly, the spirit governing resistance visions, even at their most expansive, was not identical with the nightmare of Hitlerian supremacy (a subject

¹⁹³Hassell, p. 76.

¹⁹⁴Wheeler-Bennett, p. 485.

¹⁹⁵See Chapter Two, pp. 95-97.

¹⁹⁶Hassell, p. 38.

to which we shall revert in the next chapter). Moreover, at no time did the men of the "decent Germany" ever suggest that the destiny of the Reich be achieved through force of arms. Finally, Wheeler-Bennett ignores the fact that many of the formulations contained in resistance documents can be ascribed to rhetorical exigencies--to the need to win the support of the generals, without whom a coup d'etat was impossible. Brauchitsch, Halder, and the other officers, had to be persuaded that an uprising against Hitler was not only necessary, but would also cost little in terms of foreign policy, and might even be profitable, as witness by the Etzdorf-Kordt memorandum in which reference was made to territorial concessions to bridge the "Polish Corridor."¹⁹⁷

As December turned to January, the resisters mobilized for one last effort. Hassell instructed his son-in-law, Detalmo Biroli, to be on the alert for opportunities to make contacts with Allied representatives in Italy,¹⁹⁸ Goerdeler, through the Wallenberg family in Stockholm, sent a message to Vansittart inquiring about the possibility of peace terms on the basis of the 1914 eastern frontier of Germany,¹⁹⁹ and in Berne, Theo Kordt used the connections of former Chancellor Josef Wirth to get a letter through to the British Foreign Office.²⁰⁰ Not all of these attempts were productive. Vansittart answered that Goerdeler's conditions would

¹⁹⁷See pp. 192-193.

¹⁹⁸Biroli became acquainted with the Hassells when they were in Rome. He married Fay, the youngest of the Hassell children. The evidence of Hassell's instructions is quoted in J. Lonsdale Bryans, Blind Victory (London, 1951), pp. 39-40.

¹⁹⁹Ritter, p. 157.

²⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 157-158.

be difficult to accept.²⁰¹ In Switzerland, two Foreign Office representatives met with Wirth and brought a tentative offer in writing, a copy of which they declined to hand over, but did explain orally. In essence, it gave assurances that the British would not take advantage of the internal German crisis by attacking in the west, expressed a willingness to work out peace terms with the new government (although these were not specified), and warned that no terms could be considered binding without the approval of France.²⁰² This was an improvement over Vansittart's negative response, but it still left the resisters without a document which clearly outlined peace conditions. Thus, when Hassell's son-in-law informed him about a series of meetings which he had had with a private contact, a certain Lonsdale Bryans, who was interested in effecting a liaison between opposition groups in Germany and the British Government, and who had access to Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, Hassell took a chance and agreed to see him.²⁰³

Arranged by Biroli, the Bryans-Hassell meeting took place at Arosa Switzerland on February 22-23, 1940. To provide cover for Hassell's movements, his wife first took their asthmatic son to Arosa, thus giving him an excuse to visit there. As can be imagined, Hassell began the discussions cautiously, but once convinced that Bryans was "safe," he told him as much as security would allow.²⁰⁴ Thus, he stressed the need for an

²⁰¹Ritter, p. 158.

²⁰²Ibid.

²⁰³Biroli's letter to Hassell, telling him about Bryans, refers to some forty conversations which the two men had before Biroli considered Bryans a safe and useful channel. Hassell, pp. 115-116.

²⁰⁴Hassell's statement to Bryans is in Ibid., pp. 116-118; see

"authoritative English statement" on peace terms because the resisters could never approach the generals with empty hands. Also, he insisted that the statement not be tied to demands for a coup d'etat--that "this must be an exclusively German affair." And he was astute enough to remain indefinite as to when the uprising would take place, saying only that he understood that any assurances would be valid only "before major military operations are undertaken." To Bryans' request for the names of the men involved, Hassell declined to comment except to say that an important general was associated with the conspiracy and that Sir Nevile Henderson, the last British Ambassador to Germany, would know who he meant. Finally, he presented Bryans with a written statement on the kind of terms which would be acceptable to the resistance movement as well as a covering letter signed by himself as a testimony of good faith.

"The purpose of peace," as Hassell wrote in the memorandum, "ought to be the permanent pacification and reestablishment of Europe on a solid base and a security against a renewal of warlike tendencies." The continent did not mean a "chessboard of political or military action or a base of power." Rather, it had "la valeur d'une patrie [the meaning of individual countries] in the frame of which a healthy Germany in sound condition of life is an indispensable factor." To achieve this structure, it was necessary "to leave the union of Austria and the Sudeten with the Reich" and to establish a German-Polish frontier along the

also, Bryans, pp. 65-66. The written memorandum accompanying it is another example of what Griffin calls "the announcement of a stand. . . a constitution, manifesto, covenant, program, proclamation, declaration, tract for the time, statement, or counterstatement." Griffin, "Dramatic Theory," pp. 462-463.

lines of 1914. Apart from this, however, there was no intent to hold on to Hitler's conquests. Based upon the "principle of nationality," an "independent Poland and Czech Republic" should be re-established and no claims were to be made in the west. Finally, from a program which Hassell had drawn up with Goerdeler and Popitz, there was appended a list of principles upon which the new government would be founded, including Christian ethics, justice and law as fundamental elements of public life, social welfare as a *leitmotif*, control of state executive power by the people, and liberty of thought, conscience, and intellectual activity.²⁰⁵

The story of Bryans' difficulties after he returned to London need not greatly concern us here. Suffice to say that despite his earlier contacts with Halifax, he was not invited to see the Foreign Minister, but had to content himself with handing over Hassell's statement and covering letter to Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Undersecretary. Undoubtedly, part of the reason for this reluctance on the part of the diplomats at Whitehall was their annoyance with an amateur who had presumed to intrude into the field of foreign affairs, and what was worse, had succeeded. But part of the reason, as Cadogan rightly told Bryans, was that "something similar had already been transmitted by means of . . . official agents to the same sort of people on the other side."²⁰⁶ Thus, while Bryans was allowed to return to Arosa on April 15, it was

²⁰⁵The complete program is included in Hassell, pp. 368-372. It is difficult to understand Shirer's characterization of these principles as "wooly." Shirer, p. 693. While they are only summarized in the memorandum to Bryans, the full program is included in Hassell's diary, a fact of which Shirer ought to be aware.

²⁰⁶Bryans, p. 73.

only to "leave no frayed ends."²⁰⁷ And though he felt let down and deceived, he may have been somewhat encouraged when Hassell told him that he knew about the messages "transmitted through official channels."²⁰⁸

The "official channels" which Cadogan had mentioned and which Hassell knew about was the Mueller contact at the Vatican. As we noted earlier, these negotiations had been stalled at the time of the Venlo incident. But by late January, the series of questions which the resistance leaders had sent to the British Government through the offices of the Pope had been answered.²⁰⁹ On all previous occasions, nothing was written down for security reasons, but this one time, because so much seemed to depend upon the credibility of the document, a draft was made on Vatican notepaper, and as a further mark of genuineness, Father Leiber attached to it one of his own visiting cards on which he had written: "Dr. Josef Mueller, the bearer of these proposals, enjoys the full confidence of His Holiness."²¹⁰

Mueller returned to Berlin during the first week of February, and the paper he carried with him formed the basis for the "X-Report," so-

²⁰⁷Bryans, p. 74.

²⁰⁸Ibid., p. 80.

²⁰⁹Deutsch, who quotes Father Leiber, notes that the Vatican exchanges were not "negotiations in the usual sense." At no time did Mueller ever meet the Pope, much less the British. Instead, he would bring memorized questions, described by Leiber as "usually short and specific," which Leiber would then write down and take to the Pontiff. Beyond Pius, the channel led to Sir Francis Osborne, the British Ambassador to the Holy See, and from him to Whitehall. Answers, both written and oral, were brought back from London by Sir Francis. In most cases, these could be summarized as "yes" or "no," or in brief replies under the numbered headings of the German questions. On every occasion but the last one, Leiber delivered the replies orally to Mueller, who then returned to Berlin with them. Deutsch, pp. 123; 146-147.

²¹⁰Colvin, p. 99.

called because he was designated in it as "Mr. X." Briefly, this document, which was prepared by Oster and Dohnanyi, summarized the trips to the Vatican, presented a series of reasons as to why the officers should revolt, and most importantly, listed the British conditions for peace. As Mueller remembers them, they were that

- (1) Germany must rid herself of all Nazis in the government and make an end of their political system.
- (2) A German government must take over that is able and willing to adhere to its obligations.
- (3) A settlement could then be reached which would leave Germany in possession of Austria and the Sudeten area.²¹¹

These were the most precise terms yet obtained by the conspirators. And they were quite favorable. As Hassell wrote, "On the whole the desire to make a decent peace is evident."²¹² Finally, they were the only terms which carried the authority of a figure like the Pope as surety for their implementation. Thus, it remains a mystery as to why the resistance leaders in the Abwehr, who had the report in early February, delayed until early April in presenting it to the generals, especially when we recall how they were fighting against time and how their hopes were riding on the impact of this particular document. Since all the principals are dead, executed in the reign of terror which followed the failure of the July 20, 1944 Attentat, there is no sure way to probe their motives. Still, by examining some of the records, it is possible to reconstruct that crucial period and advance a hypothesis which places the blame on rhetorical errors.

²¹¹Mueller is quoted in Colvin, p. 99.

²¹²Hassell, p. 125.

Some of the gap can be attributed to preparation--to discussing and composing the report made from Mueller's draft copy. More of it--perhaps three weeks--can be ascribed to the diplomatic intrusion of Sumner Welles, the U. S. Undersecretary of State, who visited Germany and Italy between late February and mid-March, in an effort to determine what chances of success were likely to attend an American effort at mediation.²¹³ But this still leaves two periods unaccounted for: that from March 16, when Hassell was first approached and asked to deliver the report, until April 4, when General Thomas actually did so; and the period from the end of the first week in February, when the report should have been ready, until the third week of that month when the Welles trip was announced. For the explanation behind these two gaps, it is necessary to look at the activities of other resistance figures--activities which worked against conspiracy plans to make the report the climax of their winter-long argument, and which left them with a minimum of emissaries who were persona grata at Zossen.²¹⁴

Oster was already out of the running. As we observed earlier, his carelessness in leaving documents lying around First Army Headquarters had rendered him hors de combat as an envoy to Halder.²¹⁵ The second to go was Beck. In January, he had a meeting with Halder in the Berlin

²¹³For Welles account of his trip, see Sumner Welles, A Time For Decision (New York, 1944), pp. 73-147.

²¹⁴For the reader interested in the mysteries of German military hierarchy, a word of explanation is in order. Gisevius writes, "Anyone familiar with the German military machine knows how difficult it is for like-minded officers to come in contact with one another unless they happen to be of the same rank. In the German Army, direct relationships existed only between superiors and their own subordinates. Private relationships. . .were strictly tabu." Gisevius, p. 283.

²¹⁵See p. 201.

suburb of Dahlem. For the sake of privacy, the two men walked the streets at an early hour of the morning. Beck's arguments for a coup were essentially the same ones which the resisters had been using since they first learned of Hitler's intentions to launch an attack. The inventive well was running dry. Even worse, when Halder responded with the stock military counter-arguments about lack of popular support and fears that orders would not be obeyed, Beck made a tactical error. Instead of limiting himself to the issues as such, he questioned Halder's courage by pointing out that as an experienced horseman, the Army Chief of Staff ought to know that at the hurdles, one threw one's heart over first. This implication of cowardice did not go down well. Although Halder's actions might properly be characterized as irresolute during this act, he still saw himself as a staff officer who understood the need for proper planning. As he had tried to tell Beck and the others, a revolt without the necessary pre-conditions--without solutions to the problems of Hitler's popularity with the soldiers and civilians--was bound to fail. It was easy enough for the conspirators, who carried no weight of responsibility, to demand action willy-nilly, but he had had to consider the consequences. Also, Beck himself had no right to make such a reproach. After all, he had merely resigned his post, but Halder had tried on two occasions to implement a coup.²¹⁶ As the peripatetic exchange ended, an open breach gaped between the two officers

²¹⁶The information for the meeting between Halder and Beck has been taken from three sources: Fabian von Schlabrendorff, who probably got his information from Halder; They Almost Killed Hitler (New York, 1965), p. 107; Deutsch, who also recounts Halder's version, based on a personal interview; pp. 275-276; and Ritter, whose source is probably Beck via Goerdeler, and who uses the term "open breach" to describe the result of the meeting; p. 155fn.

--a breach which would remain unbridged until Beck's death four years later, although after the war, Halder would speak honestly and warmly about his relationship with his former chief.

The third to fall from contention was Groscurth. In late October, a circular from Himmler--the "Lebensborn Decree," in which the Reichsfuhrer asked for an unlimited increase in the population, arguing that because war was a form of bloodletting in which the best blood was often dissipated, it was the duty of married women, whose husbands were in the field, not to deny themselves to members of the SS--caused enormous resentment at the front.²¹⁷ This was followed on January 4 by an article in the SS paper, "Das Schwarze Korps," which stigmatized as deserters those women who withheld themselves from contributing to population growth.²¹⁸ Understandably, Groscurth thought he saw a chance. Without permission, he toured the western commands, trying to drum up support for a coup, carrying with him copies of the decree and the article as well as evidence of SS crimes in Poland. Such an act was an infraction of regulations in several respects. Besides lacking authorization, his use of the Abwehr's "chronicles" implied a criticism of Halder and Brauchitsch for failing to regain military control of occupied territories. Also, Himmler had heard about the trip and Brauchitsch had some difficult hours with the Reichsfuhrer, trying to explain away the activities of a subordinate, and this at a time when he was trying to get the SS Chief to back away from his decree.²¹⁹ While the axe did not fall at once, Groscurth only

²¹⁷NCA, Supp., B, p. 1564.

²¹⁸Hohne, p. 157.

²¹⁹Ibid., p. 125.

being dressed down for his improprieties by Halder,²²⁰ the trip sufficiently cooled the close relationship between the two men to end the "clockwinder's" effectiveness. Finally, in early February, Groscurth was dismissed. Brauchitsch had requested a position paper on the SS circular and Groscurth was made responsible for writing it. His language choice, including such statements as "Past conceptions about the unassailability of marriage retain their full validity," or "He is a criminal who invades a marriage and destroys it,"²²¹ could not have been well-received by an Army Commander who was both divorced and remarried, and Groscurth's removal from the High Command was demanded shortly thereafter. Thus, another actor passed from the scene, ultimately to share in the greatest tragedy of German arms--the encirclement and surrender of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad, and the subsequent captivity and death of most of its members.

The last figure to undermine the resistance plan was Goerdeler. Perhaps because of his tendency to talk too freely, the men who were privy to the Vatican exchanges had not let him in on the secret.²²² Nevertheless, this conspirator with the need for action had not been idle. During the second half of March, he had been to see Halder on three occasions. And Hassell writes that according to Goerdeler, "Halder, who had begun to weep during the discussion of his responsibilities, gave the impression

²²⁰Groscurth, p. 241.

²²¹Deutsch, who has a copy of Groscurth's paper, quotes these excerpts; p. 286.

²²²This inference is based on Ritter, Goerdeler's biographer, who makes no mention of the former Mayor being involved in or knowing about the negotiations at the Vatican.

of a weak man with shattered nerves"²²³--a description which suggests that the former Mayor's importunities must have been severe. In any event, these solitary trips to Zossen, at a time when the Abwehr circle was looking for an envoy to carry the "X-Report" to Halder, is an indication that, despite Oster's best efforts, the resistance movement was not as well organized as it might have been. Moreover, Goerdeler's visits must have strengthened the Chief of Staff's resolve to avoid further attempts at opposition influence because when Oster and Dohnanyi finally arranged with Hassell to serve as emissary, Halder refused to see him,²²⁴ in spite of the fact that he himself had earlier suggested the meeting.²²⁵

Thus, the conspirators were reduced to using someone who did not require an invitation to visit Zossen, and their last minute choice was General Thomas, who, once again, undertook the role of messenger.²²⁶ Such a decision, while necessitated by circumstances, was unfortunate. For Thomas, who was Head of the Army's Economic Department and quite competent in financial matters, was the wrong person for a mission which required a man familiar with the history of the Vatican negotiations--someone like Beck or Oster; or a man who was on good terms with Halder--someone like the now-departed Groscurth; or even a man who understood the intricacies of foreign affairs--a diplomat like Hassell.

²²³Hassell, p. 130.

²²⁴Ibid., p. 132.

²²⁵Ibid., p. 127.

²²⁶Deutsch paraphrases Halder to the effect that he was told by Thomas that he only learned what was expected of him when Oster and Dohnanyi briefed him about it on the way to Zossen; p. 309.

At any rate, Thomas dutifully carried the report to Army Headquarters on April 4, sans expertise or even any preparation. Halder, who could not have been in the most receptive of moods after his sessions with Goerdeler, was prepared to be a critical audience, especially of anything originating from the Abwehr, the agency responsible for much of the "winter of his discontent." Deutsch quotes him as recalling that the report was too repetitive in some places and too vague in others,²²⁷ this last being a critical error in the rhetorical conventions of the document, since Oster and Dohnanyi had in fact composed it without heading, date, or signature. Moreover, it did not name the German envoy, who was identified only as "Mr. X," and most importantly, it lacked any signs of authenticity such as the Vatican notepaper on which the terms had been written originally, or Father Leiber's visiting card.

Looking back, it is possible to assume that the conspirators in the Counter-Intelligence Service were motivated by the fear of discovery. The Pope, after all, had far exceeded the limits of neutrality by consenting to serve as an intermediary between a resistance movement in one belligerent state and the government of another. But Halder, who had been a member of the resistance almost since its inception, ought to have been judged trustworthy, particularly where internal evidence was of paramount importance, as in the case of this report. Finally, Thomas was in no position to provide the Chief of Staff with any explanations since he too was uninformed about the background of the document.

²²⁷Deutsch, p. 311.

The results were anticlimactic. Halder, who mistrusted the report, was less than enthusiastic when he took it to Brauchitsch that same evening. In his account, he makes a careful distinction between "presenting" it to the Army Commander [vortragen], and merely "bringing" it to him [tragen] and asking him to read it.²²⁸ Thus, when Brauchitsch spoke angrily to him about it the next morning, demanding to know who had written it, describing it as treason to be in contact with a foreign power, and insisting that its author be arrested, Halder replied: "If you want to arrest someone, then you had better arrest me."²²⁹ But significantly, the Chief of Staff accepted Brauchitsch's rejection with no further argument, in part because the report lacked those marks of genuineness which would have made it an effective piece of rhetoric, and in part because it came too late. And while Halder sent a letter to the conspirators in which he wrote: "The Army will do its patriotic duty even against Hitler, if the circumstances make that necessary,"²³⁰ the message was largely pro forma because the Chief of Staff did not envision such circumstances arising.

This brings us to the last consequence in the delay over getting the report to the generals--the change in circumstances for an attack in the west since the Fuehrer had first ordered one in the fall, and the effect of that change on Halder and the other officers. Simply put, the dilemma upon which the resisters had depended in October and November--that the military leaders would choose to overthrow Hitler

²²⁸Deutsch, p. 312.

²²⁹John quotes the Brauchitsch-Halder exchange, based on conversations with both officers after the war; p. 63.

²³⁰Quoted in Hassell, p. 130.

before launching an offensive which they believed must fail--no longer held. As month followed month with no attack, the striking power of the Wehrmacht grew more and more imposing. General von Thoma, Inspector of the Mobile Forces, reports that instead of the six panzer divisions available in Poland and barely re-equipped by November 10, there were now five others, each of which was considerably above its normal complement of tanks.²³¹ General Warlimont writes that against fifty-two regular divisions ready at the end of the Polish campaign, there were now one-hundred others.²³² And even the postponements themselves--fourteen in all--had honed the soldiers to a fighting edge. As Halder put it, "The perennial state of alarm put the troops in the best fighting shape."²³³ In addition, there was a new plan, designed by Manstein, which placed the weight of the attack in the Ardennes rather than leaving it on the right flank a la Schlieffen. This important change had come about in the first months of 1940, as a result of the old plan falling into the hands of the Allies when a German courier plane mistakenly landed in Belgium on January 10. And many of the generals, who remembered the hecatombs of World War I, which resulted when the sweep through Belgium failed to envelop the French and British left wing, could not help but be impressed with a bold plan which proposed to amputate the Allied forces at the shoulder and surround them as they extended into Belgium to meet an attack

²³¹Thoma is quoted in Hart, pp. 93-94.

²³²Warlimont, p. 59.

²³³Halder is quoted in Peter Bor, Gesprache mit Halder (Wiesbaden, 1950), p. 50.

that was no longer coming from that direction. Finally, there was the fact that the winter months were nearly over and the seasonal disadvantages no longer obtained. Revealing in this respect is a comment by Gisevius about General Hoepner:

Hoepner [sic] had been with us in the conspiracy of 1938. He had also been one of the revolting panzer generals in November 1939. But in the spring of 1940, when the soil of Flanders was no longer muddy swamps and decorations, laurels, and military glory could be won so easily there, Hoepner was unable to resist the allure.²³⁴

From the perspective of the civilian anti-Nazis, Gisevius' criticism is accurate. But he loses sight of the fact that for the officers, the excitement of forging a really formidable instrument of war was certain to have an effect on political attitudes. As we observed at the beginning of this act, generals are not unlike the old warhorse in the book of Job which could not resist the trumpet call to battle. And insofar as decorations are concerned, it is apparent that Gisevius was a civilian; otherwise, he would have understood Napoleon's reply to a critic who ridiculed decorations of the Legion of Honor: "You call these toys--I tell you men are governed by toys." Finally, for failing to seize the moment of stasis when the impact of the Vatican report might have made a difference, the conspirators have no one but themselves to blame. As Griffin puts it, "there is always the danger. . .that the rhetors of the unfolding movement--confronted by retrograde or recalcitrant factors in the gradually shifting Scene--will fail to revise their strategies."²³⁵

With the coming of spring came a corresponding rise in the prospects of war. On April 9 Hitler ordered the invasion of Scandinavia

²³⁴Gisevius, pp. 519-520.

²³⁵Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 465.

and within three weeks Denmark and Norway were in German hands. To the resisters, it was plain that the attack on the Allied Powers could not be far off and with it, the last moment for tying up loose ends in Rome and London by stating clearly that all attempts to persuade the generals had failed. Opposition credibility was at stake, and it was feared that with the offensive in the west, Mueller's negotiations would be regarded as a sham, just like the meetings of Schellenberg with Stevens and Best at Venlo. As Beck said, "We must be able to establish contacts again some day, and for that these people [the Vatican and the British] must know whom they are dealing with; that there is a decent Germany that is capable of negotiations."²³⁶ So in late April, Mueller again went to Rome to break the news that no revolution was possible and that the feared offensive was to be expected shortly. He recalls the message as follows:

The discussions cannot continue with any prospect of success. Unfortunately the generals cannot be persuaded to act. [At this point there was a parenthetical reference to the unfortunate influence of the successful Norwegian adventure, as well as an indignant repudiation of the approaching attack on the Low Countries.] Hitler will attack and this action lies just ahead.²³⁷

In the event, the warning came too late and was to land the Abwehr resisters in trouble. During the first week of May, Goering's "Investigation Office" (Forschungsamt) managed to decipher two intercepted radio communications between the Belgium Ambassador to the Vatican and his government, in which the diplomat stated that Germany would shortly undertake an offensive in the west and violate the neutrality of both Belgium and Holland.²³⁸

²³⁶Beck is quoted in Bethge, p. 579.

²³⁷Mueller is quoted in Deutsch, p. 336.

²³⁸The events surrounding the intercept are in Abshagen, p. 179.

Hitler, upon learning about the intercepts, would demand the sharpest investigation which, as we shall see, would lead in time to the destruction of the resistance agency on the Tirpitzufer.

On May 10, with the opening of the cannonade, the avalanche of total war began to move and with it, the second critical moment in the drama of the German Resistance came to an end. The hope that a negotiated peace might be had died in a campaign that destroyed a great many illusions with the startling swiftness of its German victories. On May 15, only five days after launching the offensive, the Dutch Army capitulated, to be followed on the night of May 27-28 by the surrender of the Belgium Army. By June 3, the British Expeditionary Force, admittedly with the glory of Dunkirk, had been forced to evacuate the continent. Paris was occupied by the Feldgrauen on June 14, and less than a week later, the Bordeaux Government sued for an armistice.

At the conclusion of these events, the scene is dominated by the protagonist, Adolf Hitler. William Shirer found him on June 21 at Compiègne, just outside the historic railway car where Marshal Foch had laid down the armistice terms to representatives of the German Empire twenty-two years earlier. The Fuehrer had just finished reading the inscription on a granite marker which commemorated that event:

HERE ON THE ELEVENTH OF NOVEMBER 1918 SUCCUMBED THE CRIMINAL
PRIDE OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE--VANQUISHED BY THE FREE PEOPLES
WHICH IT TRIED TO ENSLAVE.

Hitler reads it. . .standing there in the June sun and the silence. I look for an expression on his face. I am but fifty yards from him and see him through my glasses as though he were directly in front of me. I have seen that face many times at the great moments of his life. But today! It is afire with scorn, anger, hate, revenge, triumph. He steps off the monument and contrives to make even this gesture a masterpiece of contempt. He glances back at it, contemptuous, angry--angry

you almost feel, because he cannot wipe out the awful, provoking lettering with one sweep of his high Prussian boot. He glances slowly around the clearing and. . .suddenly, as though his face were not giving quite complete expression to his feelings, he throws his whole body into harmony with his mood. He swiftly snaps his hand on his hips, arches his shoulders, plants his feet wide apart. It is a magnificent gesture of defiance.²³⁹

Not all Germans, however, share the Fuehrer's mood of triumph. At his home in Ebenhausen, Ulrich von Hassell writes in his diary:

Nobody can contest the proportions of the success achieved by Hitler. But that does not alter the real nature of his deeds or the cruel dangers now threatening all our higher standards. A demonic Spartacus will wreak nothing but destruction if the opposition does not act in time. It is tragic not to be able to rejoice in such achievements. . . . I am of the opinion that, however discouraging the prospects are for the present, we must not throw in the sponge; we must prepare to fight on against Hitler under changed conditions.²⁴⁰

And on July 1, at the high tide of Hitler's victory, Carl Goerdeler prepares a memorandum for the officers, in which he quotes Baron vom Stein's call to Fredrick Wilhelm III for resistance to Napoleon:

For the honest man there is no salvation save in the conviction that the wicked are capable of wickedness. To trust a man of whom it has been truly said that he has hell in his heart and chaos in his head is more than mere blindness; when there is nothing to expect but misfortune and misery, the more willingly does one take a stand which is right and honorable.²⁴¹

²³⁹William L. Shirer, Berlin Diary (New York, 1941), p. 422.

²⁴⁰Hassell, pp. 143-144; 141.

²⁴¹Goerdeler's memorandum is quoted in Ritter, pp. 171-172.

CHAPTER IV

HEERESGRUPPE MITTE AND THE THIRD ATTEMPT: 1940-1943

"It was never a question of imposing one party programme in preference to another, of ambition, or spoils, but always of saving Germany. . . ." Eugen Gerstenmaier

Hitler's triumph over the Western Powers meant defeat for the German Resistance Movement. As we have seen, the hope that the Allied Governments would meet opposition overtures halfway ended with the first clash of arms, and perhaps more importantly, with the change of political leadership in Great Britain. The appeasing Chamberlain was gone, replaced by a resolute Winston Churchill who left no doubt as to his program: "What is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war. . .with all our might and all the strength that God can give us. . . . What is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory--victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror; victory however long and hard the road may be."¹

The same defeat could be postulated for the hope that the General Staff would act to overthrow the Fuehrer, standing at the pinnacle of his success. For years, Beck in the military field and Goerdeler in the economic field had been forecasting the bankruptcy of Nazi strategy and finances.² Now these Cassandra-like prophecies were swept away in

¹Winston Churchill, Their Finest Hour (Boston, 1949), pp. 25-26.

²Beck's warnings had started as early as 1934 when he protested

the magnitude of Hitler's swift victories and in the spoils of war plundered from defeated nations. Why should the generals listen to men who had been proved wrong time after time?³ Moreover, there were the prizes of conquest--decorations and marshal's batons--which a grateful Fuehrer bestowed on his valient warriors with a largess unparalleled in German military annals.⁴ Understandably, Gisevius could complain that he "no longer expect[ed] anything from the highest generals; they are being fattened on titles, decorations, and gifts."⁵

Finally, there was the Zeitgeist--the heady atmosphere of public opinion in a victorious Reich. Otto John writes that "psychologically my friends and I lived in a curious sort of isolation from our fellow men; since Hitler's lightning victories ordinary folk had increasingly abandoned all scruples about the oppression of Europe by his regime of violence."⁶ But it was not only the Burgertum. Hassell adds: "Among the upper strata in Berlin, I found some who were indulging in unrestrained triumph accompanied by plans for dividing up the world in

against Hitler's rearmament program. See Wolfgang Foerster, Ein General Kampf gegen den Krieg (Munich, 1953), pp. 22-23; Goerdeler's warnings began in 1935 when he objected to the inflationary spending in the military sector. See Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1958), pp. 33-34.

³General Blumentritt writes: "The great military victories up to and including 1940. . .naturally raised Hitler's reputation in the eyes of the military. . . . Suddenly, Hitler was always right and his critics always wrong." "Letter of General Blumentritt," September 5, 1965.

⁴On June 19, 1940, Hitler created twelve Field Marshals and one Reichsmarshal

⁵Gisevius is quoted in Ulrich von Hassell, The Von Hassell Diaries, trans., Hugh Gibson (Westport, 1971), p. 147.

⁶Otto John, Twice Through The Lines, trans., Richard Barry (London, 1973), pp. 68-69.

great style."⁷ And Eberhard Bethge recalls a day in the summer of 1940 when he and Dietrich Bonhoeffer attended a Nazi function which was punctuated by many Hitler salutes. Bethge was distressed to see Bonhoeffer saluting vigorously with the rest. Bonhoeffer said: "Raise your arm. We shall have to run risks for very different things now, but not for that salute."⁸

Alone and with little hope of winning support, the easiest path for the resisters would have been to identify themselves with Hitler and his triumphant "New Order." But they did not consider it. Their opposition, based as it was in a revolt of conscience, sustained them.⁹ And they continued to organize and expand their movement, a fact which makes the continuity of the resistance all the more striking and should, if the drama of the struggle to this point has not already done so, give the lie to later criticism that their opposition was motivated solely by fears of defeat.¹⁰

⁷Hassell, p. 141.

⁸Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, trans., Erich Mosbacher, et. al. (New York, 1970), p. 585.

⁹The diary entry of Ernst Junger, one of the resisters, seems particularly appropriate here: "One can see, too, that it is the moral substance, not the political, which spurs to action." Quoted in Hans Rothfels, The German Opposition To Hitler, trans., Lawrence Wilson (Chicago, 1962), p. 13.

¹⁰Many critics hold that the German Resistance Movement was based on expediency alone. Space limitations preclude quoting all of them, but perhaps one can serve as an example. Hanna Arendt writes: "These men who opposed Hitler paid with their lives, and their courage was admirable, but it was not inspired by a crisis of conscience. . .they were motivated exclusively by their conviction of the coming defeat and ruin of Germany." Hanna Arendt, Eichmann In Jerusalem (New York, 1963), p. 91. This criticism strikes at the heart of the rhetorical formulation. For if there is no "dialectical enjoinder in the moral arena," there

The interval between the fall of France in the summer of 1940 and the Stalingrad winter of 1942-43 was spent in planning. This time, the preparations were not so much for the overthrow of Hitler and his Nazi dictatorship (although attempts continued to be made), but for the social order that would follow it. Until now, such plans had been left for the most part to an ad hoc arrangement as the situation demanded. But with the rapid expansion of the political scene abroad and the simultaneous lowering of moral values at home, a basic reappraisal seemed necessary. Also, the later inception and growth of a second opposition center--the Kreisau Kreis--and the advocacy of its own ideas meant a serious dialogue which, combined with changes in the Zeitgeist, reoriented the thinking of both groups. Thus, while it is an intrusion upon chronology, let us put aside resistance attempts to effect a coup d'etat and deal in a unified way with the problems they dealt with--the reconstruction of Germany and Europe.

In a movement study, such an examination is legitimately rhetorical in several respects. For one thing, these plans were dialectical in the sense that the resisters were, in part, responding to the "New Order"

is no precondition for a movement in the dramatic sense--no motive to produce a "rhetoric proclaiming. . .the new order, the more perfect order, the desired order." Robert S. Cathcart, "New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically," Western Speech, XXXVI (Spring, 1972), 87. Thus, the struggle between Hitler and the men of the "decent Germany" becomes a matter of the basest sort of politics--of thieves falling out, or, to use a metaphor more appropriate to the dramatic model, of a debate between two political opponents who are merely trying to score cheap points off each other. There is no intent to counter this criticism in a footnote. Rather, the genuineness of the resister's convictions can be gauged by the fact that they continued to oppose at a time when all the talk was of victory, and, as this chapter will show, spent the period making plans for the future of Germany and Europe quite unlike those which Hitler conceived.

which the Fuehrer and his cohorts were imposing on the Reich and an ever-increasing part of Europe.¹¹ For another, these plans were synthetic in the sense that the ideas of the resisters evolved--that from their internal tensions there eventually emerged a higher synthesis which represented a partial compromise among the various factions.¹² And finally,

¹¹This is an example of conditions not fitting categories precisely. Cathcart and Griffin only refer to enjoinderment between two opposing movements. Yet, the resister's plans reveal that they were not only reacting to National Socialism but to their own antecedents, to other resisters, and later to the Allied Governments.

¹²This use of the merger of the resister's plans to establish their antithetical position to Hitler's ideology represents another departure from Griffin's formulation. To explain, he uses Kenneth Burke's concept of the "representative anecdote" in A Grammar Of Motives (Berkeley, 1962), pp. 59-61, to justify his argument that "the enactment of the Negative may be taken. . . as a 'representative anecdote,' a moment that embodies, implicitly or explicitly, the key terms and equations of the movement. With these. . . the study of a movement begins. They identify what equals what, what opposes what, what follows what. They identify the 'heaven' of the movement, as well as its 'hell'; its gods, or god, as well as its devils ('faulty principles,' scapegoats, 'vile beasts'). And thus they suggest, however darkly, an answer to the question why, the ultimate question of motive. For the key terms prefigure. . . the lineaments of the 'perfecting myth' that draws the movement futuristically, a fronte. . . . And thus, the 'perfecting myth' becomes like the originator of the order it perfects." Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," in Critical Responses To Kenneth Burke, ed., William H. Rueckert (Minneapolis, 1969), p. 463. Doubtless, some of the resister's positions could be inferred from looking at their initial negative statements, and certainly, their motives are easily explained by examining their repudiation of National Socialism's immorality and evil policies. But to extrapolate the whole resistance program from these early declarations is unnecessary. Theoretically, Burke himself does not equate his concept of the "Negative" with the "representative anecdote"--Griffin's merger of them is strictly his own interpretation. And while Burke does write that the "anecdote . . . contains in nuce the terminological structure that is evolved in conformity from it," (Grammar, p. 60), it is significant that his own anecdote of the "act of creation" is not identified until Grammar, his seventh book, and not fully explained until The Rhetoric Of Religion (Berkeley, 1970), his tenth book. Practically, it should be noted that men speak at particular times and in particular scenes, and that utterances can be assessed best in their most recent context. Thus, to the extent that plans from the period 1940-1943 have survived, they

even though these plans were never wholly agreed upon or widely disseminated, the ideas contained within them come as close as we are ever likely to get to the resister's "dream of salvation. . .state of redemption . . .ideal Order. . .Utopia."¹³

To set the scene, it is necessary to remember that at the outset of this period, the major opposition center was still the one led by Beck, Goerdeler, and the conservatives. In the last two chapters, we traced some of the main lines of their thinking in regard to foreign policy: their opposition to the Versailles Treaty,¹⁴ their hopes for the reconstruction of a German Reich which would be enhanced by territorial additions from Austria, the Sudetenland, and the Polish Corridor,¹⁵ their criticism of Britain's appeasers for dealing with Hitler instead of themselves,¹⁶ and their unwillingness to obtain their foreign policy aims by force of arms.¹⁷ In short, this group's internationalism was concerned

represent a more mature reflection of resistance thinking than statements made in 1937-1938. And Burke himself suggests something of this ongoing nature of programs when he writes: "if you organize a conflict among spokesmen for competing ideas or principles, you may produce a situation wherein there is no one clear choice. Each of the spokesmen, whose ideas are an extension of special interests, must remain somewhat unconvinced by any solution which does not mean the complete triumph of his own particular interests. Yet, he may have to compromise to allies. . . ." Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric Of Motives (New York, 1955), p. 187. This notion of mutual concessions across time--of a merger which is less than ultimate but more than dialectic (which "would leave the competing voices in jangling relations to one another"), appears to explain best the pattern followed by the groups within the resistance.

¹³Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 460.

¹⁴See Chapter Three, pp. 211-212.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 193.

¹⁶See Chapter Two, pp. 95-97.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 109-115.

largely with healing the wounds inflicted on the German national spirit and with peacefully restoring, strengthening, and expanding Germany's place in Europe.

A new element was introduced by the rapid conquest of France and the Low Countries. As we have mentioned, even though the conservatives refused to identify themselves with a triumphant Hitler, they would have been less than patriotic if they saw the victory in the west as something other than a German success. As Meinecke put it, the fall of France had filled him with "profound emotion, pride, and joy" even though he was unable to align himself with the Third Reich.¹⁸ Thus, in the summer of 1940, we find for the first time in Goerdeler's memoranda, reference to Europe under "German leadership,"¹⁹ and later, specific claims made to Alsace-Lorraine and the South Tyrol,²⁰ areas which had not been part of earlier resistance foreign policy plans, but which now came within the range of Goerdeler's view as a result of the victory over France and the evidence of Italy's weakness.

Popitz was even more imperialistic. In December 1940, he delivered a lecture to the Wednesday Society on "The Idea of the Reich," in which he argued that the medieval concept of the Reich was a "romantic day-dream" because claims of supremacy at that time had only aroused the antagonisms of other states which recognized the "reality of a weak Germany." What was needed was a modern and viable Reich concept predicated on the strength of a "politically unified country" which would

¹⁸Meinecke is quoted in Percy Schramm, Hitler: The Man and the Military Leader, trans., Donald Detweiler (Chicago, 1971), p. 42fn.

¹⁹Goerdeler is quoted in Ritter, p. 171.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 213-214.

exert a "determining influence" on neighboring states and enjoy "special rights" with them.²¹

Hassell, who described Popitz's lecture as "brilliant,"²² was more practical in regard to Germany's place in the sun, but even he was partly seduced by visions of a Great German Reich which dominated the continent. Thus, he talked about the "West under German leadership," and after the Balkan Campaign and the attack on Russia in 1941, of a "Grossraum" ("greater area") which covered Central Europe and included within its sphere of influence the Baltic States as well as the Balkans, Finland, Scandinavia, and the Low Countries.²³

Perhaps the height of conservative ambitions was reached with Goerdeler's memorandum, "Das Ziel," parts of which were written in the last half of 1941.²⁴ During these months German military power reigned supreme, the Russians having suffered crushing defeats from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Goerdeler's draft reflected this situation in its call for a crusade against Bolshevism—a crusade which presupposed the cooperation of other states under the "strong military protection of Germany." Certainly, there was no intention to "coordinate" the others to German will. Each was to be free to organize politically according to its own wishes. But in time, Goerdeler argued, it would be possible to

²¹Popitz is quoted in Hermann Graml, et. al., The German Resistance To Hitler (Berkeley, 1970), p. 22.

²²Hassell, p. 161.

²³Hassell is quoted in Graml, p. 22.

²⁴"Das Ziel" ("The Goal") was a series of fourteen separate proposals made by Goerdeler. The earliest is dated June 15, 1940, the last November 1944. In all, these memoranda totaled slightly more than 350 pages and represented Goerdeler's thinking on a host of political and moral issues.

develop a European federation led by Germany modeled along the lines of the British Commonwealth, "provided [we] do not let [our]selves be corrupted by immoderate ambitions or mad lust for power."²⁵

Karl Bracher writes that the conservative's "foreign policy ideas [between 1938 and 1942]. . . seem particularly problematical. . . and differ from the Greater German hegemonic pretensions of the National Socialists only in scope and method, not in principle."²⁶ The first accusation is partly justified but means little. To assert that resistance proposals were uncertain of realization is hardly an inherent charge. Most utopian plans can never be consummated, though some of these had a better chance than others of their kind. Thus, while conservative expectations were illogical in the period 1940-42, they were considerably less so in the period 1938-39, when, as we have seen, Germany's claims had good prospects of being fulfilled since there was an increasing inclination on Britain's part to scrap the territorial provisions of the Versailles Treaty.²⁷ The second accusation is more serious but false. To assert that the principle governing conservative foreign policy thinking, even at its most imperialistic, was identical with Hitler's dreams of world supremacy, is to badly misread the dialectic. Certainly, the Fuehrer too had a blueprint for the place of Germany relative to the rest of the world. But his foreign policy, as Alan Bullock writes, was founded on the "exaltation of the Machtstaat,

²⁵Ritter, pp. 215-216.

²⁶Karl Bracher, The German Dictatorship, trans., Jean Steinberg (New York, 1972), p. 436.

²⁷See Chapter Two, pp. 129-135.

the Power State,"²⁸a difference in degree if not in kind from these expansive conservative notions of a "Grossdeutscher Reich." And Hitler's "New Order" for Europe, in which the Herrenvolk would rule while the Untermenschen--Jews, Slavs, and to a lesser extent, all other subject peoples--would slave,²⁹had nothing in common with conservative projections for a federation of European states led by Germany.

At this point it is necessary to break off the discussion of conservative foreign policy ideas because our inquiry has carried us to the end of 1942, just before the climax of the dialogue with the Kreisauers, and the explanation of that interchange would make little sense if it dealt with international affairs and failed to examine those political and social issues relating to Germany itself. Therefore, let us turn back once again and look at the conservative resister's positions on national reforms prior to the winter of 1942-43.

As we noted in the last chapter, the first detailed resistance program on domestic policy was written in January-February 1940 by Hassell in cooperation with Popitz and Goerdeler.³⁰ Briefly, it proposed an interim regency of three members who were to remain in power "until it is possible to re-establish a constitutional way of life."³¹ The task of preparing for this eventuality was given to a nominated

²⁸Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study In Tyranny (New York, 1961), p. 269.

²⁹Typical was Hitler's plan for Russia's place in the "New Order:" "first: conquer it; second: rule it; third: exploit it." Quoted in Nazi Conspiracy And Aggression (Washington, D. C., 1946), vii, pp. 1086-1093. Hereafter abbreviated as NCA.

³⁰See Chapter Three, p. 154.

³¹Hassell, p. 300.

council whose directive was "to organize the German state along political and economic lines that take special cognizance of historic tradition."³² Meanwhile, executive power was vested in a Reichs Statthalter or Regent (probably Beck), who delegated authority to the commanders of the military districts. Important for our purposes are the countermeasures to be taken to nullify the evil policy of Hitler's regime—"a policy calculated to kill the soul of the German people."³³ A series of decrees were drawn up which outlawed the Nazi Party and many of its worst agencies, abolished its administrative hierarchy, and revoked the laws passed since Hitler took power, "especially the legislation with regard to the Jews."³⁴

Goerdeler, whose ideas were only in partial agreement with those of Hassell and Popitz, thought of putting this interim government on a popular basis. According to the former Ambassador, he wanted to hold an election immediately after the coup was over—a suggestion which Hassell and Popitz rejected.³⁵ Popitz in particular was less concerned with the votes of the people than with the protection of the government during the transition period, and the suggestion that the country be placed under martial law is said to have been his.³⁶ Similarly, provisions for which Hassell was responsible—censorship of press and literature for example,³⁷ were not in keeping with individual rights. Still, this early proposal

³²Hassell, p. 371.

³³Ibid., p. 368.

³⁴Ibid., p. 372.

³⁵Ibid., p. 117.

³⁶This according to Eberhard Zeller, The Flame Of Freedom, trans., R. P. Heller and D. R. Masters (London, 1969), p. 62.

³⁷Hassell, p. 372.

was never intended as more than a temporary expedient. Although there is no reference to it, the decision to entrust supreme power to a regency implies the restoration of a monarchy, and this is confirmed by one of Hassell's diary entries from the same period: "A monarchy is very much to be desired, but that would be a problem for the next stage."³⁸ Also, while there is no denying the authoritarian features of the plan, it should be noted that the conservatives were most concerned with the pernicious effect of seven years of Hitler's rule--a problem which Hassell stressed when he wrote: "The regency is aware that its task. . . is scarcely calculated to win popularity quickly. It is called upon to liquidate a system which has laid heavy burdens upon the German people for a long time."³⁹

The question of the proposed monarchy brings us to Goerdeler's plans for domestic reform,⁴⁰ plans which he began to write in 1941, and which were to remain the basic conservative statement of principles until after the compromise reached with the Kreisau Kreis. Beginning with the head of state, it is not surprising that Goerdeler favored the restoration of the monarchy. For the former Mayor--indeed, for all the conservatives, the era of the Kaiserreich was a natural inheritance and they turned to it as a matter of course. Somewhat more surprising was the acceptance of a monarchy by the men of the left, Leuschner and Kaiser.

³⁸Hassell, p. 117.

³⁹Ibid., p. 372.

⁴⁰In preparing these plans, Goerdeler sought help from many people. Ritter, for example, prepared a draft on social reforms; see Graml, p. 67. And Bonhoeffer helped with a statement on the relations between church and state; see Bethge, p. 656.

In their case, agreement was based less on fond remembrances of Imperial Germany than on the fact that Goerdeler meant for the monarchy to be limited, functioning only within the framework of a constitutional system. As he put it, "the monarch is not intended to govern but to watch over the constitution and represent the state."⁴¹

In attempting to effect a restoration, Goerdeler met with insurmountable difficulties. One was the choice of a suitable pretender. Space limitations preclude listing the many objections raised by various proponents to other people's candidates. Suffice to say that even when the conservatives finally came to agree on Louis Ferdinand, the second son of the Crown Prince, his father refused to allow him to risk his life and perhaps the fortunes of the Hohenzollern family on anything as uncertain as a coup d'etat against Hitler.⁴² More decisive was the opposition of the Kreisauers who adamantly rejected anything resembling a monarchy. Hassell records an encounter with Adam von Trott zu Soltz, a spokesman for the Kreisau, in December 1941, and quotes him as arguing passionately against "any semblance of 'reaction,' 'gentlemen's club,' 'militarism.' Therefore. . .we should under no circumstances have a monarchy. . .for a monarchy would not win the support of the people and would not win confidence abroad."⁴³ In the face of these obstacles, Goerdeler backed away, although he continued to hope that a restoration might be possible in the future, a hope which is suggested by the fact that as late as 1944, his notes still contain references to

⁴¹Goerdeler is quoted in Rothfels, p. 101.

⁴²John, p. 67.

⁴³Hassell, p. 230.

members of the royal houses whom he considered to be potential candidates for the throne.⁴⁴

In addressing himself to the problem of domestic reform, Goerdeler's thinking turned mainly to a force which we discussed in the first chapter: the need for social order in an age of the mass man. To summarize briefly, what was involved here was the dislocation caused by industrialization and technology--the loss of a traditional sense of community, coherence, and stability, made worse by the demoralization of defeat, and followed by the inability of the Weimar democracy to resolve the problem--the partisan governments whose concern with special interests had only deepened the divisions between classes, and whose anonymous representatives, elected from lists, were so far removed from their constituents that they could not impart to them a sense of common purpose.

Hitler had originally made use of this force to help create his Third Reich and Goerdeler proposed to do the same in constructing its successor. Unlike Hitler, however, the former Mayor did not intend to gloss over the problem with the sham identity of the Volksgemeinschaft--to substitute a real say in the government and its activities with massed parades, frenzied propaganda, officially fostered attitudes of reverence to a Leader, and stereotyped social behavior encouraged under the hortatory device of "comradeship." Nor did he intend to create another Fuhrerstaat--to erect a hierarchy which professed to be "monolithic" and "pyramidal," but which was actually undifferentiated for the "leveled" mass, and higher up, behind the facade, a confusion of rival leaders, each with his own followers and patronage, and each competing for the favor

⁴⁴Ritter, p. 193.

of the Leader who alone determined policy and ruled the state on the basis of "Divide et impera."⁴⁵

Instead, Goerdeler planned for a social order which would on the one hand provide for the "de-massing of the Masses"--to borrow the title of the draft which Ritter prepared, and on the other create the conditions necessary for the emergence of capable leaders--an expert group of men who could govern the state. And he felt that the realization of both these goals depended upon constructing a system stable enough to ensure a maximum of self-government and, at the same time, favor those individuals who had proven themselves in politics or some other practical field.⁴⁶

Predictably, for a man trained in city administration, Goerdeler began with the smallest common denominator, the town or village community, the "cells from which the state is formed."⁴⁷ Local government

⁴⁵Goebbels' complaint reveals the dialectic difference: "We are living in a form of state in which jurisdictions are not clearly defined." Joseph Goebbels, The Goebbels Diaries, ed., and trans., Louis P. Lochner (New York, 1948), p. 346. Or there is Speer's description --one of many--of Hitler's principle of dividing power: "It was characteristic of Hitler's double-track way of running things that the Gauleiters in their capacity of party functionaries were under Bormann but in their capacity as Reich Commissioners for Defense they were under the Ministry of the Interior." Albert Speer, Inside The Third Reich, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1970), p. 404.

⁴⁶Goerdeler's program for a constitution, as well as the later Kreisau plans, reveal two of the motives which Griffin identifies as central to rhetorical movements: order and the secret. The order is, of course, the socio-political reforms of the resisters: "a cooperative system. . .of necessity hierarchical. . .a ladder of authority that exists from lower to higher." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 458. The secret is the mystery that "arises. . .where different kinds of beings are in communication. In any good system. . .relations between the classes are harmonious, cooperative, symmetrical; and the communication between classes is beneficent and benign." Ibid. Later in this act, the third motive--the kill--will be discussed.

⁴⁷Ritter, p. 184.

was the best level at which to protect isolated individuals from the de-personalizing forces of industrialization and technology and to involve them in the act of making decisions which most directly affected their own lives. Also, it was the level at which to discover those potential leaders whose success in solving the practical problems of daily existence and whose close relationship with the members of their community made them ideal candidates for greater responsibility.⁴⁸

From the local level, the way led up through the provincial and regional councils to the Reichstag and its lower chamber, the Reichsstandhaus. Admittedly, the path was somewhat oblique. With his preference for those who had established themselves in community elections, Goerdeler stipulated that only the local councils and half the Reichsstandhaus were to be filled by direct ballot. For the rest, as well as for the entirety of the Diet, the upper chamber of the Reichstag, he proposed an indirect, three-stage process in which the representatives of the local councils served as electors for the next highest body and so on to the top. Also, there could be free appointments of fifty prominent people—"respected Germans,"⁴⁹ as Goerdeler called them, who would serve at the federal level. Later, he wrote, "parties can develop. . . conservative, liberal, socialist, communist,"⁵⁰ although he was opposed to more than three, remembering the multiplication of parties which helped to paralyze the Weimar Republic.

At the federal level, Goerdeler aimed to create a strong but limited

⁴⁸Ritter, p. 183.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 185.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 186.

political authority. The government was to be led by a Reichs Chancellor who, together with his cabinet, was appointed by the Regent. Typically, Goerdeler considered himself best qualified for the executive post, and in fact he was so designated on nearly all ministerial lists prepared by the resisters. Checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches tilted in favor of the former. While the Chancellor was answerable to the Reichstag, which could demand his dismissal by a two-thirds vote, it is doubtful whether the Reichstag, consisting as it did in elected representatives and executive appointees, would have been able to muster sufficient strength to oppose the Chancellor too frequently. Still, Goerdeler made the judiciary independent (in contrast to Hitler who called himself the "Supreme Justicar of the German People"⁵¹); he was careful to keep the federal powers limited to specific areas--defense, foreign affairs, education, justice, and finance; and in regard to revenue, he proposed dividing the authority to raise taxes between the local communities and the Reich. Also, he favored free enterprise. Economic life was to be disturbed as little as possible by the state and only those financial leaders were to be expelled from the business community who had "debased their economic responsibility and degraded themselves to become spiritless tools of political bosses."⁵² Most importantly, however, Goerdeler was flexible in his thinking. As he put it, "Nothing can be dogmatically laid down,"⁵³ and as we shall see, he

⁵¹The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, ed., Norman H. Baynes, 2 Vols., (New York, 1942), i, p. 290.

⁵²Goerdeler is quoted in Rothfels, p. 106.

⁵³Ritter, p. 186.

tried to follow this policy in his negotiations with resistance factions whose thinking differed from his own.

An early indication of this was his proposal concerning the role of trade unions in the new state. By virtue of his background, Goerdeler should have been opposed to any strengthening of the unions, but his plans reveal just the opposite. Undoubtedly, this was the result of influence by Leuschner and Kaiser. They wanted to integrate the workers into the state on an equitable basis while Goerdeler wanted to give the workers civic responsibility. Thus, a compromise was struck through the agency of a single "German Trade Union." It was to be centrally controlled and self-governing, membership was to be compulsory, and it was to be responsible for negotiating wage agreements, working conditions, and other benefits. From Goerdeler's standpoint, the advantage of a single union lay in the area of social and political involvement. Leuschner had long held the view that the unions were best placed to undertake the responsibility of educating the workers so they could assume joint control for running the factories.⁵⁴ From here, it was no great leap for an optimist like Goerdeler to envision a future in which both labor and management would nominate candidates for election at the local and federal levels, thereby merging traditional antagonists in the cooperative task of helping to run the state.

It was inevitable that Popitz would object to the new powers accruing to the unions. For the conservative Finance Minister, the idea of employees having some sort of equity with employers was not only unsound

⁵⁴Zeller quotes Leuschner as saying that the unions should have "elected representatives on the boards of management. . .of all major economic undertakings." Zeller, p. 71.

economically but treasonable socially.⁵⁵ Also, Popitz felt that Goerdeler was arrogating to himself too much of the responsibility for political planning. Thus, he tried to form a common front against the proposal by enlisting the support of Hassell,⁵⁶ and later some of the Kreisauers who saw the creation of a single union as contrary to their plan of extreme decentralization. Judging from Hassell's diary and John's memoirs, the infighting must have been severe. To take just one instance, John records Popitz as saying that "he had expected that Goerdeler would discuss everything with him. . . . [But] he was tagging along behind the socialists and trade unionists and he now refused to accept the advice of men like Ambassador Hassell and Graf von Moltke [co-leader of the Kreisau]."⁵⁷ In the final analysis, however, Goerdeler and his allies on the left carried the issue, largely because of practicality. As the ex-Mayor put it, "many questions of social policy could not be dealt with from the standpoint of separate unions, but only from the standpoint of a single union embracing the whole Reich."⁵⁸

Some final aspects of Goerdeler's plans need to be mentioned since they reveal the ethical premise from which he worked. Perhaps the best characterization for them is the one he used—"renewal."⁵⁹ At base, Goerdeler was convinced that the moral fiber of the nation was sound;

⁵⁵Popitz's objections are cited in the prosecution's indictment against him; see Allen Dulles, Germany's Underground (New York, 1947), p. 155.

⁵⁶Hassell, p. 214.

⁵⁷John, p. 117.

⁵⁸Ritter, p. 189.

⁵⁹Zeller, p. 54.

if that was not so, there could be no reason for resistance, nothing worth saving. But years of Nazi rule had covered this fiber with a shell of conformity and lethargy. More important, the agencies responsible for guiding people in the "practice and persistence of piety" had been "gleichgeschaltet" to the demands of race, blood, and soil--hardly the most edifying of themes. Goerdeler's solution was to free them from the restraints with which they had been bound and to let them return to their traditional tasks.⁶⁰ Family life was the place to begin:

An end must be made to the separation of families, to frivolously contracted marriages, and to State premiums for illegitimate children. . . people must be brought to understand that happy families, lasting matrimonial bonds and healthy children can exist only where externally valid law are observed.⁶¹

The churches and schools too must be made independent:

All religious communities are to be free of State tutelage . . . schools of all types shall be free at once of the role so contradictory to their purpose of serving to falsify fact, of offending young people's instinct for truth, of teaching them phrases instead of knowledge, hypocrisy instead of noble courage, brute strength instead of real ability.⁶²

And the majesty of the law must be recovered: "Law must be restored as the basis of all decisions. The judges, freed from bias and police dictation, must become undismissible servants of the community in accordance

⁶⁰This feature of Goerdeler's plan is pietistic both in the sense of religious duties and in the sense of loyalty and devotion to parents, family, law, and the like. Griffin writes that a "good order is one. . . marked by the practice and persistence of piety." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 459.

⁶¹Goerdeler is quoted from the draft of a radio speech which he was to deliver after becoming Chancellor. The full text appears in Fabian von Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler (New York, 1947), pp. 83-90.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 86-87.

with justice and equity."⁶³ In this same context, it should be added that Goerdeler saw the law as an instrument for re-educating the people. Through the courts, Jews and other former "enemies of the state" were to receive redress for their losses and suffering, while those responsible for crimes at home and abroad would be brought to the bar of justice, tried, and punished, without respect to persons and by German courts. This last was very important. Goerdeler thought that the Germans themselves ought to be responsible for "washing clean the German name so often dishonored."⁶⁴ Such an act would have moral results no Allied court could obtain, and the cathartic nature of the task would be an important first step in reawakening the national conscience.

It has been alleged that the conservatives were hindered in their planning because they could not develop alternatives to Hitler's "New Order" which would rally the people to their side.⁶⁵ Specifically, George Romoser argues that

The conspirator's analysis of the situation. . .together with their own elitist political views, caused them to reject [a popular uprising and] inaugurate a putsch "from above" with the goal of establishing a regime which should be based on avoidance of party-parliamentary democracy as well as Nazism.⁶⁶

This objection needs to be answered carefully because it strikes at the heart of the dialectic formulation as well as at the resister's abilities to turn their secret plans into a popular movement. Certainly,

⁶³Schlabrendorff, p. 85.

⁶⁴Goerdeler is quoted in Rothfels, p. 104.

⁶⁵See for example, George K. Romoser, "The Politics Of Uncertainty: The German Resistance Movement," Social Research, XXXI (Spring, 1964); and J. C. G. Rohl, From Bismarck To Hitler (New York, 1970).

⁶⁶Romoser, 84.

the argument contains a measure of truth, as witnessed by the authoritarian features of the first conservative program, or Popitz's opposition to Goerdeler's plan for a single trade union, or Hassell and Popitz's rejection of Goerdeler's earlier proposal to hold a referendum immediately after the interim government had assumed power. But these admissions do not imply acceptance of Romoser's thesis, the burden of which is that the conservatives, because of their antecedents, were unable to construct an acceptable alternative to National Socialism--an alternative which Romoser identifies as party-politics and which he appears to think would have mobilized public support. For one thing, such an argument minimizes the fact that the conspirators were compelled to renounce any "levee en masse" by the very nature of the Nazi police state, a fact which has been documented by every resister, conservative or otherwise.⁶⁷ For another, it assumes a rather static view of man by denying him the power to break away from his political background. And the "either-or" nature of the argument excludes the possibility that other choices existed besides National Socialism and conservatism. Taking these last two points together, it should be emphasized that to a great extent, Goerdeler had succeeded in freeing himself from elitist political thought and had moved to the more equalitarian position of liberalism⁶⁸--a political

⁶⁷Typical of the conservative view is Schlabrendorff's statement taken from his post-war account: "Only the army had the weapons and the power to overthrow the firmly entrenched Nazi regime, which was supported by hundreds of thousands of SS troops. Civilian initiative was fettered." Schlabrendorff, p. 14. Typical of the socialist view is Carlo Mierendorff's remark to Professor Alfred Weber during the war: "We are obliged to act without the masses and leave the initiative to the generals." Quoted in Dulles, p. 108.

⁶⁸Goerdeler's political change from conservatism to liberalism, the result of his contacts with socialists, is what Griffin refers to

tradition in Germany marked by its stress on individual freedom and state authority--a kind of mixture of John Stuart Mill and Edmund Burke.⁶⁹ This is attested to in Kaiser's statement made after the war: that if Goerdeler had survived, he would have been "on the side of the progressive forces of the people."⁷⁰ Or there is the structure of his proposal itself. With its balance between local self-government and federal strength, the former Mayor's plan accords with the best traditions of German liberalism--a tradition which can be traced from Goethe, Kant, Humboldt, and Stein, to the leading figures of the Revolution of 1848. This tradition, as embodied in Goerdeler's domestic reforms--not the earlier quasi-authoritarian proposal, or Popitz's demand for a return to an economic class system--won the approval of Beck and the other conservative leaders and became their basic statement of principles.⁷¹

Finally, there is the uncertain question of how popular this program would have been. And here, Goerdeler's optimism might have stood the resisters in good stead. For in his unswerving desire to obtain a popular mandate, the former Mayor had blundered into a possible first step in

when he writes about "progress from pathema through poiema to mathema . . . from auscultation through creation to revision. . . to a 'modification of the expression in the light of more complicated afterthoughts.'" Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 461-462. This would also apply to Beck and Hassell's approval of Goerdeler's liberal program. Only Popitz remained unreconstructed politically.

⁶⁹An excellent illustration of this mixture can be found in an essay by Heinrich Treitschke, written in 1861. In discussing Mill's "Essay on Liberty," Treitschke praises Mill's desire to give the highest degree of liberty to the individual, but he rejects Mill's theory of the state as not giving sufficient recognition to the state as the source of the individual's creative energies and rights. Treitschke: His Life & Works (London, 1914), pp. 294-320.

⁷⁰Kaiser is quoted in Rothfels, p. 102.

⁷¹Hassell notes his and Beck's agreement, p. 230.

gaining mass support--that of an extremely divergent message.⁷² Ritter records him on many occasions as saying that "the truth needs only to be known for twenty-four hours. . . [to make] the German people realize how they had been sinned against."⁷³ And Stauffenberg, who by nearly all accounts was the most audience-oriented of the resistance leaders,⁷⁴ adopted the same strategy prior to the July 20, 1944 Attentat. In ordering the text of the first "General Valkyrie Orders" to be expunged of subtleties and equivocations, he was in effect arguing that the attention of the people could be redirected with messages antithetical to what they had heard for years from Goebbels. Truth and a spirit of reform would provide the necessary means, when contrasted with the lies and hatred which had been the mainstay of Nazi propaganda.

As we observed earlier, the period 1942-1943 marked the climax of the dialogue between the conservatives and a somewhat different kind of

⁷²Admittedly, there is a mass of contradictory evidence in the psychological literature concerning discrepant messages. See James O. Whittaker, "Resolution Of The Communication Discrepancy Issue In Attitude Change," in Thomas D. Beisecker and Donn W. Parson, The Process Of Social Influence (Englewood Cliffs, 1972), pp. 367-391. However, no less an authority than Hitler suggests the strategy. In Mein Kampf, he argues that the function of propaganda "consists of catching the masses attention. . . [not with] half measures which might give cause for doubt. . . [but with] its own truth. . . no matter how apparently crazy. . . the impudence of its assertions." Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, trans., Ralph Manheim (Boston, 1962), pp. 182-185. In a political scene where lies were the norm, the most "impudent" approach would have been to tell the truth.

⁷³Ritter, p. 241.

⁷⁴There are many testimonials to Stauffenberg's sensitivity to audiences, but space limitations preclude citing more than one. A fellow officer in a panzer division wrote: "[Stauffenberg] was revered and admired by his comrades, collaborators and subordinates, esteemed by his superiors whom he faced without a trace of subservience, fully aware of his own value and dignity, always and in every situation able to choose the right tone and manner." Quoted in Zeller, p. 179.

resistance center--the Kreisau Kreis, and this dialogue, combined with the change in the political Zeitgeist, reoriented the thinking of both groups in certain important respects. Because this interchange played no small part in the drama, let us examine the origins of the Kreisau, for it is in the forces which helped to shape its leading members no less than in their political programs that much of the cause for the tensions between the two groups can be found.

The Kreisau circle had its beginnings in the friendship formed between Helmuth James von Moltke and Peter Yorck von Wartenburg in the first half of 1940 when both were on military duty in Berlin, Moltke as a legal advisor to the Armed Forces High Command, Yorck as a staff member in the office of the Reich Price Commissioner.

The two men had much in common, and even their differences, which were considerable, made their relationship complementary. Both were descended from famous ancestors. Moltke was the great-grandnephew of the Field Marshal in Bismarck's time. Yorck came from the family of the Prussian general whose act of disobedience led to the war of liberation against Napoleon.⁷⁵ Both belonged to the generation whose formative years followed World War I. Moltke was born in 1907; Yorck three years earlier. And while this generation was often dismissed as "lost," some of its members attempted to combat their own alienation as well as the alienation of others with new forms of social identification. Moltke helped to organize voluntary work camps which brought together people of

⁷⁵In opposition to King William III, General Yorck von Wartenburg signed the Treaty of Tauroggen in 1812, breaking connections with the French and placing his troops at the Czar's disposal, a political act which set off the war of liberation against Napoleon.

all ages and classes in the hope that shared experiences would lead to a shared life.⁷⁶ Yorck was also interested in the camps, and though his basic shyness prevented him from joining, his conscience led him to work for improved social conditions on an individual basis.⁷⁷ Both had family estates in Silesia, an area where the problems of coexistence between Germans and Poles was especially acute since the Versailles Treaty had divided the province with little regard for ethnic considerations. Moltke was part of a group which tried to separate national from cultural factors in order to make it possible for minorities on both sides of the frontier to live in peace.⁷⁸ Yorck was more profoundly German and did not like the thought of Polish domination in Silesia, although the exigencies of the scene made him, as he put it, "an unhappy rebel in the cause of human dignity, freedom and right."⁷⁹

Moltke possessed the more formidable personality and presence (he was six feet seven) and he combined this with a habit of mind and speech that was all attack and moved directly to the facts of a case.⁸⁰ Yorck was much less imposing (he was small and extremely slender) and he had

⁷⁶Moltke's part in the work camps is recounted in Ger van Roon, German Resistance To Hitler, trans., Peter Ludlow (London, 1971), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 31.

⁷⁸An account of Moltke's work with minorities, including his study of Polish, is in Michael Balfour and Julian Frisby, Helmuth von Moltke (London, 1972), pp. 36-37.

⁷⁹Yorck is quoted in Zeller, p. 98.

⁸⁰Balfour and Frisby write: "Moltke could analyze soundly and fast and pick up the essence of any question in a short time. . . . But he was also prone to the clever man's fault of supposing that, because he has seen something to be self-evident and drawn appropriate conclusions, everyone else will have done so too." Balfour and Frisby, p. 46.

a more tactful way of going about things, a method which made him much more effective with those of differing views.⁸¹ Moltke had studied for the law and had a broad outlook, in part the result of his Anglo-Saxon heritage which he got from his English mother, and in part the result of his education at Oxford where he specialized in international law. Yorck had also studied for a legal career but he found a narrower if more satisfying education in his own home which had a large library of German history, philosophy and literature, a course of study which led him to be moved far more by national interests. The most striking difference between the two men, however, was moral. Moltke was convinced of the inevitability of defeat and believed it was more important to prepare for the post-Hitler period than to hasten it with a revolt, particularly one involving assassination.⁸² Yorck agreed with the need for preparations, but he found it less easy to stand by while Germany was destroyed together with Hitler, and though he was carried along at the beginning by the sheer strength of Moltke's personality and arguments, the time finally came when Moltke was in prison and unable to press his views. Then Yorck and some of the other Kreisauers

⁸¹See Eugen Gerstenmaier's description of Yorck's strength as a "moderator" in Erich Boehm, We Survived (New Haven, 1949), p. 178.

⁸²Moltke's views are fairly represented in two statements. To General von Falkenhausen, he said: "Let Hitler live. He and his party must shoulder responsibility for the terrible fate which they have brought to the German people. This is the only way to eradicate the ideology of National Socialism." Quoted in Ritter von Schramm, Conspiracy Among Generals, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1956), p. 23. And in a letter to a British friend, Lionel Curtis, Moltke argued that it was the task of the opposition "to visualize Europe after the war. We can only expect our people to overthrow this reign of terror and horror if we are able to show a picture beyond the terrifying and hopeless immediate future." Helmuth von Moltke, A German of the Resistance (London, 1948), p. 28.

joined Stauffenberg--but this is part of the next act.

When Moltke and Yorck first met, they already led small opposition groups. As early as 1938, Yorck had assembled a circle of friends to discuss the future of Germany. Included were Fritz von der Schulenburg and Berthold von Stauffenberg, brother of Claus von Stauffenberg. These men came together under the impact of the "Kristallnacht" when the great majority of Germans stood by silently while government directed terrorists ravaged Jewish communities and Goebbels called it spontaneous outbursts of popular feeling. Not unnaturally, their major concern was how to instill the concept of "Zivilcourage" into the apolitical Germans and, at the same time, prevent the government from gaining such power that it could order immoral acts with impunity. Their proposals, developed over the course of the next two years (and with frequent interruptions for military duty), included a state structure that was democratic but which left room for leadership, a federal government whose powers were limited, extensive local self-government, and decentralized social and economic institutions.⁸³

Moltke's group had grown out of the Munich crisis. In his work at the High Command, he had learned something of the officer's plot to overthrow the regime and he decided that the time had come to consider the form of government that would follow Hitler. As a matter of course, he turned for help to those with whom he had been associated in the organization of the work camps. One was his cousin, Dietrich von Trotha. Another was Trotha's friend, Horst von Einsiedel. A third was Adolf Reichwein, whose work in the camps had led him to a brilliant career in adult

⁸³These plans are summarized in Van Roon, p. 106.

education and innumerable contacts with the socialists before the Nazis transferred him to a one-room village school. A fourth was the lawyer Eduard Waetjen, who was introduced to Moltke by Einsiedel. This group's records do not seem to have been preserved, but van Roon reports that Einsiedel and Trotha, both of whom worked in the civil planning sector of the government, favored tight economic controls to prevent the kind of imbalances that were always plaguing the Nazis, and that Moltke, who was strongly international, argued for a system of European economic cooperation in place of Hitler's autarky.⁸⁴

It was Moltke's intention, if he could find common ground, to link up his group with Yorcks'. Meetings and correspondence between the two through the first half of 1940 strengthened his resolve,⁸⁵ and in August he invited Yorck, Einsiedel, and Waetjen to spend a weekend at Kreisau, his family estate in Silesia. Here plans were laid for what later became known as the Kreisau Kreis.

Briefly, it was decided to enlarge the circle by bringing in experts to work on particular features of a new order, to discuss their findings at preliminary meetings, and then to place them before general sessions. In this, the men were partly influenced by their own inadequacies at making constitutions. Moltke, for example, had been reading Goethe, Kant, and the papers and letters of the Prussian reformer vom Stein, and George Kennen has left a description of him immersed in the Federalist Papers:

⁸⁴These plans are summarized in Van Roon, p. 102.

⁸⁵Typical is a line from one of Moltke's letters in this period: "At midday, I lunched with Peter Yorck. . . . I believe we found ourselves very much in agreement and will see a lot of each other." Quoted in Balfour and Frisby, p. 110.

The picture of this scion of a famous Prussian military family . . . employed by the German general staff in the midst of a great war, hiding himself away and turning . . . to the works of some of the Founding Fathers of our democracy for ideas as to how Germany might be led out of its existing corruption and bewilderment has never left me.⁸⁶

Also, security demanded a strict division. By keeping people apart, there was some assurance that if one or two individuals were arrested, they could give only a little away. No lists of members were ever drawn up, sometimes participants were not even introduced to each other at meetings, and most of the papers were destroyed immediately after a discussion, with only the most important ones being hidden away (in a bee-hive at Kreisau where Moltke's wife recovered them after the war). Moltke and Yorck alone knew all the aspects of the planning, and Christabel Bielenberg, the wife of one of the members of the circle, writes that the government poster, "Beware an enemy may be listening," was displayed in Moltke's Berlin apartment.⁸⁷

For the next two years, the Kreisau leaders were occupied chiefly with expanding their circle, a process that was inevitably slow and cautious, beset as it was with danger at every step. Ultimately, more than fifty people would be drawn into the work of preparing for a new Germany, some of them nobles and landowners like Moltke and Yorck, but many of them socialists and churchmen.

The left was represented by Theodore Haubach and Carlo Mierendorff, both introduced to the circle by Reichwein. Haubach and Mierendorff were "young Turks" from the radical wing of the Social Democratic Party, which meant that they were less interested in top-heavy union organizations than

⁸⁶George Kennen, Memoirs 1925-50 (New York, 1968), p. 121.

⁸⁷Christabel Bielenberg, Ride Out the Dark (New York, 1968), p. 247.

in achieving social and economic equality for the workers, a point which accorded well with Yorck's belief that the workers had been cheated in their legitimate claims by both the Nazis and the conservative elite.⁸⁸ Also, Haubach and Mierendorff had emancipated themselves from the socialist dogma of free thought and this made them ideal collaborators in a group which Moltke hoped would bridge the gap between the churches and the left.⁸⁹ Mierendorff in particular would be instrumental in creating the Kreisau symbol of a socialist ring linked with a cross "as a token of the unbreakable unity" of the circle's diverse forces.⁹⁰ Foreign policy was Haubach's specialty and he opposed the notion of militant nationalism with the socialist ideals of European reconciliation and federation, concepts not unlike Moltke's transcendent internationalism.

Among the Kreisau's church representatives, the most active Catholic was Father Alfred Delp, a young Jesuit whom Moltke had recruited through the Father Provincial of Munich. Trained as a sociologist, Delp's main interest lay in the relationship between man and society, and he was primarily responsible for the Kreisau's approach to social order, "Die Dritte Idee" as he called it in his position paper, which avoided the extremes of capitalism and totalitarianism. According to Delp, free enterprise had left the individual at the mercy of the technical, scientific, and economic worlds whose demands were too great to bear. Conversely, totalitarianism had collectivized man into a regimented mass which protected him

⁸⁸Van Roon, p. 118.

⁸⁹Ritter, an unsympathetic source, concedes that the Kreisau's greatest achievement "was to bring together representatives of the radical Left and members of the aristocracy and the churches in close and friendly cooperation." Ritter, p. 198.

⁹⁰The symbol is prominently mentioned in Mierendorff's "Social-

while denying him any individuality. What was needed was a third way: "It is essential that the individual's right to life, freedom and property should be associated with far reaching socialization of the economic system. But this should not create a system of state capitalism. The social reconstruction must be executed by the people themselves and be protected by state laws."⁹¹

Delp also thought that the churches were partly to blame for modern man's problems. By withdrawing to an otherworldliness,⁹² organized religion had abandoned the world of men to any Weltanschauung strong enough to seize it. Whether it was capitalism or totalitarianism made no difference. One "idol of the state" had merely replaced another. If a God-imagined man was to triumph over the brute man, the churches would have to re-enter the world of men, minister to their needs, and give them an ethical ideal worth striving for. In this belief, Delp was joined by the Lutherans in the Kreisau. One of the most important was Dr. Eugen Gerstenmaier from the Evangelical Church's Foreign Office. After the war broke out, Gerstenmaier was made responsible for the welfare of the foreign workers in the Reich, many of whom had been imported to Germany as slave laborers. Zeller writes that the job required less an introverted theologian than a militant preacher of the social gospel, and he notes that those who came in contact with Gerstenmaier at this

ist Action Proclamation" of June 6, 1943. See Van Roon, p. 328.

⁹¹Delp is quoted in Ibid., p. 131.

⁹²This was particularly true of the Lutheran Church with its doctrine of two realms, a religious and a secular; but it was also true of the Catholic Church after the Concordat, which, while it guaranteed freedom of religion to the church, did so at the cost of restricting Catholic political and social agencies in Germany.

time were "shocked" by his increasing radicalism.⁹³ It is not surprising, therefore, that Gerstenmaier's work would lead him at last to disagree with Moltke over the need for action. True to his beliefs, he joined Stauffenberg on July 20, a bible in one pocket, a pistol in the other.⁹⁴ And though he was arrested that evening and his membership in the Kreisau became known, he was able to defend himself successfully before the "People's Court," receiving a sentence of seven years instead of the death penalty.⁹⁵

Another Lutheran who agreed with Delp was Harald Polechau, the chaplain at Tegel Penitentiary, where many of the resisters were imprisoned. Polechau was a religious socialist, partly because of his upbringing in a working-class parsonage, and partly because of his studies under Paul Tillich. Polechau believed in a church in action, a church that ministered where there was a need. Unfortunately, the Evangelical was not such a church: "the church is [neither] a living nor. . .an essential element in the life of the individual," was the way he put it.⁹⁶ His work in prison, where he attended increasing numbers of men and women in their last hours, not only made Polechau a firm opponent of capital punishment but also provided him with an activity to replace the inactivity of his church. Equally important for the Kreisauers was his position on the relationship between church and state. In a review, he

⁹³Zeller, p. 99.

⁹⁴This is Gerstenmaier's description, in Boehm, p. 187.

⁹⁵Interestingly enough, Gerstenmaier's defense consisted primarily in maintaining an otherworldly image, a task made easier by the existing stereotypes which even the Nazis believed.

⁹⁶Polechau is quoted in Van Roon, p. 57.

wrote that God's mercy must operate in politics as well as religion, that there is, to use Tillich's expression, an "affinity" between the Christian understanding of God and some forms of society: "political decisions must be made in such a way that through them or behind them God's character can be perceived--the God who not only makes men aware of their limits, but who also reveals himself as the Father of Mercy."⁹⁷

The last Kreisau representatives who need to be mentioned are two young diplomats, Hans Bernd von Haeften and Adam von Trott zu Soltz. Of the two, Haeften is perhaps the less important because his senior rank made it necessary for him to be so circumspect that he rarely attended meetings.⁹⁸ Trott's "passionate" temperament,⁹⁹ however, would have driven him to meetings whatever the difficulty, and he is known to have participated in sixty-two, the second highest number for anyone except Moltke and Yorck.¹⁰⁰

Trott resembled Moltke in many ways--in physical appearance, in age, and in his ability to see a world outside Germany. He, too, had English blood, from his mother's side of the family, and like Moltke, he had studied at Oxford, beginning what his biographer calls his love affair with that institution,¹⁰¹ an affair which endured many ups and downs. Unlike Moltke, however, Trott was also pulled by German ties --his love of his country home in Hesse, his preoccupation with Hegel,

⁹⁷Polechau is quoted in Van Roon, p. 58.

⁹⁸Christopher Sykes, Tormented Loyalty (New York, 1969), p. 347.

⁹⁹This is Hassell's description, p. 230.

¹⁰⁰Balfour and Frisby, p. 193.

¹⁰¹Sykes, p. 35.

and his will to work for a better Germany. Unfortunately, this made him appear increasingly suspect to many of his British friends who equated the growing excesses of the Nazis with all things German. Men like A. L. Rowse and Maurice Bowra had difficulty reconciling Trott's opposition to Hitler with his patriotism, and Trott, for his part, was too sensitive to foreign criticism of his country. Also, the burden of his argument in the years just prior to the war--that Britain should accommodate herself to Germany's legitimate claims in order to deny Hitler his justification and gain time for the opposition to strike--was misconstrued in an atmosphere hardening against Germany.

The many moves Trott made during his trips to Britain ended in failure and need not concern us here except as they highlight a difficulty experienced by men of good will on both sides.¹⁰² Rowse, writing in retrospect, contrasts Trott's philosophy with his own, and the difference is revealing, not only for what it says about Trott (and by implication, many of his co-conspirators), but also for what it says about Rowse and the Oxford Fellows of his generation who helped form the intellectual spirit of Churchill's wartime government.¹⁰³ "With Adam black was never black

¹⁰²Trott's visits to Great Britain and the United States have been selected as "representative anecdotes" because they clearly illustrate the nature of the dialectic between the resistance movement and what has been called "third level hierarchies" in the methodology. The reader without a knowledge of German will find perhaps the most complete account in English of an opposition attempt to identify with the Allies in Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hans Schoenfeld's trips to Sigtuna and Stockholm where they met with Dr. G. K. A. Bell, Bishop of Chichester in May-June, 1942. See Bethge, pp. 661-676; and Bishop of Chichester [Dr. G. A. K. Bell], "The Background of the Hitler Plot," Contemporary Review, LXVIII (September, 1945), 203-208.

¹⁰³Of Rowse's generation of Fellows who were in public life, the most notable was Leo Amery (who gave Chamberlain the order to resign by quoting Cromwell's speech to the Long Parliament: "You have sat too long

and white white; black was always in the process of becoming white, white of becoming black. . .with me black was black and white was white; what was true was true, what was not was untrue."¹⁰⁴

By such distances are the Idealists of this world separated from the Realists and thus unable to enter into what Maurice Natenson calls philosophic argument, a genre of discourse in which personal reality is at stake.¹⁰⁵ To Rowse, whose metaphysics were formed by traditional logic, Trott's attempt to demonstrate that Germany contained both good and evil forces must have sounded like Hegelian synthesis; while to Trott, Rowse's insistence upon strict definitions must have seemed like a return to Aristotelian universals. It is not surprising, therefore, that the disagreement over fundamentals extended to politics. "At a certain point," Rowse writes, "I decided the relationship should end. Though I am ashamed to say so, I was not sure Adam was not reporting back to Berlin what our opinions and attitudes were."¹⁰⁶

Even more damaging was the role played by Bowra. In late 1939, under cover provided by Weizsacker, Trott was sent to the United States, ostensibly to take part in a conference on the Far East, but actually to make contact with the Roosevelt Administration. Weizsacker wanted to sound out the American Government on its attitudes toward a moderate

here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!"). Others included Quintin Hogg, Richard Pares, Geoffery Hudson, A. H. M. Jones, A. H. Campbell, Ian Bowen, Isaiah Berlin, and Douglas Jay.

¹⁰⁴A. L. Rowse, Appeasement (New York, 1961), p. 94.

¹⁰⁵Henry W. Johnstone and Maurice Natenson, Philosophy, Rhetoric And Argumentation (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1968), p. 15.

¹⁰⁶Rowse, p. 96.

post-Hitler peace and to inform its officials about elements in Germany which would be helped by such a peace. To this end, Trott helped to draw up a memorandum, the key part of which read: "a timely clarification of war aims. . . would reassure and consolidate opposition in Germany and thereby contribute to the discrediting and undoing of Nazi domination."¹⁰⁷ For awhile, things appeared to be going well. Trott met with Assistant Secretary of State George Messersmith who told him that the memorandum had been sent to President Roosevelt and read with approval.¹⁰⁸ However, Messersmith neglected to add that he had also distributed copies to influential New Dealers, including Felix Frankfurter, and that he had disapproved strongly. The reason is not hard to find. Frankfurter, too, was a graduate of Oxford, and more importantly, a good friend of Bowras'. When the Oxford don learned that Trott was visiting the United States, he wrote to friends here (Frankfurter among them), warning against Trott.¹⁰⁹ It is impossible to make a direct link between Bowra's letter, Frankfurter's negative response, and the fact that Roosevelt swung around to Frankfurter's position and finally rejected the memorandum.¹¹⁰ The conclusion seems inescapable, however, that Bowra's influence at least contributed to the suspicions which gradually dampened Roosevelt's initial interest in Trott's specific proposal and the German resistance movement generally.

¹⁰⁷The memorandum is quoted in Sykes, p. 298.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 306.

¹⁰⁹C. M. Bowra, Memories 1898-1939 (Cambridge, 1967), p. 306.

¹¹⁰Other contributing factors included Roosevelt's own indecision about America's role in the conflict and the tendency for non-Germans to assume that no one could officially represent Nazi Germany unless they were Nazis themselves. See Sykes, pp. 303-305.

After July 20, Rowse and Bowra would apologize for their error.¹¹¹ But how much better it would have been if Bowra had lent his considerable prestige to seconding Trott's efforts to secure a declaration publicly committing the United States to terms that held out some hope for the resisters, and this at a time when hostilities were barely underway. Instead, his negative act contributed in important respects to a mood of heightened mistrust which before long expressed itself in the Atlantic Charter, the last point of which was a thinly-disguised demand for German disarmament,¹¹² and after that, in the doctrine of Unconditional Surrender, a policy which specifically effaced distinctions between Germans regardless of the dialectical position to which they subscribed.

Ironically, Hitler himself would benefit most from this unsuccessful dialogue. The Fuehrer was accustomed to taking every opportunity of convincing foreigners that he enjoyed the full support of the German people. As he said to Sumner Welles in the spring of 1940: "I am aware that the Allied powers believe a distinction can be made between National Socialism and the German people. There was never a greater mistake. The German people are united as one man and I have the full support of every German."¹¹³ Trott was uniquely placed to see where these misconceptions

¹¹¹For example, Bowra writes: "Trott was not only against Hitler, but after the failure of the plot of 20 July 1944, he was arrested and hung with a horrifying brutality on a wire cord. When I heard this, I saw how mistaken I had been, and my rejection of him remains one of my bitterest regrets." Bowra, p. 306.

¹¹²Hassell makes this point: "paragraph 8 in the Churchill-Roosevelt declaration. . . would certainly be interpreted by our generals as proof that England and America are not fighting against Hitler but also want to smash Germany and render her defenseless." Hassell, p. 208.

¹¹³Sumner Welles, A Time For Decision (New York, 1944), p. 108.

would lead and his anxieties about them strengthened his resolve to go back to Germany and do what he could. Upon his return, he described the problem to Christabel Bielenberg: "It is a matter of persuading the powers that be that Hitler and all he stands for is as much our enemy as theirs and that if its Hitler they are out to destroy, in that battle we are on their side, and I don't think we are allies to be ignored."¹¹⁴ As we shall see, Trott never stopped hoping that he could convince the other side of that, and when Moltke invited him to join the circle (oddly enough, they had been first introduced by Rowse), Trott agreed at once.

The main ideas of the Kreisau circle are set forth in a number of documents,¹¹⁵ the dates of which correspond roughly to three weekends when Moltke invited members of the group to his estate in Silesia: once in the spring, and again in the fall of 1942, and finally in the spring of 1943. At these meetings, preliminary findings were discussed and formulated into position papers, although not without vigorous debate and, on occasion, less than unanimous consent. Since they were largely self-contained, the first and second meetings dealing with domestic policy and the third with foreign affairs, we shall be able to treat them separately and, at the same time, deal somewhat chronologically with the dialogue between the Kreisauers and the conservatives, the climax of which occurred between the second and third meetings and revealed economic policy and foreign affairs as the substantive areas of disagreement and change.

¹¹⁴Bielenberg, p. 66.

¹¹⁵These appear as an appendix in Van Roon, pp. 329-357.

The first meeting was devoted to the relationship between church and state and the role of education. Such subjects may seem like unusual starting points for working out constitutional reforms, but the choices make sense within the context of the scene. For one thing, Moltke and his friends were greatly concerned with countering the moral havoc wrecked by the Nazis and they were convinced that this could only be done on a religious basis. The first conference paper declared: "We see in Christianity the most valuable source of strength for a religious-ethical renewal of the nation."¹¹⁶ In beginning thus, the Kreisauers were projecting for everyone what they themselves had discovered individually: that to oppose a false god like Hitler, it was necessary to have what Moltke called the "sheet anchor" of Christianity.¹¹⁷ Typical in this respect is a statement by Mierendorff: "I have long lived without religion. But I have reached the conviction that Christianity alone is capable of imparting meaning and strength to life."¹¹⁸ Or there is a line in one of Moltke's letters, smuggled to a friend in England in 1942: "Perhaps you will remember that, in discussions before the war, I maintained that a belief in God was not essential. Today, I know that I was wrong, completely wrong."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶Van Roon, p. 329.

¹¹⁷Moltke, p. 40.

¹¹⁸Mierendorff is quoted in Constantine Fitzgibbon, July 20 (New York, 1956), p. 103.

¹¹⁹Moltke, p. 28. These reactions to a personal exigence or change in the self is what makes Dan Hahn and Ruth Gonchar's definition of a movement as "socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward the demand for change in some aspect of the social order" unsatisfactory in part. Dan F. Hahn and Ruth M. Gonchar, "Studying Social Movements: A Rhetorical Methodology," Speech Teacher, XX (January, 1971), 44; as cited from Joseph R.

Beyond a sense of personal commitment, however, the Kreisauers were attempting to bridge the deep divisions that had done so much to weaken the nation and prepare it for Hitler's Weltanschauung. Protestants and Catholics must end their hostility toward each other as well as toward the socialists. The socialists, too, must give up their one-sided emphasis on this-worldliness and materialism. If the Nazis common persecution of the churches and the left had one lesson, it was that more united than divided them. Thus, Reichwein and Polechau proposed creating an ecumenical lay organization in the hope that it would overcome differences between faiths and provide religious support in the secular realm. Major emphasis was placed on joint church work at the local level. And the conference paper speaks of freeing the churches from state control, of guaranteeing freedom of belief and conscience, of lifting censorship on religious publications, and of "two bishops, each representing one of the great Christian confessions, with the object of establishing a common position on the aspects of the Christian world-view that effect the structure of public life."¹²⁰

Because the schools had helped to institutionalize Nazi ideology, part of the meeting dealt with educational reform. At the elementary

Gusfield, ed., Protest, Reform, and Revolt: A Reader in Social Movements (New York, 1970), p. 2. For the Kreisauers, this change was largely a matter of discovering that the total claims of the state could only be overcome by equally total spiritual claims. For the conservatives, it was more a matter of progressing from initial agreement with National Socialism to the strongest possible repudiation of its evil methods. In either case, however, the personal exigence corresponds to Griffin's argument that men who make movements must change, must "progress from pathema through polema to mathema." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 461.

¹²⁰Van Roon, p. 329. Even more than Goerdeler's proposal, these plans suggest that the Kreisau was preparing an order "energized and sustained by the motive of piety." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 459.

level, Moltke and the others proposed turning over the public schools to the churches and making religious instruction in both confessions a required subject to be taught when possible by clergymen. The object was "to arouse and strengthen the moral powers" of the child and "shape his character for life."¹²¹ With the secondary schools, the immediate concern was over textbooks, particularly those in history which were inculcated with a nationalistic ethos. The socialists in particular placed great importance in banning such texts and undertaking instruction without them until new ones were available. Moltke went even further and argued that the language, which the Nazis had despoiled and corrupted, needed basic reevaluation. "The means of expression," he wrote, "have been destroyed. Words have lost their meaning. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that everything that ought to be absolute has become relative. . . [and] those things like state, race and power that are entirely lacking in absolute values have become absolute."¹²² In higher education, the aim was to reverse current trends in scientific and practical training which the Kreisauers equated with the growth of technology and big business. Technical schools were to be retained, but they were to be separate and below the universities, the task of the one being to specialize, of the other to relate various fields of knowledge to one another. Reichwein advocated a liberal course of study for prospective

¹²¹Van Roon, p. 319.

¹²²Ibid. Although Moltke was no rhetorical theorist, his desire to revalue language is somewhat reminiscent of the symbolic interactionists position that the restructuring of words will result in a restructuring of consciousness. Referring to education, Kenneth Burke writes: "how overwhelmingly much of what we mean by 'reality' has been built up for us through nothing but our symbol systems. Take away our books and what little do we know about history [and] biography. . . ?" Kenneth Burke, Language As Symbolic Action (Berkeley, 1968), p. 5.

teachers to guard against one-sidedness in their own instruction, and Moltke added that university graduates "were intended to be the knowledge and conscience of the state."¹²³

The second meeting focused on the organization of the state and the economy. In these areas, the problem as they saw it from Kreisau was with countering the dominant trend toward centralization begun by Bismarck and accelerated by Hitler. This was a process common to all states in the Western world where power had become increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few administrators and bureaucrats. But it was particularly acute in Nazi Germany where one man determined policy not only in traditional areas of responsibility but often in aesthetic matters like art, music, and literature. In such an order, the average citizen counted for little. He was a number, a cog in a machine, something to be manipulated for the greater glory of Fuehrer and Reich, but without responsibility, except to obey, and without any sense of participation in the decisions affecting his own life.

Part of the Kreisau response, as we have seen, was to reawaken the individual to an awareness of his spiritual importance and to redirect organized religion to man as the focus of church life. In the secular realm too, Moltke and the others were concerned that power should exist in human, not numerical terms, and though they differed as to the extent of the changes necessary to achieve it, they were all agreed on building an order in which people could administer their own affairs and thus become responsible members of the community.¹²⁴ Also, this concept of

¹²³Van Roon, p. 224.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 332.

community implied the idea of leadership and a selection principle to place the best in the communities at the head of the state.

They began from below. Through decentralization, power was to be returned to communities "open to the inspection of the individual."¹²⁵ In parishes and towns people could practice self-government in familiar surroundings and elect representatives whose character and expertise could be judged at first hand. But the Kreisauers wanted more than simply getting the man on the street to vote. A preliminary paper states: "Everyone must have the possibility of doing something useful for the community;"¹²⁶ that is, public service work in social institutions, labor camps, church boards, and the like, which were designed to draw people from every strata of society, thereby overcoming the mystery of class differences as the Volksgemeinschaft had never really done.¹²⁷ Additionally, these agencies were intended to serve as

¹²⁵Van Roon, p. 332.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 325.

¹²⁷In a preliminary paper, Moltke used a metaphor to describe the philosophy underlying the various orders: "individuals are small pieces of metal. . . . In the center there is a powerful magnet towards which all are oriented regardless of whether. . . separatist tendencies exist among them: both friendship and enmity are dominated and regulated by the shared orientation." Ibid., p. 318. The shared orientation was, of course, the common belief in Christianity, the mortar that held the various hierarchies together. This is very similar to Griffin's argument that "Any system that endures implies an 'adequate' understanding, a dynamic understanding (the understanding which is active in that it performs the act of unification). It is the understanding essential to the ultimate success of integration (ideal unity; 'a complete and perfect whole'). For it provides the basis for communication and men must communicate." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 458 For the dialectical significance, compare this "shared orientation" to Hitler's "New Order." Albert Speer writes: "Worse still was the restriction of responsibility to one's own field. That was explicitly demanded. Everyone kept to his own group--architects, physicians, jurists, technicians, soldiers, or farmers. The professional organizations to which

counterweights against potential domination by institutions at higher levels. And their very diversity, when added to family and work ties, would prevent any one of them from totally dominating a person's life. Finally, they were to be nurseries for leadership--places where civic minded individuals could demonstrate their ability and thus merit the votes of their neighbors for election to local councils.

From the communities, the hierarchy moved upward to the districts, provinces, and Reich. For election to these higher levels, the method was indirect, the community councils voting for the district councils, and so on to the top, though the documents stipulate that half the province and Reich representatives were to be non-electors so as to preclude anyone from serving in too many legislative bodies at once. The provinces or Lander were the most important of these larger political units. Schulenburg, who had more administrative experience than the others, divided them on the basis of economic and cultural factors as well as ease of communication, the aim being to make each Land big enough to be self-sufficient but small enough for its citizens to know what was happening. This meant breaking up "artificial" states like Prussia and taking away traditional powers from Berlin. Moltke in particular was opposed to the idea of state authority which he thought led to manifest destiny and war. From his position at the High Command, he had been able to establish contact with "christian groups in the various occupied territories," and with the

everyone had to belong were called chambers (Physicians' Chamber, Art Chamber), and this term aptly described the way people were immured in isolated, closed-off areas of life. The longer Hitler's system lasted, the more people's minds moved within such isolated chambers. . . . The disparity between this and the Volksgemeinschaft (community of people) proclaimed in 1933 always astonished me. For this had the effect of stamping out the promised integration. . . . What eventually developed was a society of totally isolated individuals." Speer, p. 65.

"exception of France," he had found them equally agreed that the problem of contested frontiers needed to be solved with something more lasting than treaties dictated by the victor of the most recent war.¹²⁸ Idealistically, but with a certain foresight, Moltke argued that there should be no sovereignty save that vested in a transcendental federation of small European states: "The free and peaceful development of national culture is no longer compatible with the retention of absolute sovereignty by individual states. Peace demands the creation of an order which embraces all the individual states."¹²⁹ This was the crux of his position, and despite the objections of Yorck and Trott, who had deeprooted feelings for the Fatherland and a better grasp of political realities, Moltke largely carried the issue with the help of the socialists whose natural tendency was to think along supranational lines.

Thus, the Reich was stripped of many of its powers, retaining some control only in the areas of foreign affairs, national defense, and finance,¹³⁰ while all other responsibilities devolved to the Lander. The importance of the Lander was further underscored in the construction of the Reich government. Its upper house (Reichsrat) consisted wholly of Land Commissioners whose duty was to select the head of state. He, in

¹²⁸Moltke, p. 28. Van Roon recounts clandestine meetings between Moltke and resistance leaders in Norway, Holland, Belgium, Poland, and Austria. Van Roon, pp. 201-215.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 349.

¹³⁰It is difficult to determine with any precision just what the Kreisau circle had in mind regarding federal powers. Ritter writes that "The loosening of the fabric of the state is carried very far. How far is hard to tell, for the Moltke document is couched in vague, and from the juridical point of view completely unclear, terms. . . ." Ritter, p. 210. And Van Roon is forced to place question marks behind his enumeration of federal responsibilities in the Kreisau program. Van Roon, p. 233.

turn, nominated the chancellor and his cabinet with the consent of the lower house (Reichstag) whose members were elected by the Land Councils. And although the chancellor was given responsibility for initiating legislation, the Reichstag could demand his dismissal by a two-thirds vote of no confidence. Finally, all the Kreisauers were agreed that there should be no centralization of authority through the symbol of the monarch, constitutional or otherwise, and as we noted earlier, they succeeded in imposing this view upon the conservatives.

It was in the area of economic policy that the first real division occurred between the Kreisau circle and Goerdeler and his allies.¹³¹ Part of it involved the role of trade unions which Molkte and the others intended to break into factory units or "works unions" as they called them.¹³² And part of it concerned monopolies, cartels, and combines which they were determined to regulate "in the interests of the communities," preferably at the Land level or below.¹³³ In point of time, the argument over the unions took place before the climax of the dialogue between the two sides so we can take it up now without intruding upon chronology.

Within their own group, the Kreisauers were agreed in opposing big labor since it tallied with their opposition to authority whatever form it took. But when they solicited outside opinions, the results were

¹³¹Griffin writes: "there is the danger that the movement, as its ranks increase, will 'splinter'--fail to achieve solidarity, merger; that the myth which prefigures the Purpose of the movement, imperfectly conveyed or received (whether consciously or unconsciously), will yield in the minds of a crucial number of converts. . .to an impious new vision of Order." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 465-466.

¹³²Van Roon, p. 336.

¹³³Ibid., p. 335.

mixed. Popitz sided with them, but his support was questionable because he was known to harbor elitist views fundamentally different from their own. The agreement of Leuschner was more important and less suspect since he was an acknowledged leader of the left. In May 1942, Mierendorff showed him a copy of the economic proposal, and while Leuschner concurred with its emphasis on small communities, he refused to admit the need for factory unions, maintaining instead that a single union was the workers best guarantee of social and economic equality—in short, the agreement he had made with Goerdeler. Despite this, the Kreisauers set about to win him over, and after several preliminary discussions, Leuschner agreed to nominate Hermann Maass, his secretary and former socialist youth leader, to represent him in further talks. Maass was a "tough person to talk to" and "extremely well-versed in his own special sphere,"¹³⁴ qualifications which led to long bargaining sessions but little in the way of results. Moltke described one such meeting in a letter and it deserves to be included because, unwittingly perhaps, it reveals both sides at their worst.

The rest of us slept through long stretches of the lecture. Peter Yorck and I shamelessly while Mierendorff's extinct cigar kept dropping out of his mouth, at which he woke up, looked at me, smiled, and put it back in his mouth and went to sleep again. But these ninety minutes made us realize that here was a man who really had something to say about the position of the workers and the ninety minutes included some high points where we all listened with fascination while several pearls were concealed among the banalities.¹³⁵

The upshot, as can be imagined, was almost total failure. Although Maass went to several other meetings that summer and even attended the second Kreisau gathering in the fall of 1942, his insistence on a single labor

¹³⁴These are Moltke's assessments, quoted in Van Roon, p. 122.

¹³⁵Moltke's letter is quoted in Balfour and Frisby, p. 197.

movement and the Kreisauers equally adamant demand for factory unions, led to several unpleasant clashes and delayed the final draft of the economic proposal until the spring of 1943. By then, Moltke and his friends had given some ground, as indicated by an annex in the text which concedes the existence of a "German Trade Union" and allows for its "continuance" if conditions so require.¹³⁶ But their basic position remained unchanged. As Moltke wrote later in the year: "Mierendorff will see to it that the comrades come over to us with him and leave [Leuschner] isolated."¹³⁷ Unhappily for the Kreisauers, this hope would never be realized. The labor resisters refused to give up their allegiance to Leuschner, and he, for his part, would not break his agreement with Goerdeler. Then in December 1943, tragedy struck. Mierendorff was killed in an air raid on Leipzig, burned to death in the cellar of his aunt's house. He was replaced by Julius Leber, one of the more militant deputies of the outlawed Social Democratic Party and a contributor to some of the early Kreisau plans. But Leber was quite different from Mierendorff. Though sympathetic with many of the circle's aims, he saw merit in Leuschner's position too,¹³⁸ and he was particularly critical of Moltke's theorizing,¹³⁹ preferring to fight against the Nazis here and now, even if it meant joining forces with

¹³⁶Van Roon, p. 337.

¹³⁷Moltke's letter is quoted in Balfour and Frisby, p. 286.

¹³⁸Thus a passage from one of Moltke's letters: "Leber has gone off on lines which are not dissimilar to those of [Leuschner]." Quoted in Ibid.

¹³⁹Van Roon quotes Moltke on Leber's attitude: "He is a compelling good man but he has very one-sided interests in the purely practical and attaches much less importance than I do to the spiritual and intellectual powers." Van Roon, p. 125.

Goerdeler whose program he described as "not constructive enough."¹⁴⁰ Later he would discover in Stauffenberg that combination of action and ideas he sought, but the discussion of their alliance belongs to the next act.

As noted earlier, the climax of the dialogue between the group around Goerdeler and Moltke and his friends took place during the interim between the second and third Kreisau meetings. Of course, there had been previous contacts. Moltke refers briefly to a dinner engagement with Yorck and Beck in the fall of 1941,¹⁴¹ Popitz's indictment mentions a series of undated meetings between himself and Schulenburg,¹⁴² Leuschner and Maass' talks with Moltke and Mierendorff have already been recounted, and so has Hassell's encounter with Trott in December 1941, when Hassell defended the restoration of the monarchy while Trott attacked it.¹⁴³ But these were largely impromptu affairs which dealt with a single issue and frequently left the participants with something less than a favorable impression.¹⁴⁴ Still, there were members of both groups who wanted to establish a common front and so it is not surprising that before long they would make an attempt.

The initiative came from Hassell on the one side and Yorck, Trott,

¹⁴⁰Leber is quoted in Rothfels, p. 120.

¹⁴¹Moltke's reference is in a letter quoted by Balfour and Frisby, p. 162.

¹⁴²Popitz's indictment in in Dulles, pp. 151-152.

¹⁴³See p. 243.

¹⁴⁴Thus Hassell's reaction to his meeting with Trott in 1941: "In general I am against Trott's theoretical and illusionary outlook." p. 232.

Schulenburg and Haeften on the other.¹⁴⁵ Moltke was opposed, but gave way in deference to his friends, calling them "much more positive" than himself.¹⁴⁶ The meeting was held at Yorck's house in Berlin on the evening of January 8, 1943, with both groups fully and evenly represented, the conservatives by Beck, Goerdeler, Popitz, Hassell, and Jessen; the Kreisauers by Moltke, Yorck, Trott, Gerstenmaier, and Schulenburg. Only three accounts remain: a letter by Moltke,^{147a} a diary entry of Hassell's,¹⁴⁸ and a report by Gerstenmaier, the sole survivor, written immediately after the war.¹⁴⁹ From these, it is possible to reconstruct the pattern of the dialogue and suggest some reasons for its short term failure and longer range success.

According to Gerstenmaier, the Kreisauers had been preparing for weeks beforehand and led off the discussion.¹⁵⁰ Trott spoke on foreign affairs, Yorck on administration and Reich reform, Moltke on the cooperation between the churches and the left, and Gerstenmaier on the relations between church and state and social policy.¹⁵¹ After this

¹⁴⁵Hassell, p. 278.

¹⁴⁶Moltke's reference is in a letter written after the meeting, quoted in Balfour and Frisby, p. 121.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 206-207.

¹⁴⁸Hassell, p. 283.

¹⁴⁹Gerstenmaier's report is printed as an appendix to the German edition of Hassell's Diaries (pp. 379-380), but is omitted from the English edition. Hereafter it will be referred to as Anhang, the title given to it in the original.

¹⁵⁰Gerstenmaier, Anhang, p. 379.

¹⁵¹Ibid.

"united front," as Hassell calls it,¹⁵² Goerdeler followed with the presentation of the conservative position, a statement which Moltke later described as "really idiotic. . . flabby and totally lacking in imagination, etc."¹⁵³ Nor did the Kreisau leader keep his objections to himself. Gerstenmaier writes that "Moltke became very polemic through his interruptions . . . as Goerdeler set forth his state and social programs."¹⁵⁴ For his part, the former Mayor tried to minimize the differences by diverting the argument into what Moltke dismissed as "issues on which agreement was easy."¹⁵⁵ But his attempts only succeeded in provoking Gerstenmaier into a rebuttal "which formulated our points of view in a manner sharply antithetical to his own,"¹⁵⁶ and led Hassell to conclude that "Goerdeler is really something of a reactionary."¹⁵⁷ By now the hour was late (11:35 PM) and Moltke was unhappy because the discussion had taken so long to get down to what he considered "fundamentals."¹⁵⁸ Still, there was time for a parting shot, and he took it, calling Goerdeler's program a "Kerensky solution,"¹⁵⁹ the implication being that any group which aimed to take power after the Nazis must be prepared to pursue a radical policy unless it wanted to find itself quickly superseded. He notes that the shot

¹⁵²Hassell, p. 283.

¹⁵³Moltke's letter is quoted in Balfour and Frisby, p. 207.

¹⁵⁴Gerstenmaier, Anhang, p. 380.

¹⁵⁵Moltke's letter is quoted in Balfour and Frisby, p. 206.

¹⁵⁶Gerstenmaier, Anhang, p. 380.

¹⁵⁷Hassell, p. 283.

¹⁵⁸Moltke's letter is quoted in Balfour and Frisby, p. 206.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 207.

"quite obviously went home and with it the affair ended."¹⁶⁰

Looking back, it is plain that the approach taken by the two sides was wholly different and contributed materially to the unsuccessful outcome. Gerstenmaier's reference to lengthy preparations and the sequence of opening reports suggest that the Kreisauers had come to the meeting ready to debate basic principles, and their frustration at Goerdeler's attempts to minimize differences is understandable. Yet, the conservative spokesman also had his method of bargaining. As Gisevius puts it, "he endeavored to divert the thoughts of men with whom he negotiated from disputes about persons and programs and impress them instead with the need for action."¹⁶¹ Such an approach was particularly distasteful to Moltke who, as we have seen, was less concerned with overthrowing Hitler than with determining the kind of political and social order that would follow him. Also, the Kreisau leader frankly preferred direct attacks and usually carried his point. As his biographers, Balfour and Frisby write, Moltke "was inclined to believe that, if only a man would stick to his convictions and argue with cogency. . . he would get his way."¹⁶² Thus, in Goerdeler's efforts to "conceal differences,"¹⁶³ and Moltke's attempts to highlight them, the proceedings broke down in an atmosphere that was one part suppression of argument and one part verbal boxing match.

¹⁶⁰Moltke's letter is quoted in Balfour and Frisby, p. 207.

¹⁶¹Hans Gisevius, To The Bitter End, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (Boston, 1947), p. 347.

¹⁶²Balfour and Frisby, p. 207.

¹⁶³This is Hassell's characterization, p. 283.

Beyond this, there was the obstacle of a generation gap. Hassell begins his account by distinguishing the "youngsters" from the "older members of our group,"¹⁶⁴ and though there was some overlap, the core of the Kreisau was composed of men in their thirties whose formative years encompassed the rapid change from Weimar to Nazi Germany, while the political leaders of the conservatives were in their late fifties and had been moulded by the stable life before World War I. The implications of this age difference cut both ways. On the one hand, it sometimes prevented Goerdeler and his allies from recognizing the dissolution of old forms, as witnessed by their earlier hope of reintroducing the monarchy, an idea which received extremely short shrift from the Kreisauers who were young enough to talk of "a new era."¹⁶⁵ On the other, it meant that Moltke and his friends were without much experience in public office and therefore vulnerable to Hassell's charge that they lacked political realism,¹⁶⁶ which is another way of saying that they underestimated the extent to which politics depends upon compromise. Fortunately, this bias did not follow age exactly. Popitz was as obstinate as Moltke, although on most issues they were poles apart. Hassell and Schulenburg were less intransigent and continued to work as peacemakers.¹⁶⁷ But it was Goerdeler who, as subsequent discussion will show, was the most amenable to change.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there were differences

¹⁶⁴Hassell, p. 283.

¹⁶⁵Van Roon, p. 325.

¹⁶⁶Hassell, p. 336.

¹⁶⁷Hassell notes this in Ibid.

between the two programs, or more accurately, the differences perceived. For when we make a comparison, besides the differences, a considerable number of similarities are revealed. Both sides were reacting not only to National Socialism but to the forces that had made it possible--industrialization, technology, and the resulting loss of social order. Both wanted to affirm the dignity of man through Christian faith and mould the character of his children through education (and if Moltke and his friends emphasized faith more, perhaps that was because the older men had never lost theirs'). Both built their ideal order from the bottom upwards, stressing local communities as the best context for encouraging people to manage their own affairs (in fact, Goerdeler went much further than the Kreisauers in the matter of direct elections, although he went less far in the question of decentralization). Both made similar provisions for selecting leaders possessed of civic abilities and neither was interested in returning to the party system of Weimar (Goerdeler by delaying it and reducing the number of parties to three; the Kreisauers by deliberately avoiding any mention of political parties).

These common features hardly deserve Moltke's characterization of them as "issues on which agreement was easy," since they extended across a broad range of domestic reforms. And in fact, the problem lay not so much with the proposals themselves as with the Kreisauer's belief that they were making a new beginning, a clean break with history. This is suggested by Delp's statement: "It is time the twentieth century revolution was given a definite theme, and the opportunity to create new and

lasting horizons for humanity."¹⁶⁸ Or there are the references in the Kreisau documents to a "new point of view,"¹⁶⁹ and "thinking afresh."¹⁷⁰ Reinforcing this belief was Goerdeler's use of the term "restoration" and its frequent occurrence in his program as well as his dependency upon the tradition of liberalism--ties to the past which may well have led Hassell to call him "reactionary." Yet, the Kreisauers too were relying upon this tradition, as indicated by our earlier picture of Moltke hard at work on the writings of Goethe, Kant, and vom Stein. And Goerdeler's use of "restoration" did not mean so much a return to the past as a renewal of values that remain essential at all times. Finally, the Kreisauers seem to have regarded their program as definitive, perhaps because they had debated matters through to first principles, and this inclined them to look somewhat disparagingly at Goerdeler's more practical plans.¹⁷¹ But Goerdeler, as we have seen, was not unwilling to change, and this flexibility, combined with his conversion to a liberal philosophy, may have caused him to rethink some of his ideas.

The first clear evidence of Kreisau influence can be seen in his domestic policy. Briefly, the younger men's insistence upon regulating big business must have convinced Goerdeler that his plan for a laissez faire economy was at variance with his more fundamental desire to protect

¹⁶⁸Delp is quoted in Graml, p. 67.

¹⁶⁹Yorck is quoted in Van Roon, p. 293.

¹⁷⁰Moltke is quoted in Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁷¹Moltke is quoted as referring to Goerdeler's program as somewhat "dilettantish" in comparison to that of the Kreisau; in Ritter, p. 205.

the individual from the forces of industrialization and technology. Also he must have sensed that there was nothing inconsistent between his new found liberalism and a policy of economic regulation. In any event, he subsequently chose Paul Lejenue-Jung as his Minister of Economics in the shadow cabinet and approved his position paper on the economic prerogatives of government, which laid down among other things the claim of the state to mineral deposits and water rights.¹⁷² And a radio speech which Goerdeler prepared in 1944 states: "We are determined to obviate all possibility of the abuse of capitalism, in whatever form, for monopolistic or other purposes,"¹⁷³ a warning which suggests the extent to which the former Mayor had changed his mind.

It was in foreign affairs; however, that Moltke and the others had the greatest impact on Goerdeler's thinking. As we have noted, the heart of the Kreisau position was the reordering of European relations so that the continent might become an integrated community of states ready to adjudicate conflicts in a spirit of conciliation rather than a collection of individual powers whose competing national interests led to war. This was certainly different from Goerdeler's earlier hope for a European federation led by Germany, to say nothing of Hassell's "Grossraum" or Popitz's imperialistic Reich. Yet, again, the younger men's arguments, combined with the change in the military situation, must have convinced Goerdeler, for by May of 1943, less than four months after the dialogue, the former Mayor was writing that the peoples of Europe "must find their way freely

¹⁷²A copy of Lejenue-Jung's paper, "Basic Law on Economic Prerogatives of the Reich," is in Germans Against Hitler, ed., Erich Zimmerman and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, trans., Allan and Lieselotte Yahraes (Bonn, 1964), pp. 35-36.

¹⁷³Goerdeler is quoted in Graml, p. 88.

and independently toward a lasting, peaceful federation in which neither Germany nor any other state would claim supremacy."¹⁷⁴ With characteristic energy, he was soon preparing memoranda for European ministries of economics, defense, and foreign affairs.¹⁷⁵ And by the time of his arrest and imprisonment, he was meditating on whether nationalism had any role to play:

Pursuing these thoughts, I stumbled upon the fact that in His commandments God binds man to Himself, to his parents, to his neighbors, to the truth, to property, but by no injunction does He bind man to his nation. Have we not erred in calling upon the aid of God for national purposes, even those of us who believe firmly and deeply in Him?¹⁷⁶

The impact of Goerdeler's thinking upon Moltke and his friends is also evident, although less pronounced. At the third Kreisau conference held in June 1943, the areas of discussion included law, punishment of war criminals, and foreign policy. Taking the first two together, the Kreisauers agreed that under the Nazi regime, justice had become an instrument of the totalitarian state. It was, therefore, important that the law should be made independent and that free judges be appointed. "The Law which has been trampled upon must be restored and given authority over all orders of human existence," states the protocol of the text.¹⁷⁷ Also, war criminals were to be punished, and here Moltke and the others remained true to their principles and advocated proceedings

¹⁷⁴Goerdeler is quoted in Graml, p. 42.

¹⁷⁵These plans are cited in Ritter, p. 222.

¹⁷⁶Goerdeler is quoted in Dying We Live: The Final Messages And Records of the Resistance, ed., Helmut Gollwitzer, Kathe Kuhn, and Reinhold Schneider, trans., Reinhold C. Kuhn (New York, 1956), p. 90.

¹⁷⁷Van Roon, p. 339.

before an international court, although they did accede to Goerdeler's plans to the extent that they divided the judges to include not only three from the victorious powers and two from neutral states but one from the defeated nations. Finally, in foreign affairs, the documents make it clear that the younger men still based their hopes on a European community transcending individual states: "Peace demands the creation of an order that spans the separate countries."¹⁷⁸ But another passage adds: "The special responsibility and loyalty that everyone owes to his nation of origin, his language and the intellectual and historic traditions of his people must be protected and respected."¹⁷⁹ And in a summary of conclusions prepared in August 1943 under the title, "Basic Principles of Reconstruction," there is this significant declaration: "The Reich remains the highest authority of the German people."¹⁸⁰ Although this is followed by a statement that the Reich must be "integrated into the community of European nations,"¹⁸¹ the adoption of a federal concept--a basic tenet of Goerdeler's position--represented a shift in Kreisau thinking. It had acquired, as it were, some nationalistic balance for its transcendent internationalism.

The Kreisau ceased to exist with Moltke's arrest in January 1944. He, along with Yorck, had held everything together, providing the stimulus and taking the initiative. Without him, Gerstenmaier says, "nobody

¹⁷⁸Van Roon, p. 339.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 338.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., p. 349.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

made an attempt to organize the Kreisau once more."¹⁸² Nevertheless, the impact of the group had been considerable. In making themselves think, these younger men had compelled others to think as well. And if they had been unnecessarily blunt with Goerdeler on the occasion of their interchange, they had provided the former Mayor and his fellow conservatives with needed correctives, to a lesser degree in economic policy and to a greater degree in foreign affairs where the older men had tended to look at Europe through the perspective of Germany.

It is one of the tragedies of the dialogue that the plans it produced were condemned to remain unrealized without a revolt. For as we noted at the beginning of this act, the only group that could make one--the generals--had refused to do so in the wake of Hitler's triumphs. They might change their minds when they saw that the war was not going to be a succession of victories, but by then the bargaining power of the resisters would be weakened to such an extent that they would be unable to obtain the conditions necessary to implement their proposals. "It is the old dilemma," Hassell wrote. "If we wait until the impossibility of victory becomes clear to the whole world we shall have lost all chance for a passable peace."¹⁸³

It was not for lack of effort that nothing had been accomplished. In the spring of 1941, when Hitler decreed his infamous "Kommissar Befehl," making it mandatory for the army to execute commissars who were captured and depriving civilians of any legal status in military zones of operation, Beck protested to Brauchitsch and helped pressure him into issuing an order

¹⁸²Gerstenmaier is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 38.

¹⁸³Hassell, p. 220.

which allowed the field commanders to circumvent Hitler, but the Army Chief would go no further.¹⁸⁴ Again, in the late autumn of 1941, hopes were raised that Brauchitsch might do something when it became apparent that the drive on Moscow was breaking down, but Hitler dismissed Brauchitsch in December along with four army commanders and dozens of corps and division heads; for General Hoepner, the tank commander who had figured in earlier resistance plans, the Fuehrer reserved the special disgrace of having him cashiered.¹⁸⁵ Then, in the summer of 1942, when the Russian front was stabilized, Goerdeler visited the eastern commands, trying to persuade the marshals there to refuse to obey orders from Hitler, while Hassell made plans with Witzleben, the Commander-in-Chief in France, to lead an army on Berlin.¹⁸⁶ With the exception of Guenther Kluge, who commanded Army Group Center, Goerdeler's efforts were unavailing, and the Fuehrer himself removed Witzleben from the scene by retiring him on the pretext of ill health. Finally, when the Sixth Army was surrounded at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-1943, the resisters decided to make it a symbol for revolt. A personal appeal from Beck was flown into General Friedrich Paulus, asking him to read a declaration calling for the overthrow of a leader who had sacrificed needlessly one-hundred thousand men. Arrangements were also made with Kluge and Manstein, the commanders of the nearest army groups, to fly to Fuehrer Headquarters as soon as the declaration was made public and demand that control of

¹⁸⁴Hassell, p. 202.

¹⁸⁵The despair of the resisters over Brauchitsch's dismissal can be judged by Hassell's diary entry: "The work of many months has come to nothing." Ibid., p. 233.

¹⁸⁶For Goerdeler's part, see Ritter, p. 233; for Hassell's part, see p. 227.

the eastern front be turned over to them. But Paulus received a marshal's baton and surrendered in silence (though not in suicide, as the Fuehrer had hoped),¹⁸⁷ and while Kluge and Manstein went to see Hitler, the Fuehrer adopted a conciliatory tone, flattering their vanity and allowing them more control over their own fronts.¹⁸⁸

Giving vent to his frustration, Hassell was led at one point to call the generals "hopeless sergeant majors,"¹⁸⁹ and after the failure at Stalingrad, Beck bitterly commented: "These cowards make an anti-militarist out of me, an old soldier."¹⁹⁰ However, if the resisters were unhappy with the generals, so too was their opponent, Adolf Hitler. The Fuehrer recognized as well as they that the military--the agency which he depended upon to achieve his "New Order," harbored doubts as to his genius, traitorous thoughts about his ideology, and worst of all, power to overthrow him. Throughout the winter of 1941-1942, and even more thereafter, Hitler began in public to treat his officers with a mixture of decorations and gifts if they obeyed him and implacable severity if they did not--

¹⁸⁷Upon hearing that Paulus had chosen to live, Hitler said: "What hurts me most, personally, is that I still promoted him to field marshal. I wanted to give him this final satisfaction. That's the last field marshal I shall appoint in this war. You mustn't count your chickens before they're hatched." Quoted in Felix Gilbert, Hitler Directs His War (New York, 1950), p. 22.

¹⁸⁸This attempt is recounted in Gisevius, pp. 466-467. Manstein, one of the Field Marshals involved, describes the tactics on this occasion. "Hitler opened the talks. . .with an unqualified admission of his exclusive responsibility for the fate of the Sixth Army. . . . This gesture. . .struck a chivalrous note. Whether deliberately or unconsciously, he had thus shown considerable psychological skill in the way he opened our discussion. He always did have the masterly knack of adapting his manner to his interlocutor." Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, trans., Anthony G. Powell (London, 1959), pp. 406-407.

¹⁸⁹Hassell, p. 199.

¹⁹⁰Beck is quoted in Dulles, p. 66.

a tacit recognition on his part of the dialectical struggle in which he was engaged.¹⁹¹

Earlier, we discussed some of the decorations he bestowed and later there will be occasion to examine gifts, but during this period, the Fuehrer's punishments are more in keeping with his disposition, so let us look briefly at them. His dismissal of Brauchitsch and dozens of other generals as well as the degradation of Hoepner has already been noted. In the spring of 1942, Hassell recorded the court martial and death sentence of General Graf Sponeck, who had ordered a retreat against Hitler's explicit command to the contrary.¹⁹² Halder would be retired in the autumn of 1942 along with several other high ranking generals. And Hitler would assume the position of de facto Chief of Staff as well as Commander-in-Chief of the Army.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹Griffin refers to the leaders of a new movement "infus[ing] increasing numbers of hearers. . .with attitudes of rejection toward the hierarchy. . .[thereby] impell[ing] the 'priests' of the existing order] to an act of opposition--to the organization of a countermovement. . . ." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 463-464. While the theoretical formulation and the actual interchanges are not precise fits, the resister's efforts to win the military to opposition and Hitler's equal determination to prevent it, constitutes an example of the kind of dialectic exchange Griffin is writing about.

¹⁹²Hassell, p. 242. Sponeck's disobedience may not have been the only reason for Hitler's severe treatment of him. During Fritsch's trial, Sponeck had testified on the Army Commander's behalf, and though he was only scheduled as a character witness, he began to make allusions about "forces that set themselves above the state," his intent being to unmask Himmler and Goering as having illegally conspired to arrange for the fall of Fritsch. Unfortunately, Goering was presiding judge and quickly cut Sponeck short by calling him to order and labeling his testimony as "irrelevant." For a more complete account, see Harold C. Deutsch, Hitler And His Generals (Minneapolis, 1974), pp. 346-347. While Sponeck was not executed immediately, Hitler reducing his sentence to six years, he was shot three days after the failure of the July 20 Attentat.

¹⁹³Hitler's comment when he assumed the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Army is revealing. Halder quotes him as saying: "The task

In private, the Fuehrer was even more negative in his attitude toward the military and more determined to make it an agency of his will. Goebbels' diaries are replete with Hitler's reproaches against "faithless generals," generals who were "undependable," and "generals opposed to National Socialism."¹⁹⁴ More importantly, Hitler had made up his mind to go to all lengths to make his military fuehrertreu. He praised the foresight of Stalin, who had liquidated his officer corps before undertaking the risk of war¹⁹⁵--something he himself would do with a vengeance after the failure of the July 20 plot, he interfered more extensively in the conduct of operations,¹⁹⁶ he planned new selection procedures as a way of advancing officers who reflected his own thinking,¹⁹⁷ and, as we shall see, he determined upon a program of political

of the Commander-in-Chief is to educate the army in the idea of National Socialism, and I know of no general who could do this in the way I want it done. So I have decided to take over command of the army myself." Franz Halder, Hitler As Warlord, trans., Eric Bors (London, 1950), p. 45.

¹⁹⁴Goebbels, p. 306ff.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 406.

¹⁹⁶Goerlitz recounts the time when Rundstedt requested permission to withdraw his troops from Rostov during the winter of 1941. Hitler refused, and when Rundstedt replied that the Russians would soon force them out anyway and that the responsibility for such a retreat belonged to those who had devised the campaign, Hitler seemed ready to hurl himself on Rundstedt and tear the Knight's Cross from his uniform. Later, the Fuehrer calmed down somewhat and allowed Rundstedt to resign rather than allow him the freedom of action he had requested. But, Goerlitz has Hitler conclude, "he would not consider any more requests by generals for retirement. After all, he himself could not go to his immediate superior who was Almighty God, and just tell Him that he was fed up and wanted to quit." Walter Goerlitz, History Of The German General Staff, trans., Brian Battershaw (New York, 1954), p. 403.

¹⁹⁷Goebbels lists political trustworthiness as opposed to technical proficiency; p. 333.

indoctrination to re-educate his army.¹⁹⁸

While Hitler brooded over his counter-moves, and Hassell and Beck complained about the lack of support from the older officers, Goerdeler's "circuit riding" on the eastern front had put the civilian resisters in- to closer touch with a younger generation of military men--Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels like Henning von Tresckow, GSO I to Field Marshal Kluge, and a group of like-minded officers that Tresckow had assembled in key staff positions at Army Group Center. And there was Friedrich Olbricht, the new Chief of Staff to the General Army Office in Berlin, whose friendship with Goerdeler dated from the time of Olbricht's service with the IV Army Corps in Leipzig.¹⁹⁹ These men had come to believe that against a tyrant like Hitler, no warnings and no second chances would be effective--only action and a willingness to accept responsibility for killing him would free the army and the people from his "spell."²⁰⁰ And that is the second tragedy of the dialogue. For at a time when the leaders of the resistance had at last found a group of officers determined to revolt, an event in Casablanca was to make their political plans utopian in every sense of the word.

In January 1943, at almost the same time that Goerdeler and the Kreisauers were at Yorck's house in Berlin debating the respective merits of their programs, and the officers at Army Group Center in Russia were laying plans to dispose of Hitler, in Casablanca, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill were announcing their determination

¹⁹⁸Goebbels, p. 406.

¹⁹⁹See Chapter Two, pp. 83-84.

²⁰⁰This is Schlabrendorff's description, p. 47.

"to accept nothing less than the unconditional surrender of Germany, Japan and Italy."²⁰¹ Presently, we shall discuss the attempt mounted from the eastern front, the drama of which provides the frame for this act. For the moment, however, the diplomatic initiative of the Anglo-American leaders is more important because it had a greater impact on resistance plans.

There is not space to detail the many reasons for the policy of unconditional surrender. In part, it represented a natural extension to the mood which we described earlier in connection with Trott's visit to Britain and America. The Zeitgeist of mistrust had hardened under the blows of Hitler's policy of "Weltmacht," and indeed, Churchill offers his reading of a public that would settle for nothing less as his only justification for the policy.²⁰² However, it should be added that there were other reasons. For one thing, the German failure to make good after the Vatican exchanges had left the British with the notion that the resistance movement was not genuine.²⁰³ For another, the doctrine of unconditional surrender accorded with the American concept of moral war and final victory which Roosevelt had begun to articulate after Pearl Harbor.²⁰⁴ Also, the declaration was intended to pacify the Russians

²⁰¹The declaration is quoted in Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York, 1950), pp. 693-694.

²⁰²Winston Churchill, The Hinge Of Fate (Boston, 1950), p. 689.

²⁰³Even an appeaser like Lord Halifax, Chamberlain's Foreign Secretary, felt compelled on occasion to ask "whether there are any good Germans." Quoted in Lonsdale J. Bryans, Blind Victory (London, 1951), p. 67. However, in view of the resister's efforts to explain what had gone wrong during the attempt of 1939-1940 (See Chapter Three, p. 228), official British reaction is difficult to justify.

²⁰⁴Typical is a line from Roosevelt's annual Message to Congress, January 6, 1942: "The militarists in Berlin and Tokyo started this war."

who viewed the campaign in North Africa as something less than a "second front."²⁰⁵ And finally, it freed Roosevelt from the possibility of repeating Woodrow Wilson's mistake of making definite promises to which an enemy could later hold him.²⁰⁶

These may seem like sufficient warrants for the policy, and yet, it has been widely criticized. Secretary of State Hull, for example, feared that the demand would inspire the Germans into a "resistance of desperation" and require the Allied Powers "to take over every phase of national and local government in the conquered countries."²⁰⁷ Stalin made his position clear by creating the "Free Germany Committee," a league of anti-Nazi war prisoners and emigres to whom he guaranteed a Reich with 1937 frontiers (including Austria) if they succeeded in getting the armed forces to act against Hitler, and in whose name he authorized manifestos which declared: "Hitlers come and go but the German people and the German state remain."²⁰⁸ And Allen Dulles, who had just taken up his post in Switzerland as head of OSS writes: "at Casablanca official Allied policy

But the massed, angered forces of common humanity will finish it." War Messages of Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 8, 1941 to April 13, 1945 (Washington, D. C., nd), p. 14.

²⁰⁵Clark Kerr, British Ambassador to Moscow, warned his government only a few weeks before Casablanca, that the Soviets were threatening to withdraw from the war unless the Anglo-Americans committed themselves to a second front in France in early 1943. Arthur Bryant, The Turn of the Tide (New York, 1957), p. 463ff.

²⁰⁶This is James Byrnes' opinion, in Speaking Frankly (New York, 1947), p. 186.

²⁰⁷Cordell Hull, Memoirs, 2 Vols., (New York, 1948), ii, p. 1570

²⁰⁸The committee, the guarantee, and the slogan are detailed in Budo Scheurig, Free Germany, trans., Herbert Arnold (Middletown, 1969), pp. 32-77.

toward Germany was frozen into the formula of unconditional surrender."²⁰⁹

These criticisms have implications for this study since they help to "isolate the rhetorical movement within the matrix of the historical movement."²¹⁰ To explain: from a recruitment standpoint, the policy made it much harder for the resisters to rally reluctant generals to their side. Admiral Canaris' comment to Lahousen--"Unconditional Surrender, no, our generals will never swallow that"²¹¹--is borne out by any number of vignettes, of which the one between Goerdeler and Guderian is typical. In April 1943, the Panzer Leader writes that he was visited by the former Mayor who

described to me in detail his program of government and reform; this program showed high idealism and the social adjustments envisaged would undoubtedly have been most desirable. . . . [But] in view of Germany's dangerous situation as a result of the Stalingrad catastrophe and the demands for unconditional surrender to all its enemies. . . I came to the conclusion that Dr. Goerdeler's plan would be harmful.²¹²

In addition to generals like Guderian, there were the waverers--Marshals like Kluge who vacillated between throwing in their lot with the resisters and remaining loyal to Hitler. In the course of this act, and again in the next, we shall have an opportunity to watch Kluge as both sides contend for his allegiance, but a scene from July 20 needs to be recounted now because it bears upon the impact of the policy of unconditional surrender. General

²⁰⁹Dulles, p. 132.

²¹⁰Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric Of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, XXXVIII (April, 1952), 185.

²¹¹Canaris is quoted in Ian Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence (London, 1951), p. 163.

²¹²Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader, trans., Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York, 1967), pp. 239-240.

Blumentritt, Kluge's Chief of Staff, writes that on that day, Kluge was prepared to order the immediate cessation of V-1 attacks on England and to establish contact with the Allied field commanders preparatory to an armistice.²¹³ "Then came in rapid sequence the contradictory reports and commands. According to one Hitler was dead, and according to another, he was alive." For several critical hours Kluge hesitated, torn between orders. In the end, however, he sided with Hitler, and Blumentritt notes that among the reasons for his decision was "the business of 'Unconditional Surrender.'"²¹⁴ Finally, it can be argued that the policy even affected officers who were members of the resistance. On June 3, 1944, just a few weeks before the Attentat, some of the leading members of the conspiracy met to hear a report from Trott concerning his final attempt to win some commitment from the British and Americans regarding a peace settlement. Trott said that he had received only one answer: Unconditional Surrender. At this, Field Marshal Witzleben jumped up and exclaimed: "Now, no honorable man can lead the German people into such a situation." The plans could have disintegrated then and there had not Beck remained firm: for moral reasons, he said, the attempt must go forward, regardless of consequences.²¹⁵

From a dialectic standpoint, the policy made it easier for the Nazis to identify all Germans with Hitler's "New Order."²¹⁶ Ten months before

²¹³Blumentritt is quoted in B. H. Liddell Hart, The German Generals Talk (New York, 1948), p. 262.

²¹⁴"Letter of General Guenther Blumentritt," October 22, 1965.

²¹⁵"Letter from Baron Hermann von Lunick to Pater Max Pribilla," January 19, 1950.

²¹⁶In a manner similar to one of Kenneth Burke's three forms of identification: the unity based on a "foe shared by all." Kenneth Burke,

Casablanca, Goebbels had written in his diary of the "dangerous fix" the party leadership would be in "if British propaganda respected the German will to live and the German conception of honor."²¹⁷ After Casablanca, Goebbels had delivered into his hands a propaganda weapon of incalculable power. He soon twisted "Unconditional Surrender" into "Total Slavery,"²¹⁸ and his ministry was responsible for editorials like the one in the "Volkischer Beobachter" of April 12, 1943:

The Enemy at Casablanca proclaimed the Unconditional Surrender of the Axis and made it clear that their aim must be the total destruction of the German, Italian, and Japanese peoples. It goes without saying that great people acknowledge only one unequivocal answer to such infamy: the total mobilization of all the vital forces they possess to achieve total victory.²¹⁹

Later, as the Allies issued new demands such as reparations, forced labor, or the Morgenthau Plan, Goebbels used them to wield people and party even closer together:

The enemy press is devoting more space to discussing reparations. The English are set on handling the problem on a commercial basis while the Bolsheviks are more concerned with man power. There is no more terrible prospect for the German people than to fall into the hands of Bolshevism. That's why this news will frighten our people.²²⁰

In circumstances like these, it would have taken a remarkably keen perception to distinguish between the cause of Nazism and the fate of Germany; and while some did distinguish, as witnessed by the number of death

"The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," in The Philosophy Of Literary Form (New York, 1957), p. 165.

²¹⁷Goebbels, p. 172.

²¹⁸This is Dulles' interpretation, p. 132.

²¹⁹This editorial entitled "Kompromisslos," from the "Volkischer Beobachter," April 12, 1943, is cited in Anne Armstrong, Unconditional Surrender (New Brunswick, 1961), p. 214.

²²⁰Goebbels, p. 172.

sentences which doubled every year of the war,²²¹ the mass of Germans, as Christabel Bielenberg notes, persevered to the end, consoling themselves with the phrase, "wir mussen wohl musharren" ("we may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb.")²²²

From a political standpoint--and this is perhaps the most important result for our purposes--the policy made resistance plans meaningless. This is the burden of State Secretary Weizsacker's testimony after the war: "that the Allies had deliberately abandoned the idea of ending the war by political means."²²³ Or there is Trott's complaint to Dulles in 1944: "Constructive ideas. . .for rebuilding postwar Germany constantly come from Russia. . .[while] the democratic countries offer nothing constructive concerning the future of Central Europe."²²⁴ For the resisters--indeed, for any German government, the only political responsibility left to them as far as Washington and London were concerned was the one involving total capitulation, a prospect which, as Rothfels writes, "pointed logically to a vacuum."²²⁵

In the epilogue to this tragedy, we will discuss the implications of demanding unconditional surrender in terms of lengthening the war, but for our immediate purposes, the point to be made is that the policy effectively

²²¹Total death sentences in Germany were 99 in 1939, 926 in 1940, 1391 in 1941, 2610 in 1942, and 5336 in 1943. See The Struggle For Democracy In Germany, ed., Gabriel A. Almond (Chapel Hill, 1949), p. 44.

²²²Bielenberg, p. 143.

²²³Ernst von Weizsacker, Memoirs, trans., John Andrews (Chicago, 1951), p. 274.

²²⁴Trott is quoted in Dulles, p. 137.

²²⁵Rothfels, p. 144.

denied the resisters any political ground in the dialectical arena.²²⁶ Certainly, the opposition leadership tried to avert this as long as they retained the capacity to act. "Man is a being designed for striving," as Griffin writes, "endowed for struggle."²²⁷ Thus, Goerdeler in his optimism would go on producing reams of memoranda and through the summer and fall of 1943 he would send a series of counter-proposals to London, seeking alternatives as opportunity for tactical, let alone strategical, manoeuvre dwindled.²²⁸ Hassell, the experienced diplomat, would attempt to use the threat of Communist domination in Central Europe as an inducement for identification between the Western Powers and the German Resistance Movement,²²⁹ but the only response he ever received was the one transmitted to him from Dulles through Gisevius: "that it was 'one' war and that there would be 'one' peace--with the West and the East."²³⁰ And Trott, and later Stauffenberg with his very similar views, would go on to the end, trying to effect a workable but not merciless peace with the British and American governments for whom they felt a sense of common purpose.²³¹ But in reality, there was no hope for success. The doctrine of unconditional surrender had left the resisters

²²⁶The dramatistic formulation, as noted previously, assumes that movements are both moral and political. Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 456.

²²⁷Ibid., p. 457.

²²⁸Ritter, pp. 221; 225-226.

²²⁹Hassell, pp. 315; 330.

²³⁰Dulles, p. 133.

²³¹For Trott's attempts, see Sykes, p. 396ff; for Stauffenberg's see Joachim Kramarz, Stauffenberg, trans., R. H. Barry (New York, 1967), p. 166ff.

with nothing, as Karl Bracher writes, except "the moral certainty of being right."²³²

On March 13, 1943, Fabian von Schlabrendorff telephoned Ludwig Gehre in the Abwehr and said: "the spark is lit."²³³ This was the code for "Aufbau Flammen," or "Operation Flash," the attempt we mentioned earlier, which had been worked out by Colonel Henning von Tresckow and some of the staff officers of Army Group Center in Smolensk, and General Friedrich Olbricht, Chief of Staff of the General Army Office in Berlin.

The impulse for this attempt is important since it goes to the question of motive.²³⁴ Friedrich Olbricht has been described by one contemporary as a "deeply religious man,"²³⁵ and by another as having a "disposition. . . toward prudence, kindness and consideration."²³⁶ Taken together, these are qualities which, as we shall see in the next act, do

²³²Bracher, p. 445. The discussion on the implications of unconditional surrender is important not only to the rhetoric and politics of the German Resistance Movement but also to Griffin and Cathcart's dramatic formulation. Briefly, neither theorist provides for the possibility of more than two orders being involved in dialectic struggle simultaneously. Yet based upon the analysis above, it seems plain that competing orders do not act in isolation from the rest of the world. At the time of our own revolution, for example, the colonists sought help from France, just as insurgent groups have done before and since. The irony of the scene surrounding the conflict between the resisters and Hitler's "New Order" lies in the fact that the Western Powers, for whatever reasons, politically crippled the movement with which they had the closest ideological ties and strengthened the movement they opposed.

²³³Schlabrendorff, p. 58.

²³⁴Griffin writes: "To study a movement. . . is to study the Agents that make the Act; for men are the acters, the makers of movements. . . . And the purpose of all such study is to discover the motive, or motives--the ultimate meaning, or Purpose--of the movement." Griffin, "Dramatic Theory," p. 462.

²³⁵Schlabrendorff, p. 47.

²³⁶Annedore Leber, quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 225.

not make for an ideal revolutionary, but did bring Olbricht into opposition with the Nazi regime. In 1940, Olbricht was posted to the General Army Office as deputy to Fritz Fromm, Commander-in-Chief of the Reserve Army. This was a key position since the Reserve Army had authority over all troops stationed in the Reich, and as Gisevius explains, "it had become a kind of mania within the Opposition to hunt for the general. . .and then determine. . .the actual force of soldiers he commanded."²³⁷ Admittedly, Olbricht was not in direct command; that responsibility belonged to Fromm alone. But practically speaking, Olbricht could issue orders in Fromm's name and, for a few hours at least, that would be enough. Also, the General Army Office had direct liaison with the Army District Commands and that allowed for the possibility of unified action. Through Goerdeler, Olbricht was introduced to Hans Oster, the resister's technical coordinator, and the two officers set about building up a shadow military resistance organization in Berlin, Munich, Cologne, Vienna, and Paris which would be ready to take over in case of a revolt.²³⁸ The task was facilitated somewhat by the fact that General Hase, who had been part of the Munich Plot of 1938, still commanded the Berlin garrison, and more importantly, General Stulpnagel, who had been Halder's deputy during the first two attempts, was the new military commander in Paris.

The spark for the revolt was to be lit by Henning von Tresckow and a group of anti-Nazi officers who he had succeeded in placing on

²³⁷Gisevius, pp. 435-346.

²³⁸Schlabrendorff, p. 47.

the staff of Heeresgruppe Mitte, among them Bernd von Kleist, Rudolf von Gersdorff, Carl von Hardenberg, and Fabian von Schlabrendorff. Tresckow is one of the most attractive personalities in this drama. More humanitarian than soldier, he had been outraged by what he saw in Poland in 1939.²³⁹ During the crisis preceding the attack on France, he had supported Halder's attempted coup.²⁴⁰ In 1941, Tresckow was attached to Army Group Center as first staff officer to his uncle, Field Marshal Bock. Tresckow became Bock's conscience, forcing that reluctant officer to protest against Hitler's "Kommissar Befehl"²⁴¹ and personally seeing to it that the order was not enforced within the army group's operations zone.²⁴² This success prompted Tresckow to sound out his uncle on the possibility of leading a putsch against Hitler. However, Bock would not hear of it. Trembling with rage, he interrupted Tresckow: "I do not allow the Fuhrer to be attacked. I shall stand before the Fuhrer and defend him against anyone who does attack him."²⁴³ As Schlabrendorff observes, "To understand [Bock's] 'character' one had to subtract all that was already mortgaged to vanity and egotism; what remained was insignificant."²⁴⁴

Bock was replaced in January 1942 by Field Marshal Guenther von

²³⁹See Chapter Three, p. 176.

²⁴⁰Harold C. Deutsch, The Conspiracy Against Hitler In The Twilight War (Minneapolis, 1970), p. 251.

²⁴¹Zeller, p. 157.

²⁴²Schlabrendorff, p. 35.

²⁴³Ibid., p. 36.

²⁴⁴Ibid.

Kluge, an officer described as a "waverer" by Gisevius.²⁴⁵ Tresckow made it his responsibility to push the Marshal to the sanctuary of a firm decision. For nearly two years, he battled for Kluge's allegiance, waging an intensive, clever and wearisome campaign against his vacillation. For the most part, it was a labor of Sisyphus: no sooner would Tresckow think that he had brought Kluge to the point of resolution than Kluge would slip back into uncertainty. In time, Tresckow succeeded in establishing a measure of personal influence over Kluge, but it was only personal. Whenever Tresckow was present, Kluge was a firm anti-Nazi, but when Tresckow was out of sight, Kluge's resolution faltered.²⁴⁶

Tresckow's influence over the Field Marshal did not depend upon personality alone. Hitler was accustomed to binding his officers to him not only with the oath, batons, decorations, and threats, but also with gifts of cash.²⁴⁷ Thus, on the occasion of Kluge's sixtieth birthday, he received a letter of good wishes from the Fuehrer, a check for 250,000 marks (which were tax free), and permission to use the money to make improvements on his estate.²⁴⁸ General Blumentritt writes that "Endowments were no innovation as such. In Germany victorious politicians and generals received either money or land as a reward after a successful war, but always after a successful war."²⁴⁹ Since Kluge's Army Group had been engaged in a

²⁴⁵Gisevius, p. 449.

²⁴⁶Schlabrendorff, p. 39.

²⁴⁷Within the dramatic formulation, money is defined as rhetorical. Burke writes: "The 'pecuniary motive', we contend, should be analyzed as a special case of the linguistic motive." Rhetoric, p. 129.

²⁴⁸Schlabrendorff, p. 40.

²⁴⁹"Letter of General Guenther Blumentritt," September 5, 1965.

holding action for almost a year, the only possible conclusion is that Hitler intended the gift as a bribe and that Kluge accepted it as such.²⁵⁰ Certainly, this was the interpretation that Tresckow gave it, and he told the Field Marshal that he could only "justify the acceptance of the check if he were able to show before history that he had accepted it in order . . .to maintain himself in a position from which he could undertake action against Hitler."²⁵¹

Schlabrendorff was Tresckow's political confidant and contact with the resistance leadership in Berlin. Hassell records meeting the young officer in October 1941 and notes how gratified he was since this was the first time the initiative had come from the military.²⁵² Schlabrendorff himself writes that in the same period he established contact with Weizsacker, Oster, Olbricht, Beck, and Goerdeler, furnishing them with information about the eastern front and inquiring into conditions in Germany.²⁵³ Through Schlabrendorff, Goerdeler was able to visit Army Group Center in August 1942 where he met with Tresckow and had a two hour conversation with Kluge, during which he attempted to draw the Field Marshal into active participation in a revolt. In his enthusiasm, the former Mayor thought he had won Kluge over, and upon his return to Berlin, he said

²⁵⁰Hitler's intentions were made clear after the failure of the July 20 plot in which Kluge was sufficiently implicated to commit suicide. "I personally promoted him twice," the Fuehrer complained. "I gave him the highest decorations, gave him a large estate so that he could have a permanent home and gave him a large supplement to his pay as Field Marshal. Therefore I am as disappointed as I could possibly be." Quoted in Gilbert, p. 102.

²⁵¹Schlabrendorff, p. 40.

²⁵²Hassell, pp. 219-220.

²⁵³Schlabrendorff, pp. 42-47.

as much to Beck and the others. But Kluge's indecision had overcome him. Even before Goerdeler left Smolensk, the Marshal had sent a letter to Beck complaining about what he called a "surprise assault" and noting that he wished to avoid possible "misunderstandings."²⁵⁴

Kluge's lack of strength was one of the reasons Tresckow decided upon assassination--a fait accompli would make things easier for him.²⁵⁵ Another was the military's oath of allegiance sworn to the living Hitler, a vow which Tresckow believed had long since lost its validity, if for no other reason than Hitler's failure to honor his own pledge to the army.²⁵⁶ But these were practical or narrowly legalistic considerations, and Tresckow's own motive went far beyond them. In 1939, at the time of the Gestapo massacres in Poland, Tresckow is quoted by Gersdorff as saying: "You, and I also, will be counted among the guilty."²⁵⁷ And when Hitler's "Kommissar Befehl" was promulgated, Gersdorff records him again: "Remember this hour. If we do not succeed in . . . get[ting] these orders countermanded, Germany will have finally lost her honor, and that will be felt for hundreds of years to come. Not only Hitler will be blamed, but you and I, your wife and my wife, your children and my children."²⁵⁸

Taken together, these statements suggest the first movement in the

²⁵⁴Gisevius, p. 463.

²⁵⁵Schlabrendorff, p. 54.

²⁵⁶This refers to Hitler's letter of August 20, 1934 to Blomberg, in which the Fuehrer promised that he would "stand for the existence and the unimpeachability of the armed forces. . . and establish the army as the sole bearer of arms in the nation." The full text is in Germans Against Hitler, pp. 289-290.

²⁵⁷Gersdorff is quoted in Zeller, p. 148.

²⁵⁸Ibid.

dialectic of the scapegoat, "an original state of merger in that the iniquities are shared by both the iniquitous and their chosen vessel."²⁵⁹ During 1942, Gersdorff recounts Tresckow's words as the two men walked near Smolensk: "Is it not monstrous that here are two Colonels of the General Staff of the German Army talking about the best way of killing the Head of State?"²⁶⁰ This suggests the second movement in the dialectic, "a principle of division, in that the elements shared are being ritualistically alienated."²⁶¹ Finally, after the failure of the July 20 Attentat, Tresckow spoke to Schlabrendorff: "my conviction remains unshaken--we have done the right thing. Hitler is not only the archenemy of Germany, he is the archenemy of the whole world."²⁶² And except for the narrow margin of the Fuehrer's escape, this is the final movement in the dialectic, "a new principle of merger, this time in the unification of those whose purified identity is defined in dialectical opposition to the sacrificial offering."²⁶³

All told, the pattern of Tresckow's remarks reveals a state of initial synthesis between himself, the German nation, and Hitler--a consubstantiality in guilt. This is followed by a state of antithesis, a tragically symbolic division in the sense that Tresckow and Gersdorff were imagining it and thus symbolically committing it.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹Burke, Grammar, p. 406.

²⁶⁰Gersdorff is quoted in Zeller, p. 159.

²⁶¹Burke, Grammar, p. 406.

²⁶²Schlabrendorff, p. 120.

²⁶³Burke, Grammar, p. 406.

²⁶⁴Burke, Literary Form, p. 41.

And finally, there is a new state of synthesis in which a redeemed Germany and the rest of the world are identified as one half of the dialectical equation and Hitler as the other. In the last act, we shall discuss yet another variation of this dialectic--what Kenneth Burke punningly calls the "imbiguity of sacrifice and kill"²⁶⁵--but the point to be made now is that the third and final motive for a rhetorical movement--the kill--has been established. As Griffin puts it, "To study a movement is to study a striving for salvation. . . a progress that is grounded in Guilt--but 'Guilt' needs Redemption; and Redemption needs. . . a Victim, a scapegoat, a Kill."²⁶⁶

There were a series of interlocking problems which had to be mastered if the attempt was to succeed. First was getting access to Hitler. By the fourth year of the war, the Fuehrer had become a recluse, seldom venturing from his well-protected headquarters near Rastenburg, East Prussia. Nevertheless, Tresckow managed to make arrangements with a friend of his, General Rudolf Schmundt, Hitler's Army adjutant, for the Fuehrer to pay a "front-line" visit to Army Group Center. Schmundt, who was one of Hitler's most devoted followers was, of course, unaware of Tresckow's real purpose, although the Fuehrer himself, with his suspicious nature, postponed the visit several times before he finally agreed to come by air on March 13, 1943.²⁶⁷ Second was the method of killing Hitler. For a time, Tresckow and his fellow-officers considered shooting him, but because the Fuehrer was always surrounded by

²⁶⁵Burke, Literary Form, p. 40.

²⁶⁶Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 460-461.

²⁶⁷Schlabrendorff, p. 53.

his SS guards, they decided on a bomb instead. German explosives were not very satisfactory. Schlabrendorff reports that "they worked on a fuze that made a low hissing noise which might lead to discovery."²⁶⁸ Through Oster, several explosives of British manufacture were obtained and Tresckow experimented with them in the fields near Smolensk. These bombs had many things to recommend them. They were noiseless--breaking a small bottle released acid which corroded a wire holding back a spring and striker; once the wire was destroyed, the striker would spring forward striking the detonator and exploding the bomb. Also, the wires served as timing fuses; depending upon their thickness, a choice could be made as to the moment of explosion (ten minutes, thirty minutes, two hours). And the bombs were small; Schlabrendorff says hardly bigger than a large book,²⁶⁹ and their charges were putty-like, which meant that they could be moulded into any shape. Third was coordinating Hitler's death with the seizure of important military installations throughout the Reich and occupied Europe. This was undertaken by Olbricht and Oster who asked for six weeks to make preparations. Gisevius, who was working with Olbricht, has described how difficult it was to discover the location of SS strongpoints in Germany. At last, an ingenious plan was devised: "the police vice squad was persuaded to make a map of newly-established brothels. Wherever the SS was established in force, such institutions for their physical well-being had been set up. By this roundabout method we obtained an accurate picture."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸Schlabrendorff, p. 55.

²⁶⁹Ibid.

²⁷⁰Gisevius, p. 465.

At the end of February a final conference was held in Smolensk. From Berlin came Canaris, Oster, and Dohnanyi, ostensibly for an intelligence meeting. But late at night, the three resisters from the Tirpitzufer met with Tresckow and Schlabrendorff to coordinate plans. Oster had brought some more explosives and a set of time fuses which he gave to Tresckow. The conspirators agreed that the bomb should be placed on the Fuehrer's aircraft so that his death might appear accidental.²⁷¹ Schlabrendorff, who had obtained a detailed plan of Hitler's Focke-Wulf 200 from Otto John at Lufthansa,²⁷² notes that even though the plane was divided into separate compartments and Hitler's own was iron-plated and had a mechanism for descent by parachute, Tresckow's computations had indicated that two sticks of explosives would be more than enough to blow up the whole machine.²⁷³ To get the bomb on board, the conspirators decided to shape it like a package of cognac bottles and ask someone in Hitler's entourage to carry it back to Fuehrer Headquarters as a gift to a friend.²⁷⁴

On the morning of March 13 Hitler arrived at an airfield near Smolensk and was driven to Central Army Headquarters. His meeting with Kluge was unexceptional, but two discoveries by Schlabrendorff are significant since they further suggest the Fuehrer's awareness of his own importance as protagonist of the Third Reich and the difficulties involved in trying to kill him. The first concerns his military-

²⁷¹Colvin, p. 160.

²⁷²John, p. 106.

²⁷³Schlabrendorff, pp. 58-59.

²⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 57-58.

style hat which he took off as he entered Kluge's personal quarters. With no one watching, Schlabrendorff "impulsively reached out to pick it up. I was startled to find it heavy as a cannonball. On examination, I saw why. Our dauntless dictator, who professed to be beloved by all Germans, had his cap lined with fully three and a half pounds of steel plating for his protection."²⁷⁵ The second discovery was made at lunch: "Hitler touched only food specially prepared by the cook he had brought with him, and it had to be tasted before his eyes by his own personal physican, Professor Theo Morell."²⁷⁶

It was during lunch that Tresckow approached Colonel Heinz Brandt (another of Hitler's aides) and got him to agree to take a small package of brandy to a friend at Fuehrer Headquarters. After lunch, Hitler returned to the airfield. As the Fuehrer was about to board his plane, Schlabrendorff, who was carrying the package, broke the bottle of acid with a key hidden in his hand, and at a sign from Tresckow, gave it to Brandt, who took it and entered the plane behind Hitler. The fuse was set for half an hour, which meant that the explosion should occur somewhere over Minsk. Hurrying back to army headquarters, Schlabrendorff immediately called Gehre, his contact in Berlin, and gave him the code: "the spark is lit."²⁷⁷

There were a number of conspirators who paid close attention to the time for the next half hour. In Berlin, Gehre had borrowed Otto

²⁷⁵Schlabrendorff, pp. 56-57.

²⁷⁶Ibid., p. 57.

²⁷⁷Ibid., p. 58.

John's watch to follow the progress of the attempt,²⁷⁸ while in Smolensk, Tresckow and Schlabrendorff anxiously watched the movement of the minute hand on the clock in Tresckow's office. They had tuned the shortwave radio to the Luftwaffe frequency because they thought that the first news of the accident would come from one of the fighter planes accompanying Hitler's aircraft. Thirty minutes passed; then an hour; then an hour and a half; then two. Finally, a routine report was received announcing the Fuehrer's safe return to Rastenburg.²⁷⁹

The knowledge that something had gone wrong was overshadowed by the fear that the explosive might be discovered. Schlabrendorff called Berlin and gave Gehre the code indicating failure. But a more serious decision impended: what to do about the faulty bomb? With remarkable sang-froid, Tresckow telephoned Brandt at Fuehrer Headquarters and asked him if he still had the package. When Brandt said yes, Tresckow told him to keep it, that there had been a mistake, and that Schlabrendorff would come to Rastenburg the next day with the right one.²⁸⁰ On the 14 Schlabrendorff flew to Fuehrer Headquarters and exchanged a package containing genuine brandy for the one with the explosive. He recalls with horror how Brandt, who was unaware of the danger, shook the false brandy package in returning it.²⁸¹ Later, in the privacy of a railway sleeping compartment, Schlabrendorff dismantled the bomb to find out what had gone wrong: the explosive charges were still intact, the bottle containing the acid was broken, the

²⁷⁸John, pp. 106-107.

²⁷⁹Schlabrendorff, p. 59.

²⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 59-60.

²⁸¹Ibid.

fluid had eaten through the wire, the striker had hit--but the detonator had been defective.²⁸²

The failure of the March 13 bomb plot as well as a similar attempt only a week later²⁸³ were severe psychological blows to the civilian resisters. Otto John writes that "it was difficult to pacify those who had now twice been warned by code-word to hold themselves in readiness for a coup d'etat," however, because of the need for secrecy, "they could not be told that attempts had actually been made, and it fell to Dohnanyi to give them semi-plausible reasons."²⁸⁴

Popitz, in his frustration, now began to make overtures to Himmler through Dr. Carl Langbehn, a neighbor of the Reichsfuhrer in Dahlem.²⁸⁵ Himmler encouraged these approaches, in part because he was hedging his bets in case Hitler's unshakable belief in final victory proved illusory, and in part because Popitz and Langbehn circled cautiously around the subject of revolt, talking instead of the "Fuehrer's resignation" and of a change in Germany's political structure "that would not impair the power and authority of the SS."²⁸⁶ Two conversations (Popitz with Himmler and Langbehn with Karl Wolff, Himmler's adjutant), led to Langbehn

²⁸²Schlabrendorff, pp. 59-60.

²⁸³Gersdorff volunteered to hide two bombs in the pockets of his coat and trigger them during Hitler's annual visit to the Berlin Armory on Hero's Memorial Day (March 21). But the Fuehrer cut short his announced schedule from thirty minutes to eight, and Gersdorff had just enough time to extract the detonators from the bombs in a nearby lavatory. See John, p. 108; Schlabrendorff, p. 61.

²⁸⁴John, p. 108.

²⁸⁵For an account of Langbehn's anti-Nazi activities, see Bielenberg, another of his neighbors in Dahlem; pp. 83-88.

²⁸⁶These phrases are taken from Popitz's indictment, in Dulles, pp. 157-158,

visiting Switzerland in September 1943 where he met with Gero von Gaver-
nitz of Dulles' office and told him of Himmler's interest.²⁸⁷ But word
of the contact leaked out. Himmler's own agency forwarded the news to
Fuehrer Headquarters without first showing it to Himmler, and the Reichs-
fuehrer, anxious to cover his tracks, broke off the negotiations. He had
Langbehn sent to a concentration camp; Popitz he allowed to remain at lib-
erty, although he placed him under such close surveillance that his use-
fulness to the resistance was, for all practical purposes, over.²⁸⁸

Goerdeler had opposed Popitz's initiative, but he too was equally
frustrated by the lack of action.²⁸⁹ In May he wrote a letter to Ol-
bricht complaining about the delays and offering to see Hitler himself
and demand his resignation if there was no other way.²⁹⁰ In June he
wrote to Kluge asking him for the last time to lead a revolt against
the Fuehrer and promising on his own responsibility to conclude a fa-
vorable peace if the Field Marshal would act.²⁹¹ The nature of both
arguments suggests the depths of the former Mayor's depression. After

²⁸⁷Dulles, p. 162.

²⁸⁸Hassell, pp. 320-321. From a moral standpoint, it is just as
well that Popitz's initiative failed. Any contact with Himmler would
have hopelessly compromised the resistance for many individuals. Even
though Popitz never intended to continue the merger--indeed, once the
Reichsfuehrer's usefulness was over Popitz planned to out-manuever him--
the subtlety would have been lost. Schlabrendorff reports that the anti-
Nazi officers at Kluge's headquarters once told Canaris that they would
refuse to shake hands with him if he made good his plan to have a confi-
dential talk with Himmler. They could not shake the hand which pressed
that of such a swine. Schlabrendorff, p. 52.

²⁸⁹Hassell, p. 293.

²⁹⁰The full text is in Gisevius, pp. 456-471.

²⁹¹Ibid., pp. 471-472.

reflection, he decided not to send the letter to Olbricht;²⁹² from Kluge he received no answer.²⁹³

Beck had played no role in Popitz's "divide and conquer" strategy or in Goerdeler's desperate letter writing. In mid-March, the head of the resistance movement underwent a serious operation for cancer, and while it was successful, it incapacitated him for many weeks.²⁹⁴ Then Weizsacker, who had provided important support from the Foreign Office, was removed from the scene and made Ambassador to the Vatican.²⁹⁵ But worst of all, the Gestapo raided the Abwehr and arrested Hans Dohnanyi, Josef Mueller, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The Tirpitzufer had been under surveillance as a center of anti-Nazi activity since the time of the Vatican exchanges. Walter Schellenberg writes that in May of 1940, he and Heinrich Mueller (Head of Reich Security and colloquially known as "Gestapo Mueller") were called into Reinhard Heydrich's office where the Gestapo Chieftain told them of his suspicions about Josef Mueller and his many trips to Rome. On direct orders from the Fuehrer, they were to make an investigation of intercepted wireless messages from the Belgium Minister at the Vatican to his own government. These messages had given the exact date and time of the attack in the west thirty-six hours before Hitler had issued the orders. Unfortunately, Heydrich continued, the Fuehrer had also assigned the Abwehr to the investigation--it was like "making your goat your

²⁹²Ritter, p. 244.

²⁹³Gisevius, p. 472.

²⁹⁴Hassell, p. 300.

²⁹⁵Weizsacker, p. 277.

gardener"²⁹⁶--so the Gestapo would have to cooperate. But they were to secretly prepare a dossier on the circle around Canaris and Oster--he gave it the code name "Schwarze Kapelle" (from the Black Chapel in Rome) --to use as ammunition to bring down these enemies of the state at the earliest possible moment.²⁹⁷

As Heydrich said, Canaris too was at work on the investigation. When the Fuehrer demanded a full inquiry into the Vatican leak, the Abwehr leader had suggested Josef Mueller for the job since he had excellent connections at the Holy See. Mueller was sent post-haste to Rome, not only to cover his own tracks but to concoct a story plausible enough to satisfy Berlin. To Father Leiber, his Vatican contact, Mueller insisted that the Belgium Ambassador--the real source of the wireless intercepts-- must be induced to disappear for a time inside the Holy City. Also, it was going to be necessary to find someone on whom the blame for the affair could be placed. Did Father Leiber have any ideas? In a moment of inspiration, Leiber suggested a priest from Belgium who fortunately enough had just been sent on a missionary trip to the Congo. That took care of the question of Vatican involvement, but an explanation was still needed to explain how the news reached Rome in the first place. Here it was decided to put the onus for the leak on Ribbentrop via the Italian Foreign Minister Ciano. He was known to have a strong dislike for Ribbentrop; he was known to have opposed the campaign in the west; and the combination just might have induced him to ferret out information from

²⁹⁶Heydrich is quoted in Walter Schellenberg, Hitler's Secret Service, trans., Louis Hagen (New York, 1971), p. 343.

²⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 342-344.

Ribbentrop's entourage and pass it on to his Belgium friends in the Vatican.²⁹⁸ (Surprisingly enough, this scenario was no less than the truth. Ciano had been responsible for a series of warnings to the Belgium Government, both directly and indirectly through the Holy See).²⁹⁹ In any event, this was the story prepared by Mueller, and while it satisfied Hitler, the same could not be said for Heydrich, who placed Schellenberg and Gestapo Mueller in charge of a continuing investigation of the Abwehr.³⁰⁰

For two years the case lay dormant. Then in October 1942, a part-time Abwehr agent in Munich, Dr. Wilhelm Schmidhuber, was arrested on charges of smuggling foreign currency across the frontier. Schmidhuber had expected the Abwehr to engineer his release, or failing that, to protect him from the Gestapo. But because his case had no political implications--indeed, it was strictly criminal, the leadership at the Tirpitzufer refused. At that, Schmidhuber began to talk, "persuaded" no doubt by his interrogators. He knew nothing about the Vatican exchanges but he had kept his eyes and ears open and he suspected a great deal. The gist of his revelations was that Josef Mueller had had some strange business in Rome and that he took his orders from Dohnanyi. For good measure, Schmidhuber threw in the fact that Dohnanyi had placed his brother-in-law, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in a "reserved occupation" at the Abwehr, and that at a time when the Fatherland needed all the able-bodied men it

²⁹⁸Mueller's "scenario" is in Deutsch, Conspiracy In The Twilight War, pp. 342-346.

²⁹⁹Galeazzo Ciano, The Ciano Diaries, ed., Hugh Gibson (New York, 1946), pp. 167; 169; 183; 186; 197.

³⁰⁰Schellenberg, p. 346.

could get.³⁰¹

When this confession reached SS Headquarters in Berlin, its implications were not lost on Schellenberg and Gestapo Mueller. Heydrich was dead--assassinated in Prague earlier in the year--but the Abwehr dossier was still active and the circumstances appeared right for liquidating the agency. Legally, the Abwehr was off-limits to the Gestapo because it was a military organization, but since the Gestapo had turned up the evidence, Field Marshal Keitel, who had the final word, might be induced to give his consent, if not to a Gestapo investigation, then at least to a Gestapo investigator being appointed to observe. This was in fact what happened, and Kriminalkommissar Sonderegger was appointed to the staff of the investigating officer, Judge Advocate Dr. Manfred Roeder, who had just demonstrated his ability as an investigator of anti-Nazis in the case of the "Rote Kapelle" espionage ring.³⁰²

It cannot be said that the resisters at the Tirpitzufer lacked warnings that a countermove was in the offing. As early as the beginning of 1942, Dohnanyi had been told that his telephone and mail were being kept under surveillance.³⁰³ Then in October, shortly after Schmidhuber's arrest, Artur Nebe from the Reich Security Office, who had for a long time secretly collaborated with the opposition, warned Dohnanyi that he and

³⁰¹Schmidhuber's confession is in John, pp. 110-111.

³⁰²Roeder was known as the "bloodhound" for the persistence of his investigations, and perhaps, for the fate of his victims. For the best accounts of the "Rote Kapelle" Case, see Heinz Hohne, Codeword: Direktor, trans., Richard Barry (New York, 1971); and Gilles Perrault, The Red Orchestra, trans., Peter Wiles (New York, 1970).

³⁰³Bethge, p. 686.

Bonhoeffer had been incriminated by Schmidhuber.³⁰⁴ And as late as April 4 (the day before the Gestapo struck), Canaris told Dohnanyi to make certain that the papers in private safe were "in order."³⁰⁵

It should, then, have come as no surprise on the morning of April 5 when Roeder and Sonderegger presented themselves at the Tirpitzufer with an arrest warrant for Dohnanyi and permission to search his office. Nevertheless, when the two Gestapo investigators, accompanied by Canaris and Oster, appeared in Dohnanyi's office, he was caught unprepared. Some slips of paper were still on his desk--Abwehr commissions, including one authorizing Mueller and Bonhoeffer to go to the Vatican and explain the failure of the March bomb plots, and it bore Beck's initialled approval--the letter "O" which stood for "Eye of the Needle" ("Nadelohr"). While Roeder was searching the safe, Dohnanyi showed the slip to Canaris and asked him if he still might be allowed to finish this particular piece of business. Oster, seeing the slip and knowing its contents, assumed that Dohnanyi viewed the paper as incriminating, and was trying to bring it to Canaris' attention in order to get it out of the room officially. This was reinforced seconds later when Dohnanyi whispered to Oster, "send my wife the slip." Later, Dohnanyi would claim that all he meant by the statement was for Oster to warn his wife³⁰⁶ (although his choice of words seems somewhat strange). In any case, Oster interpreted it to mean that he should take possession of

³⁰⁴Bethge, p. 686.

³⁰⁵Gisevius, pp. 476-477.

³⁰⁶Bethge makes this argument based on a deposition by Dohnanyi's wife which he quotes in full; pp. 691-692.

the paper if he could. At a moment when he thought no one was watching, he picked up the slip to hide it. But Sonderegger had seen him and cried out.³⁰⁷

Within a few hours, Oster was relieved of his post and ordered home under house detention. Dohnanyi was arrested on the spot and taken to a military prison. Mueller and Bonhoeffer would follow him shortly. And the slip of paper upon which so much turned might have passed muster as Abwehr business since the instructions it contained were ambiguously worded and Beck's initial could have been represented as Oster's. (This was, in fact, precisely the line of defense taken by the two Abwehr resisters during their interrogations).³⁰⁸

Through the intervention of Dr. Carl Sack, the Judge Advocate-General and another anti-Nazi, the arrested men were kept in military custody and beyond the reach of the Gestapo, thereby delaying their interrogation by torture for more than a year.³⁰⁹ But the resistance movement had been deprived at one stroke of many of its leading members: Dohnanyi, its judicial chronicler and planner; Mueller, its contact with the Vatican; Bonhoeffer, its preacher militant--all behind bars;

³⁰⁷The scene in Dohnanyi's office has been pieced together from three sources: John, p. 112; Gisevius, p. 477; and Bethge, pp. 691-692. The accounts vary as to blame: Gisevius faults Dohnanyi, Frau Dohnanyi, Bethge's main source, faults Oster; and John is somewhat neutral. However, in view of Dohnanyi's strangely worded whisper, the weight of evidence would appear to point against him.

³⁰⁸Bethge, p. 706.

³⁰⁹John quotes Dohnanyi as saying: "No one can say how long he can hold out once the Gestapo has him in its powers." John, p. 113. In an effort to avoid the inevitable, Dohnanyi would finally infect himself with diphtheria bacilli, but it would not save him. In the last days of the war, he together with Canaris, Oster, Bonhoeffer, and Sack, would be tried by a drumhead Gestapo courtmartial, convicted, and hanged at Flossenbug Concentration Camp.

Oster, its technical coordinator, now under house arrest and soon to be placed on inactive reserve; while Canaris, still in office but with greatly diminished influence, continued to fight to protect his subordinates and even managed to get Gisevius transferred to Switzerland when the Gestapo began looking into his connections with the Tirpitzufer.³¹⁰ But the Abwehr, the agency which the resisters had used as their chief means of opposing Hitler's dictatorship, was damaged almost to the point of uselessness, and as we shall see, would soon be totally destroyed.³¹¹

Thus ended the performance of one band of conspirators who had begun to act against Hitler as soon as his evil designs became apparent. Others would take their places--new actors, some with better technical skills and one at least with the fanatical determination of a born revolutionary. But something was lost when these men were seized from the ranks of the opposition--call it ties to the inception of a movement, or a broken thread of continuity, or a striving toward salvation which begins when those whose "No!" first signals the dramatistic (dialectic) struggle between the forces of good and evil.

³¹⁰Gisevius, p. 477.

³¹¹The blow against the Abwehr is another example of Cathcart's "reciprocating act." He writes: "there must be a reciprocating act from the established or counter rhetors, who perceive the demands of the agitator rhetors. . . as direct attacks on the foundations of the existing order." Cathcart, 87. Unlike earlier instances--Hitler's dismissal of Beck after the Army Chief of Staff protested against plans for invading Czechoslovakia, or Hitler's denial of Halder's memorandum removing Poland from Gestapo control, or Hitler's tirade against Brauchitsch when the Army Commander tried to argue against the attack on France--the Gestapo's arrest of Oster, Dohnanyi, Mueller, and Bonhoeffer, is more "a logomachy, a waging of war not only through the use of persuasive words, but also by means of rhetorical deeds of deterrence. . . ." Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetorical Structure Of The 'New Left' Movement: Part I," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, L (April, 1964), 113.

As the third critical moment in the drama of the German Resistance Movement comes to an end, Henning von Tresckow learns of the arrests, and recognizing the magnitude of the disaster, requests two months sick leave to come to Berlin to try and repair the damage. He has always had some doubts as to whether, in the event of Hitler's assassination, the plans would have ensured a seizure of power. So he will prepare new plans himself, on general staff lines, with detailed orders and ordinances. This will be "Operation Valkyrie," measures ostensibly framed to cope with internal unrest and approved by the Fuehrer, but actually designed to facilitate the resistance take over of Hitler's "New Order." And while Tresckow is working on these plans, he will meet a new and most important conspirator in this drama--Claus von Stauffenberg.

CHAPTER V

ALLGEMEINES HEERESAMT AND THE FOURTH ATTEMPT: JULY 20, 1944

"If, by the instrument of government power, a nationality is led to its destruction, then rebellion is not only the right of every member of such a people, it is his duty." Adolf Hitler

When Henning von Tresckow arrived in Berlin in July 1943, what he saw there may have spurred his work of preparing for a coup d'etat. The first heavy Allied bombing raids had struck the city in the preceding months and the results were devastating. Landmarks like St. Hedwig's Cathedral and the Botanical Gardens were completely destroyed,¹ the downtown section was heavily damaged, particularly the areas around the railway station and the marshalling yards,² and in the outlying districts, each street had its burned-out houses and gaping ruins³--the beginning of a pattern whose sum of destruction would finally be total.

Expanding the scene, there was also the specter of defeat on two fronts. In the east, the Russian counter-stroke following the German failure at Kursk was launched against Army Group South, an attack which would liberate Kharkov and Kiev, isolate the German defenders in the

¹Ulrich von Hassell, The Von Hassell Diaries, trans., Hugh Gibson (Westport, 1971), pp. 289-290.

²Joseph Goebbels, The Goebbels Diaries, ed., and trans., Louis P. Lochner (New York, 1948), p. 311.

³Albert Speer, Inside The Third Reich, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1971), p. 376.

Crimea, and by the end of the year drive a wedge across the Dnieper.⁴ In the west, the Anglo-American conquest of Sicily breached the last outpost of "Festung Europa," prepared the way for an attack upon Italy, and helped to create the conditions for the fall of Mussolini.

These events were to prove a mixed blessing to the German resisters. On the one hand, Otto John recalls how he and his brother Klaus celebrated the end of the Italian dictatorship with a bottle of champagne and told each other that "it would be absurd if [they] could not do what the Italians had apparently succeeded in doing quite easily."⁵ Allen Dulles writes that the bombing attacks in the summer of 1943 "coincided with a sharp decline in German morale which followed the fall of Mussolini."⁶ And most importantly, in September, Field Marshal Kluge visited Berlin and had a long private talk with Beck and Goerdeler, during the course of which he expressed his concern about the "military situation" and declared his readiness to act on condition that Hitler was dead.⁷

On the other hand, the fall of Mussolini made the Nazi leadership more alive to the potential of internal revolt. Goebbels wrote in his diary for July 27: "Knowledge of [Mussolini's dismissal] might conceivably encourage some subversive elements in Germany to think they could put over the same thing here."⁸ In September Hitler spoke a public word

⁴For a full account of the Russian counter-offensive, see Alexander Werth, Russia At War 1941-45 (New York, 1964), pp. 539-680.

⁵Otto John, Twice Through The Lines, trans., Richard Barry (London, 1972), p. 119.

⁶Allen Dulles, Germany's Underground (New York, 1947), p. 169.

⁷Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1958), pp. 246-247.

⁸Goebbels, p. 469.

of warning to the "defeatist Upper Stratum" and called upon his "field marshals, admirals, and generals" to show their loyalty to him and dash the enemy's hopes of finding in the German officers corps "traitors like those in Italy."⁹ And in October, Heinrich Himmler told an audience of Gestapo officials what opponents of the regime could expect:

Another question is that of defeatism. . . . You will have read in the papers that Herr Regierungsrat so-and-so, waiter X or factory owner Y, who spoke in defeatist terms, were condemned to death by the People's Court and that the sentences have already been carried out. . . . And we will publish such information. . .so that thousands of others. . .can be taught a lesson. For that reason I am always in favor of hard and merciless punishment. . . .¹⁰

In this scene¹¹ that was one part threat and one part promise, Tresckow

⁹Hitler's speech is quoted in Joachim Fest, Hitler, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1973), p. 698.

¹⁰Himmler's speech is quoted in Trial of the Major War Criminals, 42 Vols., (Nuremberg, 1947), xxxvii, p. 698ff. Hereafter abbreviated as TMWC.

¹¹Each act has opened with a description of the scene because, as Griffin writes, "To study a movement. . .is to study the Scenes that bracket the Act. . .for any movement is a sequence of 'moments between the limits of before and after.'" Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," in Critical Responses To Kenneth Burke, ed., William H. Rueckert (Minneapolis, 1969), p. 465. However, this scene, perhaps more than any of the others, illustrates the intimate relationship between the climate of opinion and the rhetoric of Hitler's opponents. For as we shall see, not only were they forced to act--to plan and recruit under the constraints imposed by an increasingly suspicious dictatorship (with the corresponding loss of effectiveness that that entails), but the scene itself, as the staging suggests, was in its very substance rhetorical--what Griffin calls "a logomachy, a waging of war not only through the use of persuasive words, but also by means of rhetorical deeds of deterrence." Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetorical Structure of the 'New Left' Movement, Part I," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, L (April, 1964), 113. Extending the discussion a bit further, what we shall find here is something very similar to Lloyd Bitzer's definition of a rhetorical situation--one containing an exigence which invites discourse to an audience who, in spite of their attitudes, beliefs, traditions, etc., are capable of being influenced and possess the power needed to modify the exigence. Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (January 1968). While Bitzer goes too far and argues that some scenes cannot be changed rhetorically, or that some kinds of discourse--specifically poetic--are not rhetorical (a point to which we shall revert shortly), there is no doubt that the scene is of major importance.

set about preparing for a coup. The problems as he saw them were three-fold: first, the seizure of power in Berlin and other cities of the Reich and occupied Europe had to be worked out in detail; second, the effort to win support of high-ranking officers had to be intensified; and third, a new attempt to assassinate Hitler had to be organized.¹²

The first two problems were related. Tresckow was astute enough to realize that even if some officers were recruited to the movement, there were still enough "Nur Soldaten" and outright Nazi sympathizers to make it necessary to formulate the plans in such a way that they would not arouse suspicion. Fortunately, there was an existing "Fuhrer Befehl" to help camouflage matters. In 1942, when the number of war prisoners and foreign workers in Germany reached several millions, Hitler had agreed to a plan proclaiming a state of emergency and mobilizing the Reserve Army to put down internal disorders.¹³ It was given the code name "Val-kyrie," and in May and again in October 1942, Olbricht had drafted orders which were to be issued to the commanders of the various military districts.

To fit this plan to resistance purposes, Tresckow made a number of substantive changes, the most important of which involved broadening the definition of internal unrest to include a putsch by the SS—something the military had always considered a possibility, and announcing the death of the Fuehrer and a consequent state of emergency in which all executive

¹²Fabian von Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler (New York, 1947), p. 63. Schlabrendorff includes a fourth problem: clarifying the political aims of the resistance; however, even if Tresckow considered this one of his tasks, the evidence suggests that the resisters did not compromise their political differences until the winter 1943-1944, long after Tresckow had returned to the Russian front.

¹³Walter Goerlitz, History Of The German General Staff, trans., Brian Battershaw (New York, 1954), pp. 434-435.

powers were to be placed in the hands of the army. Two additional orders were written to incorporate these changes. The first, which was signed by Field Marshal Witzleben (who was to become Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces),¹⁴ announced the death of Hitler, proclaimed a state of military emergency, delegated all powers to the army, and subordinated the Nazi military and paramilitary organizations to the army.¹⁵ The second, which was to be issued over General Fromm's name in his capacity as Commander of the Reserve Army (but was not actually signed by him since Tresckow did not consider him "verschwörungsfähig" or "plot worthy"),¹⁶ transferred executive power to the commanders of the military districts, ordered the seizure of key positions like government buildings, power stations, broadcasting facilities and communications centers, placed under arrest all party leaders, Gestapo chiefs, and officials of the Propaganda Ministry, and called for the occupation of concentration camps and SS strongpoints with orders to kill any guards or SS men who resisted.¹⁷

The focal point of "Operation Valkyrie" was Berlin itself. Here, one difficulty concerned the relative strength of the forces each side could muster. Tresckow began with the assumption that the conspirators would be outnumbered by the SS, but he planned to offset this with surprise and the

¹⁴Schlabrendorff writes that Tresckow "submitted this order to Witzleben, who, after listening to his brief explanation, put his signature to it without hesitation." Schlabrendorff, p. 71.

¹⁵The full text of the order is in Germans Against Hitler, ed., Erich Zimmerman and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, trans., Allan and Lieselotte Yahraes (Bonn, 1964), pp. 131-132.

¹⁶Schlabrendorff, p. 70.

¹⁷The full text of the order is in Germans Against Hitler, pp. 132-133.

support of Count Helldorf's Kriminalpolizie.¹⁸ A related difficulty involved calculating the number of forces available for a coup. Tresckow believed that the first few hours would be critical. If the SS were contained even briefly, there would be time to bring up military reinforcements from other parts of the Reich. The trouble was that the army disposed very few units in the capital. The Reserve was a conduit to the front and troops were being constantly shifted to replace losses in combat formations. Investigation revealed only three units permanently stationed in Berlin: the Watch Battalion Great Germany (Wachbatallion Gross Deutschland), the Army Ordnance School, and two territorial brigades. Of these, the Watch Battalion was the most effective since it was reinforced to the strength of a combat regiment.¹⁹ Accordingly, Tresckow gave it the important responsibilities of protecting the War Ministry on the Bendlerstrasse--the Headquarters of the Reserve Army and the nerve center of the conspiracy, seizing the government quarter, arresting party officials, and occupying specified objectives like the press and newspaper offices.²⁰ Outside Berlin, more troops were available: the Infantry Training School at Doberitz, the Cavalry School at Krampnitz, the Panzer School at Wunsdorf, and the Artillery School at Juterbog.²¹ To these, Tresckow gave the assignments of blocking the SS, particularly the garrisons at Lichterfelde and Lankwitz, reinforcing the Watch Battalion, and most important,

¹⁸Schlabrendorff, p. 69. Helldorf had been a member of the resistance since the Fritsch crisis of 1938; see Chapter Two, p. 98.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 67.

²⁰These plans are outlined in Eberhard Zeller, The Flame Of Freedom, trans., R. P. Heller and D. R. Masters (London, 1969), p. 240.

²¹Schlabrendorff, p. 67.

occupying the radio stations, the telephone exchanges, and the communications transmitters at Koenigwursterhausen and Zeesen, both south of the city, Tegel in the north, and the tower in the Masurenalle.²²

A third difficulty concerned the attitude of the soldiers. No one could predict the extent to which National Socialist ideology had permeated the rank and file, to say nothing of the officer corps. Hitler was certainly sparing no effort to make the army fuehrertreu. In addition to the oath, rewards, and punishment, he had recently created the National Socialist Leadership Organization.²³ The Fuehrer had been impressed by the way the commissars indoctrinated the Russian Army and he wanted the German Army to be equally well-indoctrinated, from the commanding generals down to the last grenadier.²⁴ Thus, "leadership" officers were attached to each military unit with orders to imbue the soldiers with the proper spirit and report laggards, and in the course of this act, we shall meet such an officer who played an important role.

To nullify the effects of political indoctrination, Tresckow depended in part on the military system of command. Orders with proper heading, reference, file number, and signature require nothing of the recipients except mechanical obedience.²⁵ As we shall see, there were

²²Zeller, p. 245.

²³Goerlitz, pp. 420-421.

²⁴Goebbels records Hitler's thinking: "The introduction of political commissars. . .has greatly enhanced the striking power of the Red Army." Goebbels, p. 406.

²⁵Tresckow's confidence in the system was at least partially justified. In his study of coup d'etats, Edward Luttwak writes: "The apparatus of the state is. . .to some extent a 'machine' which will normally behave in a fairly predictable and automatic manner. A coup operates by taking advantage of this machine-like behavior: during the

some dangers here. If someone had second thoughts or failed to respond properly, the whole operation could be jeopardized. Also, if the plotters came to depend too heavily on the plan--say, if they failed to account for discretion or the unexpected, the operation could lead them straight to disaster.

Much, therefore, depended upon the second factor which Tresckow counted on--the reliability and initiative of the men who were privy to the plot. There were anti-Nazis in many parts of the military establishment. Some were on Olbricht's staff at the General Army Office. Others were in Tresckow's circle at Army Group Center. Still others were in what remained of the group at the Abwehr. Also, there was the network that Oster and Olbricht had begun to build in Berlin, Cologne, Munich, Vienna, and Paris. And finally, there were officers in the Army High Command, men whom Beck, and after him Halder, had selected to fill key staff positions.²⁶ They might not be enough--indeed, Tresckow proposed intensive recruitment, but for the time being, the important thing was to organize them into a conspiracy that could help with plans for taking over Berlin and other key cities.

Until Oster's dismissal from the Intelligence Service, that responsibility would have been his, and as we noted at the end of the last act,

coup. . .it uses parts of the state apparatus to seize the controlling levers." However, Luttwak adds one qualification: "some states are so organized that the 'machine' is sufficiently sophisticated to exercise discretion according to a given concept of what is 'proper' and what is not, in the orders it executes." Edward Luttwak, Coup d'Etat (New York, 1969), p. 6.

²⁶In a letter to Joachim Kramarz, Stauffenberg's biographer, Halder notes that he attempted to secure the appointments of men "in whom the spirit of resistance to Hitler was more or less inborn." Joachim Kramarz, Stauffenberg, trans., R. H. Barry (New York, 1967), p. 84.

one of Tresckow's reasons for coming to Berlin was to try and repair the damage done at the Abwehr. Thus, he asked Olbricht about a candidate to replace Oster, and Olbricht suggested Claus von Stauffenberg, a thirty-seven-year-old Colonel who had served under Hoepner and later under Halder, and who was in a Munich hospital recovering from serious wounds suffered in North Africa.²⁷ According to Stauffenberg's biographer, he came secretly to Berlin in August and met with Tresckow and Olbricht and agreed to become the "coordinator" for the coup.²⁸ His first task, for which he was particularly suited, was to draw up a staff study for the military occupation of Berlin, and then to condense it into written orders and martial decrees which should convey to the individuals involved precisely what they should do when they received the "Valkyrie Befehl."²⁹

The final problem which Tresckow dealt with was the assassination of Hitler. He had delayed making any arrangements in this regard until at least one of the front-line marshals was won over. It was not only a matter of the prestige which rank carries but also of coordination between the combat troops and the reserves.³⁰ These preconditions were fulfilled with Kluge's affirmative declaration to Beck and Goerdeler in

²⁷Schlabrendorff, p. 64.

²⁸Kramarz, p. 121.

²⁹The chronology of Tresckow's preparations and Stauffenberg's part in them is confusing. Schlabrendorff, whose evidence forms the basis for the narrative, places Stauffenberg in Berlin at the outset of the planning. But since he had been seriously wounded in late April and, according to Kramarz, was hospitalized for three months, he could hardly have been in the capital until early August, by which time much of the preliminary work had already been completed.

³⁰Schlabrendorff, p. 74.

September, a declaration motivated in part by Tresckow's reasserted influence.³¹

Shortly thereafter, Tresckow returned to Army Group Center and with his fellow-officers discussed the possibility of getting Hitler to make another visit to the front. This time there would be no bomb in his airplane. Instead, six of them agreed to use their revolvers to put an end to him.³² Unfortunately, the Fuehrer could not be persuaded to repeat his earlier trip. Even worse, Kluge was seriously hurt in a car accident soon after he returned to his headquarters, and that removed him from the scene for many months. His replacement, Field Marshal Ernst Busch, had a moral blindness against which even Tresckow could not prevail.³³ Nor was he any more successful with Erich von Manstein, the Commander of Army Group South and a friend of long standing. Through the autumn of 1943, Tresckow waged an unceasing campaign to recruit Manstein to the resistance. Schlabrendorff writes that on one occasion the Field Marshal was so moved by Tresckow's insistence upon the responsibility that he would bear before history that he trembled with emotion.³⁴ In the end, however, Manstein became afraid of Tresckow's influence. Late in 1943, when Tresckow proposed through Hitler's adjutant, General Schmudt, that he should become Manstein's Chief of

³¹Schlabrendorff, p. 74.

³²Ibid., p. 75.

³³Symptomatic of Busch's "ethical standards" was his reaction to an adjutant's announcement that men and women were being shot by the SS outside his headquarters. Busch responded with a military order: "Draw the curtains." Quoted in Richard Grunberger, The 12-Year Reich (New York, 1971), p. 150.

³⁴Schlabrendorff, p. 75.

Staff, the Marshal declined to accept him. He wrote to Schmundt and while he praised Tresckow's abilities as a staff officer, he noted that his attitude toward National Socialism was negative.³⁵ For all intents and purposes, that was the end of Henning von Tresckow's military career and, to a large extent, his active participation in the resistance. In the months ahead, he would send some of his fellow officers to assist in the coup, and as we shall see, at a critical moment, his answer to a question of Stauffenberg's, would reveal more clearly than any other the moral basis of the July 20 Attentat. But for the rest, he was condemned to watch from the wings as the drama was played out, and at its end, he would take his own life rather than face the vengeance which Hitler had prepared for his adversaries.

The principle character of this act--Gisevius calls him the "new dynamism" of the German Resistance Movement³⁶--was Claus, Count Schenk von Stauffenberg, a man who would at last confront the evil genius of Hitler with talents equal to his own: determination, strong nerves, revolutionary zeal, power over men, and a willingness to throw these assets into the balance in the struggle "to purge the nation of its guilt and break the fetters of the tyrant."³⁷

³⁵Schlabrendorff, p. 75. In fairness to Manstein, his exception should be noted. He writes that he turned down Tresckow because another officer on his staff deserved the promotion, and he denies that he stigmatized Tresckow as an unreliable National Socialist. Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, trans., Anthony G. Powell (Chicago, 1958), p. 68. After the war, Otto John tried to resolve the differences between Manstein and Schlabrendorff but was unable to do so. John, p. 186.

³⁶Gisevius, p. 483.

³⁷Stauffenberg sometimes quoted this line from Stefan George's poem, "Return of the Dead," to explain his position to his fellow-officers." Zeller, p. 191.

By nearly all accounts, Stauffenberg was possessed of exceptional abilities. He was tall and strikingly handsome (not by chance was he nicknamed the Bamberger Reiter after the famous statue of the beautiful young knight in the cathedral of his native city). A professional soldier, he had little of the narrowness often associated with that caste. His interests included architecture, literature, and music; he had studied foreign languages (he was fluent in English, and a student of history and philosophy); he was concerned with social and political problems; and he had a passion for poetry.³⁸ These are hardly subjects for the officers' mess, but Stauffenberg talked about them,³⁹ and his knowledge, his enthusiasm, his ready smile, and his capacity to make others feel at ease, not only made him very popular with his fellow soldiers,⁴⁰ but marked him for a position of authority.⁴¹

Stauffenberg's passion for poetry is relevant to our purposes since it brings us to one of the most dominant forces in his early life--his

³⁸This list of interests, and it is by no means complete, has been culled from Kramarz, p. 38; and Zeller, pp. 174-179.

³⁹On the basis of interviews, Zeller writes: "Stauffenberg often discussed historical, political, social and artistic matters." Ibid., p. 177; and Kramarz quotes one of Stauffenberg's fellow officers: "His talk was principally of political problems with a pronounced social tinge." Heinz Greiner, in Kramarz, p. 42.

⁴⁰Margret Boveri quotes an unnamed soldier whose description is typical: "He was always smiling when he talked, and he was never alone. Everywhere he went, in an instant, a group of devoted followers would appear and join him." Margret Boveri, Treason In The Twentieth Century, trans., Jonathan Steinberg (New York, 1963), p. 284.

⁴¹Goerlitz writes: "Men began to speak of him quite seriously as the future Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and it went so far that careerists took pains to get in touch with him in the secret belief that he was 'the coming man.'" Goerlitz, p. 434.

association with Stefan George, the poet, and his acceptance, together with his brother Berthold, into George's circle.⁴² George's philosophy was one of action; he wanted to build the young men who surrounded him into an elite--an order of nobility founded not on birth or wealth but on the mind and a willingness to act. To these chosen few, George prophesied a vision of heroes--divine-like men who, in their understanding and courage would seize the moment (he called it stasis, after the Greek kairos) to serve others for the betterment of society, even to the point of self-sacrifice.⁴³

Stauffenberg was deeply moved by George's teaching, and he gave evidence of the poet's influence throughout his life. For one thing, the idea of calling the resistance movement "secret" or "hidden" was Stauffenberg's, from a poem by the same name in George's anthology, The New Reich.⁴⁴ For another, George's sense of hierarchy would find its way into Stauffenberg's plans for a new order in Germany--plans which for the most part were very similar to the Kreisauers, and which again reveal the socio-political differences between the resisters and Hitler.⁴⁵

⁴²The decisive influence of Stefan George is affirmed in Kramarz, pp. 29-35; and Zeller, pp. 173; 184.

⁴³These features of George's philosophy have been taken from Ulrich K. Goldsmith, "Stefan George," in Columbia Essays on Modern Writers (New York, 1970); and Peter Viereck, Dream and Responsibility (Washington, D. C., 1953).

⁴⁴Kramarz, p. 29.

⁴⁵An oath drafted by Stauffenberg in the last weeks before the Atentat indicates his conflict with Hitler's system as well as the influence of George's teaching. "We want a new order which makes all Germans responsible for the state and guarantees them justice and right; but we despise the lie that all are equal and we submit to rank ordained by nature. We want a people with roots in their native land, close to the powers of nature, finding happiness and contentment in the status to which

Finally, the title of George's poem, "Anti-Christ" was the name Stauffenberg gave to the Fuehrer,⁴⁶ and, as John Wheeler-Bennett writes, its last lines served to express his "barely contain[ed] contempt for those who would not act:"⁴⁷

The Master of Vermin far stretches his realm,
No treasure that fails him, no luck that foresakes. . .
Destruction take all other rebels!

You clamour, enticed by his devilish show,
Lay waste what remains of the sap from the spring
And feel you need first when the end comes.

Then you hang out your tongues o'er the emptying trough,
Stray like herds without aim through the courtyard in flames,
And fearfully rings out the trumpet.⁴⁸

Stauffenberg had not always urged men to oppose Hitler. In the beginning, he had tried to give the Fuehrer and his "New Order" the benefit of every doubt. According to Rudolf Fahrner (one of Stauffenberg's few close friends who survived the July 20 aftermath), the young officer initially saw in Hitler the type of political leader who is able to simplify ideas and make them effective, thereby inspiring the masses to devotion and sacrifice. Also, the concept of the Volksgemeinschaft, with its

they have been called, and overcoming in freedom and pride, the base instincts of envy and jealousy. We want leaders who, drawn from all the sections of society, are in harmony with the divine powers and set an example to others by their noble spirit, discipline and sacrifice." Quoted in Zeller, p. 395.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 393.

⁴⁷Without giving a source, Wheeler-Bennett draws a striking picture of Stauffenberg, after his injury, quoting George's "Anti-Christ." "He would recite it with fervour, his great frame striding up and down the room and his maimed claw of a left hand gesticulating fiercely; his one remaining eye, gleaming a vivid blue, a black patch covering the empty socket of the other." John Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis Of Power (New York, 1954), p. 582.

⁴⁸Ibid. The translation is by Maurice Bowra.

principle of equality and its promise that able men could ascend to the top of the hierarchy, seemed at last to break through the crust of bourgeois tradition that had extended from the last century, and drew to Hitler people with ability and high idealism. And in foreign policy, the Fuehrer appeared as the champion of the nation, rebelling against the Treaty of Versailles and insisting on Germany's legitimate claims.⁴⁹

For Stauffenberg, the reversal began with the "Kristallnacht" of November 1938 (when Goebbels organized the burning of Jewish synagogues and businesses).⁵⁰ A fellow officer recalls that this event "drew from Stauffenberg, always particularly insistent upon justice, decency, and morality, a savage condemnation."⁵¹ Through the spring and summer of 1939 he watched the approach of the German-Polish conflict with serious misgivings, and Fahrner quotes him as saying apropos to Hitler: "The fool is bent on war."⁵² But it was only during the course of the campaign that Stauffenberg came face to face with the inherent evil of the Third Reich. As a staff officer with Hoepner's Sixth Panzers he could see the Einsatzgruppen at work as they liquidated Jews and Poles, the beginning of the Fuehrer's racial policy in the east.⁵³ And as we

⁴⁹Fahrner's discussion of Stauffenberg's early views is in Zeller, pp. 183-186.

⁵⁰Stauffenberg's reversal from an objective, if not tolerant observer of National Socialism, to one of its foremost opponents, is less like the traditional peripety of the theater and more like Griffin's argument that the "enactment of the Negative. . .will be precipitated by some. . .cluster of events. . .that symbolize the unacceptable." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 462.

⁵¹Werner Reerink, quoted in Kramarz, p. 71.

⁵²Fahrner is quoted in Ibid.

⁵³The most infamous of all the SS murder squads, Einsatzgruppe Woyrisch, worked in the operations zone of Army Group South, the same

noted in the third act, when Stauffenberg returned to Germany, he was visited by his uncle, Count Nicholas von Uexkull and Fritz von Schulenberg, who showed him Dohnanyi's "chronicle of shame" and urged him to intervene or to seek a post from which intervention might be possible.⁵⁴

Terence Prittie asks why Stauffenberg did nothing to oppose Hitler in the next few years, and answers his own question by saying that "World War II was a titanic struggle which put matters of lesser importance out of mind."⁵⁵ Such a response does an injustice to Stauffenberg's efforts to resist. For while it is true that to his last day he conscientiously carried out the obligations of his position (and they were anything but inconsiderable,^{56a} a fact to bear in mind when we come to July 20 and find some of the officers with frayed nerves)⁵⁷ it is also true that in the

army to which Hoepner's Sixth Panzer Division was attached. See Heinz Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, trans., Richard Barry (New York, 1970), pp. 302-303.

⁵⁴See Chapter Three, p. 177.

⁵⁵Terence Prittie, Germans Against Hitler (Boston, 1964), p. 231.

⁵⁶Indicative of Stauffenberg's normal work load is a description by Karl von Thungen, an officer who served with him on the General Staff: "I never opened Claus's door without finding him on the telephone, mountains of paper in front of him, a pencil between his fingers. . . . Depending on who he was talking to, he would be laughing (that invariably came somewhere in the conversation) or cursing (that generally happened too), or giving an order, or laying down the law. . . . His clerk was usually with him, and whenever there was a pause would take down post-haste notes for files, letters, or circulars. . . . When I used to visit him he was generally at the end of a twelve--, fourteen--, or even sixteen hour day. . . ." Quoted in Kramarz, pp. 78-79.

⁵⁷To this can be added Schlabrendorff's description of the even greater burden borne by the conspirators: "The ever-present fear of spies and the possibility of being under surveillance by the Gestapo were a paralyzing burden which every member of the resistance had to bear day after day, month after month, without a moment's relaxation or relief. Shaking off this weight anew each morning was in itself an effort that sapped much of our energy and stamina." Fabian von Schlabrendorff, The Secret War Against Hitler, trans., Hilda Simon (New York, 1965), pp. 266-267.

period 1939-1943, Stauffenberg made repeated attempts--over and above his regular duties--to initiate military action against Hitler. There are, for example, several accounts by General Halder--the first as early as June 1940, of Stauffenberg, who had been posted to the Army High Command, exploring ways and means of overthrowing the Nazi dictator:

For hours at a time we would mull over the possible methods of removing this monster, without in the process seriously damaging the army, now in contact with the enemy in fulfillment of its duty to defend the Fatherland, and without destroying the entire structure of the state.⁵⁸

Halder, as we have seen, was no longer willing to go beyond private criticism of Hitler, so Stauffenberg turned to the field commanders, sounding them out about the possibility of action. Schlabrendorff reports that he visited Field Marshal Kluge in the summer of 1941,⁵⁹ a faint hope in view of that officer's infirmity of purpose; he is known to have written General Paulus in June 1942, shortly before the opening of the German offensive on Stalingrad;⁶⁰ and during the winter of 1942-1943, he traveled to Army Group South where he obtained an interview with Field Marshal Manstein.⁶¹ All of these approaches ended in failure, but it may well be that a remark of Manstein's led to a resolve that would have its effect on the planning of July 20. For the Marshal told Stauffenberg that a coup could not be undertaken without a definite order from above--an observation which was meant

⁵⁸Halder is quoted in Kramarz, p. 85.

⁵⁹Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, pp. 65-66.

⁶⁰Stauffenberg's letter, in which he discusses the possibilities of action and indirectly chides Paulus by noting that the highest ranking generals seem to be more interested in quarreling about their prestige than in steeling their courage to act, is included as an appendix in Kramarz, pp. 203-204.

⁶¹The details of the Manstein-Stauffenberg interview are in Ibid., pp. 108-109.

to be sarcastic. But it seems reasonable to assume, as Goerlitz writes, that Stauffenberg and Tresckow's later decision to usurp authority to give orders had its beginnings in part with Manstein's comment, and in part with the unwillingness of the field marshals to act upon their own responsibility.⁶²

For our purposes, it is also important to trace Stauffenberg's progress through what Griffin calls "the moments of his drama, which are also the moments of his movements"⁶³--Order, the Negative, Guilt, Victimage and Mortification, Catharsis and Redemption.⁶⁴ We have already noted Stauffenberg's initial tolerance of National Socialism, and of course, there was the matter of the oath he swore to Hitler, a covenant between ruler and ruled that had to be upheld if order was to be maintained. Further, we saw how the Nazi system demonstrated its corruptness--the persecution of the Jews, the military conquest of other countries, the exterminations in the east--an accumulation of events which alienated Stauffenberg and impelled him to say "No!" In this scene, guilt has been at least part of the motive, as indicated by a speech he made in October 1942 to a group of officers at Vinnitsa in the Ukraine. According to one source, Stauffenberg spoke for half an hour, condemning Hitler's policy in Russia and warning of its consequences: "We are sowing such hatred in the east that our children will reap the reward of

⁶²Goerlitz, pp. 428-429.

⁶³Griffin draws upon Burke's "interlocking moments" in the Rhetoric of Religion (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 4-5, when he describes man's progress through "the moments of his drama which are also the moments of his movements." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 457.

⁶⁴The order of the two terms, Negative and Guilt, have been reversed. However, the change is permissible since each of the terms implies the others.

it one day"⁶⁵--an argument strangely reminiscent of Kenneth Burke's discussion of guilt from the familial point of view.⁶⁶ Or there is Stauffenberg's decision, in January 1943, to seek a command at the front--an expression of guilt in the sense that he was evading his responsibility to stay in the High Command and continue to oppose Hitler.⁶⁷ As this act moves toward its climax on July 20, we shall have occasion to identify the other moments--Victimage and Mortification, Catharsis and Redemption --but for the present, the point is that Stauffenberg went to North Africa where he was seriously wounded and nearly died (he lost his right hand, part of his left, and his left eye), and that traumatic experience taught him that men cannot flee from the resolution of their guilt.⁶⁸ As he said to his wife while still in the hospital: "We General Staff officers

⁶⁵Zeller quotes a member of the audience, Otto Schiller; pp. 189-190.

⁶⁶Burke treats familial change in identity as part of the moment of rebirth. Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy Of Literary Form (New York, 1957), p. 36. But he also notes that it is possible to presuppose the guilt of a person from the type of rebirth he claims: "The order can be reversed, for the terms in which we conceive of redemption can help to shape the terms in which we conceive of the guilt that is to be redeemed." Burke, Rhetoric of Religion, p. 218.

⁶⁷Earlier, Stauffenberg had tried to prevent other officers from giving up potentially influential staff positions: "What is this sham heroism, going and getting yourselves shot like hundreds of thousands of others 'in the faithful performance of duty.' This is nothing but cowardly evasion, no better than the Field Marshals who make the excuse of their duty to obey. . . . When, by reason of his office or his upbringing, a man reaches high rank, a moment arrives when the man and the job are identical and no second thoughts can weigh with him; it is his duty to be responsible." Quoted in Kramarz, pp. 107-108.

⁶⁸Both Kramarz and Zeller note the change in Stauffenberg after his injuries. Kramarz writes, "Many who met him at this period were struck by the fact that his entire outlook on life seemed to be more sharply focused. . . ." Ibid., p. 122. And Zeller quotes him as saying: "I've got to do something now to save the Reich." Zeller, p. 183.

must carry our share of responsibility."⁶⁹ A little later, he told a friend: "I could never look the wives and children of the fallen in the eye if I did not do something to stop this senseless slaughter."⁷⁰ And when Olbricht offered him a post on the staff of the Reserve Army and the chance to take part in the plans, then already underway, for a coup d'etat against Hitler, Stauffenberg agreed at once.

Having committed himself to become "coordinator" for the coup, Stauffenberg set about organizing existing cadres of anti-Nazi officers and recruiting new ones.⁷¹ With men like General Olbricht and his group of resisters at Reserve Army Headquarters, it was principally a matter of making assignments for the parts each would play in the capital.⁷² So too for the officers on the staff of General Hase, the City Commandant.⁷³ For contact with the training schools, it was necessary to win new recruits, and Stauffenberg did so, initiating into the conspiracy liaison officers for each school.⁷⁴ Berlin Police President Wolf Helldorf and SS Gruppenfuhrer Artur Nebe promised the support of the Kriminalpolizie.⁷⁵

⁶⁹Stauffenberg's statement to his wife is in Zeller, p. 183.

⁷⁰Kramarz quotes Peter Saurbruch, p. 122.

⁷¹Zeller writes that "one-hundred or more men. . .worked with Stauffenberg for the coup d'etat." Zeller, p. 233. Obviously, space limitations preclude naming all of them, but some have been listed because they played key roles on July 20, and others are included to provide some idea of what Griffin means by "the accumulation of individual conversions. . .the organization of an opposition. . .the achievement of solidarity, merger, in the ranks of the converted." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 462.

⁷²Officers and assignments are listed in Zeller, pp. 212; 221-223.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 224-225.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 222; 225.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 224.

And while the Commander of Wehrkreis III (Berlin-Brandenburg), General Korzfleisch, was known to be a "Nur-Soldaten," Stauffenberg managed to reach an understanding with his deputy, General Rost, and another conspirator, General Thungen, agreed to replace Korzfleisch on the day of the coup.⁷⁶

The unknown quantity in Berlin was a man we have met before--General Fritz Fromm, Commander of the Reserve Army. Fromm had been approached by Halder at the time of the abortive coup during the winter of 1939-1940,⁷⁷ and Hermann von Witzleben, one of Fromm's staff officers, writes that he had had a general knowledge of resistance activities ever since.⁷⁸ But Fromm was a "weather vane"⁷⁹ who turned with the prevailing winds. Tresckow had not trusted him;⁸⁰ Olbricht had attempted repeatedly to recruit him, only to be rebuffed;⁸¹ and Stauffenberg, who talked with Fromm after joining the Reserve Army, told him candidly of his own views, to which Fromm replied that his ideas were very similar and that if there was going to be a putsch, would Stauffenberg please include Keitel in the "clean out."⁸² Understandably, the resister's impressions were somewhat mixed. Stauffenberg was of the opinion that Fromm would go along once

⁷⁶Zeller, pp. 224-225.

⁷⁷See Chapter Three, pp. 208-209.

⁷⁸"Letter of General Hermann von Witzleben," May 23, 1966.

⁷⁹This is Hassell's characterization, p. 285.

⁸⁰See p. 329.

⁸¹Kramarz reports that on one occasion Fromm dismissed Olbricht with the words: "That was very interesting. Heil Hitler." Kramarz, p. 171.

⁸²Zeller, p. 211.

Hitler was dead, but he took no chances and contacted the commander of his old panzer division, General Erich Hoepner, who agreed to take over Fromm's position if the need arose.⁸³

For the group left at the Abwehr, Stauffenberg's assignment was to procure a supply of explosives and to make various experiments with them to determine their effectiveness.⁸⁴ From Tresckow's staff at Army Group Center, little in the way of active support could be expected, but Tresckow sent Major Ulrich von Oertzen, a close friend, to assist Stauffenberg, he detailed another officer, Lieutenant Heinrich von Lehndorf-Steinort, to serve as the link between the army group and the reserves,⁸⁵ and somewhat later, Schlabrendorff would travel to Fuehrer Headquarters where he obtained a detailed account of Hitler's daily routine.⁸⁶

Although Berlin was the focal point, an equally important center was the Army High Command near Rastenburg. As we have noted, Beck and Halder had succeeded in appointing some anti-Nazi officers to the General Staff, and Stauffenberg now reaped the results of their efforts. Among the recruits were General Eduard Wagner, the First Quartermaster-General, Colonel Alexis von Ronne, Head of the Foreign Armies Section, General Fritz Lindemann, Head of the Army Ordnance Department; General Erich Fellgiebel, Chief of the Army Signal Corps; and General Helmuth Stieff, Head of the Organizational Department.⁸⁷

⁸³Kramarz, p. 191.

⁸⁴Wheeler-Bennett, p. 589.

⁸⁵Zeller, pp. 210; 233.

⁸⁶Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, pp. 101-102.

⁸⁷Schlabrendorff lists these officers, p. 74.

Fellgiebel and Stieff typify a problem that will become increasingly apparent as this drama reaches its penultimate moment: the uneven quality of human material with which Stauffenberg had to work. Stieff, for example, had been a moral opponent of Hitler's since the time of the SS exterminations in Poland,⁸⁸ and extracts from his subsequent letters indicate that he experienced a growing sense of alienation as the Fuehrer's racial policy spread across the Balkans, the Baltic States, and Russia.⁸⁹ However, this moral impulse did not mean that Stieff was prepared to become an assassin or even a particularly determined revolutionary. In his post at the Army High Command, Stieff was summoned occasionally to the Fuehrer's daily military briefings, and Stauffenberg had repeatedly urged him to use this opportunity to kill Hitler. Finally, Stieff "agreed to smuggle a bomb into the meeting of October 12 or 14. . . . However, after some consideration he decided not to do it. . . his conscience was not easy."⁹⁰

For practical reasons, Stauffenberg, who was the motivating force for the coup, should have been in Berlin on July 20, directing things from the War Ministry. But because co-conspirators like Stieff could not accommodate their moral standards to the political necessity for murder,⁹¹ Stauffenberg

⁸⁸See Chapter Three, p. 176.

⁸⁹Quotations from Stieff's letters also reveal a continuing guilt motif: "All of us have brought so much guilt upon ourselves--for we are after all co-responsible"--runs a typical passage in Zeller, p. 217.

⁹⁰Schlabrendorff, quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 120. Stieff was not the only conspirator whose rigid interpretation of morality precluded tyrannicide. General Georg Thomas, a resister from the earliest period, would not kill Hitler because, he maintained, his religious beliefs made such an act impossible. Georg Thomas, "Gedanken und Ereignisse," Schweizerische Monatshefte, Heft 9 (December 1945), 548. And Werner von Haefen, Stauffenberg's aide, also refused to make the attempt on religious grounds. Kramarz, p. 151.

⁹¹This extension of Griffin and Cathcart's formulation has been

himself would finally have to go to Fuehrer Headquarters and play the part of assassin. It was as though in a great battle the commanding general fought, rifle in hand, in the firing line.

Fellgiebel, by contrast, showed himself to better advantage. As Chief of the Signal Corps, he was in charge of all military communications in the Reich; that is, the major switching centers at Fuehrer Headquarters, Mauerwald (near Rastenburg), Zossen (the Army High Command), and the multi-storied bunker at the War Ministry. Because the conspirators intended to implement their coup through the mechanical transmission of orders, Stauffenberg and Fellgiebel discussed the possibility of blocking the centers at Fuehrer Headquarters and Mauerwald so that Nazi loyalists would not learn what was going on, while keeping open the centers at Zossen and the War Ministry so that the conspirators would have clear channels for their own orders.⁹² Also, because Stauffenberg was going to have to kill Hitler, there would be a three hour delay between the assassination and his return to the capital (the distance between Fuehrer Headquarters and Berlin was about the same as between Budapest and Berlin). This time gap was critical since it would

mentioned before (See Chapter Two, p. 107, fn. 154; and Chapter Three, pp. 189-190, fn. 136). Briefly, Griffin writes: "movements are essentially political, concerned with governance or dominion. . .and movements are essentially moral--strivings for salvation, perfection, the 'good.'" Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 465. Both theorists seem to assume that moral and political impulses are positively related to what Cathcart calls "the creation of dialectical tension." Robert S. Cathcart, "New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically," Western Speech, XXVI (Spring, 1972), 87. While this assumption may be accurate if each impulse is considered separately, it says nothing about the possibility that the two impulses may be incompatible in relation to each other, as witness the analysis of Stieff.

⁹²Kramarz, p. 177; Zeller, pp. 244-245.

provide the conspirators with a head start against moves by the SS for a countercoup, the nemesis of any conspiracy. Together with two of his senior staff officers, General Fritz Thiele and Colonel Kurt Hahn, Fellgiebel agreed to take charge at Fuehrer Headquarters, flash the word of Hitler's assassination to Hahn at Mauerwald, who, in turn, would relay the message to Thiele at the War Ministry and General Wagner at Zossen. Then Fellgiebel and Hahn would block all further transmissions into or out of Fuehrer Headquarters and Mauerwald.⁹³

Wheeler-Bennett charges that "Fellgiebel. . . failed lamentably the execution of his task," and without providing a source, includes therein the responsibility not only for transmitting the message but also for the destruction of the communications center at Fuehrer Headquarters.⁹⁴ Besides the fact that the center was too large and too well protected by SS guards to permit its physical destruction, the weight of evidence suggests that the Signal Corps Chief accomplished most of his mission, and under extremely nerve-wracking conditions. The shock he must have felt when he saw Hitler emerge alive from the ruins of the shattered "Lagebaracke" (the building in which military conferences were held), can only be guessed at. But Fellgiebel acted as though the Fuehrer was dead, flashed the message to Hahn, and with the unexpected help of Hitler himself (who naturally wanted no word of the attempt to get out), succeeded in blocking the communications center for more than two hours.⁹⁵

⁹³Zeller, pp. 244-245.

⁹⁴Wheeler-Bennett, p. 643.

⁹⁵Gestapo interrogation reports indicate that at 1:00 PM (eighteen minutes after the bomb exploded), Fellgiebel transmitted the follow-

Stauffenberg's final task of military organization involved building up the network begun by Oster and Olbricht in the major cities of the Reich and occupied Europe. In Paris, the work was simplified because General Stulpnagel, the City Commandant, was a staunch anti-Nazi who had gathered around himself officers of like persuasion. Included were Lieutenant-General Hans von Boineburg-Langsfeld, and Lieutenant-Colonels Friedrich von Tuchert and Caesar von Hofacker--this last named a cousin of Stauffenberg's who served as the contact between Paris and Berlin. Later, Stulpnagel would add Eberhard Finckh, the Quartermaster-General of the German Army in France, and the group would continue to grow until it embraced General Alexander Falkenhausen, the Military Commander of Belgium, General Hans Speidel, Field Marshal Rommel's Chief of Staff, and Rommel himself.⁹⁶

With the other military districts, the work was not so easy. Some of the Wehrkreise Commanders were non-political, or even worse, outright Nazis. Also, there was the problem of frequent personnel changes, necessitated by deteriorating conditions at the fronts. In these circumstances,

ing message to Hahn: "Something frightful has happened. The Fuehrer is alive. Block everything." Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung, ed., Karl Peter (Stuttgart, 1961), pp. 63; 329. If it is kept in mind that the lines were tapped by the SS, the message appears to be the best Fellgiebel could have managed under the circumstances. Further, Hahn succeeded in sending a similar message at 1:15 to Wagner at Zossen (who relayed it to Paris; for corroboration, see Wilhelm von Schramm, Conspiracy Among Generals, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1956), p. 23.), and to Thiele at the War Ministry. Corroboration for this second message comes from Gisevius, who was in the War Ministry, and reports the transmission of the message "a few minutes after the explosion." Gisevius, p. 544. Undoubtedly, the wording gave some rise to second thoughts, but after the attempt had once been made ("something frightful has happened"), it was no time for hesitation or indecision on the part of anyone involved.

⁹⁶The best account of Stulpnagel's resistance circle and events in Paris on July 20 is Schramm.

Stauffenberg tried, whenever possible, to recruit men who were in a position to see if the "Valkyrie" Orders were being carried out, or failing that, to report any trouble. Ultimately, he would find liaison officers for thirteen of the seventeen military districts,⁹⁷ although not all these men had close relationships with their respective commanders, a problem that contributed marginally to the failure of the plot.

Since many of these recruits were new to the resistance movement, it might be instructive to examine Stauffenberg's method of winning them over.⁹⁸ One of the officers he talked to describes their conversation:

We discussed the hopeless military situation, the fact that a coup d'etat could do nothing to improve it but would at least avoid further bloodshed and the final ghastly chaos. The stigma of the present government must be removed. With particular seriousness he added that it was questionable whether the coup would succeed, but even worse than failure would be the shame of submitting tamely to oppression and allowing oneself to be paralyzed by it. Freedom, both internal and external, could only be won by action.⁹⁹

From other accounts, it appears that Stauffenberg's technique was often the same, using the worsening military situation as a starting point and proceeding from there to compel the potential recruit to draw the obvious political conclusion.¹⁰⁰ As such, it was less a matter of rhetorical

⁹⁷Zeller provides a listing and notes that only two of the thirteen survived. Zeller, pp. 246-247.

⁹⁸This is in keeping with Griffin's suggestion that the critic's "task is to isolate the rhetorical movement within the matrix of the historical movement. . .and be able to say this was the pattern of discussion, the configuration of discourse. . .peculiar to the movement." Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric Of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, XXXVII (April, 1952), 185.

⁹⁹Kramarz quotes R----- K-----, p. 154.

¹⁰⁰See for example, the accounts of Finckh and Hosslin of their meetings with Stauffenberg, in Zeller, pp. 221; 222. Or there is Gisevius' description of Stauffenberg's "bent for dialectic." Gisevius, p. 510.

appeal than a dialectic search, "forc[ing] the man opposite," as Peter Sauerbruch writes, "into a pitiless examination of the factual position."¹⁰¹ Occasionally, an officer would raise an objection, as for instance, when Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Bernardis remarked that the fault was not so much Hitler's as the men around him. Then Stauffenberg would become an interlocutor, advancing an argument which directed the inquiry on to its logical conclusion: "Bernardis, it is not the staff; it is the Fuehrer himself."¹⁰²

Kramarz notes that Stauffenberg could be utterly candid when necessary, but equally, when he was convinced that the dialectic was going to be unproductive, he could turn the discussion into other areas.¹⁰³ Also, he kept conspiracy groups carefully separated; thus, if anyone should fall into the hands of the Gestapo, they would not be able to give away enough to endanger the whole plot.¹⁰⁴ And Stauffenberg adopted a "need to know" policy: only a few men were let into all the secrets, such as the proposed use of explosives or the assassination of Hitler; more were informed about the need for force--the staging of a coup d'etat; and still more were made aware of the seriousness of the situation and the possibility of declaring

¹⁰¹Saurbruch is quoted in Kramarz, p. 153.

¹⁰²The Bernardis-Stauffenberg exchange is quoted in Ibid., p. 153.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁰⁴Meinecke recounts a meeting with Hermann Kaiser, a Captain in the Reserve Army and a member of Stauffenberg's group. Kaiser was interested in the secret political leagues at the time of the War of Liberation against Napoleon, and he asked about the German League of 1812-1813. Although Meinecke did not realize the significance of the question, he told Kaiser that the league had been a chain of small cells, each composed of three or four like-minded individuals of whom only one knew anything about the next cell and its members. Friedrich Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, trans., Sidney B. Fay (Boston, 1950), pp. 98-99.

a military emergency.¹⁰⁵

Such insistence on security had its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it meant that the Gestapo never came to suspect the growing circle of soldier-conspirators around Stauffenberg, a lack of awareness reflected by Himmler's own willingness, in early July 1944, to help the severely-handicapped resistance leader carry his heavy briefcase--the same one in which he would later place the bomb with which he intended to kill Hitler--into a conference at Fuehrer Headquarters.¹⁰⁶ On the other, it meant that the rest of the conspirators, military and civilian, were often frustrated by Stauffenberg's secrecy.¹⁰⁷ Hassell's diaries reveal that he did not even meet Stauffenberg until November 1943, and then the ex-Ambassador's first notation concerns the warning Stauffenberg gave him about being "extremely cautious in making statements and meeting people."¹⁰⁸ Or there is Goerdeler's complaint that Stauffenberg would not keep him informed about preparations for the

¹⁰⁵This is the way Fritz von der Schulenburg described it to Gestapo investigators after the failure of July 20. Spiegelbild, p. 521. Interestingly enough, Stauffenberg's system paralleled an order of Hitler's, promulgated in December 1940, in which the Fuehrer laid it down that no officer could be told more of any plan than was absolutely necessary for its execution. As noted on several previous occasions (Chapter Two, pp. 89-90, fn. 91 and 92; and Chapter Four, p. 245, fn. 46 and 47, and pp. 274-275, fn. 127), this is one of the ways in which Hitler heightened the mystery of Fuehrerprinzip and deepened the divisions between the various parts of the state hierarchy--divisions that led to "misunderstanding, the growth of absurdity and injustice, the increasing loss of communication and identification." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 460.

¹⁰⁶This incident is recounted in Hohne, p. 531.

¹⁰⁷Gisevius reports Helldorf's complaints and describes Stauffenberg as behaving "like a sphinx." Gisevius, pp. 497-498; and a Gestapo interrogation report quotes Hofacker as voicing the same objection. Spiegelbild, p. 521.

¹⁰⁸Hassell, p. 336.

coup.¹⁰⁹ And unwittingly, Gisevius discloses the reason for Stauffenberg's security arrangements when he writes of an argument between the two of them over his proposed visit to his friend Hans Oster, still under house arrest and close supervision by the Gestapo.¹¹⁰

The tensions, however, extended beyond Stauffenberg's attempts to curb the indiscretions of Goerdeler, Hassell, Gisevius, and the others. Until Stauffenberg joined the resistance movement, there had been a division of authority between the soldiers and the civilians, the former concentrating on technical preparations for the Fuehrer's overthrow, while the latter concerned themselves with plans for a post-Hitler government.¹¹¹ But Stauffenberg changed this arrangement. As we have said, he was not the average soldier, and his interests in political and social problems led him to demand a voice in decisions effecting the future of Germany. Moreover, while he acknowledged Beck's leadership and kept him informed about plans for the coup,¹¹² the older man's recent illness and his preference for thought instead of action,¹¹³ led him to relinquish more and more of the actual leadership to the younger man. Finally, Stauffenberg was not without his own contacts in the civilian sector. Rudolf Fahrner has been mentioned already, as has Fritz Schulenburg,

¹⁰⁹Goerdeler's criticism is recorded in Kramarz, p. 150.

¹¹⁰Gisevius, p. 511.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 483.

¹¹²Zeller, p. 200.

¹¹³Hassell writes in June 1944: "Beck was really his old self again, but this 'old self' has indeed, in the course of time, proved to be more a pure 'Clauswitz,' without a spark of 'Blutcher' or 'Yorck.'" Hassell, p. 347.

who would arrange for Stauffenberg to meet Julius Leber.¹¹⁴ And Peter Yorck, who was Stauffenberg's cousin, introduced him to members of the Kreisau Circle, among them Alfred Delp, Eugen Gerstenmaier, and Adam von Trott.¹¹⁵

Together with Leber, Trott, Yorck, Fahrner, and his brother Berthold, Stauffenberg forged a new political alliance. In part, this merger was due to the similarity in their ages, and in part it was the result of their common political views. None of them had any intention of returning Germany to the status quo ante. Stauffenberg, for example, appears to have thought in terms of a social order in which "people fit to govern [could] be recruited from all sections of the population."¹¹⁶ This corresponded with Leber's view, for while he was a socialist, he rejected the dogma of mass rule, setting against it his doctrine of "fighting personalities," who, no matter what their station, should have the right to struggle to the pinnacle of the hierarchy.¹¹⁷ Stauffenberg also considered replacing the national party system with the "political reality of local communities, vocational groups or associations of common interests which should be given a public voice."¹¹⁸ This was not only similar to the

¹¹⁴Kramarz, p. 126.

¹¹⁵Gerstenmaier notes Stauffenberg's connection with the Kreisau in Erich H. Boehm, We Survived (New Haven, 1949), p. 183.

¹¹⁶Fahrner quotes Stauffenberg, in Zeller, p. 196. With the exception of the oath (see p. 337, fn. 45), Stauffenberg's own writings on foreign and domestic policy do not seem to have survived.

¹¹⁷Leber's position is explained in Willy Brandt, My Road to Berlin (New York, 1960), p. 40.

¹¹⁸Fahrner, in Zeller, p. 196.

Kreisau principle of decentralization,¹¹⁹ but also to Leber's long-standing condemnation of the "dead apparatus of political parties. . . [with their] outdated formulas and slogans."¹²⁰ Moreover, Stauffenberg affirmed that "even in political life, man cannot prosper without allegiance to God,"¹²¹ a position not unlike that of the Kreisauers who insisted that the churches influence be felt in every sphere of life,¹²² and while Leber distrusted clerical ambitions, he was the only deputy of the Social Democratic Party who had refused to leave the church and he supported religious education for the young.¹²³

As a soldier, Stauffenberg favored maintaining Germany's military establishment which he deemed necessary for the preservation of national security, though he urged the formation of an alliance between the nations of Europe.¹²⁴ This was in keeping with Trott and Yorck's proposal--defeated at the second Kreisau conference--for a supranational federation, but with restricted authority, which would allow the individuals members to fulfill their functions as states.¹²⁵ And surprisingly enough, Leber, unlike so many of his fellow socialists, was not opposed to a standing army since, as he put it, a sovereign state could not remain defenseless.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹See Chapter Four, pp. 273-277.

¹²⁰Leber is quoted in Brandt, p. 40.

¹²¹Fahrner, in Zeller, p. 195.

¹²²See Chapter Four, pp. 270-271.

¹²³Ritter, p. 201.

¹²⁴Zeller, pp. 206; 195.

¹²⁵See Chapter Four, p. 276.

¹²⁶Leber's position is in Brandt, p. 40.

Concerning the place of industrialization and technology, Stauffenberg argued that "notwithstanding their importance, they must serve the community and. . .not become men's masters,"¹²⁷a statement which accorded with the Kreisau concern over finding ways to protect the individual from being overwhelmed by impersonal forces, whatever their name.¹²⁸ But most of all, what drew these men together was their resolve to act. Stauffenberg's determination in this respect has already been discussed. Trott, who was offered asylum on several of his visits to neutral countries, always gave the same answer: "German honor would never recover unless it could be said that there were men with resolution and courage to rise against the worst of their tyrants."¹²⁹ Leber is recorded as saying: "To bring about a coup, I'd be willing to make a pact with the devil."¹³⁰ And after the failure of the attempt, Yorck would write his wife: "We meant to kindle a torch."¹³¹

The Gestapo interrogation reports stress the tensions caused by Stauffenberg's move into the political side of the resistance.¹³² His main opponent was, of course, Goerdeler. Since the movement's inception, the former Mayor had rationalized it, uniting its various factions

¹²⁷Fahrner, in Zeller, p. 196.

¹²⁸See Chapter Four, pp. 273-277.

¹²⁹Albrecht von Kessel paraphrases Trott's response in Christopher Sykes, Tormented Loyalty (New York, 1969), p. 422.

¹³⁰Leber is quoted in Zeller, p. 232.

¹³¹Yorck's farewell letter to his wife is in Dying We Live: The Final Messages and Records of the Resistance, ed., Helmut Gollwitzer, Kathe Kunn, and Reinhold Schneider, trans., Reinhard C. Kuhn (New York, 1956), p. 134.

¹³²Spiegelbild, pp. 177; 179; and 211.

and providing it with a political program which, especially after the dialogue with the Kreisauers, was anything but reactionary. Thus, he responded with hostility as Stauffenberg staked out his claims, and he is reported to have said that the young officer was an "obstinate fellow who wanted to play politics."¹³³

The fault, however, did not lie entirely with Stauffenberg. For example, Goerdeler's new "progressive" image was not enhanced when he raised one of his favorite ideas with Stauffenberg--that of restoring the monarchy--for which, needless to say, he found no support.¹³⁴ Also, there was Goerdeler's continuing opposition to assassination, a stance which, narrowly conceived, had all the merits of the moral high ground, but which equally failed to account for the fact that no activity is autonomous; that each is part of a larger field of action--in this case, political necessity. Nor did Stauffenberg lightly approach the need for tyrannicide. His widow writes that it was a question of conscience: he had to struggle with himself before he found moral justification.¹³⁵ More than Goerdeler, however, Stauffenberg understood that a coup had little chance of succeeding while Hitler was alive. With many of the soldiers, the Fuehrer's "spell" had scarcely diminished, and there was the problem of the oath--a vow made "before God" which pledged them to "unconditional obedience" until death. Finally, the very atmosphere that each man created contributed to the tension between them. Stauffenberg, as we have seen, preferred a dialectic approach, he wrote very

¹³³Goerdeler is quoted in Ritter, p. 249.

¹³⁴Kramarz, p. 159.

¹³⁵"Letter from Grafyn Nina von Stauffenberg," November 12, 1965.

little, he was extremely reserved, and when he was deeply moved, he would give vent to his feelings late at night, alone or with his nearest friends, by quoting poetry.¹³⁶ Goerdeler, by contrast, was tireless in his search for collaborators, frequently speaking to more people about the "decent Germany" than was necessary, he wrote reams of memoranda, some of which would prove to be his undoing,¹³⁷ he is not known to have had an aesthetic bent, and as John writes, he was "apt to turn a discussion into a lecture."¹³⁸

The strife between the two resistance leaders could have splintered the movement at a critical moment if they had not been willing to search for common ground.¹³⁹ With Goerdeler, it was the effort, once his initial hostility had passed, to try and eliminate misunderstandings. He asked Joseph Wirmer to contact Stauffenberg in the hope that, being much the same age, Wirmer would be able to explain that his plans looked not to the past but to the future.¹⁴⁰ Jacob Kaiser and Wilhelm Leuschner also exercised a conciliatory influence, mediating

¹³⁶See Grafyn Stauffenberg's account of her husband reciting poetry late at night after an air raid, in Zeller, p. 425.

¹³⁷Goerdeler once forgot a briefcase full of resistance material at a hotel, and the Gestapo was helped immeasurably when they found it after July 20. Boveri, pp. 196-197.

¹³⁸John, p. 78.

¹³⁹Griffin warns that "there is a danger that the movement, as its ranks increase, will 'splinter'--fail to achieve solidarity, merger; that the myth which prefigures the Purpose of the movement, imperfectly conveyed or received. . .will yield in the minds of a crucial number of converts . . .to an impious new vision of Order." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 465-466.

¹⁴⁰Kramarz, pp. 160-161.

between the two men.¹⁴¹ And Beck took a hand in smoothing out troubles.¹⁴² With Stauffenberg, it was not only the discovery that Goerdeler's program was very similar to his own, but also that the former Mayor was an equally strong advocate of action. Hassell notes that Goerdeler had his faults-- he was too sanguine and too imprudent: "It is a relief, though, to speak with a man who wants to act."¹⁴³ Goerdeler's tragedy consists in the fact that given his temperament, he was always condemned to urge others, to act at one-remove. But that did not diminish his resolve, and combined with Stauffenberg's lack of ideological rigidity--"I know no ideas," he once said, "only men"¹⁴⁴--the tension was reduced to such an extent that Hassell, late in 1943, was able to characterize the movement, optimistically perhaps, as a "band of brothers."¹⁴⁵

An indication of the new solidarity was Beck's request that Goerdeler, together with Leber, Leuschner, and Kaiser, draw up a final list of ministers for a provisional government. Cabinet making can be an extremely partisan enterprise, especially when each participant is convinced of the merits of his own nominees, and it is really rather extraordinary, as Ritter writes, that the building of a united front by men of such diverse political views was possible.¹⁴⁶ There was, of course, general agreement that Beck be named Head of State. More controversial was the choice of

¹⁴¹Zeller, pp. 272-273.

¹⁴²Kramarz, p. 161.

¹⁴³Hassell, p. 58.

¹⁴⁴Stauffenberg is quoted in Boveri, p. 283.

¹⁴⁵Hassell, p. 327.

¹⁴⁶Ritter, p. 253.

Goerdeler as Chancellor, but Leber, the only other candidate, withdrew his name from consideration because he thought it would not look right for a socialist to appear in the forefront of a post-Hitler government, and he took the post of Interior Minister instead.¹⁴⁷ Leuschner was nominated as Vice Chancellor, Hassell as Foreign Minister, Wirmer as Minister of Justice, Paul Lejeune-Jung as Minister of Economics, Eugen Boltz as Minister of Culture, Andreas Hermes as Minister of Agriculture, General Hoepner as Minister of War, and General Fellgiebel as Minister of Posts.¹⁴⁸

This government represented the entire spectrum of the resistance movement, from the conservative right to the socialist left. But to avoid any suspicion of political bias, Goerdeler and the others named as administrative assistants to each cabinet minister men of different political persuasions. Thus, Theo Haubach was nominated as State Secretary to Goerdeler, Peter Yorck to Leuschner, Fritz Schulenburg to Leber, Stauffenberg to Hoepner, and so on. As one of his last "circuit rides," Goerdeler undertook the responsibility of visiting all of those involved and securing their consent. For most, an affirmative answer meant a death sentence, since the Gestapo discovered the list after the failure of the coup and only five of the thirty-five survived.¹⁴⁹

Another important undertaking was the drafting of emergency proclamations, radio speeches, and special decrees for the period immediately

¹⁴⁷Kramarz, pp. 159-160. Undoubtedly, part of Leber's motivation was fear of creating another "Dolchstoss," as the socialists had done in 1918.

¹⁴⁸The entire list of ministers is in Zeller, pp. 250-251.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 250.

following the overthrow of Hitler.¹⁵⁰ Nearly everyone contributed: Beck, Stauffenberg, and Witzleben prepared appeals to the armed forces, while Goerdeler, Hassell, Leber, Leuschner, and Wirmer wrote statements for the civilian population. As with the cabinet nominees, it was not always easy to reach a consensus. Goerdeler, for example, corrected Stauffenberg's proclamations in order to show how unusable they were,¹⁵¹ and Leber is reported to have said that he lacked the patience to listen to the end of some of Goerdeler's drafts.¹⁵² But the intent behind each of the declarations was the same. The nation had to be told the truth about Hitler's tyranny--his mass murders, his reign of terror, his blasphemous delusions, his obsession with conquest: "You shall learn the truth about the criminals and their crimes. . . . You will then be in a position to realize that monstrosities have taken place." Also, the motives of the resisters had to be made clear: "We would be unworthy of our fathers, and would earn the contempt of our children, if we lacked the courage to do everything conceivable to achieve self-respect once more." Then, the line had to be drawn between decent Germans and the others: "No one with a clear conscience need be afraid. We are not dealing with the question of members of the party or members of the people. Away with these distinctions. . . . We are dealing with the question of decent or indecent."

¹⁵⁰In English, the most accessible copies of these appeals are in Germans Against Hitler, pp. 162-169 (from which all of the excerpts used in this narrative have been taken); Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, pp. 83-90; and Wheeler-Bennett, pp. 724-743. These appeals are yet another example of what Griffin means by "a stand, a 'standing together,' an understanding. It may be called a . . . proclamation, declaration, tract for the times, statement, or counterstatement." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 462-463.

¹⁵¹Ritter, p. 256.

¹⁵²Ibid.

And finally, the people had to know what the future held:

Our goal is a true community. . .based upon respect, readiness to help, and social justice. We seek fear of God. . .justice and freedom. . .truth and cleanliness. We want to restore our honor, and thereby our reputation in the community of peoples. We want to contribute our best strength to heal the wounds that this war has inflicted on peoples everywhere, and to revive trust among them. . . . The task is enormously difficult. We will have to work hard. . . . But we shall travel this road as a free people in decency, and we shall find peace of conscience once more.

The final political task (and it was a hopeless one) involved making yet another effort to determine whether there existed any possibility of an understanding with the Western Allies. On this question, Stauffenberg in his inexperience, and Goerdeler in his illusions, were fundamentally agreed.¹⁵³ Great Britain and the United States, by virtue of their cultural and spiritual heritage, were much closer to the thinking of the anti-Nazis than the Soviet Union. Also, there was the seemingly endless problem of the generals, for whom agreement with the Allied Governments was essential if they were to overcome their patriotic scruples.¹⁵⁴ Yet, as we have seen, neither of the Western Powers had made any attempt since

¹⁵³Kramarz, p. 160.

¹⁵⁴These reasons for attempting to reach a modus vivendi seem so compelling that surprise can be expressed when a critic like George Romoser suggests that the resisters were politically mistaken in trying to ascertain Allied attitudes; that they should have acted without seeking assurances. George K. Romoser, "The Politics Of Uncertainty: The German Resistance Movement," Social Research, XXXI (Spring, 1964), 78. In the last analysis, the resisters did act without any prior agreements. But more importantly, the charge of unrealistic politics could be properly lodged against them only if they had made no efforts, given the exigencies they faced. This is not to say that the Allied Governments were without their own concerns, perhaps the greatest of which was ending the Fuehrer's claims to "die ganze Welt." But the duty to commit political suicide cannot be postulated of any incipient movement, even if the existing order is led by Adolf Hitler.

1940 to give assurances on which the opposition could have counted.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the resistance leaders prepared to play their last political card: their fear, which they hoped the Anglo-American Governments shared, of Russian domination in Central Europe--a domination which still might be countered by a strong Germany; or failing that, to threaten dealings with the Soviets who, in their public statements at least, appeared to indicate a willingness to meet opposition overtures halfway.¹⁵⁶

Envoys were dispatched: Otto John to Madrid, Trott to Sweden, and Gisevius, who was already in Switzerland, to explain these alternatives to the Western representatives in the hope that it would impel them to negotiate. In every case, the answer was the same. John writes that he was told by a member of the British Embassy that "instructions had been received from

¹⁵⁵See Chapter Four, pp. 265-269; and 301-303.

¹⁵⁶For the Soviet position, see *Ibid.*, p. 297. Since the end of the Second World War, Gisevius has argued that Stauffenberg, Leber, and Trott were not employing the threat of negotiations with the Russians as a tactical manoeuvre, but that they seriously intended "all political activity to be directed to the East." Gisevius, pp. 486-487; and 508-511. In part, Gisevius' interpretation is attributable to his dislike for Stauffenberg, whose increasing importance necessarily lessened the role of Gisevius' friend Goerdeler; and in part it is the result of Gisevius having been in Switzerland where he was not fully informed about resistance decisions. That the threat to treat with the Russians was a bluff is attested to by any number of sources. Hassell, for example, writes: "I see in this new game of playing with both sides the only real opportunity for the new regime, but not in the sense of double-dealing. The manifestation of fairness toward England is vital." Hassell, p. 327. Leber, who was the most realistic, is reported to have said that it was illusory to imagine that Germany could drive a wedge into the enemy coalition, and that it was wrong to attempt to win by some clever tactic the support of one side or the other. Brandt, p. 139. After his visit to Sweden, Trott came to the conclusion that the "Free Germany Committee" was no more than a vehicle for Soviet propaganda. Sykes, p. 427. And Kramarz states that "Stauffenberg never considered compromising with the Soviet Union." Kramarz, p. 163.

London forbidding any further contact with emissaries of the German opposition."¹⁵⁷ In Sweden, Trott was informed that "any contact with the Germans who might seek to get rid of the Nazis and shorten the war was forbidden."¹⁵⁸ And in Switzerland, Allen Dulles told Gisevius "that it was 'one' war and that there would be 'one' peace--with the West and the East."¹⁵⁹

When this uniformly negative answer reached Berlin, it dashed the hopes of even the most optimistic. "Unconditional surrender, unconditional surrender, like a broken gramophone record," Trott said. "That is the only echo which comes back across our border from the West. But we have to face it."¹⁶⁰ Leber, who had expected nothing else, agreed, although he argued that a coup still might alter the political situation to the extent that the Allies would recognize the resistance leadership as worthy, if not equal partners in negotiations.¹⁶¹ Surprisingly enough, Stauffenberg was the most unwilling to accept these pessimistic forecasts, and as we shall see, after the Anglo-American invasion of Normandy, he laid plans with Rommel and Kluge for opening up the western front while holding in the east, an act which would secure essentially the same results militarily that had been denied politically.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷John, p. 134.

¹⁵⁸Sykes quotes Ewan Butler, a member of the British Legation; p. 415.

¹⁵⁹Dulles, p. 133.

¹⁶⁰Trott is quoted in Christabel Bielenberg, Ride Out the Dark (New York, 1971), p. 142.

¹⁶¹Leber's position is stated in Kramarz, p. 166.

¹⁶²Zeller, pp. 273-274.

From this time on, however, a different note begins to enter the rhetoric of the resisters--a note at once fatalistic and yet purified of all but the highest motives. Wirmer is reported to have said that political concerns were no longer important; the members of the first government would be liquidators.¹⁶³ Meinecke quotes Beck as saying: "There is no deliverance. We must now drain little by little the bitter cup to the very bitterest end."¹⁶⁴ Hassell records the results of a meeting between himself and Goerdeler: "We believe that in spite of everything it is imperative, for moral reasons. . .that an attempt be made."¹⁶⁵ And Stauffenberg, who would decide personally to assassinate Hitler, was, unconsciously perhaps, transforming his own motives from the kill to sacrifice and purification. Fahrner was visiting him during this period and recalls the way he put it:

If we acted now we could still save a lot of property and much more human life--and not only of Germans. But even heavier was the knowledge that the whole affair was not a matter of outward success. It was a command of moral purification and honor that had to be obeyed.¹⁶⁶

Presently, we will discuss the effects of this fatalism upon the events of July 20, but as noted previously, this transformation, or dialectic transcendence, represents the final moments of the drama for Stauffenberg and the others: Victimage and Mortification, Catharsis and Redemption. Clearly, the decision to kill Hitler is a manifestation of victimage, not only in the sense that he deserved to die--that

¹⁶³Wirmer's position is stated in John, pp. 144-145.

¹⁶⁴Meinecke, p. 101.

¹⁶⁵Hassell, p. 322.

¹⁶⁶Fahrner is quoted in Zeller, p. 289.

he was the "Anti-Christ" who had transgressed all boundaries of politics and ethics,¹⁶⁷ but also in a persuasive sense--that his death would provoke action, "convert the estranged [the undecided military] to 'turn toward' the movement [in] increasing numbers."¹⁶⁸ Victimage, however, can merge into its opposite--mortification, or self-victimage,¹⁶⁹ as when men begin to realize, imperfectly perhaps, that they may fail practically but succeed symbolically--a kind of pure persuasion,¹⁷⁰ or perfect act of martyrdom, a totally voluntary self-sacrifice enacted in atonement for their own and other's guilt. This is mortification, catharsis, and redemption reduced to one moment, and its outlines are already discernible in the resister's statements.

The analysis can be extended further. Earlier in this act, we said that Henning von Tresckow would respond at a critical time and reveal the moral basis of the July 20 Attentat.¹⁷¹ That time came

¹⁶⁷Burke characterizes this kind of scapegoat as "worthy legalistically." Literary Form, p. 35.

¹⁶⁸Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 464.

¹⁶⁹Burke calls this the "imbriguity of sacrifice and kill. . . . One or the other of this pair may be stressed as the 'essence' of the two." Literary Form, p. 40.

¹⁷⁰In A Rhetoric Of Motives, Burke talks about a persuasion which "involves the saying of something, not for an extra-verbal advantage to be got by the saying, but because of a satisfaction intrinsic to the saying." Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric Of Motives (New York, 1955), p. 269.

¹⁷¹See p. 335. John Wheeler-Bennett specifically denies the men of July 20 any ground in the moral arena: "They were no squalid band of traitors in the pay of the enemy, plotting to destroy their country from motives of gain or pique or jealousy. Nor were they, in the main, inspired by any higher motives than the destruction of a Leader and a regime whom they had followed and tolerated as long as he brought them advantage but concerning whom, at various stages along the way, they had been disillusioned. . . ." Wheeler-Bennett, pp. 592-593. In the last act and again in this one, we have explained how the resisters lost any

when Stauffenberg, despite his public words of encouragement to the doubters,¹⁷² began to weaken inwardly in his own resolve. He wrote Tresckow, asking whether it made any sense to continue with the plot now that its political justification was gone. In reply, Tresckow upheld the need for assassination at whatever cost:

Even should it fail, the attempt. . . must be undertaken. We must prove to the world and to future generations that the men of the German Resistance Movement dared to take the decisive step and to hazard their lives upon it. Compared to this, nothing else matters.¹⁷³

And Stauffenberg, heartened by this answer, declared: "It must be done, coute que coute."¹⁷⁴ Finally, when it was plain that the revolt had failed, Tresckow's last statement to Schlabrendorff, while more eloquent perhaps than any of the others, makes clear the reasons why the resisters acted and why they would die:

In a few hours time I shall be before God, answering for my actions and my omissions, and I shall uphold with a clear conscience all that I have done in the fight against Hitler. God promised Abraham to spare Sodom should there be found ten just men in the city. He will, I trust, spare Germany for our sake and not destroy her.¹⁷⁵

In examining the political and moral dimensions of the resistance movement during the months prior to July 20, we have neglected to look

real political basis for opposing Hitler. Thus, to accept Wheeler-Bennett's argument would be to leave them without any impulse for opposing in this last critical moment, an impossibility in any case and one which Tresckow's answer disproves.

¹⁷²Hassell, p. 336.

¹⁷³Tresckow's response is quoted in Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, p. 103.

¹⁷⁴Stauffenberg is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 276.

¹⁷⁵Tresckow's statement is quoted in Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, p. 120.

at what Cathcart calls "reciprocity or dialectical enjoyment,"¹⁷⁶ not so much in the way he intends it--as an exchange of appeal and counterappeal that generates a rising and decisive tide of discourse, but in a way no less rhetorical--as a series of attempts to kill Hitler and counter-attempts by the Gestapo to destroy the conspiracy¹⁷⁷--a kind of dialectic thrust and parry that will bring us to Stauffenberg's trips to Fuehrer Headquarters in July 1944, the last of which provides the frame for this act.

We have already recounted Tresckow's unsuccessful effort in the early autumn of 1943 to lure Hitler back to Army Group Center, and we have discussed Stieff's unwillingness to play the part of an assassin at a military conference in mid-October. In November, a third attempt was made. This time, the opportunity arose when the army decided to introduce a new uniform into service and Hitler, with his fetish for details, wished to give it a personal inspection. Accordingly, Stauffenberg made plans, not only for the inspection but also for the Fuehrer's death. A young front-line officer, Axel von dem Bussche, volunteered to model the uniform while carrying two bombs secreted in the pockets. At an appropriate moment, he would leap at Hitler, seize him, and at the same time trigger the bombs. On several occasions during the following weeks, final arrangements were made for the inspection date, but each time, Hitler unexpectedly cancelled his appearance, a state of affairs which continued until

¹⁷⁶Cathcart, 87.

¹⁷⁷Griffin writes that "killing is rhetorical, whether it is in the order of Victimage or Mortification." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 464. And Burke, of course, discusses the rhetorical and dialectical aspects of the kill in many of his books. See for example, Literary Form, pp. 34-43; Rhetoric, pp. 260-267; Permanence and Change (Los Altos, 1965), 283-294; and A Grammar Of Motives (Berkeley, 1969), pp. 406-408.

the end of the month when an Allied air raid destroyed both the inspection site and the uniform models, and the whole idea was discarded.¹⁷⁸ In December, a fourth attempt was made. Shortly after Christmas, a meeting on manpower reserves was scheduled at Fuehrer Headquarters, and Olbricht, on a plea of ill-health, arranged for Stauffenberg to take his place. With a bomb in his briefcase, he made his way to the ante-room of the conference building, only to discover that the meeting had been cancelled at the last minute.¹⁷⁹ Finally, in January 1944, another uniform inspection was scheduled. This time, Stauffenberg talked with the son of Ewald von Kleist, a prominent anti-Nazi,¹⁸⁰ who agreed, after discussing it with his father, to sacrifice himself. But once again, the Fuehrer postponed the inspection date, and finally cancelled it altogether.¹⁸¹

The irregularity of Hitler's few public appearances combined with his increasing penchant for remaining secluded at his headquarters near Rastenburg, made it necessary for the conspirators to learn about his routine so that they could determine if there was some predictable moment when he could be assassinated. Schlabrendorff, who sometimes visited Fuehrer Headquarters, went to Rastenburg to explore the scene and obtain a copy of Hitler's daily schedule. What he found was not encouraging. There, in the middle of a gloomy forest, reminiscent, as Jodl puts it, of a "cloister

¹⁷⁸Wheeler-Bennett records this attempt, based upon an interview with von dem Bussche, pp. 590-591.

¹⁷⁹Dulles, whose source is probably Gisevius, recounts this attempt, p. 69.

¹⁸⁰For some of Kleist's activities in the resistance movement, see Chapter Two, pp. 124-127.

¹⁸¹Zeller, pp. 265-266.

and concentration camp,"¹⁸²the Fuehrer lived for weeks on end, surrounded by minefields, barbed wire, and guards.

Specifically, there were three Sperrkreise, or fortified perimeters, each concentrically smaller, and each broken by a check point at which guards demanded a new password each day. The outer enclosure was fortified with watchtowers and contained a railway station, tank park, and a teahouse where Hitler occasionally entertained guests. The middle enclosure housed the barracks of all camp personnel, the main dining hall, and the local communications center of the signal corps. The inner-enclosure, or "Wolfsschanze," belonged to the Fuehrer alone, and contained his living quarters and private dining room, a kennel for his dogs, and a "Lagebaracke," or situation building where the daily war briefings were held.¹⁸³

From Colonel Dietrich von Bose, another of the conspirators, Schlabbendorff obtained a detailed account of Hitler's daily schedule. The Fuehrer got up at ten in the morning, was provided breakfast by a servant, read a selection of translated excerpts from the foreign press supplied by Ribbentrop, and saw his adjutants around eleven. At one, he held a military conference with his army chiefs, lunched at two, often delaying his guests with monologues until four, slept until six or seven, and then gave official audiences. Dinner was at eight--often another two hour meal, and afterwards, there was yet another monologue, usually lasting until four in

¹⁸²Jodl is quoted in TMWC, xv, p. 283.

¹⁸³The plan of Fuehrer Headquarters is in Germans Against Hitler, p. 121.

the morning, during which he talked to trusted friends.¹⁸⁴

It was apparent to Stauffenberg that the only way to kill Hitler was to gain access to his one o'clock military briefings. That was when he approached Stieff, only to have the Head of the Organizational Department lose his courage at the last moment. Another possibility involved securing an appointment to the Fuehrer's military staff, but Hitler, ever suspicious, gave an order forbidding any transfers to his headquarters unless he was told about them personally.¹⁸⁵ Nor was the Fuehrer alone in his mistrust. Other Nazi leaders were becoming increasingly aware that some sort of plot was being planned against them. Early in November 1943, Goebbels is quoted as saying: "I cannot tell whether it is a conspiracy with a defined purpose and a defined organization."¹⁸⁶ And in his diary, he wrote: "The English and Americans are again talking about a general's plot. . . . It is very suspicious that, whenever the enemy speaks of a domestic crisis in the Reich, he always thinks of the generals."¹⁸⁷ Himmler, however, had more than suspicions. In mid-November, he told Goebbels "about the existence of a group of enemies of the state, among whom are Halder and possibly Popitz."¹⁸⁸ This was the result of the earlier Langbehn affair as well as a more recent Gestapo investigation of a peripheral opposition

¹⁸⁴Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, pp. 100-101.

¹⁸⁵General Warlimont, to whom the order was given, writes that Hitler's reason for issuing it was "his fear of an attempt on his life." Walter Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters 1939-45, trans., R. H. Barry (New York, 1964), p. 48.

¹⁸⁶Goebbels is quoted in Roger Manvell & Heinrich Fraenkel, The July Plot (London, 1964), p. 86.

¹⁸⁷Goebbels, p. 559.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 570-571.

group known as the Solf Kreis, the effects of which would reach as far as the inner-councils of the conspiracy.

In late September, a Gestapo agent posing as a Swiss, attended a tea-party at the home of Hanna Solf, the widow of Imperial Germany's last foreign minister. Among the guests that afternoon was Otto Kiep from the Abwehr, who talked indiscretely about his associate Ludwig Gehre, while Frau Solf and some of the others entrusted the agent with letters to friends in Switzerland, one of which contained an incriminating reference to General Halder.¹⁸⁹ For months, Himmler circled his prey, tapping their telephones and opening their mail, hoping to enlarge his catch in "this nest of sedition." And he was duly rewarded. In January, Helmuth von Moltke learned the real identity of the agent and called Kiep to warn him.¹⁹⁰ That was when Himmler struck, arresting Moltke, Kiep, and the other guests at the tea-party. Gehre luckily managed to escape, moving from one hideout to another, and growing a mustache to change his appearance.¹⁹¹ Halder was placed under observation at home.

Kiep's arrest and Gehre's flight again focussed suspicion on the Abwehr. Nor was it lessened any when, late in January, two of its agents in Istanbul refused an order to return to Berlin. They were Erich and Elisabeth Vermehren who, while not members of the resistance, were outspoken critics of the Fuehrer and his "New Order." Rather than face imprisonment and possible death in Germany, they asked for asylum with the

¹⁸⁹For the full story of the Solf tea-party, see the account by Lagi von Ballestrom Solf, in Boehm, pp. 132-148.

¹⁹⁰For details of Moltke's part in the affair, see Michael Balfour and Julian Frisby, Helmuth von Moltke (London, 1972), pp. 296-298.

¹⁹¹John recounts the details of Gehre's escape and adventures underground, pp. 134-137.

British and were taken to England where, unfortunately, stories of their defection, somewhat embellished by reports that they had taken the Abwehr code book, were widely publicized in the press.¹⁹² For Hitler, it was the last straw. He summoned Canaris to the "Wolfsschanze" and heaped abuse upon him, accusing him of helping to lose the war. And when Himmler suggested that the Gestapo could do a more effective job of intelligence-gathering, the Fuehrer signed an order abolishing the Abwehr and transferring its personnel and functions to the Gestapo Security Service.¹⁹³ Canaris ceased to be Chief of Army Intelligence, and his post, truncated beyond all recognition, devolved to Colonel Georg Hansen, who, fortunately, was another member of the conspiracy. He would manage to keep alive a rump opposition cell in the very center of Hitler's Praetorian Guard until after July 20, but any hope the resisters still harbored for making the Abwehr an agency of change in the Third Reich was finished. And while Canaris was given a sinecure as Head of the Economics War Department, Himmler left him with little doubt that his and the other resister's days were numbered. As the Reichsfuehrer put it, he now knew who was behind the opposition to the regime and "he was going to deal effectively with such men as Beck and Goerdeler."¹⁹⁴

The months from January to July became a death struggle between the Gestapo and the resisters, the one trying to ferret out the exact design

¹⁹²The Vermerhren Affair is discussed in Karl Abshagen, Canaris, trans., Alan Brodrick (London, 1956), pp. 237-238; and Ian Colvin, Chief Of Intelligence (London, 1951), pp. 181-185. After the war the Vermehrens told Colvin that they had not taken the code book.

¹⁹³Abshagen, pp. 238-239.

¹⁹⁴Himmler's statement to Canaris is quoted in Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, p. 97.

of the plot, the others looking anxiously for an opportunity to strike, while from the periphery of the scene, events were moving to defeat both groups as Russian attacks moved steadily closer to the old Polish frontier and Anglo-American armies prepared for the invasion of France.

With the resisters, the tensions are indicated by Leuschner's complaint that the colonels were having second thoughts just like the generals before them.¹⁹⁵ Or there was Gehre's warning that if the Gestapo caught him, he would "blow the whole Bendlerstrasse shop sky high," a threat, John explains, which was intended to accelerate the coup.¹⁹⁶ Beck's home in Lichterfelde was under close surveillance until an air raid destroyed the other houses on the block, including the one requisitioned by the Gestapo so that they could photograph visitors.¹⁹⁷ And Goerdeler, though not yet under arrest, was forced to maintain a low profile, which meant staying out of Berlin.¹⁹⁸

The first good news was that the conspiracy had gained another Field Marshal to replace Kluge. This was Erwin Rommel, the most popular of Hitler's generals, and the Commander of Army Group B in France. In November 1943, Rommel had been assigned to inspect and strengthen the western defenses of "Festung Europa." What he saw along the Atlantic Wall must have convinced him that the army, composed as it was of "Positional Formations" (i.e., equipped with horse-drawn transport), or in some cases, of divisions consisting entirely of men with flat feet or stomach ailments, stood very

¹⁹⁵Ritter, p. 270.

¹⁹⁶John, p. 137.

¹⁹⁷Gisevius, p. 516.

¹⁹⁸Hassell, p. 340

little chance of repelling a determined assault.¹⁹⁹ And at his headquarters, Rommel found himself in a hotbed of resistance activity. We have already mentioned General Stulpnagel, the City Commandant of Paris, who had served as an instructor with Rommel at the Dresden Infantry School before the war. And there was Hans Speidel, Rommel's Chief of Staff, who had been such a severe critic of the regime that Hitler had earlier expelled him from the Luftwaffe and returned him at reduced rank to the army²⁰⁰

Caught between the importunings of these two officers and his own knowledge that the front would not hold, Rommel's attitude began to undergo a change. Speidel reports that the Marshal, who until then had been largely apolitical, now began to read Hitler's Mein Kampf, and was especially struck by the passage used to introduce this act: "If, by the instrument of government power, a nationality is led to its destruction, then rebellion is not only the right of every member of such a people, it is his duty."²⁰¹ To accelerate this change, Stulpnagel and Speidel contacted the resisters in Berlin, and an old friend of Goerdeler and Rommel, Dr. Carl Stroelin, the Mayor of Stuttgart, arranged to visit the Marshal. Their meeting was held in Rommel's home at Herrlingen, near Ulm. Stroelin did most of the talking, but limited himself to military matters, supporting his remarks about Germany's worsening situation with facts and figures from the other fronts, prepared for him by the officer-conspirators at the War Ministry. He insists that

¹⁹⁹Goerlitz, p. 454.

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 456.

²⁰¹Hans Speidel, Invasion 1944 (New York, 1968), p. 71.

he said nothing about assassination (an act which Rommel opposed), but he did put the issue of revolt squarely before the Marshal: "You are our greatest and most popular general. . . . You are the only one who can prevent civil war in Germany. You must lend your name to the movement." And Rommel, after thinking about it for some time, replied: "I believe it is my duty to come to the rescue of Germany."²⁰²

Upon returning to France, Rommel again talked with Stulpnagel and Speidel and the three of them sought to influence Field Marshal Rundstedt, Commander-in-Chief, West. But that old soldier would have nothing to do with a conspiracy. He said to Rommel: "You are young. You know and love the people. You do it."²⁰³ And Rommel did, although in his own way. In meetings with Speidel, he made it plain that he opposed assassination, but he was willing to make plans to arrest Hitler and secure an armistice on the western front, if the Fuehrer would not listen to reason.²⁰⁴ This was not quite consistent with Stauffenberg's ideas, part of which involved an armistice, and part of which included Hitler's death. Another meeting, this time between Stroelin and Speidel in late May, did nothing to resolve the issue, so a memorandum was prepared, to be presented to Rommel as a fait accompli, stating his objections to murder, but underscoring his willingness to support a revolt.²⁰⁵ And Stauffenberg went to France in June and arranged with Colonel Finckh, the Quartermaster General of the German Army, West, for a system of signals between

²⁰²The Stroelin-Rommel exchange is quoted in Desmond Young, Rommel (New York, 1950), p. 179.

²⁰³Rundstedt is quoted in Speidel, p. 73.

²⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 101-102.

²⁰⁵Manvell & Fraenkel, p. 88.

Berlin, Paris, and Rommel's headquarters at La Roche Guyon, so that the three resistance centers could coordinate their actions when the time came.²⁰⁶

On June 6, the Anglo-American Armies launched their long-awaited invasion of France, and by the end of a month's fighting, the German defenses were close to the breaking point. The urgency of the situation was underscored in a battle conference held on June 17 at Margival near Soissons, attended by Hitler and his two Western Front Marshals. During the course of the conversations, Rommel urged the Fuehrer to consider ending the war in view of the desperate situation in Normandy, but his plea was met with a categorical refusal, and he was told to mind his own business and leave the intricacies of statesmanship to those better able to handle them.²⁰⁷ For Rommel, it was the end, and he considered himself a free agent. For Rundstedt, it was his last conference for awhile, since Hitler was looking for a scapegoat, and he replaced the old Field Marshal with Kluge, now recovered from his injuries. This was the second good news for the resisters because Kluge had long been aware of the conspiracy, and though he came to France fresh from two weeks under Hitler's "spell" at Berchtesgaden, he soon discovered, as Speidel writes, that the Fuehrer was living "in a dream world."²⁰⁸ Thus, Kluge again declared himself ready to make common cause with the conspirators in Paris and Berlin (though not entirely with Rommel), by sending word to Beck that he would

²⁰⁶Kramarz, p. 173.

²⁰⁷Speidel, p. 94.

²⁰⁸Ibid., p. 106.

support a coup providing Hitler was dead.²⁰⁹ And he and Rommel even managed a truce armistice by arranging a local suspension of hostilities with the Allied Command in order to exchange German nurses captured at Cherbourg for severely wounded American soldiers.²¹⁰

In the east, military conditions were even worse. On June 23, acting in coordination with the Anglo-American invasion, the Russians launched their summer offensive against Army Group Center, an attack which would cost the Germans twenty-eight divisions (400,000 men killed, wounded and missing), thirty-one of the forty-seven generals serving with the Army Group, and territory extending up to the East Prussian frontier.²¹¹ For the resisters, ironically enough, this was the third piece of good news. Such tremendous losses meant replacements, and that meant conferences between staff officers of the Reserve Army and their Commander-in-Chief, now returned to the "Wolfsschanze" under the delusion that as long as he was in East Prussia, the province would not fall.²¹² More importantly, in late June, Stauffenberg was appointed Fromm's Chief of Staff. This was a key position since it allowed him to sign orders in Fromm's name and to attend military conferences at Fuehrer Headquarters, although this last had its drawbacks since it meant that if he undertook the attempt on Hitler in East Prussia, he would be lost to the conspirators in Berlin

²⁰⁹Wheeler-Bennett, p. 639.

²¹⁰Speidel, p. 107.

²¹¹These figures and territorial losses are reported in Paul Carell, Scorched Earth: The Russian-German War, 1943-1944, trans., Ewald Osers (New York, 1971), pp. 596-598.

²¹²Hitler is quoted on this point in H. R. Trevor-Roper, The Last Days Of Hitler (New York, 1962), p. 127

during the travel time between the two scenes. In any event, there appeared to be little choice, so Stauffenberg decided to do the job himself, "with my three fingers," as he put it.²¹³ And even his injuries had their advantages, for his empty sleeve, missing eye, and mutilated hand were themselves guarantees of good faith.

On July 1, Stauffenberg was called to the "Wolfsschanze," and for the first time, the two leading characters in this act faced each other. Hitler is reported to have asked who this one-eyed colonel was: he found him sinister.²¹⁴ And Stauffenberg said later that he was gratified to discover that the Fuehrer's magnetism had no effect upon him, though he recalled one moment, while everyone else was studying maps spread across the table, that Hitler had glanced up and looked at him for a long time, apparently trying to assure himself that this new participant posed no threat.²¹⁵ For his part, Stauffenberg secured explosives from Colonel Hansen, similar to those used by Tresckow and Schlabrendorff a year earlier, and he learned to activate the mechanism by operating a small pair of pincers which would break the glass vial. Thus, from the first week in July, he warned the resisters to be prepared for action. Gisevius slipped across the frontier from Switzerland and made his way to Berlin where he stayed with friends.²¹⁶ Otto John flew in from Madrid where he had been trying to arrange an armistice through the American Embassy.²¹⁷

²¹³Stauffenberg is quoted in Boveri, p. 299.

²¹⁴Wilhelm Keitel, The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Keitel, ed., Walter Goerlitz, trans., David Irving (New York, 1966), p. 265.

²¹⁵Stauffenberg's reactions are in Zeller, p. 277.

²¹⁶Gisevius, pp. 491; 500-501.

²¹⁷John, p. 145.

Hassell succeeded in reaching Berlin from his home in Ebenhausen, although air raids had disrupted railway service to such an extent that it took him three days.²¹⁸ And Beck, Olbricht, Hoepner, Schulenburg, Trott, Yorck, and the others were informed.

These same days saw the margin of the struggle between the resisters and the Nazis narrow perceptibly. On July 5, Julius Leber and Adolf Reichwein, who were trying to sound out communist underground leaders on the possibility of cooperation, were arrested; they had been recognized and denounced by a Gestapo agent masquerading as a communist.²¹⁹ On July 13, General Falkenhausen, the Military Governor of Belgium and a man upon whom the resisters had counted for help in the west, was dismissed from his post and replaced by a Gauleiter.²²⁰ On July 17, Rommel was eliminated when his car was shot up by a British fighter, killing the driver and wounding the Field Marshal so seriously that he was first thought dead.²²¹ And on the same day, the Gestapo issued a warrant for Goerdeler's arrest, making it necessary for him to go into hiding.²²²

The conspirators were quite shaken by these "reciprocating acts." Stauffenberg was worried that Goerdeler would not be able to keep silent under Gestapo interrogation,²²³ and he had counted particularly on Leber's

²¹⁸Hassell, p. 359.

²¹⁹Kramarz, p. 184.

²²⁰Zeller, p. 296.

²²¹Speidel, p. 112.

²²²Gisevius, p. 533.

²²³Fest, p. 707.

help.²²⁴ With Rommel, nothing would be done, but Kluge was still in command and the connection with France remained intact. Falkenhausen was told to remain in Brussels and await events.²²⁵ And Stauffenberg made arrangements with Goerdeler to stay at specified addresses so that he could be notified as soon as the coup was completed.²²⁶

On such notes, events moved forward to July 20, a day on which Stauffenberg had been ordered to report for a conference at Fuehrer Headquarters. On two earlier occasions that month, arrangements for the attempt had been made and he had traveled to the "Wolfsschanze," armed with a "bag of tricks," as he said.²²⁷ On each occasion, however, a combination of adverse circumstances had thwarted his plans, once when Himmler and Goering had not attended,²²⁸ and again when he was called upon so quickly to report that he lacked an opportunity to trigger the bomb.²²⁹ But this time, he was determined that there would be no turning back; for good or ill, the attempt would be made.

Early on the morning of July 20, Stauffenberg, Stieff, and Stauffenberg's adjutant, Lieutenant Werner von Haeften, flew from Berlin to an airfield at Rastenburg, East Prussia, a trip which lasted somewhat over two hours. In his briefcase, Stauffenberg carried statistical data on Germany's manpower reserves, a shirt, and wrapped inside it,

²²⁴Kramarz, p. 184.

²²⁵Gisevius, p. 518.

²²⁶Ritter, p. 288.

²²⁷Stauffenberg is quoted in Kramarz, p. 177.

²²⁸Zeller, p. 293.

²²⁹Ibid., pp. 295-296.

a two-pound bomb. Of British origin, this bomb could be fitted with a variety of fuses: one caused an explosion after two hours, another after half an hour, and the third after ten minutes.²³⁰ This bomb was fitted with the shortest fuse.

After driving from the airfield to Fuehrer Headquarters, the three men separated, Stieff going to his office, Haeften to a building reserved for visitors, while Stauffenberg went to the main dining hall where he had breakfast with Captain Mollendorf, aide to the headquarters commandant and a member of the conspiracy. Afterwards, Stauffenberg visited with Fellgiebel, presumably to make a final check on transmitting word of Hitler's death and blocking the communications center. Then, he made his way to Keitel's office, arriving at 12:30.

The Field Marshal was upset. Mussolini was scheduled to visit headquarters that afternoon so the military conference had been moved up to 12:30; for the same reason, it would be necessary to keep reports as brief as possible. Stauffenberg interrupted to ask if he might change his shirt, and Keitel impatiently agreed. In the privacy of a small washroom, the resistance leader opened his briefcase, unwrapped the bomb, and activated it with a pair of pincers.²³¹

Carrying a live bomb, Stauffenberg, together with Keitel and Keitel's aide, Lieutenant-Colonel von John, walked across to the "Wolfsschanze," Keitel trying to hurry them and John gesturing to help Stauffenberg carry his briefcase, an offer declined with thanks.²³² The "Lagebaracke" which

²³⁰Schlabrendorff, p. 55.

²³¹Zeller, p. 302.

²³²Kramarz, p. 186.

they entered shortly after 12:30 was a one-story wooden building, reinforced with concrete, and containing a central corridor, a telephone room, a cloakroom, and a conference room, some forty by sixteen feet, most of which was taken up with a very long and heavy map table, held up on either end by thick wooden supports running its entire width,²³³ a stage property which would bear significantly upon the day's events.

They were, as Keitel had feared, late. Hitler and some twenty officers were already gathered around the table, the Fuehrer in his accustomed place at the center of one of its long sides, listening to a report by General Heusinger, Chief of Operations of the Army High Command, on the military situation at the eastern front. Keitel briefly interrupted the proceedings to announce Stauffenberg, who, he said, would report on the status of the much needed reserves. Heusinger continued his report, while Stauffenberg edged as close to Hitler as possible and placed his briefcase under the table on the inside of the supports. Then, excusing himself on the pretext of an urgent telephone call, he left the building and went to the communications center located a short distance away where Fellgiebel and Haeften were waiting beside a staff car.²³⁴

Inside the conference room, Colonel Heinz Brandt, ironically, the same officer to whom Schlabrendorff had entrusted the "cognac bottles" a year earlier, attempted to get closer to the table so that he could follow Heusinger's report on the maps, and discovered Stauffenberg's briefcase in his way. Never suspecting its contents, he moved it away

²³³The design and contents of the "Lagebaracke" are in Germans Against Hitler, pp. 123; 128

²³⁴Kramarz, p. 187.

from Hitler, to the other side of the supports²³⁵--an act which helped to save the Fuehrer's life.

Heusinger was reaching the end of his report: "West of the Divina, strong Russian forces are driving northwards. Their spearheads are already southwest of Dvinsk. Unless at long last, the army group is withdrawn from Lake Piepus, a catastrophe. . . ." ²³⁶ The exploding bomb cut off his sentence, flames shot up and smoke filled the room--the time was 12:42.

To Stauffenberg, standing a hundred yards away, it seemed as if a fifteen centimeter shell had hit the building.²³⁷ Convinced that no one could have survived such a blast, he and Haeften took their leave of Fellgiebel. For the Signal Corps Chief, the problem was to flash word of the assassination to Hahn at Mauerwald and then block the communications center. For Stauffenberg and Haeften, the problem was to bluff their way through the two outer checkpoints and reach the airfield, and it is a measure of Stauffenberg's talent for improvisation--a talent, as we shall see, that was not shared by many of his co-conspirators--that he was able to do so.

At the first barrier, the guards, alerted by the explosion, refused to let them pass until Stauffenberg said that he had an urgent order from

²³⁵Brandt's deathbed deposition is in Germans Against Hitler, p. 129.

²³⁶Heusinger recounts his last words that day in Adolf Heusinger, Befehl in Widerstreit (Stuttgart, 1950), p. 352.

²³⁷This is the way he would describe it later to the conspirators in the War Ministry; in Gisevius, p. 546.

the Fuehrer to fly to Berlin at once,²³⁸ and by sheer effrontery succeeded in getting through. At the second barrier, however, the guards were more suspicious, so Stauffenberg demanded to use their telephone. Calling the office of the headquarters commandant, he got Captain Mollendorf, who, as a member of the conspiracy, confirmed to the guards that the two officers were allowed to pass, and their departure was logged at 12:44.²³⁹ From here it was simply a race to the airfield, and at 1:15, Stauffenberg and Haeften were in the same plane that had brought them to Rastenburg earlier that morning, flying back to Berlin, secure in the knowledge that Hitler was no more.²⁴⁰

They were, tragically enough, mistaken. Many of the participants, including the Fuehrer, had survived.²⁴¹ Brandt's unconscious action, coupled with the fact that Hitler was nearsighted and had been sprawled across the heavy table, following Heusinger's report on the maps, protected the Fuehrer from the full effects of the blast. At that, he was hurled across the room, his hair was set on fire, his right arm was partially paralyzed, his right leg was badly burned, and both his ear drums were damaged. Also, the explosion blew his trousers off, and a beam fell across his back, bruising him so that his "backside," as he said later, "was like a baboon."²⁴²

²³⁸The Gestapo investigation report of Stauffenberg's ruse to get through the checkpoint at Sperrkreis II is in Spiegelbild, p. 230.

²³⁹Ibid.

²⁴⁰This is the way Haeften would describe it later in the day to Otto John, p. 148.

²⁴¹Of the twenty-four people in the room, four were killed, three were injured seriously, and a number of others, including Hitler, were treated for minor injuries.

²⁴²Hitler is quoted in Manvell & Fraenkel, p. 109.

Fellgiebel, to judge by an eyewitness account,²⁴³ was badly shaken when he saw Hitler, supported by Keitel, being led from the shattered ruins of the "Lagebaracke." But the Signal Corps Chief decided to act as if the Fuehrer was dead. Although he was unable to prevent two immediate calls--one from Goebbels' representative at headquarters to the Propaganda Minister in Berlin,²⁴⁴ and another from Hitler's second adjutant to Himmler in nearby Rastenburg,²⁴⁵ neither message contained any hint of a conspiracy. Indeed, Goebbels thought the attempt was the work of someone on the construction crew that had recently reinforced the building with concrete, while Himmler was summoned to begin a standard police investigation. In any event, Fellgiebel called Hahn at Mauerwald: "Something frightful has happened. The Fuehrer is alive. Block everything."²⁴⁶ And considering the circumstances: the scene, his state of mind, and the fact that the lines were tapped, the message was pregnant with meaning since it indicated not only that the attempt had failed ("The Fuehrer is alive"), but also that the action was to go forward ("Block everything"). Then, with the unexpected help of Hitler himself, who naturally wanted no word of the attempt to get out,²⁴⁷ Fellgiebel closed down the communications center at Fuehrer Headquarters, and Hahn, after

²⁴³This was Lieutenant-Colonel Sander, who joined Fellgiebel at the very moment of the explosion, and recalled how the Signal Corps Chief paced back and forth after seeing Hitler emerge alive; in Zeller, pp. 346-347.

²⁴⁴This call is verified by Speer, who was with Goebbels on the afternoon of July 20; p. 487.

²⁴⁵Zeller, p. 246.

²⁴⁶Spiegelbild, p. 329.

²⁴⁷Zeller quotes Lieutenant-Colonel Below, who gave the order; p. 346.

relaying the message to General Wagner at Zossen and General Thiele in the War Ministry at Berlin, did the same to the center at Mauerwald. By Gestapo accounts, the lines remained closed from 1:15 to 3:30,²⁴⁸ thereby providing the conspirators with the vital head start needed for seizing control of the state and bringing a genuine "New Order" to Germany.²⁴⁹

Two generals had been left in charge of operations in Berlin: Friedrich Olbricht and Erich Hoepner. They were responsible for issuing the necessary orders and supervising the seizure of the capital as soon as word of Hitler's assassination was received. Like the other conspirators, they had been engaged for some time in a life and death struggle against the functionaries and practitioners of the Third Reich, with the exhaustion of nerves and weariness of spirit that that implies. But there is something more that needs to be said because, in microcosm, it helps to explain their actions and omissions as well as the actions and omissions of other officer-conspirators on that critical day.²⁵⁰ Olbricht has been described by Gisevius as "an administrative head. . . [e]quipped for doing preparatory work. . . but not a man for revolutionary action."²⁵¹ Such a combination is probably appropriate in many dramas, but something of an incongruity when the script calls for resolute actors--men who have

²⁴⁸Spiegelbild, pp. 63; 329.

²⁴⁹Speer reports that early on the afternoon of July 20, many of the Nazi leaders were at a meeting in Berlin. "If the rebels had been more skillful and taken parallel action immediately, they could have had a lieutenant with ten men march into this assembly and arrest many important members of the Reich government." Speer, pp. 486-487.

²⁵⁰This refers, of course, to motives; something the movement critic must uncover; Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 461.

²⁵¹Gisevius, p. 464.

progressed from a "passive condition, state of mind, through 'a deed, doing, action, act,' to 'an adequate understanding; the thing learned.'"²⁵² Similarly for Hoepner, although the difficulty in his case was a narrow, militaristic outlook that prevented him from seeing beyond the confines of the war games table or the battlefield. Gisevius, who was on the scene, relates that Hoepner later spent more time bemoaning the fact that the conspiracy lacked the militarily all important fifty-one percent chance of success than he did in trying to assure that it had any chance at all.²⁵³

This, then, was the background of the two officer-conspirators who received the message from Hahn at Mauerwald shortly after 1:00. Admittedly, it was contradictory, reporting an abortive assassination and the closing of communications channels.²⁵⁴ So Olbricht consulted with Hoepner and the two of them decided to wait until more definite information

²⁵²Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 461.

²⁵³Gisevius, p. 559. What is being described here is a state of mind conditioned largely by past scene-agency ratios--what Burke calls adherence to "custom, usage, manner, fashion." Grammar, p. 15. Another way of putting it is to use Burke's notion of trained incapacities or terministic screens: "A way of seeing /which/ is also a way of not seeing." Permanence and Change, p. 49. Perhaps statements by two participants will serve to introduce the concept, variations of which will be examined as they arise. Franz Halder writes: "The tradition which grew up in the Prussian-German Army, namely that the military was not an instrument of revolution. . .influenced the officers and made them conscious of the fact that they were not revolutionaries." "Letter of General Franz Halder," August 16, 1965. And Fabian von Schlabrendorff adds: "One of the main characteristics of the average German officer was his one-track mind. His concentration on military matters made him incompetent in non-military matters." Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, p. 65.

²⁵⁴Hoepner later affirmed this before the "People's Court," quoted in TMWC, xxxiii, p. 399ff.

could be obtained.²⁵⁵ What they failed to realize was that with the very detonation of the bomb, they were already committed to a course of action in which delay would be fatal. As we have noted, Hitler was not waiting for more detailed knowledge. Although he did not suspect a conspiracy, he had had Heinrich Himmler called, and the Reichsfuhrer and his minions were now sifting through the wreckage looking for clues. It would not be long before the thread of evidence led to Stauffenberg, and from him the whole skein could be unraveled to the officers in the War Ministry. In what must be considered the limits of incapacity, Hoepner would later theorize that it was still possible to back out: that everyone could just go home and pretend nothing had happened.²⁵⁶ It was simply beyond the scope of his perspective to realize that it was far too late for such make-believe. And even the excuse of waiting until a clearer picture could be obtained was little more than a rationalization. Between Fellgiebel's ability to block communications and Hitler's own desire that news of the attempt should not leak out, the exchanges at Fuehrer Headquarters and Mauerwald were shut down and remained silent for more than two hours--time enough to launch a coup, had they only done so.

Stauffenberg and Haeften landed at Rangsdorf airfield outside Berlin shortly after 3:45. Symptomatic of the fact that plans had gone awry was the absence of a car to take them to the War Ministry.²⁵⁷ Stauffenberg immediately telephoned the Bendlerstasse to find out what had happened to their transportation, and it was only then that he learned nothing had been

²⁵⁵Olbricht had Thiele keep trying to get through to Fuehrer Headquarters until nearly 4:00, when Stauffenberg called. Kramarz, pp. 189-190.

²⁵⁶Gisevius, p. 559.

²⁵⁷Boveri, p. 311.

done. Informing his fellow-plotters that Hitler was dead, he urged them to delay no longer. The "Valkyrie" Orders should be issued at once, even before he and Haeften reached the War Ministry.²⁵⁸

Stauffenberg's call finally galvanized Olbricht into action. He gave the necessary instruction to Colonel Mertz von Quirnheim, another conspirator, who brought the long-secreted orders out of a safe and took them to the communications center for dispatch to the military district commanders. Major Egbert Hayessen, liaison to General Hase, left to join the City Commandant. Lieutenant-Colonel Bernardis, to save time, telephoned the training schools outside the city, and then called the commander of the Watch Battalion, a Captain Ernst Otto Remer, and ordered him to divide his unit, sending part of it to guard the War Ministry, while he took the rest to the city commandant's office where he would be given further instructions. Police Chief Helldorf was alerted to report to the Bendlerstrasse, and Captain Karl Klaussing organized an ad hoc detachment of non-commissioned officers and men to protect the building until the Watch Battalion arrived.²⁵⁹ By 4:15, General Hase had received his orders, and with the cry of "Gentlemen, we're off!" prepared to call up the ordnance school and the territorial brigades.²⁶⁰

The issuing of the "Valkyrie Befehl" meant that the military conspirators and Hitler and his hierarchs were now fully embarked on a collision course. For though the officers in the War Ministry did not know it, some of the Wehrkreis commanders, after receiving orders announcing the death of

²⁵⁸Zeller, pp. 304-305.

²⁵⁹John reports the presence of guards as early as 5:00; p. 147.

²⁶⁰Gisevius quotes Hase, p. 540.

the Fuehrer and a state of military emergency, telephoned Keitel at Fuehrer Headquarters for confirmation,²⁶¹ and because the lines were open again, they were able to get through. This was the first hint to the Nazi loyalists that the attempt was part of a wider plot. In fact, Himmler had just narrowed the list of suspects to the missing colonel from the War Ministry, and had telephoned Gestapo offices in Berlin, ordering Stauffenberg to be arrested inconspicuously, a task undertaken by SS Standartenfuhrer Piffraeder.²⁶² Thus, Keitel informed Hitler that the Reserve Army had activated the "Valkyrie" Orders, and that the assassination attempt was no isolated incident.

That this news disturbed the Fuehrer's frame of mind would be an understatement. Until then, he had been euphoric, showing Mussolini the ruined building, the damaged map table, and his tattered trousers (this last destined to become a pious relic of miraculous intervention),²⁶³ and adducing from these proofs the somewhat overdrawn conclusion that nothing would befall him and that the Nazi cause would come through its present perils to final victory. On this bit of casuistry, the two dictators adjourned to Hitler's tea house, and together with their associates, began to celebrate the Fuehrer's narrow escape.

²⁶¹The most complete account of events at Fuehrer Headquarters during the afternoon and early evening is by Eugen Dollman, an SS liaison officer to Mussolini, and a eyewitness. His interrogation by Allied investigators after the war is summarized in Dulles, pp. 9-11, and is the primary source for the following narrative. It will not be cited hereafter except for purposes of direct quotation.

²⁶²John, p. 147.

²⁶³Later, Hitler had these trousers carefully wrapped and sent to Eva Braun with instructions to guard them carefully.

It was during this "Mad Hatter's tea party,"²⁶⁴ where Hitler's court vied with one another in protests of loyalty mixed with mutual recriminations, that Keitel broke the news of the revolt. Someone started to make a comparison between Stauffenberg's attempt and the plot of 1934 when Ernst Roehm and the SA had allegedly planned a putsch. Suddenly, the Fuehrer was seized with blood lust. He leapt to his feet like a wild man, foam flecking his lips, and shouted that he would be revenged on all traitors. He would root them out, and their women and children too. They would all be killed; they would all be thrown into concentration camps—it was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—not one of them would be spared. Then, subsiding as quickly as he had flared up, Hitler ordered Keitel to countermand the "Valkyrie Befehl." Later, as the situation worsened, he would call Goebbels, instructing him to broadcast an announcement that there had been an attempt on his life but that he had emerged unscathed,²⁶⁵ and he would appoint Himmler Commander-in-Chief of the Reserve Army with orders to fly to Berlin and crush the revolt.²⁶⁶ Hitler sat down again, and looking at his assembled and somewhat astonished guests, he said: "The German people are unworthy of my greatness. . .of what I have done for them."²⁶⁷

With the Fuehrer's escape from death, and equally, with his knowledge that an attempt was being made to overthrow his regime, the stage

²⁶⁴This is Wheeler-Bennett's characterization, p. 464.

²⁶⁵Speer, p. 487.

²⁶⁶Zeller quotes Hitler's precise orders: "Shoot anyone who resists, no matter who it is. . . . The fate of the nation is at stake. Be ruthless!" Zeller, p. 339.

²⁶⁷Dulles, p. 11.

is set for the final struggle of this drama²⁶⁸--a struggle for which the resisters, sensing their vulnerabilities, had tried to compensate by assassination, and which they still had an easy chance to win during the hours of inactivity between 12:42 when the bomb exploded and 4:00 when Stauffenberg returned to Berlin. Now it would be necessary for them to employ discourse--lines of argument and emotional appeals to counter the inherent advantage held by Hitler and his followers.²⁶⁹ The object of both side's attention would be the agency of the German Army, represented by a field marshal, several generals, and a captain, all in positions of authority. Whichever group could influence these few officers to identify with them would carry the day, for between them, these military agents commanded enough soldiers to tip the scales of decision. The balance of this act, therefore, will be concerned with an account and critique of

²⁶⁸Cathcart writes: "It is not the alienation of an outgroup alone that produces a movement. . . . Rather, it is the formulation of a rhetoric proclaiming that the new order, the more perfect order, the desired order, cannot come about through existing agencies of change, and this, in turn, produces a counter-rhetoric that exposes the agitators as anarchists or devils of destruction." 87. The new order, of course, was the resister's plans for a post-Hitler Germany which were explained at some length in the last chapter, and which were, in part, embodied in their radio addresses and declarations as well as in the "Valkyrie" Orders. The counter-rhetoric, the impulse for which is revealed in Hitler's frenzied statements to his guests, and which at the least identifies the resisters as "anarchists or devils of destruction," will be included in the Nazi's counter-arguments and orders.

²⁶⁹Inherent advantage refers to more than just a dialectically secured position or the presumption traditionally accorded the status quo. The perservering reader may want to look again at Chapter One, especially pp. 35-44, where an analysis was made of the factors in Hitler's god-like hold over the German people. For others, perhaps Richard Weaver's description of "god-terms" as the "prime movers of human impulse," or his definition of the even more potent "charismatic term" which has "a power which is not derived, but which is in some mysterious way given," will suggest something of the nature of the rhetorical force which Hitler as Fuehrer possessed. Richard Weaver, "Ultimate Terms In Contemporary Rhetoric," in The Ethics Of Rhetoric (Chicago, 1953), pp. 211; 227.

the rhetoric used by both sides as it occurred in four decisive encounters during the afternoon and evening of July 20, for it was in these encounters that the drama of the German Resistance Movement reached its penultimate moment.

The first took place in the War Ministry, shortly after Stauffenberg's call. With the "Valkyrie" Orders going out, Olbricht went to the office of General Fromm, Commander of the Reserve Army. His intention was to induce Fromm to give his approval and the authority of his name to the orders, a factor of some importance in view of his rank and position.

Fromm was listening to a military report when Olbricht entered and announced that Hitler had been assassinated.²⁷⁰ Fromm asked: "From whom have you heard that?" Olbricht replied that the information came from Hahn at Mauerwald, who had gotten it from Fellgiebel at Fuehrer Headquarters. As we shall see, this prevarication was an error in tactics since Olbricht would be asked to substantiate it. Had he waited until Stauffenberg, his real source, was on the scene to support him, the need for other corroborating evidence might have been unnecessary. In any event, Olbricht continued: "I propose therefore that under the circumstances, Valkyrie Exercise be issued to all Military District Commanders and that you assume executive powers of the Armed Forces." Fromm replied that he could only take such far-reaching measures if he personally were convinced of the Fuehrer's death.

At this, Olbricht made his second tactical error. Since he believed

²⁷⁰Schlabrendorff, who was in prison with Fromm, relates the account of this conversation and the later one between Fromm, Olbricht, and Stauffenberg, based upon Fromm's recollections; Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, pp. 112-117. They will not be footnoted hereafter.

Hitler was dead and that confirmation would induce Fromm to act, he picked up the telephone and asked for a priority call to Field Marshal Keitel at Fuehrer Headquarters. If only he had done this earlier when communications were still shut down. Even the strange lack of contact between Berlin and East Prussia might have aroused enough concern to motivate Fromm. But the time gap was passed, a connection was made, and Keitel was on the line.

Fromm: What has happened at General Headquarters? Wild rumors are afloat in Berlin.

Keitel: What should be the matter? Everything is as usual here.

Fromm: I have just received a report that the Fuhrer has been assassinated.

Keitel: That's all nonsense. It is true that there has been an attempt, but fortunately it has failed. The Fuhrer is alive and only slightly injured. Where, by the way, is the chief of your staff, Colonel Count von Stauffenberg?

Fromm: Stauffenberg has not yet returned to us.

For our purposes, two of Keitel's statements are important: the news that Hitler was alive, which meant that the authority of his position was still intact; and the implied threat of punishment contained within the ominous question about "your. . .Stauffenberg." As we have noted, Keitel was already aware of the assassin's identity and his parting shot was not intended as polite repartee, something known by the guilty-conscienceed Commander of the Reserve Army.

To extend the analysis, Stauffenberg's earlier opinion that Fromm would go along once Hitler was dead reveals Fromm's sensitivity to the ultimate authority in the Reich.²⁷¹ Moreover, General Witzleben writes that Fromm was

²⁷¹There are two aspects to this argument. First, while order in the Third Reich "involve/d/ a distribution of authority. . .with its uncertain dividing line between loyalty and servitude" (Burke, Permanence and Change, p. 176), the dividing line between loyalty and disloyalty was rather clear cut, and Fromm's status as Commander of the Reserves, though allowing him certain prerogatives, did not extend to treason.

a canny operator who tried to "play both sides."²⁷² As such, he was not about to mistake a movement in crisis for a movement consummated. And finally, the implication of punishment if Fromm was disloyal also achieved its desired effect. The Chief of the Reserve Army had knowingly harbored a conspiracy within his own headquarters. That was treason, and it nullified all the protestations of loyalty which he had ever made to Hitler. It did not require great foresight to predict that the consequences of such falsehood would be pitiless retribution. When conditions warranted it later in the evening, Fromm would do everything within his power to divide himself from the resisters, even if it meant executing half his staff.

When the conversation ended, Fromm turned to Olbricht and gave precise commands that the "Valkyrie" Orders were not to be put into effect. Astonished by the news that Hitler was alive, and, as Gisevius notes, "equipped to be what he was, an administrative head. . .not a man for revolutionary action,"²⁷³ Olbricht backed out of the office without an argument.

It was now 4:30. Many of the resisters were in the War Ministry: Beck, Helldorf, Gisevius, Gerstenmaier, John, Yorck, Schulenburg.²⁷⁴

Second, Fromm's tacit affirmative to the resisters was a negative to Hitler. Kenneth Burke, Language As Symbolic Action (Berkeley, 1968), p. 458. As such, it contained the potential for guilt if discovered, and victimage or mortification to expiate the guilt. (Burke, Rhetoric of Religion, pp. 4-5). Since making a victim of others is always less painful than making a victim of oneself, Fromm's subsequent acts are understandable, if reprehensible.

²⁷²"Letter of General Hermann von Witzleben," July 16, 1966.

²⁷³Gisevius, p. 464.

²⁷⁴Gerstenmaier, Gisevius, and John report approximately the same cast of players. Gerstenmaier in Boehm, pp. 187-188; Gisevius, p. 511;

And Stauffenberg had just arrived. Gisevius describes his appearance as "impressive. Tall and slender, he stood breathless, bathed in perspiration. Somehow the massiveness of the man had been reduced; he seemed spiritualized, lighter."²⁷⁵

Olbricht hastened to inform him of Fromm's unfavorable reaction, and the two of them went into the general's office to make another attempt to influence him. Fromm received them with something less than cordiality: "Keitel says the Fuhrer was only slightly injured." Stauffenberg replied, "Field Marshal Keitel is telling his customary lies. I myself set the bomb and saw Hitler's body being carried away." This evidence, from an eye-witness, might have given Fromm cause to reassess his position, but Olbricht did not allow him the opportunity. With a regrettable sense of timing, he added: "This being the case, we have issued the code word for rioting to the District Commanders."

Upon hearing that his authority was challenged, and even worse, that he was exposed, Fromm jumped to his feet, banged on the table and shouted: "This is open insubordination. Count Stauffenberg, the attempt has failed. You must shoot yourself on the spot. And you [to Olbricht], consider yourself under arrest." In answer, Olbricht made his only attempt to persuade Fromm. "General," he said, "the moment for action has come. If we do not strike now, our country will go down to utter destruction." To a man of Fromm's character, an appeal transcending self-interest was patently the wrong approach. He was concerned with his own safety, not the welfare of the Fatherland. Perhaps an argument expanding the scene--say, one that

and John, pp. 147-149.

²⁷⁵Gisevius, p. 541.

referred to plans, already en train, for opening up the western front and allowing the Allied Armies free access to Germany, might have convinced Fromm that he could play the role of "Savior of his Country" with very little risk.²⁷⁶ But Olbricht merely said: "You cannot arrest us; you deceive yourself as to the true situation. It is we who arrest you." Thereupon followed a scuffle between Fromm and Olbricht in which Stauffenberg intervened. The Commander of the Reserve Army was overpowered and placed under arrest. To his position, the conspirators appointed General Hoepner who, typically enough, insisted upon seeking Fromm's approval for the change in command.²⁷⁷

In the long run, Fromm's defection meant that he would be unavailable to the conspirators to speak and offer reassurances when confused officers in the Wehrkreis Districts phoned in during the course of the evening. The task of answering their many questions would fall largely to Stauffenberg, and, as we shall see, he would perform admirably, but he was still only a colonel and not in a high enough position of authority to command the same kind of obedience as his opponent Field Marshal Keitel, who was speaking in the Fuehrer's name.

Finally, it should be added that the conspirators did not kill Fromm but only placed him under "honorable detention" in a vacant office. Gisevius, watching the incarceration with surprise, wanted to know why Fromm was not "shot out of hand?" He was told by Olbricht

²⁷⁶This would be somewhat similar to Burke's definitional argument: "A given act is in effect a different act depending upon the scene in terms of which it is located or defined." Burke is quoted in Daniel Fogarty, Roots For A New Rhetoric (New York, 1959), p. 70.

²⁷⁷Manvell & Fraenkel, p. 124.

that "Fromm had always been fair. If he gave his word of honor [not to escape], he would keep it."²⁷⁸ The handicap of trained incapacities, of selective blindness caused by habits of thought, was working against the officer-conspirators. As Hitler himself suggested in Mein Kampf,²⁷⁹ any man who is not with you is against you, and harsh decisions must often be made for the sake of the higher goal. Gisevius, looking at the action from a civilian perspective, recognized this. Olbricht, and even Beck, to whom he turned for support, did not.²⁸⁰ Thus, they afforded Fromm the honors of military confinement, and he would repay their courtesy, first by secretly ordering the tanks from the Panzer School back to base,²⁸¹ and later by breaking his parole and helping to quash their revolt.

No sooner had Fromm been detained that SS Standartenfuhrer Piffraeder arrived. He, too, was placed under arrest, and again Gisevius wanted to know why he was not shot? This time, the answer was that there

²⁷⁸The Gisevius-Olbricht exchange is in Gisevius, p. 549.

²⁷⁹The Fuehrer declared: "Firm belief in the right to apply even the most brutal weapons is always bound up in the existence of a . . . fanatical faith in the necessity of victory of a revolution. . . ." Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, trans., Ralph Manheim (Boston, 1962), p. 533.

²⁸⁰Gisevius, p. 549.

²⁸¹The conspirators must have forgotten that the office in which Fromm was held had a second door, because when General Specht, the Commander of the Panzer School, arrived to report that his tanks were in the city, he could not find anyone in the War Ministry to give him instructions. Otto John reports hearing him say to two other officers: "Do any of you gentlemen know why we have been ordered here?" John, p. 148. Evidently, he must have gone looking for Fromm and found him by entering the second door. And Fromm's orders must have been to return to Wunsdorf, since that is what Specht and his panzers proceeded to do. Boveri, p. 295.

were insufficient troops available to form a firing squad,²⁸² although the thought persists that if someone had given him a pistol, Gisevius would have done the job himself. Simultaneously, Olbricht was giving instructions to Helldorf, subordinating the Kriminalpolizie to the Reserve Army, and commanding them to carry out any measure ordered. He had just finished when "Beck's quiet, firm voice reached out to him. 'One moment, Olbricht. In all loyalty we must inform the chief of police that according to certain reports from headquarters. . . Hitler may not be dead.'"²⁸³ Again, the honorable code of the officer and gentleman was working at cross-purposes with the revolutionary need for victory, and Helldorf's later decision to have the police merely stand by, and this at a time when armed men were desperately needed, can probably be traced to Beck's insistence upon honesty.

With Fromm and Piffraeder in custody, the conspirators faced their second major confrontation. This came in the person of General Joachim von Kortzfleisch, Commander of the Berlin Military District, who arrived at the War Ministry in perplexity and annoyance. He had heard reports that Hitler was dead, and he had come to the Bendlerstrasse to obtain clarification from General Fromm. Since that was impossible, Beck was delegated to talk to him. Perhaps he would be able to convince Kortzfleisch to join the conspiracy. The addition of a general with his authority would be of great value, especially in the critical area of Berlin, where his status gave him legitimate control over military units.

No record of the conversation between the two men exists, but

²⁸²Gisevius, p. 552.

²⁸³Ibid., p. 542.

Gisevius, who was standing nearby, recounts Beck's reaction immediately afterward, and it is not difficult to see that the outcome of the attempt to influence Kortzfleisch hinged upon Beck's choice and expression of arguments for breaking the oath of allegiance.

Beck returned. I had never seen him so angry. He described the scene that had taken place. General Kortzfleisch had refused to cooperate on the grounds of his oath to Hitler. Beck repeated his indignant reply to me: "How dare you refer to your oath of loyalty to such a perjurer. . . ."284

From this brief fragment, it is evident that Beck made two errors, one substantial, the other formal, and both exceedingly strange in view of his background and temperment. Concerning the substantive error, he treated the oath like a contract which is equally binding on both parties, although he should have known, as Halder writes, that "the duty of the soldier who has taken an oath of loyalty is not legal or contractual, but ethical." 285 All German soldiers, both before and after taking the oath, were lectured on its significance, complete with examples of those who had betrayed the honor of their country, their army, and themselves, by failing to keep it.286 And unlike other countries, the German oath was not administered willy-nilly in some recruitment sergeant's office. Instead, it was part of a solemn public ritual in which a man dedicated himself to his country

284Gisevius, p. 552.

285"Letter of General Franz Halder," August 17, 1965.

286Examples of political betrayal must have been very hard to find. General Blumentritt writes: "there were always instances of disobedience in purely military commands having to do with tactics and operations, but never in connection with political problems. Only in 1812 did the famous General Yorck, contrary to the command of the king, successfully conclude a pact with the Russians against Napoleon. But this heroic example was mentioned only very briefly and incidently during the training of an officer." "Letter of General Guenther Blumentritt," October 22, 1965.

in the presence of family and friends, and before his fellow-soldiers, on the most sacred of military symbols, the flag. Add to this the formal error--that Beck was uncharacteristically angry,²⁸⁷ and the conclusion seems inescapable that he was directing his anger and the thrust of his argument at the wrong man. If anything, Kortzfleisch was displaying a moral attitude appropriate to men of his caste,²⁸⁸ and Beck, a former officer who had had his own inner-struggle of conscience and scruple before breaking the oath, should have understood that others could have the same struggle, and adjusted his tone and arguments to meet it. But he did not, and Kortzfleisch was consigned to detention in another vacant office.

While these confrontations were taking place in the War Ministry, another critical encounter was beginning to unfold some blocks away at the office of General Hase. This denouement involved the detailing of Captain Ernst Otto Remer and his battalion Grossdeutschland. As noted at the beginning of the act, the conspirators intended to employ the bulk of this unit to cordon off the government quarter, seize the Propaganda Ministry, and arrest party officials, particularly the Gauleiter, Dr. Joseph Goebbels. At one stroke, they would thereby gain control of the Reich capital and many of its important administrative and communications facilities. However, for the third time in as many exchanges,

²⁸⁷The differentiation between sense and expression is only for purposes of analysis. As Burke puts it, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his." Burke, Rhetoric, p. 55. Obviously, Beck failed on all these counts.

²⁸⁸This is the scene-agency ratio mentioned earlier. Interestingly enough, Burke notes that "morality"--one of the terms characterizing this ratio--has its etymological origin in the Latin word for "custom." Burke, Grammar, p. 15.

the weight of tradition and its effect upon the officer-conspirators was working to their disadvantage.

At a few minutes past 5:00, Remer arrived at Hase's headquarters on Unter den Linden. The officers in the commandant's office, like their counterparts at the Bendlerstrasse, were initiates to the conspiracy. Unfortunately, they possessed a second similarity: they were equally ill at ease in the unfamiliar role of revolutionaries. If, to quote Susanne Langer, each group "meets a new idea with its own concepts, its own tacit, fundamental way of seeing things,"²⁸⁹ then the military conspirators were to a large extent trapped by their own values and training, and their every action revealed it.

The Commander of the Watch Battalion was admitted without delay and given his orders. The Fuehrer had met with an accident, internal disorders were breaking out, and the army was assuming executive power. His assignment was to blockade the government section, allow no one in or out, seize the Propaganda Ministry, and arrest Dr. Goebbels.²⁹⁰ In Remer's own account, written after the war, he relates his shock at the news of Hitler's death, and more importantly, his suspicions over the manner in which he was given his orders.

I asked: Is the Fuehrer dead? Has he had an accident or was it an assassination? Where are the internal disorders? I did not notice anything driving through Berlin. Who is the successor to the Fuehrer? It should be a German [Field] Marshal. Are there any orders from this successor?²⁹¹

²⁸⁹Susanne Langer, Philosophy In A New Key (New York, 1951), p. 4.

²⁹⁰Remer's orders appear in "The Remer Report of July 22, 1944," in Germans Against Hitler, p. 144.

²⁹¹Ernst Otto Remer, Meine Rolle, 20 Juli, 1944 (Hamburg, 1951), p. 8.

The officers involved--General Hase and his liaison, Major Hayessen, made no attempt to improvise--to answer questions as respondents in a dialectic. Instead, in Remer's words, "they acted nervous and remained silent."²⁹² Since the orders had been given verbally, Remer tried to glance at the papers lying on the desk, hoping to get a clearer picture of the scene. When Hayessen noticed this, he took the papers away in what Remer described as "an ostensive [revealing?] manner" and hid them in portfolios.²⁹³ This, too, helped to kindle the captain's suspicions, nor were they dampened any when, as he made ready to depart, the conspirators climaxed their blunders by detailing one of their own number to accompany him back to his unit. The Commander of the Watch Battalion writes:

. . .the Lieutenant-Colonel, who had been given to me. . .as a liaison officer, told me that I should not believe he was a spy. Such a statement, from an officer on active duty, was strange to say the least. It not only made me very angry, but it aroused within me the thought that these people had something to hide.²⁹⁴

Thus, Remer was receptive to a suggestion from his unit's "political leadership" officer, Lieutenant Dr. Hans Hagen. Earlier that day, Hagen had seen a staff car in which he thought he recognized Field Marshal von Brauchitsch.²⁹⁵ Since the former Army Chief had been dismissed by Hitler in 1941, Hagen wondered if a military putsch might not be underway. In civilian life, he had been on the staff of the Propaganda Ministry, and

²⁹²Remer, p. 9.

²⁹³Ibid.

²⁹⁴Ibid.

²⁹⁵"The Hagen Report of October 16, 1944," is in Germans Against Hitler, p. 152. Hagen was mistaken; Field Marshal Brauchitsch was not in Berlin on July 20.

he volunteered to go there and check with Dr. Goebbels.²⁹⁶

Remer, already upset by the unusual manner in which he had been given his orders, readily agreed. He provided Hagen with a motorcycle and instructed him to make a reconnaissance of the ministry and report back with whatever information he could obtain. Meanwhile, he himself would follow the "Valkyrie" Orders by dividing his unit, sending part to guard the War Ministry and taking the rest to the center of the city. By 6:30, the Watch Battalion was in place, and the cordoning off of the government quarter had been completed.²⁹⁷ Remer was in conference with his squad leaders when a message arrived from Hagen, requesting him to report to Goebbels in the Propaganda Ministry. With the distinct sensation that his "head was at stake,"²⁹⁸ Remer complied.

For Goebbels, it had been an afternoon of rising tensions. Although the message from Fuehrer Headquarters, immediately after the assassination attempt, had not been too unsettling--indeed, Speer, who was with him, recalls the Propaganda Minister saying, not without sarcasm, that it must have been the work of some of Speer's construction crew which had recently reinforced the building with concrete,²⁹⁹ the scene had grown more threatening with the passing hours. First, there was a visit from a former employee with whom he did not wish to speak, until the man told him to look out the window as the Watch Battalion surrounded his ministry.³⁰⁰ Then there was

²⁹⁶"Hagen Report," p. 153.

²⁹⁷"Remer Report," p. 145.

²⁹⁸Ibid., p. 146.

²⁹⁹Speer, p. 487.

³⁰⁰Rudolf Semmler, Goebbels--The Man Next To Hitler, trans., G. S. Wagner (London, 1947), p. 133.

the comment of Rudolf Semmler, one of his many aides, that "they were all trapped like rats."³⁰¹ Hitler had just telephoned from the "Wolfsschanze," demanding that he get out a broadcast announcing the failure of the attempt,³⁰² but Dr. Naumann, another of his aides to whom he gave the news bulletin, could not get through the cordon of troops, even though it was a short distance from the ministry to the radio station.³⁰³ Now this captain was coming to his office, and Speer, who was still with him, notes that Goebbels took some pills from a box, put them in his pocket, and said: "Well, just in case," before having Remer admitted.³⁰⁴

It is a credit to Goebbels' self-control and to his confidence in his rhetorical abilities³⁰⁵ that he faced the Commander of the Watch Battalion with an outward show of certainty and, unlike his opponents in the office of the city commandant, a sure grasp of his audience's susceptibilities. He began by reminding Remer of his oath to the Fuehrer, and when Remer replied that Hitler was dead, Goebbels retorted: "The Fuehrer is alive." Seeing that Remer was taken aback, the Propaganda Minister drove home his advantage. "I spoke to him just a few minutes ago. An ambitious little clique of generals has begun this military putsch. A filthy trick. The filthiest trick in history."³⁰⁶

³⁰¹Semmler, p. 133.

³⁰²Speer, p. 489.

³⁰³Semmler, p. 133.

³⁰⁴Speer, p. 490.

³⁰⁵Goebbels told Speer, just before Remer came in, that "He was sure he could win Remer over to his side." Ibid., p. 492.

³⁰⁶This is Speer's account, Ibid.

Speer writes: "You had only to see Remer to observe the change that these words produced, to realize Goebbels had already won."³⁰⁷ But the Propaganda Minister had not earned his post for nothing. He asked Remer if he would like to talk personally to the Fuehrer by telephone? Remer agreed, a connection was made, and Hitler was on the line.

Do you hear me? Do you recognize my voice? I am living. The attempt has not succeeded. A small group of glory-seeking officers would dispose of me, but now we know against whom we are fighting and we will dispose of them in short measure. You are hereby commanded in my name to restore order in the capital.³⁰⁸

The Commander of the Watch Battalion was no longer dealing with men who were unsure of themselves, who acted in a furtive manner, or apologized for what they were doing. Goebbels declared: "The Fuehrer is alive." Ergo, the ultimate source of authority and the oath of allegiance which helped to guarantee that authority were still predominant. And Hitler himself recognized the same rhetorical potential: "Do you hear me? I am living." Only a Voice embracing a whole hierarchy—a god-term, as Richard Weaver writes, whose "force imparts to others their lesser degree of force, and fixes the scale by which degrees of comparison are understood,"³⁰⁹ could speak in such a manner.

But Hitler was not content to let matters rest there. Just as gods

³⁰⁷Speer, p. 492.

³⁰⁸Remer quotes Hitler, p. 12. Speer, who listened to Remer's part of the conversation, writes: "We could only hear the repeated phrases: 'Ja-wohl, mein Fuehrer. . .Jawohl!'" Ibid., p. 493.

³⁰⁹Weaver, "Ultimate Terms," in Ethics Of Rhetoric, p. 212. Burke lists several pages of synonyms for god-terms. A few, chosen at random, should provide some idea of their power: "title of titles. . .over all motivation. . .authority. . .principle of hierarchy. . .object or source of reverence. . .fear. . .final cause. . .apex. . .all." Burke, Rhetoric, pp. 299-301.

have the power to reward and punish, so too do their secular variants,³¹⁰ and the Fuehrer's threat to dispose of his opponents "in short measure" as well as deigning to allow Remer to act in his "name" must have exerted considerable influence.³¹¹ For as our narrative has shown, the captain was, in part at least, ready to carry out the orders of the conspirators, and he had felt that his "head was at stake" when he was summoned to Goebbels' office. Thus, his evident relief³¹² at learning the truth was probably motivated not only by the news that Hitler was alive but also by the thought that in this ambiguous scene he had not yet transgressed the dividing line between loyalty and treason. Equally important, however, was his right to act as surrogate for the Fuehrer. Few officers of captain's rank suddenly transcend above generals and field marshals and find themselves placed in command of a national capital. Such a mounting is a heady experience, and the critic, studying the remainder of Remer's account, can almost hear the self-satisfied tone of the man as he issued orders throughout the evening to superiors and underlings alike.

When the conversations were concluded, Remer assembled his soldiers in the garden of the Propaganda Ministry and Goebbels addressed them. To Speer, he said, "Once I convince them, we've won the game. Just watch how

³¹⁰Burke refers to God's capacity to bless and punish. Rhetoric of Religion, pp. 131; 50. From here, it seems like a small extrapolation to transfer these powers to His secular variant, Adolf Hitler.

³¹¹Hitler reinforced this reward an hour later when he telephoned again and elevated Remer to the rank of major. By the end of the war, less than a year later, Remer had risen to the rank of major-general.

³¹²Speer notes this, p. 492.

I handle them."³¹³ And though the speech was "rather insignificant,"³¹⁴ the Propaganda Minister's sense of assurance and his familiar platitudes about loyalty, tradition, and responsibility, had a "mesmeric effect."³¹⁵ When Goebbels finished, Remer sent his troops to patrol the city streets and detailed one of his subordinates, a Captain Schlee, to take command of the rest of the battalion at the War Ministry, with orders to arrest every suspicious person found there.³¹⁶ For all intents and purposes, the revolt in Berlin was over.

In the resistance headquarters on the Bendlerstrasse, news of Remer's defection was not yet known. The first installments of the "Valkyrie Befehl" had been issued and Stauffenberg was busily engaged answering telephone calls from confused officers in the military districts. These men had been the recipients of conflicting sets of orders during the early evening. First, they had received instructions from the Reserve Army, announcing the death of Hitler and the assumption of state control by the military. Shortly thereafter, opposing orders had arrived from Hitler's Headquarters, signed by Field Marshal Keitel. These declared that Himmler had been appointed Chief of the Reserve Army, that only orders from him or Keitel were to be obeyed, and that "any orders issued by Fromm, Witzleben, or Hoepner are invalid."³¹⁷

³¹³ Speer, p. 493.

³¹⁴ This is Speer's judgment, Ibid., p. 494.

³¹⁵ This is Speer's conclusion, Ibid.

³¹⁶ "The Schlee Report of July 23, 1944," is in Germans Against Hitler, p. 150.

³¹⁷ The full order runs: "With immediate effect the Fuehrer has appointed Reichsfuehrer SS Himmler to command the Reserve Army and has

Understandably, the Wehrkreis Commanders were confused, and the conspirator's liaison officers were phoning in for help. Otto John, who was watching Stauffenberg, relates his attempts to hold the conspiracy together:

Stauffenberg here--yes--yes--they are all C-in-C's orders--yes, that stands--all orders are to be carried out at once--you must occupy all radio and signal stations forthwith--any resistance will be broken--counterorders from the Fuhrer's headquarters--they are unauthorized--no--the Wehrmacht has assumed plenary powers--no one except the C-in-C Reserve Army is authorized to issue orders--do you understand--Yes--the Reich's in danger--as always in a time of supreme emergency the soldiers are now in full control--yes--Witzleben has been appointed Commander-in-Chief--it is only a formal nomination--occupy all signal stations--is that clear?³¹⁸

Gisevius, who was also nearby, was particularly impressed by the tones which Stauffenberg employed:

One moment his voice was firm and commanding, the next friendly and persuasive, the next imploring. "You must hold firm. . . . See to it that your chief doesn't weaken. . . . I'm depending upon you. . . . Please don't disappoint me. . . . We must hold firm. . . . We must hold firm. . . ." ³¹⁹

From these accounts, it is plain that Fromm or Kortzfleisch's authority was being sorely missed by the conspirators. Had either of these imprisoned officers been present, the weight of their evidence might have been enough to tip the scales of decision.³²⁰ As it was, Stauffenberg

given him the appropriate authority. Only orders from the Reichsfuhrer and from myself are to be obeyed. Any orders issued by Fromm, Witzleben, or Hoepner are invalid." Fuhrer Naval Conferences (London, 1947), p. 51.

³¹⁸John, p. 151.

³¹⁹Gisevius, p. 555.

³²⁰Indicative of how close-run the struggle was is Constantine Fitzgibbon's account of July 20, where he lists six of the military districts, exclusive of Paris, in which the resister's orders were followed in whole or in part. Constantine Fitzgibbon, July 20 (New York, 1956), pp. 197-199.

was having to depend primarily upon the military's inborn sense of obedience to orders, or when that did not work, upon importunities, to keep the weakening district commanders in line. Since he was only a colonel, such a task posed formidable difficulties in the best of circumstances, but during the evening of July 20, when his opposition was the ultimate authority of the Fuehrer himself, the difficulties were almost insurmountable.

By 6:45 the Deutschlandsender had broadcast the communique that the Fuehrer had survived the attempt.³²¹ By 7:00 General Wagner, the man in charge of communications at Zossen, would not even answer his telephone.³²² And by 7:30 Field Marshal Witzleben, who had just arrived to take over command of the armed forces, learned that the operation was not going according to plan, and instead of thinking of alternatives, flew into a rage, criticized the other officer-conspirators, and marched out of the War Ministry declaring: "a fine mess this."³²³

In the midst of these discouraging events, a call came in from Paris. General Stulpnagel, the City Commandant, was phoning to announce receipt of the "Valkyrie" Orders and the arrest of all Gestapo personnel in his area. This was the best news yet, and Beck, who took the call, thanked Stulpnagel for his support and asked him if he had any news from Field Marshal Kluge. Stulpnagel replied that he did not, and offered to transfer the call to the Marshal's headquarters at La Roche-Guyon.³²⁴

³²¹Zeller, p. 310.

³²²Gisevius, p. 566.

³²³Ibid., p. 558.

³²⁴Ibid., p. 557.

Kluge was the key to the plot in France and Beck was well-advised to be concerned. As Stulpnagel's superior, he could reverse the actions of the city commandant.³²⁵ But as commander of the western front, he could also order a halt to the fighting in Normandy and sue for an armistice with the Anglo-American forces--actions he had agreed to providing Hitler was dead. General Witzleben writes that had Kluge followed this latter course, the fact that Hitler had not been killed or that Fromm and Remer had defected, would have made no difference; the gap in the west could never have been repaired, and the conspirators would have successfully brought Hitler's rule to an end.³²⁶

And Kluge was prepared to act. General Blumentritt, his Chief of Staff, reports that when the orders arrived from Berlin announcing the Fuehrer's death and the state of military emergency, the Field Marshal told him that his first step would be to stop the discharge of V 1's [rocket bombs] against England, and the second step would be to get in touch with the Allied Commanders preparatory to an armistice.³²⁷

Then came Keitel's countermanding order with the news that Hitler was alive and the threats of punishment implied in the statement that orders from the officers in the War Ministry were not to be obeyed. Typically, Kluge began to waver. Blumentritt writes: "These were political decisions and he was not capable of answering them because of

³²⁵This is what he would finally do, after his conversation with Beck. See Schramm, pp. 45-65.

³²⁶"Letter of General Hermann von Witzleben," July 16, 1966.

³²⁷Blumentritt is quoted in B. H. Liddell Hart, The German Generals Talk (New York, 1964), p. 262.

tradition."³²⁸ Unsure of which orders to follow, unsure of the Fuehrer's death, and most of all, unsure of himself, Kluge readily agreed when Blumentritt suggested calling Hitler's Headquarters in East Prussia to try to clarify the situation.

When a connection was made, Blumentritt asked to speak to any of the ranking staff officers: Field Marshal Keitel, General Jodl, or General Warlimont. The operator informed him that none of these officers was available to come to the phone.³²⁹ This was an unusual occurrence; it might even be termed suspicious. Perhaps something had happened at Fuehrer Headquarters and they were trying to keep it hidden.³³⁰ When Blumentritt expressed these fears to Kluge, the Marshal only shook his head. As his adjutant, Count Ludwig von Berg observes, "He [Kluge] preferred certainty to chance,"³³¹ and he was willing to wait to get it.

For the next quarter of an hour, the line was kept open in the hope of receiving some news. Finally, General Stieff, a member of the conspiracy, came to the phone. In this officer was represented another of the hinges in the critical moment of July 20, for depending upon what he said, Kluge would make a decision. Tragically, Stieff was not equal to the occasion. Already as much a prisoner to the pieties of his caste as many

³²⁸"Letter of General Guenther Blumentritt," October 22, 1965.

³²⁹Hart, p. 262. Jodl was missing because he had been hurt in the explosion (a chandelier had fallen on his head); Warlimont had also been in the conference building, although no specific report is given as to his injuries; and with Keitel, a possible explanation is that he, like Stauffenberg, was waging a ceaseless battle by telephone for control of the military districts, and was taking incoming calls without regard to the relative importance of the caller.

³³⁰These are Blumentritt's suspicions, in Ibid.

³³¹"Letter of Count Ludwig von Berg," December 12, 1965.

of the other officer-conspirators, he had silently abandoned the resistance movement, probably when he saw Hitler emerge alive from the ruins of the shattered "Lagebaracke." In reply to Blumentritt's question, he said: "Where did you get the news that the Fuehrer was dead? He is quite well and in good spirits."³³²

Blumentritt had just relayed this disconcerting piece of information to Kluge when the Paris-Berlin call was transferred to La Roche-Guyon and Beck was on the line. Although neither man was aware of it, the impending conversation was to mark the conspiracy's best, though final bid for success.³³³

Beck: Kluge, announce publicly that you're a party to what's being done here in Berlin and give the word for a general revolt.

Kluge: What is the actual state of affairs at headquarters?

Beck: In the long run, does it make any difference provided we're determined to go ahead?

Kluge: Yes, but. . . .

At this point, Gisevius, who had been standing near Beck, felt the resistance leader was not pressing Kluge toward an unequivocal decision. He whispered to Beck, "Make it clear to Kluge that he can no longer back down."

Beck: Kluge, I'm asking you for a straight answer: do you approve of what we're doing here and will you place yourself unconditionally under my orders?

(there followed a rather lengthy pause)

Beck: Kluge, in order to avoid misunderstandings. . .I would remind you of our last conversation and of what was agreed between us. I ask again: Do you place yourself unconditionally under my orders?

Kluge: First, I must consult with my people here, on the basis of the actual state of affairs. I'll ring you back in half an hour.

³³²Stieff is quoted in Hart, p. 262. Stieff's defection would not save him. He was among the first group of conspirators to be tried and executed in August 1944.

³³³The entire conversation, as well as Gisevius' aside, is in Gisevius, pp. 557-558. It will not be footnoted hereafter.

He never did.

An analysis of the Beck-Kluge interchange, together with Gisevius' aside, suggests two reasons for the failure to influence Kluge: Beck's unwillingness to counter the news that Hitler was alive, and the manner in which he expressed his arguments. To explain, Beck is known to have taken part in two of the day's confrontations: this one with Kluge and the earlier one with Kortzfleisch. While Beck himself left no statements regarding his feelings about these exchanges, his remarks to Gisevius concerning his anger at Kortzfleisch and the subsequent failure of that method may have been working on his mind. If any angry, unyielding manner was the wrong approach, then he would try another. When we recall the classical bent of his own character, the one he chose, appropriately enough, was a bland "comradly tone."³³⁴

Unfortunately, he failed to account for the fact that Kortzfleisch and Kluge, while both officers, were still unique in important respects. Kortzfleisch was apolitical and definitely a soldier of the old school, while Kluge, though privy to the plot, was a waverer. Thus, if Beck had been listening more carefully, he would have noticed that even at this late hour, Kluge was vacillating, hoping that someone would give him the desired push to the sanctuary of a firm decision.³³⁵ His opening gambit,

³³⁴This is the term used by Gisevius to describe Beck's tone during the first part of the encounter; p. 557. To extend the point briefly, we have no wish to quarrel with philosophers generally, but Aristotle (whom Beck admired), took as his model the "Golden Mean." Hence, Beck's natural tendency would have been to self-control, to an avoidance of excess or defect. Unhappily, Beck was probably not familiar with another classicist--the Roman poet Horace, one of whose odes contains the line: "If you wish me to weep you must weep first."

³³⁵This is not only my interpretation. Blumentritt writes that even after Stieff's response, "We felt very uneasy. . . realizing how suspicious it was in the circumstances." Hart, p. 262.

asking about the actual state of affairs, was indicative of this wish. If Beck had grasped the reins firmly and responded with a clear, unambiguous statement about the Fuehrer's death, it is possible that he might have steadied the tottering Kluge once and for all.³³⁶

Instead, Beck unwittingly reinforced an earlier defense argument of Keitel and Stieff by telling Kluge that the actual state of affairs made no difference. To the western front marshal, fretting at his headquarters in remote La Roche-Guyon, they made all the difference in the world. Gisevius, listening only to Beck's part of the conversation, was perceptive enough to realize that things were going wrong; hence, his whispered advice. But it was already too late. Kluge had heard from the very leader of the opposition the implied admission that Hitler might not be dead. Keitel's orders could have been fabrications; even Stieff could have been forced to say what he did; but if the conspirators--in a sense, unwilling or hostile witnesses--were admitting to the Fuehrer's survival, then there could be no doubt. Unintentionally, Beck had been trapped by his opponents own argument, and it proved to be the final straw which broke the conspiracy.

Although it probably made little difference at this point, Beck made at least two more tactical errors in his conversation with Kluge. Hard on the blunder of his implied admission that Hitler lived, Beck demanded that Kluge place himself under his [Beck's] unconditional

³³⁶For Beck, strangely enough, Hitler was dead. Gisevius quotes him as saying: "A 'leader' whose immediate entourage included those who opposed him to the extent of attempting assassination must be considered morally dead." Gisevius, p. 557. But Beck was unable to transfer this kind of death to the more important political realm where it would have been much more meaningful in his argument.

orders. It was a vain hope. In the hierarchy of the Fuhrer Staat, only one man--Adolf Hitler--had the right to make such a claim, and Beck had just conceded the possibility that Hitler was alive. Finally, for a man of Kluge's temperament ["He preferred certainty to chance"], it is possible that Beck could have succeeded by commenting on the glittering success of the plot in Paris. This was part of the field marshal's territory, and the use of this shift of scene argument,³³⁷ demonstrating to Kluge that he had nothing to fear, might have convinced him. Beck had just finished speaking to Stulpnagel and was in possession of all the facts; yet, he said nothing and let the wavering Kluge hang up without such easily offered and obviously needed re-definition. The entire conversation was a series of misplaced overtures and missed opportunities, and its conclusion ended the conspirators last chance for success.

With the desertion of Kluge, the exchanges during the critical evening of July 20 came to an end. There remained only Fromm's delayed response to the earlier threat of punishment for disloyalty. Shortly before 10:00, the Reserve Army Commander succeeded in escaping from custody. The knowledge that retribution was close at his heels added an almost indecent haste to his actions.³³⁸ Gathering weapons and Nazi sympathizers from within the confines of the War Ministry, he and his cohorts surprised and overwhelmed the band of resisters. One report

³³⁷See p. 399, fn. 276.

³³⁸Fromm was not quite fast enough. Although Gestapo investigators were unable to link him directly to the plot, he was charged with "cowardice" and condemned and executed in March 1945. Schlabrendorff, his fellow-prisoner, relates that the sentence affected Fromm deeply. He had not expected it. Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, p. 121.

says that Haeften aimed his pistol at Fromm, until Stauffenberg waved him off, apparently resigned to letting the inevitable take its course.³³⁹ Another says that Stauffenberg was wounded, shot in the left arm or back, by one of the officers accompanying Fromm.³⁴⁰ We are certain that only two of the resisters managed to escape: Otto John, who fled first to the home of his brother Klaus, and then on July 24, boarded a Lufthansa plane to Madrid;³⁴¹ and Gisevius, who moved from one resistance hideout to another until Allen Dulles was able to supply him with a set of Gestapo papers which allowed him to travel safely to Switzerland in January 1945.³⁴²

For the rest, however, there was no deliverance. Fromm established a drumhead courtmartial and in the name of the Fuehrer condemned to death Stauffenberg, Olbricht, Quirnheim, and Haeften. Hoepner, for the sake of old times, was given the choice of arrest or suicide,³⁴³ and Beck was allowed to take his own life. By this time, Captain Schlee had arrived and part of the detachment from the Watch Battalion was pressed into service as a firing squad. The condemned were taken to the courtyard below, Stauffenberg supported by Haeften. The scene was lit by the headlights of an army truck. There was only one volley.³⁴⁴

³³⁹Kramarz, p. 200.

³⁴⁰Zeller, p. 316.

³⁴¹John, p. 152.

³⁴²Dulles, p. 141.

³⁴³Hoepner, remarking that he really did not think he had done anything too bad, chose arrest. Two weeks later, he was in the first group of conspirators to be tried, condemned, and executed.

³⁴⁴Gerstenmaier, who was under guard in an office, thinks he heard Stauffenberg cry "Long live our sacred Germany" just before the volley; in Zeller, p. 436.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE: THE GERMAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN RETROSPECT

"There was saved out of Nazi-ruled reality a treasure of wine pressed from the good grapes that ripen in the innermost places of man's being, in vineyards that are holy and hushed. It is a strong and mysterious vintage, sweet and bitter alike; and God grant that we shall never tire of drinking it, so that perhaps its aroma may outlast the stench of the marshes which once seemed to stretch almost to the ends of the earth." George N. Schuster

Hardly any of Hitler's opponents escaped after the failure of July 20. The discovery by the Gestapo of secret documents--some of them in a briefcase of Goerdeler's, left at a hotel where he often stayed in Berlin,¹ and others in Olbricht's safe in his office at the War Ministry,² soon gave the investigators a fairly comprehensive picture of the revolt, allowing them to refute with comparative ease the denials of those who were already under arrest, and to add to their number almost all of the other resisters.

Peter Yorck, Fritz Schulenburg, Eugen Gerstenmaier, Erich Hoepner, Stauffenberg's brother Berthold, and Haeften's brother Bernd, were taken into custody that night in the Bendlerstrasse. At almost the same time, Stieff and Fellgiebel were arrested at Fuehrer Headquarters. Hase, Hansen, Popitz, and Witzleben were picked up on the 21; Schacht on the 23;

¹Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1958), p. 292.

²Eberhard Zeller, The Flame Of Freedom, trans., R. P. Heller and D. R. Masters (London, 1969), p. 365.

Helldorf on the 24; Adam von Trott on the 25; Hassell, seated "at his desk,"³ on the 28; Jessen on the 30; and in early August, they were followed by Canaris, Delp, Haubach, Maass, Leuschner, Lejeune-Jung, Oster, Schlabrendorff, Wirmer, and Goerdeler (for whose capture Hitler had set a reward of one million marks). A few succeeded in taking their own lives: Henning von Tresckow, Eduard Wagner, and Guenther von Kluge; others, like Heinrich Stulpnagel, who was ordered to report to Berlin on July 21, only managed to blind himself, a condition which did not spare him from later trial and execution;⁴ and Rommel, when his complicity became known, chose to commit suicide rather than subject his family to persecution.⁵

The scope of the resistance surprised even the "intuitive" Hitler. There was not a single agency in his "New Order" which had not been "infected,"⁶ although the number and status of the civilians involved as well as the extent to which the officer corps was implicated particularly enraged him.⁷ If Heinrich Himmler's speech to the Gauleiters on August 3 was any reflection of his master's voice, not only those directly accused

³This is how Frau Hassell told Gestapo investigators that they would find her husband, in Ulrich von Hassell, The Von Hassell Diaries, trans., Hugh Gibson (Westport, 1971), p. 366.

⁴Wilhelm von Schramm, Conspiracy Among Generals, trans., R. T. Clark (New York, 1956), p. 120ff.

⁵Hans Spiedel, Invasion 1944 (New York, 1968), pp. 142-143.

⁶This is Ribbentrop's term, in a telegram sent to all diplomatic missions; quoted in Germans Against Hitler, ed., Erich Zimmerman and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, trans., Allan and Lieselotte Yahares (Bonn, 1964), p. 189.

⁷Albert Speer, who went to the "Wolfsschanze" on July 21, records Hitler's outbursts against these two groups; Inside The Third Reich, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1970), pp. 498-499.

but their families too faced a merciless reckoning:

You need only re-read the Germanic sagas. When they proscribed a family or declared them outlaws. . .they went all the way, without mercy. They outlawed the entire family and said: A man has committed treason, the blood is bad, there is traitor blood in it, and it will have to be exterminated. And. . .that was what they did, down to the last member of his kin.⁸

Fortunately, less irrational minds prevailed, but even that did not prevent the arrest and imprisonment of whole families whose only crime was the circumstance of birth. Captain Payne Best⁹ writes that at one time in Buchenwald, there were ten Stauffenbergs, eight Goerdelers, the widow of Caesar von Hofacker, General Erich Hoepner's brother, and many others.¹⁰ Age and sex made no difference. Among those in custody were at least a dozen women over seventy, while under a certain age, children were taken forcibly from their parents and placed in foster homes.¹¹

For those immediately involved, Hitler exacted the most terrible reciprocity of which his totalitarian order was capable: special military courts for the officers (so that they could be handed over to the civil authorities);¹² drug injections;¹³ "sharpened interrogations" by the

⁸Excerpts from Himmler's speech are in Germans Against Hitler, p. 195.

⁹For Payne Best's role in this drama, see Chapter Three, p. 203.

¹⁰Payne Best, The Venlo Incident (London, 1950), pp. 259-260.

¹¹Typical was the removal of Adam von Trott's two children, one aged two and a half, the other nine months, from the family estate at Imshausen; Christopher Sykes, Tormented Loyalty (New York, 1969), pp. 441-442.

¹²General Guderian, who served on the court, recounts this "unpleasant task." Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader, trans., Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York, 1957), p. 275.

¹³Karl Abshagen mentions drug injections which, according to the prisoners, made it difficult to concentrate. Karl Abshagen, Canaris, trans., Alan Brodrick (London, 1956), p. 246.

Gestapo;¹⁴ stage-managed trials before the "People's Court" and its President, Roland Freisler, a jurist who combined "knife-edged legal acumen . . . [with] theatrical eloquence;"¹⁵ and then the butcher's hooks and gallows of the prison and concentration camps.¹⁶

In this process the Nazis made every effort to defame their captives--to rob them of their moral motives¹⁷and, in public at least, to prevent them from testifying to their belief in the "movement's guiding vision of Order--its dream of 'heaven,' paradise, the 'good society,' Utopia."¹⁸ And in this, they have been vied with by critics like John Wheeler-Bennett whose account of the poor showing by some of the defendants during the First Senate of the "People's Court" on August 7-8,¹⁹ remains the commonly-accepted version of the resistance leaders at their

¹⁴This term was coined by "Gestapo" Mueller, who had charge of examining the resisters. Generally, it included "simplest rations (bread and water), hard bed, dark cell, deprivation of sleep, exhaustion exercises, and resort to blows." Mueller' directive is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 190.

¹⁵This is the judgment of Rudolf Diels, Gestapo Chief in Prussia, quoted in Zeller, p. 444.

¹⁶Hitler's instructions ran: "I want them to be hanged, strung up like butchered cattle." Quoted in Joachim C. Fest, Hitler, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1974), p. 172.

¹⁷In the "official" line of the Nazi leadership, there was an un-deviating attempt to discredit the resisters morally. Thus, Bormann's circulars to party officials referred to "reactionary criminal riff-raff;" Ribbentrop's telegram to "treacherous. . . criminals;" and Jodl's speech to the armed forces to "plotters. . . still more villainous than the most sordid professional criminals." Quoted in Germans Against Hitler, pp. 183; 187.

¹⁸Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements," in Critical Responses To Kenneth Burke, ed., William H. Rueckert (Minneapolis, 1969), p. 468.

¹⁹The transcript of the first trial is in Trial Of The Major War Criminals, 42 Vols., (Nuremberg, 1947), xxxiii, pp. 299-530. Hereafter abbreviated as TMWC.

movement's ultimate moment.²⁰ Pointing out that only two weeks earlier, these same men had been ready to hazard everything on a plot to overthrow Hitler, he charges that "now not one of them could muster up the strength of will to interrupt Friesler's obscene rhetoric. . .and make it clear to Germany and to the world. . .the reasons why they stood in the dock."²¹

While conceding that some of the resisters cut poor figures at the trial--Witzleben in his age and ill-health, and Hoepner in his foolishness--we should bear in mind the scene in which they found themselves. These men stood amid the ruin of their hopes. For most, the time between sentence and execution would be a matter of hours.²² And the proceedings were, from beginning to end, a caricature, designed only to exploit and humiliate them. Thus, they were even costumed for the occasion, dressed in shabby clothing, often many sizes too large for them, their suspenders and belts were taken away, they were unshaven, several of them

²⁰This period of interrogations, trials, final messages, and executions, represents the ultimate moment of the resistance movement for several reasons. First, the resisters themselves interpreted their martyrdom as a symbolic expiation for the guilt shared by all Germans, and this is not far from Griffin's description of the period of consummation as a "time of Redemption [when men] are charged with attitudes of benevolence. . .attitudes ultimately in the order of self-sacrifice." Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 467. Second, the resisters had the opportunity at last of going public--of "announc/ing] a stand, a 'standing together,' an understanding." *Ibid.*, pp. 462-463. And while Griffin places such a statement in the inception stage of a movement, conditions would appear to alter categories since those in a hidden movement cannot express themselves openly until exposed. Third, in this same vein, the resister's dialectical exchanges with their Nazi opponents were, for the first time, unmediated, and though they got little chance for the statement-counter-statement usually associated with such interchanges, the Nazis' verbal attacks did not go wholly unchallenged.

²¹John Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis Of Power (New York, 1954), p. 682.

²²Hitler said: "The sentence must be carried out within two hours of its being passed! They must hang at once. . . ." Quoted in Fest, p. 711.

showed signs of the Gestapo's "sharpened interrogations," and in Witzleben's case at least, his jailers had refused to let him wear his den-
 tures.²³ Moreover, Hitler had given strict instructions that none of
 them were to be allowed to explain themselves: "they must not be given
 a chance to make any grand speeches," was the way he put it.²⁴ And in
 Freisler, they had an interlocutor whose concept of the law was the will
 of the Fuehrer,²⁵ and whose idea of an examination was "making propaganda
 speeches."²⁶

In spite of this logomachy--this war of words directed against them,
 many of the resisters defended themselves stubbornly, and when the oppor-
 tunity arose, countered Freisler's tirades with declarations of their own.
 Thus, even during the first trial, where the storm of abuse cut off almost
 before it had begun, any continuous discourse from the dock, Peter Yorck,
 asked by Freisler why he had not joined the party, replied: "Because I am
 not and would never be a Nazi."²⁷ Later, when Freisler accused him of dis-
 agreeing with Hitler's ideology, his concept of justice, his extermination
 of the Jews, Yorck answered: "The essential point is the connection between
 all these questions: the claim by the state to total power over the citizen

²³Photographs of the defendants, disclosing all of the above, is in
Germans Against Hitler, pp. 299-307.

²⁴Hitler is quoted in Fest, p. 711.

²⁵This was the so-called "Gesinnungsstrafrecht," or "political-crim-
 inal justice" in which "right consists in whatever is of service to the Na-
 tional Socialist State." For an extended discussion, see Joseph Goebbels,
The Goebbels Diaries, ed., and trans., Louis P. Lochner (New York, 1948),
 pp. 159-160.

²⁶Schlabrendorff, who appeared before Freisler, describes his man-
 ner thusly; Fabian von Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler (New York,
 1947), p. 135.

²⁷TMWC, xxxiii, p. 420.

with the elimination of his religious and moral obligations toward God."²⁸ And even pathetic, old Field Marshal Witzleben, who had repeatedly played into Freisler's hands, summoned the strength to meet the judge on the most substantive political issue:

Freisler: You were going to govern against the people! That's true isn't it?

Witzleben: What makes you think so?

Freisler: You were not going to govern against the people?

Witzleben: Certainly not!²⁹

Perhaps even more damaging to the Nazis than the public trials were the prior interrogations. Admittedly, the intended audience was smaller--only the Fuehrer. But Gestapo Chief Kaltenbrunner, as he saw his prison cells fill to overflowing,³⁰ became as determined as his captives to give Hitler an unvarnished account of the movement, its actors, and their motives, in the hope that "the revelations may be just what is needed to make him see the necessity of change."³¹ Thus, the investigation reports include this declaration by Berthold von Stauffenberg:

²⁸TMWC, xxxiii, p. 424.

²⁹Ibid., p. 368. Defendants in later trials were equally defiant. For example, Bernd von Haeften, asked by Freisler why he had criminally broken faith with Hitler, replied: "Because I regard the Fuehrer as the instrument of evil in history." Zeller, p. 373. Attorney Joseph Wirmer proved a particularly tough proposition for the judge: "If I am hanged, its not me who's frightened, but you. . . ." Freisler: "You'll soon be in hell. . . ." Wirmer: "It'll be a pleasure, if you follow soon, Herr President." Ibid., pp. 373-374.

³⁰Conditions in the Berlin jails became so crowded that the Gestapo was forced to transfer many prisoners to Ravensbruck, a concentration camp for women north of the capital. Lagi Ballestrom Solf, who was already there, writes that it was not until September that Ravensbruck became quieter and less crowded. By then, of course, many of the resisters had already been executed. Countess Solf is quoted in Eric H. Boehm, We Survived (New Haven, 1949), p. 145.

³¹Kaltenbrunner's instructions are quoted in Ritter, p. 297.

As regards domestic policies [referring to 1933] we had fully endorsed most of the National Socialist tenets: the Fuehrer principle, the idea of expert leadership, responsible for itself and linked with the concepts of a healthy respect for rank and of a "people's community;" the principle of common welfare before individual welfare; the struggle against corruption. . . [the] rejection of the big city mentality. . . and the will to build a new system of law on German foundations--all these seemed sound and full of promise to us.

But nearly all the basic ideas of National Socialism were completely reversed by the regime. Instead of "leaders with a calling," as a rule "mediocrities," who exercised uncontrolled power, got to the top. The idea of a "people's community" was violated by incitement against the upper classes and the intellectuals and by generally arousing resentment among the petit-bourgeois.³²

³²Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung, ed., Karl Peter (Stuttgart, 1961), pp. 447; 453. The Gestapo prefaced this report by noting: "His [Stauffenberg's] short evidence was the clearest and most important document indicting Hitler that may ever have been written and shown to him. It manifested a type of German manhood with deep religious, political, and artistic principles, utterly divorced from Hitler." The interested reader may wish to refer again to the ideals of National Socialism in the first part of Chapter One; for the others, perhaps Guderian's retrospective summary will explain the initial dialectic merger and subsequent division described by Stauffenberg's statement and the next one by Schulenburg. "The reasons for the Germans' submission to Hitler's powers. . . must first be sought in the failure of policy as manifested. . . after the First World War. . . . It gave us unemployment, heavy reparations, oppressive lack of equality, lack of military strength. . . . As a result, the man who now promised to free [us]. . . had a relatively easy task, particularly since the formal democracy of the Weimar Republic. . . could achieve no significant successes in the diplomatic field and at home proved incapable of mastering Germany's internal difficulties. So when Hitler promised. . . the Germans that abroad he could free them from the injustices of Versailles and that at home he would abolish unemployment and party strife, these were aims which were entirely desirable and with which any good German must agree. Who would not have approved of them. . . ? Once in power Hitler. . . achieved a number of outstanding successes: the disappearance of unemployment, the raising of the workers' morale, the re-creation of national feeling, the elimination of party strife. It would be wrong to not grant him the credit for these achievements. Once his internal power was affirmed, Hitler turned to his external political program. The return of the Saar, the re-introduction of military self-determination, the occupation of the Rhineland, the incorporation of Austria--all these were completed to the delight of the German nation. . . . Thus Hitler's self-confidence grew, and, as his power became more firmly established in both external and internal matters, so he developed an over-bearing arrogance which made everything and everybody appear quite unimportant in comparison to himself. This attitude assumed unhealthy proportions owing to the mediocrity and, indeed,

Schulenburg spoke in a similar vein:

The whole leadership has turned its back on the principles of simplicity and modesty which it preached in the early days of National Socialism. We want leaders who set an example by their conduct and action. . . . We want a society again based on the sanctity and inviolability of law. . . . We want Germany to be purged of corruption and crime, and justice and decency restored for all, without discrimination.³³

Hitler's response to these reports is not known, but the reactions of some of the interrogators have, in some instances, been preserved.

insignificance of the men he had summoned to fill the most important appointments in the Third Reich. Up to this time Hitler had been receptive to practical considerations and had at least listened to advice and been prepared to discuss matters with others; now, however, he became increasingly autocratic. . . . There was no longer any collective examination of major policy. Many ministers never, or very seldom, saw Hitler. . . . Administrative power passed into the hands of the Gauleiters. These men were appointed, not on account of their qualifications. . . .but because of their achievements within the party; and in such appointments sufficient attention was by no means always paid to a man's moral character. Since many party functionaries attempted to copy Hitler's ruthlessness. . . .political morals soon tumbled. The national administration was emasculated. It was the same story with the judiciary. The fateful Authorization Act entitled the dictator to give his regulations the force of law without the approval of parliament. . . . [Also] certain elements of his closest entourage, persons themselves of low culture, awakened in him a strong dislike for those people of a more spiritual nature and with a socially superior background with whom he had previously been able to get on; they did this with the conscious purpose of bringing him into conflict with those classes and thus of destroying what influence they still possessed. In this attempt they were very successful. . . .because in Hitler resentment still slumbered as a relic of his difficult and humble early years. . . . [and] because he believed himself to be a great revolutionary and thought that the representatives of older traditions would hinder him, perhaps even deflect him from the fulfillment of his destiny. . . . By the spring of 1939 Hitler's hubris had reached [its highest] point. . . .and [while] the position of Germany was so powerful that there seemed no reason why the remaining national aspirations could not be left to solve themselves gradually and peacefully. . . .such a policy was foreign to Hitler. . . . 'I have not much time to lose. My successors will possess less energy than I. They will be too weak to take the fateful decisions that must be taken. I, therefore, have to do it all myself, during my own lifetime.' And so he drove himself, his colleagues, his whole nation forward at a breathless pace along the road he had chosen." Guderian, pp. 359-366.

³³Spiegelbild, p. 454.

Thus, Gestapo officials in Paris, after examining Caesar von Hofacker, are reported to have said that he was the most dangerous enemy who had yet crossed their path; it was almost a compliment.³⁴ Another investigator was heard telling one of the resisters: "No doubt you and your friends are good Germans. But you are enemies of the regime and therefore we must destroy you."³⁵ And in the cases of Goerdeler, Popitz, and Schulenburg, none of them was executed immediately after trial. Instead, they were put to work formulating proposals for the reconstruction of a post-war Germany. With Schulenburg, the Gestapo's interest was in re-districting the Lander (something he had done as a member of the Kreisau),³⁶ while with Goerdeler and Popitz, Kaltenbrunner himself requested their views on Reich reform and the relationship between national, state, and local governments.³⁷ In the long-run, of course, all three would be executed: Schulenburg a month after sentencing; Goerdeler and Popitz, condemned to live for five months in the twilight world of the prison cell until February 2, 1945, when they were hanged together.

Survival was invariably a matter of chance. Joseph Mueller, Hjalmar Schacht, and General Halder, for example, were saved because Himmler got

³⁴This reaction is in Schramm, p. 177.

³⁵Zeller, p. 380. This statement by the Gestapo interrogator at once concedes the moral ground from which the resisters operated, and discloses the "reciprocating act from the establishment or counter-rhetors [who] perceive the demands of the agitator rhetors. . . as direct attacks on the foundations of the established order." Robert S. Cathcart, "New Approaches to the Study of Movements: Defining Movements Rhetorically," Western Speech, XXXVI (Spring, 1972), 87.

³⁶See Chapter Four, p. 275.

³⁷An account of Goerdeler and Popitz's work in prison is in Ritter, pp. 298-299.

the idea that a distinguished group of "hostages" might be a bargaining chip in negotiating with the Western Powers.³⁸ Gerstenmaier, as we noted earlier, played the role of an otherworldly cleric so convincingly, that he was sentenced to only seven years.³⁹ Schlabrendorff was being brought into the courtroom for his trial on February 3 when an Allied bombing attack struck the building, killing Freisler and destroying the prosecution's evidence.⁴⁰ But for the others, there was no escape, and five thousand were executed for complicity in the plot to assassinate Hitler⁴¹--a figure which should provide some indication of the dimensions of the movement.

Evidence of a different sort comes from one of the under-secretaries in the Ministry of Justice, who, when presented with a petition for mercy by the widow of Hermann Maass, exclaimed: "The 20th of July is getting beyond us. We can't control the thing any longer."⁴² For our purposes, however, the important point is the forum used by these captives before the end--their letters and messages from prison, because they disclose, more fully than either the trials or the interrogations, the strength of their moral motives, Nazi attempts to discredit them to the contrary. Thus, Peter Yorck wrote to his wife two days before his execution:

³⁸For Himmler's plans, see Schlabrendorff, p. 4.

³⁹See Chapter Four, p. 263.

⁴⁰Schlabrendorff, pp. 139-140.

⁴¹These figures are in Karl Bracher, The German Dictatorship, trans., Jean Steinberg (New York, 1970), p. 458. Zeller lists 4,980 victims, based upon a British Admiralty Report of July 20, 1947; Zeller, p. 445.

⁴²The government official is quoted in Ibid., p. 380.

Tomorrow the People's Court will sit in judgment on me and the others. I hear that the army has expelled us: they can take our garments, but not the spirit in which we acted. . . . I believe myself to be impelled by a sense of guilt which is weighing all of us down, and to be pure in heart. That is why I confidently hope to find in God a merciful judge. . . .

My death will, I hope, be accepted as an atonement for all my sins and as a vicarious sacrifice in expiation of the guilt we harbor in common. May it also lessen, if only by a hair's breadth, the alienation of our era from God. I too am dying for my Fatherland. Though in appearance my death is an inglorious, even a shameful one, I tread this last path erect and unbowed, and I only hope that you will not see this as arrogance and delusion. We meant to kindle a torch of life. And now a sea of fire engirds us.⁴³

If, as Gisevius argues, all Germans were guilty for the evils of Hitler's "New Order"--not so much in the sense of criminal responsibility, but in terms of "passive acceptance, intellectual subservience. . . .^[or] silent support,"⁴⁴ then Yorck's statement signifies a readiness to shoulder that guilt in an act of martyrdom, what Griffin calls a "purgative striving that ends in. . . transcendence."⁴⁵ This is very similar to Burke's notion of the "perfect victim"⁴⁶--the sacrificial vessel whose worthiness is not defined by those who wish to "perfect" it as a scapegoat, but by the intrinsic worth of the vessel itself.⁴⁷ For despite Yorck's admission of personal responsibility, the fact remains that "all men begin in

⁴³Peter Yorck von Wartenburg, "Farewell Letter to his Wife," August 6, 1944, quoted in Dying We Live: The Final Messages and Records of the Resistance, ed., Helmut Gollwitzer, Kathe Kuhn, and Reinhold Schneider, trans., Richard C. Kuhn (New York, 1956), p. 134.

⁴⁴Hans Bernd Gisevius, To The Bitter End, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (Boston, 1947), p. 603.

⁴⁵Griffin, p. 464.

⁴⁶The reference here is to Burke's idea of a scapegoat "too good for this world." Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy Of Literary Form (New York, 1957), p. 35.

⁴⁷Ibid.

a fallen state, burdened by . . . hierarchic psychosis and categorical guilt."⁴⁸ Thus, his willingness to become a scapegoat for himself and others represents "the highest value. . . the most perfect sacrifice"⁴⁹ since he, among all Germans, must be considered least guilty in view of his ongoing struggle for perfection in an imperfect society. And Yorck is synecdochic in the sense that we have used his letter as surrogate for those of other resisters: Alexis von Roenne,⁵⁰ Helmuth von Moltke,⁵¹ Alfred Delp,⁵² Carl Goerdeler,⁵³ or the statement of Henning von Tresckow which we cited earlier.⁵⁴ Some of them may have lacked Yorck's eloquence, but none of them lacked his readiness or transcendent worthiness, borne of striving.

There is yet another theme in these farewell messages which properly belongs to this analysis. Perhaps it is expressed best by Helmuth Moltke when he described an exchange between himself and Freisler:

Freisler said to me during one of his tirades: "In one respect only are we and Christianity alike. We claim the whole man!" I don't know whether the people sitting there took that in, for it was a kind of dialogue between Freisler and myself--a mental

⁴⁸William H. Rueckert, Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations (Minneapolis, 1963), p. 133.

⁴⁹Burke, Literary Form, p. 35.

⁵⁰Roenne's last letter is in Germans Against Hitler, pp. 257-258.

⁵¹Moltke's last letters are in Michael Balfour and Julian Frisby Helmuth Von Moltke (London, 1970), pp. 317-331.

⁵²Delp's diary fragments and farewell letters are in Zeller, pp. 103-106.

⁵³Rothfels quotes the end of one of Goerdeler's letters from prison: "I ask the world to accept our martyrdom as penance for the German people." Hans Rothfels, The German Opposition To Hitler, trans., Lawrence Wilson (Chicago, 1962), p. 152.

⁵⁴See Chapter Five, p. 368.

one, because I was not allowed to say much. But during it we came to know each other through and through. Of the whole pack, only Freisler understood me, and of the whole pack, only he knows why he has to kill me. There was no talk of "complicated individual" or "complicated ideas," but simply, "The mask is off." We talked to each other, so to speak, in a vacuum. He did not make a single joke at my expense, as he did with Delp and Eugen [Gerstenmaier]. No, between us, it was all in grimmest earnest. "From whom do you take your orders? From the other world, or from Adolf Hitler? To whom do you owe loyalty and faith?"⁵⁵

Freisler, whom Moltke described as "talented, with some degree of genius in him,"⁵⁶ had apprehended the crux of the division between the resisters and Hitler. Defeated in their many attempts to overthrow the Nazi dictatorship, unable to overcome the objections of enough officers, spurned in their continuing efforts to obtain political support abroad, and, in truth, trapped repeatedly in their dilemma between moral imperatives and political necessities, the men of the "decent Germany" could still dissent on the basis of conscience--a viable counter-faith which, as we have seen, went far beyond mere non-acceptance of the ordained creed. Accordingly, the dialogue between Freisler and Moltke reveals the genuine religious vision with which the resisters matched Hitler's "corrupt use of religious patterns"⁵⁷--a perspective embodying the key concepts and equations of their movement and a common denominator by which they could be identified.⁵⁸ It was this religious conviction

⁵⁵Moltke is quoted in Balfour and Frisby, pp. 326-327.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 317.

⁵⁷This is Burke's description of Hitler's perspective in "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," in Literary Form, p. 173.

⁵⁸Karlyn Kohrs Campbell argues that the distinguishing characteristic of "enduring criticism" is the discovery of forms that permit and evoke participation. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Criticism: Ephemeral and

that initially drove them into opposition; it was this religious conviction that lay behind their political ideas and programs; it was this religious conviction that provided them enough ground to struggle in the dialectic arena; and in the final analysis, it was this religious conviction, as Freisler so well understood, that made it necessary for the Nazis to execute them.

William L. Shirer has observed that while the revolt against Hitler required eleven and a half years to prepare, it took only eleven and a half hours to put down.⁵⁹ Like some of his other judgments,⁶⁰ this one

Enduring," paper presented at the Central States Speech Convention, April, 1973, p. 4. Identifying the resistance movement's genuine religious perspective does not constitute any lasting contribution to rhetorical theory since Professor Campbell rightly limits such contributions to "symbolic processes that are not self-evident," and this one was not camouflaged in the least. However, there is some room to disagree with Professor Campbell when she writes that "the oxymoron, the figure of paradox and contradiction, is the distinguishing linguistic resource of the Women's Liberation Movement." Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Rhetoric Of The Women's Liberation Movement: An Oxymoron," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, LXI (February, 1973), 84. As this study has shown, the "oxymoron" is fundamental to describing the initial state of merger between any incipient movement and the existing order in that both begin with a single reality structure in which their potential opposites are combined. Subsequent stages in the dialectic may call for new linguistic forms--say, "irony" (restrictively defined as "opposite"), might be the master trope for the division period, and then "oxymoron" again for the new synthesis, since in the dramatic perspective, the ongoing nature of order inevitably implies new divisions.

⁵⁹William L. Shirer, The Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich (New York, 1960), p. 1068.

⁶⁰The reference here is to a remarkably short survey of twenty-three pages entitled, "The Historical Roots Of The Third Reich," in which Shirer attributes the causes of the Nazi dictatorship to three forces: (1) The Protestant Reformation; (2) The Thirty Years War; and (3) The Rise of Prussia to Power in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Foregoing invidious comparisons which could be made in a similar sketch of any nation's history, we can content ourselves with observing that political phenomena ought to possess enough common features to make it susceptible to some sort of general analysis. Yet, to accept Shirer's

suffers from an imbalance between simplicity and substance because it tells us nothing about the causes for the failure of the movement's immediate purpose or the possibilities of its longer-range success.

Taking these points in turn, there is no doubt that the drama we have witnessed was a tragedy.⁶¹ The more important question, however, is why? To answer it, we might divide the response into the three areas which were raised at the beginning of the prologue:⁶² morality, politics, and practical execution,⁶³ bearing in mind, of course, that these are not autonomous; that indeed, one of the main reasons for the failure of the movement lies in the fact that many of its actors were never able to reconcile the competing claims of these areas.

causal relations would be to leave us with no way of accounting for other 20th Century dictatorships like Italian Fascism or Russian Communism, neither of which can lay claim to Shirer's "antecedents."

⁶¹Clearly, failure should not preclude the study of a movement. Griffin writes: "As students of persuasion, interested not so much in the accomplished change of opinion as in the attempt to effectuate change, we should find the rhetorical structure of the lost cause as meaningful as that of the cause victorious." Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetoric Of Historical Movements," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, XXXVIII (April, 1952), 185.

⁶²See Chapter One, p. 2.

⁶³To these three causes must be added a fourth--"chance," which Meinecke defines as "a unique and unexpected intervention of some sort of extraneous force." Friedrich Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, trans., Sidney B. Fay (Boston, 1969), pp. 56-57. No other cause could account for the fact that the explosives that Tresckow and Schlabrendorff had placed in the Fuehrer's plane in March 1943 failed to explode, or that Hitler was sprawled across the heavy conference table, following Heusinger's report on the maps, when Stauffenberg's bomb went off. By Meinecke's definition, chance is not susceptible to the kind of rhetorical analysis which follows, although he does argue that "in everything we may call chance there lies something of the general tendency [of a people], and in every general tendency something of chance" (Ibid., p. 57), which is perhaps another way of saying that men more adept at revolutionary action run less risk of being thwarted by chance.

We can begin with morality, treating the term as Burke does, in the dual sense of "custom, usage, manner. . . [and] right."⁶⁴ Thus defined, the pieties which first drove the conservatives into opposition: their concept of an army, bureaucracy, church, state, and their moral code--all of which the Fuehrer was twisting into new shapes--also made it difficult for them to engage in acts necessary to overthrow the Nazi dictatorship. Examples, which have been detailed in earlier scenes, come readily to mind. One of the most important was Goerdeler and Beck's scruples about assassination; scruples, incidently, which Goerdeler never overcame.⁶⁵ Up to 1941, before Hitler withdrew to the sanctuary of his field headquarters, there were opportunities to kill him, and though he was never an easy target, he himself admitted that a ruthless assassin, determined to hazard his own life in the attempt, could have succeeded.⁶⁶ Surely, in a nation of fifty-million people, a killer sufficiently skilled could have been found, but only once in the drama of the resistance movement did anyone look for such a desperado. That was when Nikolaus Halem, "independent of us," as Schlabrendorff put it,⁶⁷ decided to hire an assassin. The one he found (and this too is typical of what happens when "decent" men are unprepared to engage in "indecencies"), was more interested in the money than the task, and eventually, when Halem refused to keep paying, one of

⁶⁴Kenneth Burke, A Grammar Of Motives (Berkeley, 1969), p. 15.

⁶⁵Ritter writes that when Goerdeler met a fellow-resister shortly after the failure of July 20, his first words were: "Thou shalt not kill." Ritter, p. 292.

⁶⁶For Hitler's statement, see Chapter Three, p. 168.

⁶⁷Schlabrendorff, p. 93.

the killer's accomplices informed the Gestapo.⁶⁸

Perhaps the most fateful instance of this orthodox moral code working against political necessities occurred during the second act when Halder, the key military conspirator, pleaded with his civilian counterparts to remove the Fuehrer once and for all. Despite the outbreak of war, Halder was not unwilling to act, but he was deeply troubled by his oath, his duty to protect the state, and his fear that Nazi ideology had made deep inroads in the army. Yet, when he expressed these apprehensions, the civilians responded with a barrage of memoranda full of irrelevant arguments about broader political issues; and Gisevius, who had not yet acquired the "gangster" perspective necessary to meet the Nazis on their own terms, could only write that Halder ought to "openly stand by his act which his intelligence and conscience made mandatory for him."⁶⁹ What Gisevius, the civilian, could not recognize was that Halder's moral code, defined in the sense of customs, traditions, caste concepts, and the like, embodied the very factors that made it almost impossible for him to "openly stand by his act." And Beck was more culpable than Gisevius. As a former officer who had had to conquer many resistances within himself, Beck should have grasped the significance of Halder's difficulty and made plans for Hitler's death. But instead, he reproached Halder for his lack of courage, pointing out to him that as an experienced horseman, he ought to know that at the hurdles, the rider threw his heart over first⁷⁰--hardly the kind of answer

⁶⁸Schlabrendorff, p. 93. Halem was arrested, tried, and executed.

⁶⁹Gisevius, p. 295.

⁷⁰See Chapter Three, p. 220. Beck's error is characteristic of Griffin's warning: that one of the dangers in a movement is the failure of its leaders to make their rhetoric "perfect by adapting it in every

Halder was seeking to resolve his dilemma.

By the time, then, that the younger generation of resisters came on the scene--Tresckow, Schlabrendorff, Stauffenberg, and the others--men who understood that the Fuehrer was the principle of his hierarchy and that nothing short of destroying him would bring the whole order down, the earlier, more favorable circumstances had changed. Beck now approved of assassination, but that was of little help against Hitler's knack for sensing danger. To altered schedules, cancelled appearances, and irregular comings and goings, the Fuehrer had added withdrawal to the seclusion of the "Wolfsschanze" where no one except his closest friends, highest functionaries, and selected officers were permitted to enter. Thus, it was necessary for Stauffenberg, one of the few resisters with access to this inner-sanctum, to divide his efforts between the role of assassin in East Prussia and director of operations in Berlin. It was a desperate decision and a fatal division, and Gisevius' post-mortem--that "before the Putsch began, an inexorable text was writ large above the catastrophe: too late"⁷¹--can serve as an epitaph for a moral code sufficiently inhibiting to prevent revolutionary acts at the most opportune moment.⁷²

Politically, there were two reasons for failure: the unwillingness

minute detail to the [natural] appetites of its hearers.'" Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 466.

⁷¹Gisevius, p. 489.

⁷²This effort to break with the past--with habits of thought and reflexes sanctified by traditional values as well as with political forms like the monarchy, represents another variation of the dialectic struggle--what Griffin calls "a progress from pathema through poiema to mathema: from 'a suffering, misfortune, passive condition, state of mind,' through 'a deed, doing, action, act,' to 'an adequate idea; the thing learned.'" Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 461.

of any power to come to the aid of the movement either at home or abroad. Within the totalitarian scene, there was, of course, no chance of organizing a popular political front in the commonly accepted sense. The only internal agency that counted was the army, and in the final analysis, the resisters were unable to influence enough officers in key positions to join the plot. Here again, morality in the guise of tradition enters the scene. Franz Halder writes that "the German Army could never become an instrument of revolution because that was contrary to its entire history."⁷³ He may be exaggerating somewhat since a number of officers did join the movement. But tragically, the resisters were limited in their choice of agencies to the one in which the concept of disobedience was low among the terminology of motives. As Beck said to Halder in 1938, "Mutiny and revolution are words that have no place in the dictionary of the German soldier"⁷⁴--a statement Halder himself felt so strongly about that he repeated it at Nuremberg.⁷⁵ Thus, Stauffenberg's decision to usurp the machinery of command, a decision that might have worked had it been implemented in time, as witness Kluge's initial readiness to act when the "Valkyrie" Orders arrived, properly headed, formulated, and signed.⁷⁶ Reinforcing this military attitude of obedience was another moral imperative--the oath of allegiance--sworn "before God"--and binding every soldier to Hitler as Fuehrer and Supreme

⁷³"Letter of General Franz Halder," August 17, 1965.

⁷⁴Beck is quoted by Halder in Peter Bor, Gesprache mit Halder (Wiesbaden, 1950), pp. 112-113.

⁷⁵Halder's statement is in Nazi Conspiracy And Aggression, 10 Vols., (Washington, D. C., 1946), Supp., B, p. 1563. Hereafter abbreviated as NCA.

⁷⁶See Chapter Five, p. 413.

Commander, just as its archetype, the vassal's oath, bound the giver to his liege lord. If this bond could have been broken, the internal political success of the movement would have been assured. Thus, Tresckow's argument for assassination, not so much to kill Hitler the man but to eliminate Hitler the recipient of the oath.⁷⁷ How right Tresckow was can be seen in the statement of Dr. Hans Hagen, the "political leadership" officer who played such an important role in the events of July 20. After the war, he was quoted as saying that if Hitler had been killed by the bomb, his duty would have been to obey the generals in the War Ministry. "I would have shot Goebbels, even though he was my friend," was the way he put it.⁷⁸

If the shibboleths hindering the political support of the German Army seem strange, the failure of the dialogue between the opposition and the Western Powers is equally so, and for largely the same reasons.⁷⁹ Again, there are many examples from which one or two will have to suffice. Particularly galling must have been the resisters' journeys to London during the period of the Sudeten Crisis. At that time, Kleist, Kordt, and Tettelbach tried to impress upon the British the officers' fears of a full scale war for which they knew the army was unprepared. If Britain would only stand firm against Hitler, they argued, there would be a military coup, followed by negotiations on the Versailles Treaty with a

⁷⁷See Chapter Four, p. 308.

⁷⁸Hagen is quoted in Roger Manvell & Heinrich Fraenkel, Dr. Goebbels, His Life and Death (New York, 1961), p. 275.

⁷⁹Stauffenberg's statement to his brother: that "the only thing the English supplied [the bomb] did not work," is somewhat harsh but not wholly inaccurate. Spiegelbild, p. 55.

"reasonable" German Government which, unlike the Nazis, would be trustworthy and employ acceptable methods.⁸⁰ No real apology for the negative British reaction has been made except by Wheeler-Bennett who writes that while Chamberlain can be faulted for many shortcomings, "neglecting the advances of the Berlin conspirators is not among the most serious." He goes on to claim that the western leaders "were being asked to gamble the fate of their countries on the very uneven chance of a successful coup d'etat in Germany" and that even had it succeeded, there was no indication that the anti-Hitler faction would have followed foreign policies any different from the Fuehrer.⁸¹

A common thread runs through this argument: an inability to distinguish German from German. Beginning with foreign affairs, there is no doubt that the resisters wanted to change the peace treaty, particularly in regard to the Sudetenland and the Polish "Corridor." But that is not the same as Hitler's policy of "Lebensraum" at the expense of the whole Slavic world, and of course, Wheeler-Bennett says nothing about Chamberlain's imminent trip to Munich where he was blackmailed into conceding more of Czechoslovakia than was ever dreamed of by the most imperialistic resister. Then there is the claim about "gambling the fate of their countries." Totalitarian orders, as Wheeler-Bennett should know, survive in part through foreign triumphs and in part by presenting a monolithic domestic front to the outside world. Yet here were emissaries with an almost embarrassing wealth of information on how to thwart a triumph and whose very presence suggested something less than solidarity. Where,

⁸⁰See Chapter Two, pp. 124-218; 96-97.

⁸¹Wheeler-Bennett, pp. 414-415.

then, is the gamble? If the coup had succeeded, Chamberlain could have had the peace he so earnestly desired for Europe. If the coup had failed, Hitler would have had a civil war on his hands or, at the least, an army purged of many of its highest ranking officers. Either of these would have cracked the facade of monolithic unity and left the Western Powers in a far stronger position than the one they were in after Munich.

More understandable was the Allies mistrust following the inability of the resisters to persuade the officers to act in the spring of 1940. (Although it should be noted that Beck sent Mueller back to the Vatican with an admission of failure and a compensating warning about the imminent German attack.)⁸² In the past, the opposition had been undone by western responses to Hitler's diplomatic successes. Now, his military victory over France and the Low Countries, and later in the Balkans and Russia, made the Allied Powers reluctant to treat with people who seemed to represent the very agency upon which the Fuehrer depended for his triumphs: militarists, Prussian Junkers, and the General Staff. Reinforcing this view was Hitler's claim to "die ganze Welt"--a claim which he appeared near to realizing and which seemed to demand an Allied counter-claim aimed at his destruction. Thus, the resisters faced the problem of Germans and the Nazis being regarded as one by the statesmen whose political support was indispensable.⁸³ After Stalingrad, and again, after the losses in the summer of 1943, the prevalent mood in Germany was one of fear and war weariness, a mood which prompted an increasing number of officers

⁸²See Chapter Three, p. 228.

⁸³Hassell's diary entry in February 1942 expresses the fear: "I have been apprehensive lest the idea that Germany and Nazism were one was. . . a fait accompli." Hassell, p. 240.

to receptivity and spurred the efforts of the resisters because there was again some hope of military support. But now their attempts to negotiate with the Western Powers was met with the final paragraph of the Atlantic Charter, calling for German disarmament. This was Roosevelt's invention,⁸⁴ as was the even stronger doctrine of Unconditional Surrender promulgated at Casablanca.⁸⁵ Granted, that the President did not wish to tie his hands as Woodrow Wilson had done, and granted that he was concerned about affronting the Russians. But at base, Roosevelt's insistence on the formula was due to his concept of moral war and total victory⁸⁶--a concept

⁸⁴Churchill affirms this in The Grand Alliance (Boston, 1950), pp. 434-435.

⁸⁵Winston Churchill, The Hinge Of Fate (Boston, 1950), p. 685. There is no intent to excuse Churchill, who writes that he takes his share of the responsibility, but the initiative came from Roosevelt. For corroboration, see Elliot Roosevelt, As He Saw It (New York, 1946), p. 117.

⁸⁶See Chapter Four, p. 296. This study is not the place for a long discussion of Roosevelt's motives. However, since dramatism assumes morality as part of the ground and dialectic as the form of a movement, the President's motives in demanding moral war and total victory--motives which ended the dialogue between the resisters and the Allies--need to be examined briefly. First, there was Roosevelt's desire to stir up public opinion, and he understood American values well enough to know that we prefer our wars portrayed in terms of a struggle between the forces of light and darkness: "This is a conflict that day and night now pervades our lives. No compromise can end that conflict. There never has been--there never can be--successful compromise between good and evil. Only total victory can reward the champions of tolerance, decency, and faith." War Messages of Franklin D. Roosevelt: December 8, 1941 to April 13, 1945 (Washington, D. C., nd), p. 30. Second, as well as Roosevelt understood Americans, he misunderstood Germans; thus, his identification of Prussian militarism with Nazism: "When Hitler and the Nazis go out, the Prussian military clique must go with them. The war-breeding gangs of militarists must be rooted out of Germany. . .if we are to have any real assurance of future peace." Ibid., p. 85. Third, there was the moral lesson Roosevelt wanted to teach: "As for Germany, that tragic nation which has sown the wind must reap the whirlwind. . . . The German people are not going to be enslaved--because the United Nations does not traffic in human slavery. But it will be necessary for them to earn their way back into the fellowship of peace-loving and law-abiding nations. And, in their climb up that steep road, we shall certainly see to it that they are not encumbered by having to carry weapons." Ibid., p. 145.

which sacrificed political advantage to moral principle, and one which he pursued, with the Germans at least,⁸⁷ until there were no resisters left who might have helped deny Hitler the bloody Gotterdamerung he sought at the end.⁸⁸

The final reason for the failure was practical--the mismanaged plans for a coup d'etat. Once again, the cause must be sought beyond the practical, in the areas of morality and politics. Carl Burkhardt describes the German attitude toward revolution:

Germans are by nature not adapted to play the part of revolutionaries. They have an inborn respect for the authority of the state. Riots and civil wars have often occurred in other countries, but they have almost never occurred in German history.⁸⁹

Narrowing the scope to the military, upon whom, as Schlabrendorff writes, "the practical execution of the scheme would fall,"⁹⁰ there is General Witzleben's analysis:

⁸⁷The reference here is to Roosevelt's selective application of the doctrine; that is, he was willing to endorse the political arrangements made by General Eisenhower with Admiral Darlan for Vichy French cooperation in North Africa, and he approved the negotiations between Foreign Secretary Eden and Marshal Badoglio for an Italian Armistice. But with the German resisters, who had better moral credentials and potentially more to offer in the way of political gains than either the French or Italians, Roosevelt continued to maintain an uncompromising attitude.

⁸⁸Speer quotes Hitler as saying: "If the war is lost, the people will be lost also. It is not necessary to worry about what the people will need for elementary survival. On the contrary, it is best for us to destroy these things. For the nation has proved to be weaker. . . ." Speer, p. 557.

⁸⁹Burkhardt is quoted in Ernst von Weizsacker, Memoirs, trans., John Andrews (Chicago, 1951), p. 182.

⁹⁰Schlabrendorff, p. 49.

The German Army was, for the first time in its long history, faced with a situation for which it was unprepared. The officers were not able to initiate a civil war or start a revolution. They were entirely helpless before a criminal who pretended to be Germany.⁹¹

July 20 witnessed the truth of these statements as most of the soldier-conspirators demonstrated their shortcomings as revolutionary dialecticians: Olbricht's failure to issue the "Valkyrie" Orders during the first critical hours of the coup; Hoepner's moaning about the odds against success; Olbricht's inability to employ arguments which might have influenced Fromm; Beck's misdirected rage at Kortzfleisch over the issue of the oath; Hoepner's misplaced courtesy in affording Fromm and the others the honors of military confinement; Hase and Hayessen's furtiveness in giving orders to Remer; Stieff's unwillingness to tell a single lie to Blumentritt; Beck's implied admission that Hitler was alive in his conversation with Kluge. All these errors, which are traceable to habits of thought, combined to rob the plot of any chance of success. As Schlabrendorff puts it, "We were not natural revolutionaries; for our strength lay in the officers and officials who took part. Blood should have run--instead the men of July 20 said to all and sundry--Have a seat."⁹²

Among the officers, only Stauffenberg proved to have the strength to act against his background instead of merely reacting to it--to improvise and match rhetorical abilities in the dialectic struggle with the Nazis. Thus, his clever bluffs through the checkpoints at Fuehrer Headquarters

⁹¹"Letter of General Hermann Witzleben," July 16, 1966.

⁹²Schlabrendorff is quoted in Terence Prittie, Germans Against Hitler (Boston, 1964), p. 248.

and his tireless battle to counter Keitel's orders, speaking firmly to one, referring to the realities of the situation with another, entreating a third, basing his plea on the patriotism of a fourth. Even Gisevius, whose own transformation to a revolutionary was evident in his repeated demands for summary justice and whose word carries added weight because he was a critic of Stauffenberg, was impressed: "Stauffenberg was the only one in control of the situation, the only one who knew what he wanted."⁹³

In sharp contrast to most of the officer-conspirators, the dialecticians of the Third Reich--particularly Hitler, its god-term, and Goebbels, its high priest, committed very few mistakes in defending the existing order. They recognized the susceptibilities of their audience and manipulated it to their greatest advantage. Hitler, for instance, had boasted to Hermann Rauschning that he understood the proper methods for dealing not only with the masses but with the elite:

I have been busy with what amounts to the study of human weakness. We do well to speculate on human vices as well as human virtues. . . . And it is not enough to work on the weaknesses of the masses; those of the men at the head of affairs is of much more importance. I cannot embark on a policy without knowing them. A thorough knowledge of the weaknesses and vices of . . .my opponents is the first consideration of success. . . .⁹⁴

Goebbels too was a master at bending men on the basis of their weaknesses: "Put pressure on your adversary with ice-cold determination. Probe him, search out his weak spot; deliberately and calculatingly sharpen the spear [and] hurl it with careful aim where the enemy is naked and vulnerable."⁹⁵

⁹³Gisevius, p. 555.

⁹⁴Hermann Rauschning, The Voice Of Destruction (New York, 1940), pp. 273-274.

⁹⁵Goebbels is quoted in Joachim C. Fest, The Face Of The Third

With such insights, it is little wonder that the loyalists' arguments ranged the entire gamut of contentions that promote obedience, loyalty, law, order, and all the other symbols of the prevailing system of authority which, in German military tradition, were regarded as the highest virtues. It was almost like a refrain: "The Fuehrer is alive;" "Do you recognize my voice? I am living;" "He is unhurt;" "A small group of ambitious officers would dispose of me;" "Any orders issued by Fromm, Witzleben, or Hoepner are invalid;" "We shall dispose of them in short measure;" "You are hereby commanded in my name to restore order;" "Where does your loyalty and responsibility lay?" And like so many automatons, the soldiers to whom these arguments were directed--Fromm, Remer, and Kluge, clicked their heels, said "Jawohl," and obeyed.

It would be a fitting conclusion to the drama of the resisters if their immediate failure could be offset with examples describing their longer-term success; if the accident of history which caused their total disappearance⁹⁶ could be compensated by showing that their spiritual values and ideas of order have triumphed in post-war Germany and Europe; if the Biblical quotation used by one of them to dedicate his diary could be said to have been vindicated: "unless the seed falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth good fruit."⁹⁷

Reich, trans., Michael Bullock (New York, 1970), p. 137.

⁹⁶The bodies of the executed men were turned over to the Anatomical Institute of Berlin University. The head of the Institute was a friend of many of the resisters, and therefore blocked their use as cadavers. He had them cremated intact and the ashes buried in a nearby cemetery. There, an Allied air raid destroyed the urns. Zeller, p. 445.

⁹⁷Albrecht von Kessel, "Verborgene Saat: Das 'Andere' Deutschland," an unpublished diary, p. 1.

Unfortunately, in the three decades since the events of July 20 wrote a tragic end to their movement, the results have been a merging of lighter and darker shades, more accurately reflecting life than the theater. In the early years at least, a number of factors--the need to survive, the official silence in Germany and abroad, the beginning of the cold-war, and the establishment of a government in Bonn--militated against the issues raised by the resisters: the limits of obedience, the claims of conscience, the question of tyrannicide, the distinction between patriotism and treason, the binding quality of the oath, and the burden of guilt.

On this last issue in particular, there has never been any resolution, despite the Nuremberg Trials and other judicial proceedings. For it was the resisters intent, once the coup had succeeded, to spell out the Nazi crimes and atrocities to the German people in the hope that the revelation of these horrors--committed in their name--would bring them to a feeling of repentance and a willingness to accept responsibility. As one writer suggests, sparing them this opportunity may be the real tragedy for the fact "that it is embedded in history and can never be raised again, means that the German people will be branded, as by the mark of Cain, with the symbol of a past with which they will never be able to come to terms."⁹⁸

With the issue of the oath, there has been more progress. General Blumentritt writes that the officers informally discussed the subject while they were still prisoners in Britain,⁹⁹ and that following their

⁹⁸Dieter Ehlers, quoted in Hermann Graml, et. al., The German Resistance To Hitler (Berkeley, 1970), p. 234.

⁹⁹"Letter of General Guenther Blumentritt," October 9, 1965.

release, these conversations continued:

After the war I had a long discussion about this problem in Marburg-Lahn. Participating . . . were professors of theology, of history, and of political science. . . . Towards the end of this discussion a very young student said in a skeptical and ironic tone that in the future we should introduce a new course into our military schools; namely, "Oath Science."¹⁰⁰

The young student was worried unnecessarily. In 1950, when the West-German Government joined NATO, the whole issue of the military oath was carefully examined. The hearings took place behind closed doors and the results were never officially revealed. But it is significant to note that far-reaching changes in the formulation have occurred. The new oath simply runs: "I swear to faithfully and truly serve the Federal German Government and to bravely defend the freedom of the German people, so help me God."¹⁰¹

The differences between this vow and its predecessor are substantive. No longer does the soldier swear loyalty to an individual; instead, it is to the state and people that he gives his allegiance. Thus, the tragic dilemma so often encountered by German officers in the Third Reich--that of deciding when the welfare of the nation differed from that of its Fuehrer--should finally be laid to rest. The new oath discloses a second difference as well. No longer is unconditional obedience demanded of the soldier. Two passages in the "Soldatengesetz" or "Military Law" spell this out clearly:

If an order, offending against the dignity of man is not followed, this is not to be considered as disobedience. . . .

¹⁰⁰"Letter of General Guenther Blumentritt," October 9, 1965.

¹⁰¹"Letter of General Werner Boie," October 2, 1965.

Furthermore, it will not be considered a case of disobedience if an order provoking an offense or crime is not followed.¹⁰²

When we recall Hitler's criminal commands to his soldiers,¹⁰³ these moral qualifications become extremely important. As Dr. Rupert Angermair put it, "an oath can be valid only under condition that the subject or content of the promise is acceptable to God. It is impossible to 'swear to God,' that is, to call on God as a solemn witness, when one intends to insult God if a human, be he the highest superior, so orders."¹⁰⁴

The other issues--the claims of conscience, the question of tyrannicide, and the distinction between patriotism and treason--were discussed in connection with the trial of Ernst Otto Remer, the officer who had command of the Watch Battalion on July 20. After the war, Remer helped to found a neo-Nazi political party, one of whose means of gaining power was to libel the men of the resistance movement as "traitors"--to brand them the way Hitler did the Social Democrats following World War I. Hailed before a court, Remer's trial, conducted with German thoroughness and, to judge by the testimony, with a certain German ponderousness, became a "cause celebre" since it brought to the witness box theologians of both confessions, jurists, and officers, all of whom testified as to the rights of resistance against a totalitarian order. We have already quoted part

¹⁰²"Letter of General Werner Boie," October 2, 1965.

¹⁰³Hassell records an example of the soldier's choices under Hitler. "A young officer, now in Munich, received an order to shoot three hundred and fifty civilians, allegedly partisans, among them women and children. He hesitated at first, but was then warned that the penalty for disobedience was death. He begged for ten minutes to think it over, and finally carried out the order with machine-gun fire. He was so shaken by this episode that, although only slightly wounded, he was determined not to go back to the front." Hassell, p. 276.

¹⁰⁴Dr. Angermair is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 278.

of the opinion of Dr. Angermair, the Catholic theologian, in which he attacked the unconditional nature of the oath. Additionally, he dealt with the boundary between treason and patriotism, drawing it on the basis of intent:

A traitor acts from pure hatred or greed, from personal ambition, lust for power, and so on. He subjects the common welfare of his whole people to criminal private interest. That is contrary to the deed of the men of July 20, who put their personal welfare so far behind their love of the people that they gave their own lives. "My people may perish, so long as I have the profit," murmurs the traitor on his dark ways. "Long live our holy Germany," called Graf von Stauffenberg when he was led to his death for his attempt to save Germany.¹⁰⁵

Dr. Angermair's Lutheran counterpart, Dr. Hans Joachim Iwand, addressed himself to the issue of resistance in general, and from a confession which has traditionally submitted to the authority of state rulers, cited doctrine supporting rebellion from the writings of Martin Luther:

I may conclude with Luther's words in his essay, "Warning to My Beloved Germans": "One must not let everything be rebellious that the bloodhounds call rebellious. For they want to shut the mouth and tie the fist of the whole world so that nobody can punish them with sermons and defend himself with the fist, while they keep an open mouth and a free hand. Thus, they want to frighten and catch the whole world by the name of rebellion and to console and safeguard themselves. . . . One would have to put the definition and interpretation differently. Rebellion is not if somebody acts against the law; otherwise all violations of the law would have to be called rebellion. But he is called rebel who does not want to stand the authority and the law, and attacks them and fights them, and wants to be master himself and to set up the law himself. . . . That is rightly called a rebel; so that resistance against the bloodhounds cannot be rebellious."¹⁰⁶

The need to unite the military, which had divided over the issue of resistance, was attempted by General Helmuth Friebe, who endeavored to

¹⁰⁵Dr. Angermair is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 281.

¹⁰⁶Dr. Iwand is quoted in Ibid., p. 286.

acknowledge the army's debt to those officers who had opposed Hitler while not alienating the many who did not.

Summarizing, I will. . .use a classification from General Spiedel--which, however, is not to suggest an evaluation: "only-soldiers" rejected the plot for reasons of soldierly obedience and soldierly loyalty. These qualities are the basis for all military discipline, and for those who had them, an oath was an oath. . . . The "thinking-soldiers" were led by the unique circumstances surrounding July 20 to the concept that it was really a question of to be or not to be for the nation. For them, the oath-bearer--the head of state--became and was a mortal danger; and for them, the oath, under special and quite extraordinary circumstances, found its limits. . . . During the war the prevailing view was that of the "only-soldiers," who as officers at the front saw only, and were permitted to see only, their hard task. Since the collapse, a great many "only-soldiers" have become "thinking-soldiers". . . . The two groups stand side by side today, honoring and understanding their mutual conceptions. Both groups, in their overwhelming majorities, recognize the motives of their comrades involved in the plot of July 20 as motives which were in truth noble and patriotic.

For Remer, however, there was no place in this transcendent merger:

The few that represent the attitude of Herr Remer are of such an imperceptible minority that their voice--with whatever volume it speaks--does not deserve attention. To represent them as spokesmen of a reactionary officers corps "that has learned nothing new and does not want to learn anything new" strikes us old officers as bitter and unfair.¹⁰⁷

Finally, the issue of tyrannicide--an obstacle, as we have seen, that men as different as Goerdeler and Moltke could never surmount, and that Beck negotiated only with great difficulty, was discussed by Hermann Weinkauff, former President of the Federal Court.

If the possessor of state power. . .becomes a tyrant; if he establishes a despotism over his own people by means of terror, lies, and a state organization that resembles a slave-keeper; if he makes the legal order invalid by subjecting it to his personal will; if he commits or incites atrocities

¹⁰⁷General Friebe is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 296.

. . .against a part of the people of the state; if during the war he permits immense atrocities to be committed against other peoples, crimes that cover the name of his own people with shame and dishonor; if he continues the war to the dead end. . .disregard[ing] the enormous, useless sacrifices. . .impose[d] on his own people and on other peoples; if he deliberately tries to drag his own people into his personal downfall. . .then indeed he has forfeited. . .every right to obedience and subordination; then the people's own responsibility for the disgraced order comes invincibly to the fore; then resistance is permitted and asked for; both passive and active--and, if it must be--violent resistance. Then, if no other means is open. . .the slaying of the tyrant is also permitted. Here, if anywhere, the slaying lacks the legal character of murder, and has rather the character of a lawful execution of a criminal.¹⁰⁸

In defense of the conditional nature of these arguments--the strained formulas and references to special circumstances--we should note that in German tradition, there never has been any justification for tyrannicide, either moral or political, except in cases of illegal usurpation,¹⁰⁹ which would not have applied to Hitler.¹¹⁰ Also, all social orders rest upon the positives and negatives of the "thou shalt" and the "thou shalt nots,"¹¹¹ and they would soon crumble if the ruled were licensed to kill the rulers willy-nilly. Thus, the attempt to partially reorient national coordinates, to readjust "expectanc[ies] and. . .affect. . .choice of means with reference

¹⁰⁸Hermann Weinkauff is quoted in Germans Against Hitler, p. 266. Herr Weinkauff's statement, together with that of General Friebe, Dr. I-wand, and Dr. Angermaier, may represent movement toward the final stage in the "progress from pathema through poiema to mathema; from 'a suffering, misfortune, passive condition, state of mind,' through 'a deed, doing, action, act,' to 'an adequate idea; the thing learned.'" Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 461.

¹⁰⁹On the lack of justification for tyrannicide, see Sister Mary Alice Gallin, German Resistance To Hitler (Washington, D. C., 1961), p. 31ff.

¹¹⁰On the legal aspects of Hitler's accession to power, see Chapter One, pp. 14-16.

¹¹¹Kenneth Burke, "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language," in Language As Symbolic Action (Berkeley, 1968), p. 433ff.

to the future. . . [so that the people] know what. . . is expecte[d] of them. . . and decisions and judgments and policies. . . [can take] such expectancies into account."¹¹²

Remer's trial ended with a guilty verdict and a prison sentence of four months. Upon his release, the former commander of the Watch Battalion weighed his political chances, found them unpromising, and emigrated to Egypt. But his party remained, led by other Hitler apologists, old fighters, and right-wing extremists, whose political slogans echoed another era: "No servitude to Jewry," "South Tyrol is suffering for Germany," "Breslau, Koenigsburg, Danzig, and Stettin will be German again," and of course, the old standby, "German Democracy."

At the polls, the neo-Nazis met with mixed results, making some gains in Lander politics, but failing to obtain the five percent necessary for representation in the federal Bundestag.¹¹³ However, they compensated for their lack of electoral power with an avalanche of pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, and books, designed to keep alive the old symbols--the elitist, national, and racial catchwords. The "Deutsche Wochzeitung," for example, published by Alfred Rosenberg's ex-secretary, hews strictly to the anti-Bolshevik line of Hitler's old order.¹¹⁴ Gerhard Frey, who fancies himself the new Fuehrer, owns the "National und Soldatenzeitung," and claims a circulation of more than 100,000--third largest among the political journals of West Germany.¹¹⁵ And "Nation

¹¹²Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Indianapolis, 1965), p. 18.

¹¹³Bracher, p. 487.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 473.

¹¹⁵Amos Elon, Journey Through A Haunted Land (New York, 1967), p. 35.

Europa," which purports to speak for European fascism provides a forum for individuals like Hermann Ramcke of parachute troop fame, Hans Grimm, author of People Without Living Space, Wenzel Jaksch, President of the League of German Refugees, and many others.¹¹⁶ Books like I Was Hitler's Doctor¹¹⁷ and Forward Gunner Asche,¹¹⁸ not only blur the harsh realities of the Third Reich but condition the reader to stronger stuff like Benno Zieser's odious novel, The Road to Stalingrad¹¹⁹ and The Forced War¹²⁰ (written, ironically enough by an American historian, David Hoggan), which shifts the blame for starting World War II from Hitler to the British and the Poles.

In this rhetorical struggle, where old words are deployed like soldiers, reminding people of a time when language expressed the unexpressible, camouflaged obscenities, and turned lies into special kinds of truth, there is a real danger that the terministic screens of the past--the deflections and selections against which the resisters fought--will reassert themselves. Democratic order has never been strong in Germany, and it requires not only the economic prosperity which has been part of the scene for the past twenty years, but an understanding of the language which is logically prior to economics.¹²¹

¹¹⁶Bracher, p. 474.

¹¹⁷Biltmore Publications, 1948.

¹¹⁸Little, Brown, and Company, 1956.

¹¹⁹Ballantine Books, 1957.

¹²⁰Hochschuller-Zeitung Verlag, 1964.

¹²¹Burke writes: "For the human mind, as the organ of a symbol using animal, is 'prior' to any particular property structure--and in this sense the laws of symbols are prior to economic laws." Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric Of Motives (New York, 1955), p. 136.

Perhaps that is what Heinrich Boll had in mind when he wrote: "Words, as soon as they are uttered or written down transform themselves and impose a reality on the speaker or writer. [He who] writes down a word should know its ancestry and of what transformations it is capable."¹²²

Democracy is the most difficult form of government. It can only be assured, as Konrad Adenauer once said, "when the concepts of freedom and order have become part of the very being of each individual."¹²³ Germans have always had order; freedom, however, in the sense of commitment--of active participation in public affairs, is much more novel. Typically, the German language has used foreign words to designate many of the basic attributes of a free society.¹²⁴ A good example is one we mentioned in earlier acts: "Zivilcourage." The German word "Mut" is a different kind of courage. "Heldenmut" (heroic courage) is expected in certain situations and is honored. But "Zivilcourage" signifies the courage to oppose the opinion of the majority--to violate taboos. Today, this is changing slowly. Post-war Germans have created the cumbersome "meinungs-freudig," which means "the joy of having my own opinion." Or there is the phrase, "seiner Uberzeugung gemass handeln," which, while more awkward than "Zivilcourage haben," is at least a native product. A dramatic view of man assumes that motives are "rough shorthand descriptions for certain patterns of discrepant and conflicting stimuli."¹²⁵ If the

¹²²Herr Boll is quoted in Elon, p. 25.

¹²³Dr. Adenauer is quoted in Richard Hiscocks, Democracy in Western Germany (London, 1959), p. 233.

¹²⁴By comparison, Cassell's German Dictionary lists eight derivations for order.

¹²⁵Burke, Permanence and Change, p. 30.

Germans continue to invent words to allow identification with a democratic hierarchy--words which provide them with choices against totalitarian order, then the conditions which created the need for the resistance movement, like the movement itself, may be a thing of the past.

There is a recurring line from Burke's "Prologue in Heaven" which seems appropriate as an introduction to this final section on methodological implications for future study. During a dialectic in which The Lord and Satan examine the infinite analogs between theology and logology, the "Blakean bearded patriarch" repeatedly warns His "over-hasty . . . young companion" that "It's more complicated than that." For our purposes, the same could be said about four areas of methodology: (1) the tension between morality and politics; (2) the influence of orientations upon actors; (3) the ubiquity of dialectic conflict; and (4) the importance of existing agencies as instruments of change.

Taking these areas in order, Griffin and Cathcart locate the origin of rhetorical movements in morality and politics--"strivings for salvation, perfection, the 'good'. . . and the wielding and obeying of authority."¹²⁶ There can be no quarrel with this approach since all three of Burke's major motives--Order, Secret, and the Kill--are encompassed within it. However, Griffin and Cathcart say nothing about the possibility of tensions between morality and politics as a movement progresses from origin to object--say, for example, between the desirability of achieving a new political order and the undesirability of killing to achieve it. As this study has shown, such ongoing tension is a

¹²⁶Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 456; Cathcart, 86.

fundamental part of the drama of movements and the critic needs to be aware of the complications involved in it.

From a theoretical standpoint, part of the explanation for the tension--in this case, for stressing arrest instead of kill--can be found in Burke's concept of motives: "words for situations. . . [that] prepare us for some functions and against others."¹²⁷ This, in turn, implies orientations since "motives are subdivisions in a larger frame of meanings."¹²⁸ Thus, there is a critical serviceability in a linguistic account of motives in that it allows us to predict certain responses rather than others once we have identified the orientation.

However, a second part of the explanation, which elevates men above the predictable, makes the critical function at once artistic and more difficult. My reference here is to the Negative, that uniquely human resource which provides men choice in their actions by giving them the minimal option of saying "yes" or "no." Briefly, Burke's statement that "an act, to be an act, must be willed [and] the will, to be a will, must be free,"¹²⁹ means that men can be more than the sum of their orientations --that the essence of drama is choice and willed action. Thus, the critic is involved in the task of deciding to what extent men give evidence of being free, and more importantly, of increasing the capacity of their fellowmen to choose, to act, and to advance the movement so that its success is possible.

¹²⁷This quotation is a composite taken from Permanence and Change, p. 30; and Attitudes Toward History (Boston, 1961), p. 4.

¹²⁸Permanence and Change, p. 19.

¹²⁹"Dramatistic Origins of Language," in Symbolic Action, p. 436.

In this particular study, placed as it was within a totalitarian scene, my judgment has been to blame the older generation of resisters for obstructing choice in the matter of assassinating Hitler, although their motives for doing so are understandable. Men like Beck, Canaris, and Goerdeler were not always able to overcome the hampering nature of their moral values and become determined political revolutionaries like Tresckow and Stauffenberg. These younger men, who saw the scene differently, supplied the movement with the impetus to overcome these inhibiting orientations and pieties. One of them, Rudolf Gersdorff, recognized this contrast between the generations. He has written an account of Marshal Manstein, carefully dividing himself from a discussion about ways of assassinating Hitler. During a pause, he broke in: "Then you mean to kill him?" The answer was short and to the point: "Jawohl, Herr Feldmarschall, like a mad dog!"¹³⁰

In other studies, critics may reach different conclusions about killing since the nature of the dialectic exigence will vary in intensity. But the point with which we began still holds: that tensions arising from the competing claims of morality and politics are not limited to the moment when a movement begins or the moment when a new order is established and the wheel turns once more; rather, tensions continue throughout all the stages of a movement and provide additional complications for the critic.

The second area--that of the influence of orientations upon actors--concerns the fact that men, like movements, must go through periods of change. Griffin discusses this by referring to a movement beginning "when

¹³⁰Gersdorff is quoted in Fest, Hitler, p. 700.

some pivotal individual or group. . .gives voice to a No!"¹³¹ And he describes the importance of change in actors as "a progress from pathema through poieema to mathema; from 'a suffering, misfortune, passive condition, state of mind,' through 'a deed, doing, action, act,' to 'an adequate idea; the thing learned.'"¹³²

Again, there is little argument over the designation of a "pivotal individual or group" saying "No!" except to note that in a totalitarian scene, the negative must be uttered privately since, as Bethge puts it, "the use of camouflage becomes a moral duty"¹³³ and a public "No" would at the least mean dismissal from posts within the governing hierarchy. Also, it should be stressed that in revolutionary movements (and perhaps in all movements, since they exist outside the established order's concept of morality and politics), the "pivotal individual or group" will not be some rabble-rouser or anarchist but men of stature who emerge from moderate, traditional backgrounds to assume the role of leaders. This was certainly true of the German Resistance Movement, all of whose members in the early stages came from the conservative upper-class and nobility. And the phenomenon seems generalizable to other revolutionary movements. Erasmus, for instance, was the forerunner of the Reformation, Mirabeau and Lafayette of the French Revolution, Kerensky of the Communist Revolution, and so on.

The importance of identifying this pivotal individual or group as moderate and traditional is two-fold. On the one hand, it narrows the

¹³¹Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 462.

¹³²Ibid., p. 461.

¹³³Bethge, p. 532.

initial scope of inquiry, allowing the critic to concentrate on a specific level in what Burke calls "the pyramidal or hierarchical form."¹³⁴ In the upper-class, there will be both the partial immunity bestowed by rank and the ready-made network of personal contacts which give a semblance of order to the movement. Goerdeler, for example, with his many acquaintances in the civil service, possessed an automatic entree into every bureaucratic corner of the Reich, and as lord mayor, his work in labor mediation made him known to socialists like Leuschner and Kaiser.¹³⁵

On the other hand, this upper-class designation helps to explain why some actors are able, by slow degrees, or only in part, to make the transformation from pathema through poiema to mathema. Put differently, a moderate, traditional background is very similar to the scene-agency ratio which Burke defines as "custom, usage, manner. . . [and] right."¹³⁶ And of all the pivotal individuals or groups, those who perceive their acts in terms of tradition are least equipped to make the changes necessary as a revolutionary movement progresses from origin to object. Just as Erasmus was followed by Luther, Mirabeau and Lafayette by Danton, Desmoulins, and Robespierre, and Kerensky by Lenin and Stalin, so too will old actors be replaced by new ones--men who join a movement in its later stages and assume leading roles because they "[were] quickest to sense new factors in their incipient stages" and to carry out the hard decisions necessary if the movement is to overcome the existing order--in

¹³⁴Burke, Permanence and Change, p. 276.

¹³⁵Ritter, pp. 19-20.

¹³⁶Burke, Grammar, p. 15.

short, "[to] effect the collective killing of the Kill."¹³⁷ Thus, the critic should be prepared not only to account for the presence of these new actors, but also for the absence or decreasing importance of the others.

The third area--that of the ubiquity of dialectic conflict--presents the critic with a seemingly endless problem for which the methodology is inadequate. Simply put, Griffin and Cathcart leave the reader with the impression that only two orders--an existing one and its incipient opponent--are involved in dialectic conflict at any given moment,^{138a} a reduction that does not allow us to account for other forces which bear upon a movement's success or failure.

Without getting into a lengthy explanation of the extent to which Burke perceives dialectic as the stuff of life, a passage from A Rhetoric Of Motives, in which he deals with "Identification and the Autonomous," may suggest something of the scope of the problem:

. . .the principle of Rhetorical identification may be summed up thus: The fact that an activity is capable of reduction to intrinsic, autonomous principles does not argue that it is free from identification with other orders of motives extrinsic to it. Such other orders are extrinsic to it, as considered from the standpoint of the specialized activity alone. But they are not extrinsic to the field of moral action as such, considered from the standpoint of human activity in general.¹³⁹

¹³⁷Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 467.

¹³⁸In fairness to Griffin, it should be noted that one of his application essays, "The Rhetorical Structure Of The 'New Left' Movement: Part I," Quarterly Journal Of Speech, L (April, 1964), makes specific reference to "alliances" between liberals in America and socialists in Europe. However, since this article appeared before his methodological essay on dramatism, the reduction to two orders is even more difficult to understand.

¹³⁹Burke, Rhetoric, p. 27.

Defining dialectic in Burkean terms of "merger, division, and transcendence,"¹⁴⁰ and speaking very summarily but adequately for our purpose, this study has revealed the following forms of dialectic conflict at different times, or, in some cases, at the same time, in the drama of the German Resistance Movement: (1) the struggle of the resisters to divide themselves from the attractions and evils of the Third Reich; (2) the struggle of the resisters with their past--the pieties and orientations which prevented them from reconciling the competing claims of morality, politics, and practical execution; (3) the struggle among the resisters over political programs, to merge themselves into a movement with a unified vision of order; (4) the struggle between the resisters and the Anglo-American Powers with whom they sought to identify; and (5) the struggle between the resisters and Hitler's "New Order," as mediated through the agency of the army.

From a historical as well as a theoretical perspective, it was impossible to explain the drama of the German resistance without reference to each of these conflicts (and by implication, it should be impossible to explain the drama of any movement without reference to those actions which impinge upon it directly). Thus, the critical problem becomes one of choice--of determining the number of scenes and the extent of analysis necessary to explain each struggle. And chronology too is a problem since a movement goes forward "a fronte, futuristically,"¹⁴¹ thereby making it necessary to cut in repeatedly on those struggles which endure,

¹⁴⁰Burke, Grammar, p. 402.

¹⁴¹Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," p. 458.

re-illuminating their transactions and, in time, their resolutions. There is, then, no easy answer for the critic who endeavors to study a complete movement. Perhaps that is why Griffin recommends taking the briefest movement or part of a movement so as to encompass it more easily.¹⁴² As an extension to his recommendation, a further suggestion seems in order: that the work involved in putting together segments from previous studies of movements should be considered a legitimate scholarly undertaking.

The fourth area--that of the importance of existing agencies--arises from one of Cathcart's statements in which he argues that "the new order, the more perfect order, the desired order, cannot come about through existing agencies of change."¹⁴³ As this study has shown, the very opposite is true: the new order can come about only through existing agencies.

The reason for this difference begins with the existing system's method of governing and decision-making; in this case, with the Fuehrer's principle of dividing power and blocking channels of communication so that all lines of authority converged at the top¹⁴⁴--"an order," as Griffin calls it, "marked by misunderstanding, the growth of absurdity and injustice, the increasing loss of communication."¹⁴⁵ Bethge argues that in such an order, the first thing needed for resisting was information since Hitler's sudden actions were invariably a surprise.¹⁴⁶ And information, in turn,

¹⁴²Griffin, "Rhetoric Of Historical Movements," 185.

¹⁴³Cathcart, 87.

¹⁴⁴Speer, p. 65ff.

¹⁴⁵Griffin, "Dramatistic Theory," pp. 459-460.

¹⁴⁶Bethge, p. 527.

meant holding on to key positions because, as Hassell notes, small though the chance of opposing was within the system, "on the outside the chance for successful opposition would be even smaller."¹⁴⁷

In the Third Reich, the key agency for information was the Abwehr. With its protection from the Gestapo, its multitude of covert activities, and its potential for contacts that cut on the bias across the hierarchy of the Fuhrerstaat, the counter-intelligence agency afforded a well-placed center from which to keep informed. And after the Fritsch crisis, Gisevius writes that Oster became "communications facilitator" and set up his own "secret service" so that the resisters "would learn in good time what was being devised in the triangle formed by the chancellery, Karinhall [Goering's estate outside Berlin], and the Gestapo."¹⁴⁸

Information, however, had to be disseminated, and Gisevius' account of a meeting between Hjalmar Schacht, General Kluge, and Carl Schmid, is a classic illustration of clandestine communication in a police state:

It may sound like a very simple matter for a government minister, an army commander, and an administrative president to get together. But not in revolutionary Germany. For weeks I had to shuttle back and forth between Muenster, Dusseldorf, and Berlin before I finally got all parties to agree on a time and place. Each of them wanted to prepare an alibi; each had to arrange some official journey as a pretext.¹⁴⁹

As it happened, the three missed the rendezvous, and the next few hours became a series of uneasy waits interspersed with disguised telephone calls and hurried trips as Gisevius tried in vain to re-establish connections.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷Hassell, p. 1.

¹⁴⁸Gisevius, p. 235.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 206-208.

Such, then, were the frustrations that were the daily lot of resisters in Hitler's "New Order."

In a scene of terrorism, organized as it was to a high degree of efficiency, it was impossible to resist "from below." Thus, Gisevius' argument for an Archimedean point--a fulcrum for action or a power base within the system from which to mount a serious threat.¹⁵¹ And that meant the military. As Schlabrendorff writes: "Only the army had the weapons and power to overthrow the firmly entrenched Nazi regime. . . . It was therefore necessary to win army leaders and officers to our cause, and this is the reason why military men had to play an outstanding role in the resistance movement."¹⁵²

Schlabrendorff is correct about the importance of the military in Nazi Germany. As we have seen, one of the chief "rhetorical pattern[s]" inherent in the movement" was the mediated dialectic between the men of the "decent Germany" on the one side and Hitler on the other, each trying to influence army agents to identify with their cause--what we have earlier called a micro-argument within the framework of the larger macro-argument between the resisters and Hitler. In fact, the drama of the German opposition has been organized around four critical moments when the resisters succeeded in mastering some of their own vulnerabilities, importuned other powers for help, answered the objections of the officers, and set en train plans to strike. And the "representative anecdote" in each moment was a different part of the military establishment: the General Staff, the Abwehr,

¹⁵¹Gisevius is quoted in Hassell, p. 87.

¹⁵²Schlabrendorff, pp. 14-15.

the Central Army Group in Russia, and the Reserve Army.

Thus, the importance of agencies as instruments of change, at least in this unusual scene, is established. But methodologically, it seems possible to extend the issue to include agencies placed in less ominous surroundings than Hitler's Germany. Cathcart's own examples of the abolition movement and the women's suffrage movement both employed the agencies of church, school, and press to facilitate their demands for change. So the difference is more a matter of degree than of kind, and the critic should be aware that the scene-agency ratio, in which Burke discusses the principles of determination for instrumentalities, is essential to understanding the drama of a movement.

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