

28 May, 1945
The OKW

THE RELATIONS OF THE OKW TO THE PARTY AND THE SS.

The Reichswehrministerium united Army and Navy under one civilian cabinet minister, who, however, had no commanding functions over troops.

When in February 1933 Gen. von Blomberg took over the office of Reichs-
wehrminister it was his ambition to amplify this ^{position} ~~take~~ to a supreme command of the Wehrmacht. This trend corresponded ~~man well~~ both to the authoritative political system (Fuehrerstaat) and to the then much discussed similar deliberations and experiments made in other European countries (France) primarily caused by the raise of the Air Force as the third component of the armed forces.

The nomination of Gen. Von Blomberg as Oberbefehlshaber der Wehrmacht in connection with the declaration of Wehrfreiheit early in 1935 meant, therefor, that besides his administrative and political functions he became, next to the Fuehrer, Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht.

On this basis the organization of the OKW (see app.) was founded along the lines of the so-called Spitzengliederung, which, in often repeated but never quite satisfactorily finished studies of the General Staff, had been contemplated. This solution seemed simple and corresponding to the demands of a modern Wehrmacht consisting of three components. Optimists even expected that this system of command would bring about military advantages in the future development.

I.

THE OKW UNDER FIELD-MARSHAL VON BLOMBERG 1935-38.

In full recognition of the difficulties arising against his aims both from traditional (Army) and personal (Goering) points of view, General von Blomberg pushed on slowly and carefully in building up and putting in the organization of the OKW.

His first, and often pronounced, principle was that the OKW should, by no means, become "top heavy", as he used to say. Therefor, he endeavored perpetually to organize anew as little as possible, to keep down the personal strength of the ~~various~~ various departments of the OKW and to delegate all ~~statel~~ statel ble tasks to already existing organizations of the Reichswehrministerium

mostly within the OKH.

The OKH right from the very beginning, resented the formation of the OKW for two main reasons:

1. the inclination of Blomberg, proved already before, to yield to political influence of the party, which had brought him to his office as Reichswehr minister,

2. the presumption that the activity of an Army general at the top of the OKW with several high-ranking army officers around him, would naturally restrict the independence of the army.

In the political field, Blomberg and his successor regarded it (as I see it) as their historical task to reconcile the strongly bound traditional feelings and customs of the army with the new political trend, and thereby to save the best of it for the future.

It can be rightly assumed that in 1933, the personality of Blomberg had done much to lead Hitler to his resolution to take over ~~10-100,000~~ men army and its officer corps almost entirely into his new state instead of yielding to the military ambitions of the SA in which the old "Kampfer" not only of the "Saalschlachten" but also of the "Freikorps" or post-war times were assembled.

When these ambitions reached a high pitch in the Roehm putsch of June 1934, von Blomberg had not come out in the open. It is known, however, that his C. of S., Gen. von Reichenau, had a strong hand in defeating the rebels and their plans, apparently in full understanding with Hitler.

In this way, Blomberg, in his opinion, when the OKW was founded ^{in 1935}, had already done much in favor of the army and tried, as a matter of fact, to continue on this way as ^{best} well as he could (see ^{2.6.} "Wehrergesetz" which prohibited party membership for soldiers.)

The practical cooperation OKW- Party was, at first, restricted to the Administrative Department (Gen. Reinecke) and its activities in matters of press and propaganda, education, colors, new form of the military salute etc.

While these changes as well as the consequences of the Nuernberger Gesetze (1935?) ^{already} caused great annoyance among almost all elder army officers, the army, on the whole, including almost all Army officers of the OKW, expected much stronger results from the political attitude of Blomberg. It did not only want him to shield it against party ambitions but to influence the ^{course} ~~cause~~ and methods of interior politics by throwing in the whole weight of the more or less conservative army.

The murder of the generals von Se leicher and von Bredow, committed by party members in connection with ^{the} Roehm putsch weighed the more heavily on the army as a Declaration of Honor could not be gotten from the responsible parties. Nothing had been known, either, that Blomberg had protested against the other atrocities of those days.

The ^{army} ~~army~~ missed further bitterly that Blomberg never stood up publicly against party propaganda pretending that ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~fact that a new Wehrmacht had been formed was due entirely to party merits.~~ Fritsch, the Ob. d. H., at last gave satisfaction to the army when in a speech at Bremen (1935?) he called the public attention to the fact that the 100,000 men army was the main base of the new army and the only bearer of the old army traditions.

Again and again Blomberg was urged by ^{both} the OKW Ob. d. H. ~~and~~ and by his own Staff Officers ^{of the Army} to stand up against the general methods of interior politics which, after the death of Hindenburg, began to show themselves throughout Germany (ie publications of Streicher, "Reichskristallwoche", ^{the} "voluntary" financial burdens of the heavy industries). To these demands and complaints, however, which were directed toward him as a member of cabinet ⁱⁿ rather than his position as Ob. d. W. he refused constantly to give way, or later even to listen to.

The SS, from the point of view of the OKW and OKH during this period did not mean very much because it had not yet displayed its military ambitions, and only a few far-sighted Army officers could picture the impending dangers from this side.

x) (smashing in of shop windows and installations of Jewish shops, restaurants etc)

In the purely military field the OKW watched anxiously and ambitiously every step of the OKW in building up the organization of the High Command. "overtheless, the OKW was obedient and loyal enough to put a certain number of well-qualified officers at the dispositions of the new OKW General Staff, while the Air Force restricted its "cooperation" to the detail of Liaison Officers mostly. (From one of these, often missed in the OKW when needed, comes the word that he could not visit the "Museum" (OKW) every day. The answer of the army officer who had called for him, is said to have been: "Better to come to ^a the museum ~~thamom~~ once in a while than always stay in the "Operetten Theater" (Air Force Ministry). That gives some evidence of the contrast between which the OKW tried to keep the balance.)

After the first Wehrmacht war-game, (Winter 35-36) which dealt mostly with organizational problems of command the tension ~~between the OKW and the Army~~ had already reached such a degree that von Blomberg, in his concluding summary reminded the supreme commanders of the three component forces in the presence of Hitler, that the military obedience applied to them as well as to every soldier. As things were, this sharp remark was mainly directed toward Fritsch and the army.

However, the occupation of the Rhineland in spring 1936 already brought out for the first time the real difficulties connected with the new organization of command. They were characterized, as the OKW always had feared, by the inclination of the OKW

first, to give way to political presentations, this time of the Gauleiter in the Western districts who had an aspect of their own of the military situation,

second, to give detailed orders ~~without regard~~ to the army- not to the air-force as well- without sufficient knowledge of all the necessary circumstances.

However accelerated rearmament (two years service, tripling of the number of army divisions, building up of war-industries, and of the west-wall) were often discussed, and decided upon by Hitler, without conferring with the OKW, especially under exclusion of the Chief of the General Staff (Gen. Beck). Sometimes even Blomberg had to have himself surprised by sudden new "authoritative" decisions. The OKW, therefor, felt by no means always grateful to Hitler or the OKW, on account of those

"Danner" gifts. The basic idea of Fritsch and Beck in regard to rearmament was, and always remained, in accordance with the style of thinking and acting in the General Staff of the Army to build up solidly and soberly, regarding the interests of the army as well as of finances of the nation (Schacht) and of the civilian population. The building of the west-wall, for instance, along army-plans, ought to have taken about 15 years of time, - a planing which I often, many years later, Hitler heard laugh at contentiously. Only the reckless manner in which the air-force pushed on their armament, mostly without any regard to other interests, moved, occasionally, the OKH, to go forward more rapidly, in its own field- not without reproaching the OKW because of its perpetual giving in to the demands of the Luftwaffe.

Corresponding to these contrasts in principles, an ever increasing tension developed between the leading personages. More than anyone else it was the Chief of the General Staff of the Army (Gen Beck), the successor of Moltke and Schlieffen, outranked already by the organization of the OKH to the second place behind the Ob.d.H., who suffered by the new state of affairs and almost disappeared in the new hierarchy.

Because of my leaving the OKW in August 1936 (for Spain, later on for command of Bn and Regiment) I can only give a few details of the further developments up to my return in fall of 1938.

One of these occurred in December 1936 when, just back from Spain, I was summoned to the Reichschancellery and, sitting for the first time in conference with Hitler, a complete understanding of OKW and OKH was ~~at~~ in ~~hand~~ reached that, according to my suggestions, and contrary to the demands of the German ambassador in Spain (Faupel) no great units of the German army should be dispatched to Spain. Hitler consented to that, probably more for political reasons.

In the first and only Wehrmacht maneuvers in autumn 1937 I did not take part and have, therefore, no special knowledge of. When I came back to the OKW, however, in 1938, the ample and sharply formulated correspondence between OKW and OKH laid before me, proved that the ~~opinion which gave~~ ^{as to} argument what kind of organization the High Command should have, had not been settled.

II.

in Feb. 38

The OKW after the dismissal of Field Marshal von Blomberg ^{commander} until December 1941, when Hitler took over the command of the army.

The proceedings which led to the dismissal of Blomberg and Fritsch have never been made sufficiently known to me. There is no doubt, however, that Hitler, in this way, was to get a firmer hold on the Wehrmacht, and, above all, on the "reactionary" army by eliminating Blomberg, whose tall and representative figure, in spite of his political willingness, covered too much from his ever distrusting eyes, and, far more important, by expelling Fritsch. He was the idol of the army, of generals as well as of the general staff, and even of the plain soldier. He, himself, was nothing but a great soldier, distinguished by a warm heart, a cool brain, and a sharp eye, entirely unpolitical, a man whose presence alone prohibited illusions and empty phrases.

The percussion aroused by his dismissal even went down to the troops as well as to civilian circles and was followed by another wave of horror when the disgusting ^{and entirely unjustified} accusations laid on him became known.

The changes at the top of the OKW showed more clearly than those of the OKH in which direction things were going. Gen. Keitel, since fall 1935 O of S of Blomberg, became "Chef OKW". Position and title of Ob.d. ~~N~~ as Blomberg had been, were abolished in favor of the direct command by Hitler as Oberster Befehlshaber der Wehrmacht, a position he had held, ^{more} theoretically, already since the death of Hindenburg. Also the title of Reichswehrminister was eliminated, although Keitel took over the necessary administrative functions with the rank of a Reichminister. Taken as a whole, the relative independence of the OKW under Blomberg ~~command~~ gave way to a situation in which ^{the} Chef OKW was less a military adviser than the head of the military staff of Hitler, created and prepared to follow ^{from now on, any} orders without discussion.

Logically, some time later, the partial responsibility of the Chiefs of General Staffs in every stage of command, customary in the German army since the elder Moltke, was abolished by order of Hitler, leaving the entire responsibility to the holders of command only.

The Chef OKW, along these lines, was not entitled to give, by himself, any orders, to the high commands of the three component forces. Since Hitler, in those times, seldom could be reached on military issues Keitel could only converse with the three High Commands and "beg" them to act according to the directives (Weisungen) of the OKW which they had ~~to agree~~ on in conferences held before. Hence the costum of "begging" instead of "ordering", widespread in the Wehrmacht during the war. The staff ~~is~~ of the OKW, however, instead of rising with the Fuehrer now directly behind it, impressed me as one of a clearing house, instead of a supreme command when I came back to Berling.

Brauchitsch, at the head of the OKH, followed more or less the footsteps of Fritsch, if not of his firmness. With the regard to the OKW he found little difficulty in handling Keitel but the struggle between the General Staff ^{EFU} ~~headquarters~~ ^{on} both sides kept on unchanged.

How the OKW and the OKH reacted to Hitler's demand of military occupation of Austria shortly after these changes, has never been revealed to me. When I, in March or April 1938, then commanding a regiment of Artillery at Duesseldorf got suddenly the call of Keitel to go to Vienna and represent the OKW there, I found out, and told him, after a fortnight, that the command posts of Army and Air force were in full activity at Vienna and that nothing had been left to represent the OKW on. Thus I succeeded to get back to Duesseldorf soon.

Next time I was summoned to Berlin by OKH in June 38, when Gen. Beck concluded the so-called "Generalstabereise" of that year, which practically had been only a sequence of written problems by an important speech in front of the General Officers of the Army General Staff in Berlin and all the General Staff officers who had taken part in studying the problems. Brauchitsch was present, the heads of the OKW, Keitel and Jodl, however, not even invited. The problem based on a presumed German attack on Czechoslovakia, with France coming to her support, - (apparently in connection with plans of Hitler that were entirely unknown to me at the time. Beck, in a masterly manner showed clearly that G. could probably be beaten by the German army of the strength of 38 within a few weeks, that, however, the French army in the meantime, would penetrate over the Rhine and along the Main with no German forces of considerable strength to oppose them. Beck left no doubt to his listeners that, therefore, the attack on Czechoslovakia would end in complete defeat for the German army, and that any political plans of that sort could in no way comply with military responsibility. Brauchitsch, in a few concluding words, expressed himself more cautiously.

When I returned, in September 38, to Berlin to replace Jodl, later on in the Office as Chief of the Abteilung Landesverteidigung in OKW, chosen for this position by Keitel out of three candidates offered by the Heerespersonalamt, I found a depressing situation. Heavy conflicts were still on the way between Keitel and Brauchitsch over the rehabilitation of Fritsch. General Beck, another idol of almost the universal General Staff of the Army, had been dismissed. General Halder, a very good man, too, but without the splendid personality Beck's, was put in his place. Military proceedings against G. were secretly under way, yet Jodl warned me, that the General Staff of the OKH was still thoroughly opposed to the undertaking and that I should stay off of any conversation with them on this issue. The Chief OKW even himself - as I understood later, had been besieged by Officers of the three forces, by high-placed civilians, including cabinet ministers, and, supposedly even by Goering, to influence the Fuehrer to stay off his plans at least for the time being. Keitel, however, followed his pronounced principle, applied ever since, that once an order was finally given by Hitler, it had to be respected without any further discussion.

The difficulties were augmented still by certain differences of opinion between Hitler and the OKW on the tactical procedure to be applied when invading C. In the last stage these difficulties were enlarged utterly by the interferences resulting from the political conferences with Chamberlain and causing much useless marching of troops up to and from the borders of C.

Once the Sudeten case was over, the relationship OKW-OKH continued in a strained way. It was significant, for instance, that Brauchitsch, when I reported to him to take over my new office in Nov. or December 1938, said nothing to me but: "You certainly will have a hard job."

Difficulties with the SS of a typical kind arose when the invasion of the whole of C. in March 39, ordered by Hitler the afternoon before, revealed, for the first time several atrocities of a SS regiment on account of which the army commander, Gen. Blaskowitz, had ordered a courts-martial. All the endeavors of Blaskowitz and then Brauchitsch remaining unsuccessful, the case was turned over to the OKW and shelved by Hitler, much to the annoyance of the ~~Wermacht~~ *Army Officers*.

Other difficulties with the SS were connected with my own name during this period, arising out of a demand of Himmler to enlarge the then two or three regiments of the SS Verfügungstruppe to a division, equipped with heavy weapons and artillery. This entirely new and surprising planning which had no military sense but was liable to interfere with the interests of the army in every respect, found every resistance of the OKH, backed by the OKW, with my signature. The resistance was overruled by Himmler and Hitler himself very soon, but it led to getting my name on the blacklist of the SS, as I learned two years later from member of the SS in the FHQ.

~~From the time of the~~ The preparations to the campaign against Poland brought out in an exemplary manner the scheme of organization of the High Command as it was originally planned. *(See Part 4)* In spring 39, when the Polish minister of foreign affairs came back from London with a treaty of alliance, Hitler gave the order to the OKW and the Oberbefehlshaber of the three component forces, that preparations had to be made and concluded until September 39, in order to win back Danzig and the corridor by force, if Poland would not yield to diplomatic pressure up to that time. The OKW then, *available as head of German* gave a brief outline in accordance with the general directives of the Fuehrer, which he approved, and the high commands of the three component forces proceeded correspondingly.

in their fields, - the OKH not without asking the OKW to shorten its directives with regard to the army. Some time later, the Oberbefehlshaber of the three component forces, in the presence of Keitel, laid their plans before Hitler, who demanded several modifications. Army and Air Force complemented their preparations on his order by war games, and the preparation of great maneuvers in the middle east area of Germany- for the first time with massive armored troops, which had to take place as a last military pressure on Poland ~~whenever~~ if diplomatic representation should fail, or even as camouflage ~~for the military measures which were to be taken.~~

After a relatively calm summer, during which none of us knew where things were going(I was on a one-month vacation at the Belgian coast until the beginning of August.) Hitler, about Aug. 20 assembled all officers who were to be in high command posts during the impending campaign at the Berghof, and pronounced finally his will to go to war against Poland, giving word to his conviction that the Western powers would not get in. After new diplomatic steps had caused a further delay of several days, the OKW issued the Weisung No. 1, with the necessary details for combined action of the three component forces in the opening stage.

After the campaign had begun, Hitler left Berlin in his special train, taking with him Keitel and Jodl who had come back with mobilisation as chief of the Wehrmachtsfuehrungstab, and two or three staff officers only. Even at this moment, the refutation of an intermediate OKW between Hitler and the OKH as well as the Air-Force came into the open when Army and Air Force detailed special liaison officers to Hitler but not to the OKW. They were soon sent back, however.

During the campaign the death of Gen. Oberst von Fritsch caused a new heavy annoyance, Hitler resenting heavily the universal homage paid to Fritsch by Brauchitsch and almost all elder army officers.

When Poland, in its western parts had been occupied by the German forces, Keitel tried in vain to keep up there a military government which was at first strictly demanded by OKH. He had to yield, however, to the designated General Governor, Reichsminister Frick who, apparently after a short trip to his kingdom-to-be, in front of Hitler and Keitel cursed the Wehrmacht on behalf of its weak and insufficient military administration and on this base was at once installed by Hitler in his new office. When, ~~and~~ shortly afterwards, Gen. Blaskowitz, who stayed at Warzchau in command of the

few remaining German troops, resented very much the system of administration which the Gen Gov. began to apply in Poland. Hitler removed Blaskowitz from his command, and never forgot this opposition of a General against political measurements. In all these, and similar cases, the Chief OKW stood between Hitler and the OKH, general without being able to satisfy either side.

The later campaigns in Europe and Africa were prepared on the orders of Hitler under a similar set-up with one exception only, that is the occupation of Norway. In this case Hitler had the OKW put up a special staff of the three components for the preliminary studies, attached to the ~~Wehrmacht Fuehrungs stabs~~, later on the Staff of an Army Corps in the same place, in order to push through his personal ideas and wishes on this shortest possible way.

During these campaigns, the repeated troubles and difficulties aroused mostly by Hitler's everlasting distrust of the OKH and the army generals on the whole, and his growing inclination to interfere with the slightest detail, did nothing to improve the relations between OKW and OKH, or to increase the authority of the OKW.

In the occupied territories under Military Government further difficulties arose since the party and the German civilian ministries respected the military government only as far as it was of any use to them. The OKW tried in vain to enforce the military regulations on those circles and was repeatedly reproached on account of its inefficiency by the military governors as well as by the OKH which was held responsible for the military administration as a whole. As time went on, these conditions grew worse as Hitler himself pushed on men such as Speer, Sauckel, Rosenberg, and above all Himmler, to special activities in the occupied zones, encouraging them ~~to take no account of~~ to disregard the obsolete military point of view, with the result that they often did not ^{even} communicate with the military authorities which they were in their areas.

On the other hand, the Party and civilian representatives found no difficulties in bringing their observations and complaints of the military situation in the occupied zones before Hitler who, generally without any investigation had the OKW act according to their demands. *In addition to that* suspicions regarding the military governors themselves *arose often out of* were often mentioned on these occasions, and led, for instance, to the sudden dismissal of Gen. von Falkenhausen, Gen. Gov. of Belgium. In the final stage, almost everywhere SS leaders were put in as military governors, and in similar positions (Belgium, Italy, Croatia,) who, naturally followed much more the orders of Hitler than those of the military authorities. Under this system, neither the military governors, nor their higher echelons, could be held *un*iversally responsible for the *un*administration on the whole.

III

THE OKW IN THE LAST STAGE FROM DECEMBER 1941 UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1944.

Up to the end of 1941 the OKW, in spite of many ~~data~~ shortcomings, had tried, ~~fairly~~ successfully, to keep up, in the Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab, its position as the operations staff of the Fuehrer above the three component forces, especially expressed by directives issued during the preparatory stages of various campaigns and at important turning points. Only in Norway and from summer 41 in Finland the OKW, by order of Hitler also was tactically engaged. The dismissal of Field Marshall von Brauchitsch in December 1941 and the taking over of the OKW by Hitler himself threw over the entire scheme.

When things in the East in winter 1941-42 grew steadily worse, Hitler had persuaded himself that he alone was able to remedy the situation. Taking over the command as Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres meant to him at first only to replace the hand of Brauchitsch in the East. He, therefore concentrated his and the Army's ~~main~~ operation's staffs efforts with all his ~~strength~~ *strength* on this, then most important field of operations with the ~~double~~ result that by and by (first)

his own operation staff, the Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab was eliminated at first from advising him on ~~man~~ the operations in the East, later on (in a decided manner since ~~from~~ September 42 Zeitzler became C of the army ~~ernal~~ Staff-)

from almost any knowledge of what was going on on the Eastern front.

Second, the operation division of the army general staff lost its control of the army forces in the other ranges of Europe which went over to the Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab.

Thus, the Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab abandoned gradually its main task as supreme staff for strategical planning and survey of the entire field operation becoming instead a second Army Operation Division. The last written survey of the whole ~~Military~~ ^{Military} situation of Germany was laid down by me late in October 1942 in which I predicted the probability of an impending allied landing attack in French North Africa. Later on, strategical studies of this ~~kind~~ universal kind in writing as far as I know, have never been made again.

Another result of this development was that every army division which was to be moved to or from the ~~area~~ East to any other area had to be decided upon by Hitler himself, mostly after long deliberations and difficulties between the two G of S, Jodl and Zeitzler.

Keitel had to take over a great part of the ~~military~~ general activities connected with the office of the Ob.d.H. Thus his person was enforced directly on the OKH without, however improving the relations. On the contrary, since, at first, the Heerespersonalamt and up to the end of the war the Judge Advocate's department of the army were subordinated to him, it was his duty to act by orders of Hitler, in dismissing many high-ranking and often merited Generals and ~~immediately~~ putting the charges before courts-martial, both of which found seldom the approval of the army.

The third part of the army, the Ersatzheer, then under Gen. Oberst Fromm remained independent from the army G of S. as well as from Keitel and could only be begged to act according to their demands.

Zeitzler made several unsuccessful attempts to modify this set-up in favor of his unrestricted influence as G. of S. of the whole army, while Jodl, against many suggestions from me and others never tried to put the Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab back to its original task. On the contrary, in fall 1943, he issued an order prohibiting all officers of his staff further to discuss the question of the Wehrmachtspitzengliederung.

The cutting down of the activities of the OKW in the strategic field was accompanied by further restrictions of its organizations caused by political reasons, and the almost unlimited distrust of Hitler which ~~discontinued itself~~ reached its first climax in September 1942 after the failure in the Caucasus. Incidentally with the dismissal of Gen. Halder and FM List at that time, even Keitel and Jodis fell utterly in disgrace and were, for many a week no more received except for short reports while Zeitzler became the favorite. This attitude which was openly demonstrated in Headquarters, and known soon throughout the official circles, paved the way for harassing further the organization and the authority of the OKW. Speer, about that time, succeeded in taking over the Wehrwirtschaftsstab (Gen. Thomas) as the head organization of military industrial planning and armament procurement to his ministry besides winning a still larger influence by his OT ^{OKW} and the fortification department of the OKH. Some time later, in connection with the incident of Istanbul the Intelligence service (Admiral Canaris) was turned over to the Reichssicherheitshauptamt. (Himmler, Kaltenbrunner.) Small remainder of those sections only stayed on with the OKW.

Both these restrictions correspond to the often declared principle of the Fuehrer that the Wehrmacht should occupy itself with strictly military affairs only. In the final stages of the war this development went so far that special delegates of the party ordered by Hitler controlled the remaining departments of the OKW in order to cut out the last remnants of such semi-military activities and win the men occupied therewith for duty with troops.

The other tendency of Hitler's to combine more and more similar activities of the three component forces under the OKW, as for instance the medical ^{services} shortages, the administrative work in its several aspects, the motorization etc. brought little success only.

The NSFO Service put up by Hitler himself some times in 1943 under Gen. Reinecke could no more strengthen the authority of the OKW, since Hitler himself over the head of the Chief OKW directed these activities. Besides the general situation as well as the unpolitical attitude of the mass of the Officer Corps was not favorable to this new organization.

During this period, the Waffen-SS had become a steadily growing factor. As late as 1939 after the beginning of the war, Hitler once had mentioned that the SS should never replace the army but was to become what he called a "Staatstruppenpolizei" to be settled once at the new boundaries of the Reich in the East. Later on, he pronounced occasionally that as in each great national system had its "Guards" the SS were to become the preferred troops of the third Reich. Long ago, the open resistance of OKW against the activation of always new SS divisions had ceased. The Chief OKW, originally able to control the development fairly well by the distribution of recruits and volunteers, had had to yield long since to every demand of Himmler. The Fuehrer himself saw to it that the HW and the RAD turned the very best youth over to the SS. The original voluntary basis was openly abandoned or replaced by recruiting methods of an unusual kind. Presentations of the OKW to Himmler on this issue were hardly answered. While the losses of Army divisions since the first winter in Russia could never be quite filled up, especially not with non-coms and privates, almost every enlisted man in the Waffen SS ~~promoted~~ showed the ability to become a non-com.

As they were preferred in the matter of personnel, the Waffen SS was much better procured with armament and equipment of every kind, much to the annoyance of the army, whose Chief ever again but in vain tried to modify these conditions in presentations to the Chief OKW or Hitler himself.

The commission to Himmler early in 44 to build up the Volksgrenadier Divisions and finally, on July 20, 1944, to take over the Einsatzheer completed his independence from any restrictions which the Chief OKW would have been able before this time, to place upon the ever enlarging organization of the Waffen SS.

While the Waffen SS in former years was pleased to call and to present itself as the fourth part of the Wehrmacht, it was always questionable whether this fourth part would or would not obey the general directives of the OKW. Tactically, the subordination of the SS divisions under the command of the army was upheld. In the last stages of the war, one could, however, often hear that the SS did not want to belong to the Wehrmacht anymore but had ~~represent~~ become an organization of its own.

With SS units other than Waffen SS, the OKW had nothing to do, even not when detachments of those units were detailed to the Zone of operations of the army or in occupied territories under MG.

They got their orders directly from Himmler. Whenever their activities interfered with the Wehrmacht or their interests, the OKW intervened but mostly without success.

A new form of cooperation between the party and the OKW developed in summer 1944, when the party by its own organizations began to build up fortified zones in the German border areas. The first example of this kind of civilian fortification was set in East Prussia where Gauleiter Koch started the work without any communication with the army commands in the neighborhood. When it became known, Hitler had the Gauleiter take on military advisers for the tactical and engineer work of a special military kind. Supervision, however, remained in the hands of the Gauleiter, and his party subordinates. Following this precedent, the fortifications in the other border countries of Germany later on were ~~established~~ established following the basic directives which were given by ~~a committee~~ simultaneously by the Wehrmachtsfuhrerstab and Reichsleiter Bormann, and the ~~Fuehrerheadquarters~~ directives.

On the same cooperative basis, the ~~regulations~~ were worked out which regulated the relations between army and party when fighting on Germany proper. The main principle thereby ordered by the Fuehrer himself was that the army had to stay off of any administrative work even in the zones where the actual fighting took place.

The development from Sept 44 till the end of the war I do not know because of my retirement from active duty. Three details however, out of this period may be emphasized:

First, that the idea of the Volksturm, as I happened to learn was conceived and performed without taking in the Chief OKW. ~~Second-~~

Second, that in fall 44 the handling ~~of~~ and responsibility over Prisoners of War was turned ^{from OKW} over to Himmler as Chief of the Ersatzheer.

Third, that the Chief OKW in October 44, then not yet informed ~~of my retirement and my physical and psychological condition~~ that the seriousness of my physical and psychological ailment, considered the idea to put me in, after my return as his representative at Berlin, with the purpose of ^{helping to} avoiding any further damage to the ~~own~~ organization of the OKW in this way.

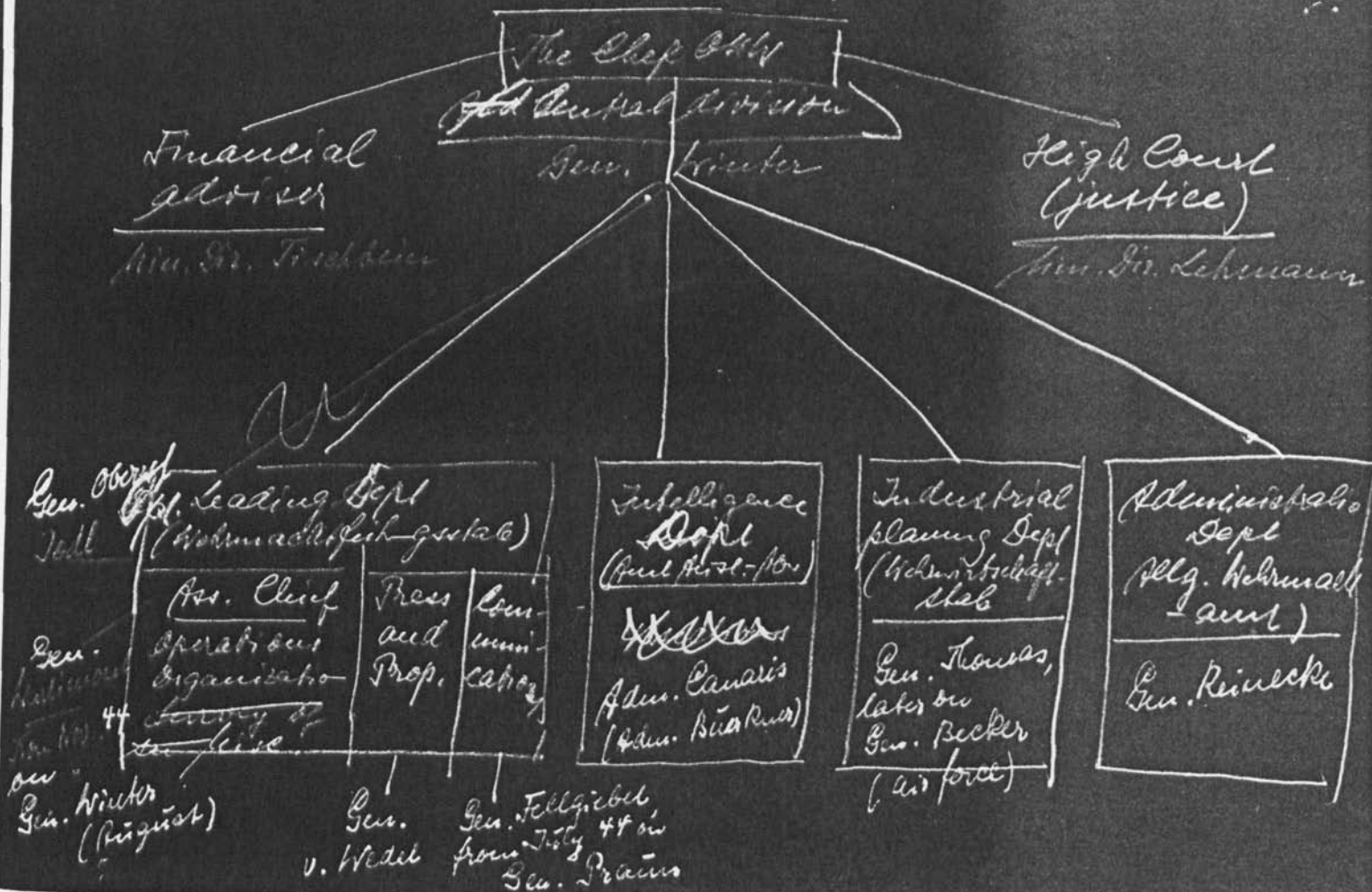
and authority

Conclusion -17-

This survey cannot but give the main outlines of a vast problem seen in first line from the point of view of my former office. If it is certainly too early to draw any further conclusions, it may be stated, however, that the political influence on one side and the overweight ^{of} which the army ⁱⁿ and the continental situation of Germany ^{always} will maintain on the other hand., have proved stronger than an organization scheme built up along theoretical military considerations.

The most decisive factor in present political development as far as Germany is concerned during the period of the first half 1935.

Rough Scheme of the organization
of the OKW, after 1938



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But the political influence
on one side and the over-
weight which the King in
the Centre has obtained
of European groups will
mainly ^{on the other side} ~~be~~ in the
Centre ^{on the} ~~of~~ have proved
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Latin scheme ~~the~~ European
group ^{an} ~~organization~~ which
of the C. V. ~~built up along~~
theoretical considerations

Salerno