Germany's attitude toward Swiss neutrality 1933-1945

George M. Lubick

The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
Lubick, George M., "Germany's attitude toward Swiss neutrality 1933-1945" (1967). Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers. 5204.
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/5204

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
GERMANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SWISS NEUTRALITY,
1933 - 1945

By
George M. Lubick, Jr.
B. A. University of Montana, 1966

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of
Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
1967

Approved by:

[Signature]
Chairman, Board of Examiners

[Signature]
Dean, Graduate School

JAN 9 1968
Date
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chapter</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>SWISS HISTORY AND NEUTRALITY: THE BASIS FOR NAZI GERMANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SWITZERLAND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>GERMANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SWISS NEUTRALITY, 1933-1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>SWITZERLAND IN GERMAN STRATEGY, 1940-1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>SWITZERLAND AND NAZI WAR ECONOMY, 1938-1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIXES 134

BIBLIOGRAPHY 138
CHAPTER I

SWISS HISTORY AND NEUTRALITY: THE BASIS FOR NAZI GERMANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SWITZERLAND

The accession to power of the National Socialist Party in Germany represented a threat to Switzerland in two respects. Not only was the Nazi Fuehrer-Principle diametrically opposed to the Swiss concept of democracy, but more importantly the Reich's race principle extended beyond Germany's borders to all of Europe. The Swiss viewed the latter principle as a particular threat, since Switzerland was historically and culturally related to the Reich, and the German-speaking Swiss accounted for seventy per cent of the state's total population.

The basis for the race principle had been laid down in 1920 in Article I of the Program of the German Workers' Party, which read: "We demand the union of all Germans in a Pan German State (gross Deutschland) in accordance with the right of all peoples to self-determination."¹ Four years later, in Mein Kampf, Hitler further emphasized that the "Reich must embrace all

Germans." Although the theoretical foundations for a Pan German state had evolved long before the Nazi accession, it was only after 1933 that the Reich was able to put this theory into practice.

To stress the importance of its views toward Germans abroad, the National Socialist Party developed the concept of the German folk-community (Volksgemeinschaft), to which all Germans, regardless of their place of residence, owed allegiance. The basic principles of the folk-community were embodied in Vom Wesen der Volksgemeinschaft, which stated:

Adolf Hitler has set his stamp on the world folk-community. This word is to make completely clear to the members of our people that the individual is nothing when not a member of the community of men of the same origin, same language, and same culture, i.e. the folk-community.

The German folk-community includes not only all those who are members of the NSDAP, it includes all who by origin, language, and culture belong to the folk-community and in accordance with the rigid laws of nature acknowledge their allegiance to the German folk-community.

The task of spreading the principles of the folk-community fell to the Foreign Organization of the NSDAP (Auslands Organisation or AO der NSDAP). This body, through propaganda and agitation, worked to make Germans living abroad, as well as foreign citizens of

\(^2\)Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, trans. R., Manheim (Boston, 1943), 398.


\(^72\)Hereafter cited as State Dept., National Socialism.
German extraction, conscious of their kinship to the Third Reich and of the fact that they owed to it their sole allegiance. Citizenship in a foreign country held no meaning for members of the folk-community. The Bremen Nachrichten reiterated this fact stating:

The Volksdeutscher living in foreign states must know besides the natural obligations of the German toward his host—that he must remain loyal to his nationality (Volkstum); it is to this he owes the highest values.⁴

Switzerland became a primary target for folk-community propaganda and agitation soon after Hitler became chancellor in January 1933. Switzerland, according to the League for Germandom in Foreign Countries, was the home of 2,860,000 Germans.⁵

Two characteristics of Swiss history were particularly significant in the formation of Nazi Germany's policy toward Switzerland. First of all, the origin and nature of the Swiss Confederation were German. And second, neutrality had been the basic principle of Switzerland's relations with the rest of Europe since the sixteenth century.

When Henry I united the Germanic peoples in a single empire in 919, most of present-day Switzerland

⁴Bremen Nachrichten, as quoted in State Dept., National Socialism, 73.

⁵State Dept., National Socialism, 421. The figure of 2,860,000 is quoted from a Nazi source and represents the number of German-speaking Swiss. The total number of German nationals in Switzerland did not exceed a few hundred thousand.
came under the control of the new empire. Various members of the Swiss nobility, notably the counts of Zurich, enjoyed a close friendship with the Imperial House, and in return the Emperors often stayed in German Switzerland. Henry II held Imperial Diets in Zurich in 1004 and 1018. By 1032 all of Switzerland was included in the Holy Roman Empire and was governed by the dukes of Zähringen. Ultimately, in the thirteenth century the counts of Habsburg became imperial bailiffs of Switzerland.

With the decline of the Empire's power in the thirteenth century it became necessary for the cantons to undertake measures for their own government and defense, previously the Crown's most important activities. In effect, the cantons became relatively free of imperial control and resented the subsequent attempts of the Habsburgs to extend their authority over Swiss territory. In order to preserve their independence, the Swiss cantons turned to Emperor Frederick II, who realizing that he had neither the power to defend the cantons nor to force them into subservience, granted them charters as free communities within the Empire. The people of Uri received their charter in 1231 and those of Schwyz in 1240. Through granting the charters Frederick hoped to retain for himself the free passage over the strategic
Alpine passes.

The charters of 1231 and 1240 enabled Uri and Schwyz to accept imperial sovereignty rather than become personal possessions of the Habsburgs, who eventually would have inherited the communities.

When Rudolf of Habsburg was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1273, imperial and feudal overlordship over the Swiss cantons passed into his hands, and he began to increase his holdings in central Switzerland while exercising more actively his feudal rights in Uri and Schwyz. To prevent further loss of their liberty at the hands of the Habsburgs, Uri and Schwyz sought security through unity. In 1291 they extended an invitation to the leaders of Unterwalden, which had recently come under Habsburg rule, to meet with them and prepare a common plan of action. The meeting of these three small forest cantons resulted in creation of the "Perpetual League" for common defense, which is considered the actual beginning of Swiss political development. For the next two centuries, Swiss history was dominated by an increase in cantons bound together by similar alliances.

During this period the League proved its

---


7Lucerne joined the alliance in 1332; Zurich in 1351; Glarus and Zug in 1352; Berne in 1353; Fribourg and Solothurn in 1481; Basel and Schaffhausen in 1501; Appenzell in 1513.
effectiveness on a number of occasions. In 1315, the
three original cantons defeated Duke Leopold at Morgarten,
after he had attempted to reimpose his family's authority
on Schwyz and Unterwalden. Following the victory at
Morgarten the cantons adopted the name Swiss Confederation. As a confederation of eight members, the Swiss
defeated the invading Austrians again in 1386 at Sempach
and in 1388 at Naefels, permanently ending Habsburg
attempts to extend their authority over the Confederation.

By 1499, two additional members had joined the
Confederation, and the Swiss finally threw off the yoke
of the Empire after defeating the forces of Emperor
Maximilian I in the 1499 Swabian War. By the terms of
the Peace of Basel, September 22, 1499, the Swiss were
freed from imperial obligations, although official recogni-
tion of the Confederation's independent status was with-
held until the 1648 Peace of Westphalia.

Initially, the three forest cantons had consti-
tuted a nucleus around which gathered all those districts
between the Jura, Rhine and Alps opposed to Habsburg
rule. At this time the members of the Confederation
were without exception German-speaking.

Until 1515, when Francis I of France defeated
the Swiss at Marignano, Switzerland had enjoyed two

---

8 William Oechsli, History of Switzerland, 1499-
1914 (N.Y., 1922), 2. (Hereafter cited as Oechsli, History
of Switzerland).
centuries of military success. The French victory put an end to the Swiss legend of invincibility and marked the beginning of Switzerland's withdrawal from European affairs. Following Marignano, the Swiss as allies of France shared in the defeats at La Bicocca in 1522 and Pavia in 1525. Thereafter the Swiss were content to refrain from further warlike expeditions and began to turn to neutrality as the basic principle of their foreign policy.

The concept of Swiss neutrality is not completely covered by the doctrines of international law. It must be understood as a unique political entity which has grown with the state, has changed through centuries of growth and has thus become an essential factor in the historical individuality of the Swiss State. Initially, armed neutrality became the nation's fixed policy, and foreign powers became accustomed to regard this policy as firmly established. It was not until 1674 that the Diet of the Confederation declared perpetual and absolute neutrality to be the principle of its foreign policy.

The decision to rely upon neutrality was the result of both internal and external causes. While Swiss troops had enjoyed considerable military success during the previous centuries, the individual cantons were not always

9Walter Hofer, Neutrality as the Principle of Swiss Foreign Policy (Zurich, 1957), 6. [Hereafter cited as Hofer, Neutrality.]
at peace. Dissent between the small agrarian cantons and the strong urban cantons over economic policies caused unrest. At other times, the foreign policies of the individual cantons conflicted, causing additional problems. Finally, the immediate effect of the Reformation was to strain the already weak ties of the Confederation. By far, the most important external cause for Switzerland's declaration of neutrality was the rise of the Balance of Power in Europe. Switzerland actually lived on the jealousy and rivalry of its great neighbors.¹⁰

In essence, the equilibrium of rival great powers is the air in which the neutrality of small states thrives, while the greatest threat to their existence is the ascendancy of a single power.¹¹ For this reason Switzerland, with Great Britain, was the most consistent advocate of the Balance of Power in Europe throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Throughout these centuries, foreign powers regarded Switzerland mainly as a field for procuring mercenaries, and the Swiss concluded capitulation agreements with most European powers. In 1787, it was calculated that the number of capitulated Swiss soldiers (serving with cantonal approval and in accordance with treaties)

¹⁰Hofer, Neutrality, 8.

in foreign service was 38,000. However, while Swiss soldiers were found all over Europe, the Swiss people were turning away from the mercenary profession. Consequently, in the course of the eighteenth century Switzerland became one of the worst armed countries in Europe. At the same time, the other powers were beginning to rely upon their own national armies, and the recruiting of mercenaries gradually died out, removing the last contingency which might involve the nation in a European dispute.

The armies of Revolutionary France presented the first major threat to Swiss neutrality since the Thirty Years' War, during which both camps of belligerents attempted to enlist the Swiss on their side. Following the French declaration of war on Austria on April 20, 1792, the Swiss Diet ordered the fortification of the frontier near Basel and declared its customary neutrality, including Geneva, Neuchatel and the bishopric of Basel in the declaration. French respect for neutrality decreased in proportion to the success of its armies, and in 1797 the regions of Naltelline, Chiavenna and Bormia were separated from Switzerland and added to the Cisalpine Republic. The rest of Switzerland was renamed the Helvetic Republic, charged with a heavy indemnity and

12 Oechsli, History of Switzerland, 237.
13 Ibid.
permanently allied to France. Five years later Napoleon intervened to settle domestic strife in the Republic and forced the Act of Mediation upon the Swiss. The Act transformed the Republic into the Swiss Confederation, which became a French satellite, and not until Napoleon's defeat did the Swiss regain their independence.

On March 20, 1815, the Five Great Powers signed a joint declaration recognizing the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland as "corresponding to the true interests of all European States." The November Act of Neutrality, as the joint declaration became known, provided the foundation for Swiss neutrality throughout the nineteenth century and marked the incorporation of Swiss neutrality in international law. Although the Swiss welcomed the international guarantee of their neutrality, they were not content to rely solely upon its effectiveness. The Confederation saw in the maintenance of its own military forces the strongest guarantee of its neutrality. Thus perpetual and armed neutrality became the basis for Switzerland's policy.

On the eve of World War I, Switzerland announced its intention to remain neutral in a declaration to the powers which read:

"... the Federal Council formally declares that during the war which is about to begin, the Swiss Confederation will maintain and defend with all the means it has at its disposal, the integrity and the

14 Hofer, Neutrality, 11-12."
inviolability of the Swiss territory, as they have been recognized by the Treaties of 1815.¹⁵

Throughout the war Switzerland successfully followed the course which had been proclaimed in August, although the Swiss did find themselves drawn into the anti-German blockade, which was a violation of the principle of neutrality. In general however, Switzerland attempted to maintain equal trade with both camps of belligerents for as long as possible.

Following the war, the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles recognized in Article 435 that "... the guarantees stipulated in favor of Switzerland by the Treaties of 1815 and especially the Act of November 20, 1815 constitute international obligations for the maintenance of peace..."¹⁶ The traditional concept of neutrality which the Swiss had practiced for centuries was re-emphasized and its incorporation in international law verified.

The term neutrality implied that Switzerland would maintain a policy of impartiality in its foreign relations. However, the Council of the League of Nations was anxious to secure Swiss adherence to the League, an organization based upon collective security. But accession to the

¹⁵D.H. Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant (N.Y., 1928) I, 429. [Hereafter cited as Miller, Drafting of the Covenant.]

League and absolute neutrality were policies which excluded each other. Collective security implied confederation, partiality, intervention, whereas neutrality implied aloofness, impartiality and abstention. Therefore, the two principles could neither in theory nor in practice exist together. A means had to be found to reconcile the two opposites.

The Swiss delegation to Paris also heartily approved of the creation of the League of Nations, since such an organization, if successful, would be an asset to Swiss neutrality and independence. Therefore, Switzerland was anxious not only to join the League, but also to see the League situated in Geneva where all members would be aware of Switzerland's special position.

On February 14, 1919, the Swiss delegation at Paris issued a "Memorandum Concerning Swiss Neutrality," an authoritative statement on Swiss neutrality, in which Switzerland's devotion to the principle of neutrality for the past centuries was reviewed. The first portion examined the value of Swiss neutrality to Europe, especially in time of war. It stated in part:

Switzerland must remain in the future, as she has in the past, the trusty guardian of the passes of the Alps.
In this war, like already in 1871, Switzerland

could render humanity far greater services than she could have done in taking part in the struggle. An island of peace in the midst of the storm, Switzerland could provide for the hospitalization and repatriation of victims of the war. Finally, the Swiss Confederation was enabled by its neutrality to contribute to fill the gap which had been left through the rupture of diplomatic relations between belligerents.  

The second portion of the Memorandum laid the basis for Switzerland's policy in the future in relation to the establishment of the League. It stated:

Only if Switzerland will remain true to her traditions and principles, she will occupy in the League, for the benefit of all confederate states, the place which is assigned to her by neutrality.

Basically, Switzerland sought to reconcile the idea of collective security with the concepts of neutrality and inviolability of Swiss territory. In a subsequent memorandum of general comments on the Draft of February 14, 1919, the Swiss delegation further discussed the value of Swiss neutrality to the League in time of war.

If Switzerland was to sacrifice her neutrality in a war which is waged against an illegitimate war, her neutrality would scarcely be respected in all ordinary cases of war. Switzerland believes, that she could render greater service by her neutrality than in taking an active part in a campaign.

It is understood that neutrality could not be interpreted as allowing any sort of assistance to be given to States in conflict.

In an attempt to join the League with at least a

18 Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, I, 429-31 passim.
19 Ibid., 431.
20 Ibid., 302-304.
portion of its neutrality preserved, the Swiss Confederation introduced on April 11, 1919, an amendment to Article 16 of the Covenant. Had the amendment been accepted, it would have changed the Article to read:

The Members of the League agree that . . . . on the request of the Council they will take necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the Covenant of the League.21

The Swiss amendment was rejected, however. President Wilson, with the support of the French delegation opposed the measure. The opponents argued that the obligation of the League to guarantee Swiss neutrality was inconsistent with the Covenant. The Swiss, on the other hand, were determined to be allowed to object to free passage of troops over their territory and made further attempts to obtain some sort of declaration to replace the amendment. It was suggested that President Wilson might refer to Swiss neutrality as being under Article 21 of the Covenant, the "Monroe Doctrine Article." Wilson, however, made no reference to Swiss neutrality as being included in Article 21 in his April 28 speech to the Plenary Session of the Peace Conference. Consequently, the delegates ignored Switzerland's position when the final draft was completed. No loophole was left

21Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, I, 428.
through which Switzerland might enter the League with its neutrality intact.

Article 20 stipulated "that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings inter se which are inconsistent with the terms thereof . . . . . "22 But Article 21 seemed to offer the possibility of inclusion in the League and maintenance of neutrality. The "Monroe Doctrine Article" read:

Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international agreements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace."23

The Swiss Federal Council considered Swiss neutrality to be precisely an "international agreement for securing the maintenance of peace." Article 435 of the Versailles Treaty, as previously mentioned, did in fact recognize the 1815 Treaties guaranteeing Swiss neutrality as "international obligations for the maintenance of peace."24 On the basis of the "Monroe Doctrine Article" and Article 435 of the Treaty of Versailles, Switzerland sought to enter the League without making reservations. Accordingly, the Swiss Federal Council sent a note to all Powers represented on the Council, requesting a definition of Switzerland's status as a member.

22Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, I, 690-91.
23Ibid., II, 691.
The outcome of the Swiss request was the London Declaration of February 13, 1920 which found Swiss neutrality compatible with the Covenant. The League members recognized that "Switzerland is in a unique situation, based on a tradition of several centuries which had been explicitly incorporated in the Law of Nations." The treaties of 1615 and Article 435 were found to coincide with Switzerland's position on neutrality. Switzerland for its part recognized the duties of solidarity which League membership imposed, including:

... the duty therein of co-operating in such economic and financial measures as may be demanded by the League against a covenant-breaking State, and is prepared to make every sacrifice to defend her own territory under every circumstance, even during operations undertaken by the League of Nations, but will not be obliged to take part in any military action or to allow the passage of foreign troops or the preparations of military operations within her territory.

As a consequence of the London Declaration, Switzerland adopted a policy of differential, or partial neutrality, which provided a means to maintain the status of neutrality within a system of collective security.27

Ironically, when the proposal for Swiss membership in the League was presented to the Swiss electorate for approval by referendum, the measure passed by a majority of only 415,819 to 323,225. Eleven and a half cantons

26Ibid.
were carried for the League, ten and a half against it. A change in ninety-four votes in Appenzell Exterior would have tied the state vote and defeated the League. Differential neutrality remained the basis for Swiss foreign policy for only eighteen years. By 1938, Switzerland's discontent with the failures of the League, coupled with pressure from Germany, caused the Federal Council to rescind differential neutrality in favor of returning to its traditional policy of absolute neutrality.

In 1933, Nazi Germany could view Switzerland, on the basis of its origin, language and culture, as a member of the German folk-community. Switzerland's origin had indeed been German, and the country had been historically tied to Germany—directly and indirectly—for over a thousand years. Of the twenty-five cantons, nineteen were predominantly German, and seventy-two percent of the population of 4,000,000 spoke German. Nazi references to Switzerland as the "Suedmark" were not entirely unfounded.

By 1933, Swiss neutrality had been an established tradition for over 400 years, while its incorporation in international law dated from 1815. Following World


War I, the desire to be included in the League had led the Swiss government to drift away from the nation's established tradition of absolute neutrality. As of February 20, 1920, differential neutrality replaced absolute neutrality as the principle of Swiss foreign policy, and Switzerland implicitly drifted into the orbit of the victors of 1918. The Weimar Republic accepted and generally favored Switzerland's entry into the League, while German nationalist elements desired to see the proposal vetoed. Relations between the two countries were not strained until Hitler came to power, after which differential neutrality and Swiss membership in the League were continually attacked.
CHAPTER II

GERMANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SWISS NEUTRALITY, 1933-1940

German foreign policy during the Nazi era was complicated by the State-Party dualism resulting from the influence of the National Socialist Party in the German Foreign Office. In effect, the Foreign Organization of the NSDAP\(^1\) competed with the Foreign Office in the direction of policy and, in general, hindered the work of the latter. Initially under the direction of pre-Nazi diplomats, the Foreign Office aimed at inducing Switzerland to return to its traditional policy of perpetual, absolute neutrality which had been compromised when the Swiss joined the League of Nations. The success of this policy required that nothing be done by Germany which would prejudice German-Swiss relations. On the contrary, the Foreign Office intended to assure Switzerland that Nazi Germany constituted

\(^1\)The first Party organization concerned with the problems of Germans abroad was formed in 1930 in Hamburg. In 1933, the organization came under the direction of Ernst Bohle, a protege of Hitler's Deputy, Rudolf Hess. Two years later, Foreign Office officials were inducted into the Foreign Organization as a professional group, insuring collaboration of diplomats abroad with Party agents. The Foreign Organization received definitive sanction in 1937 when it was designated as the Foreign Organization in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although Bohle was placed under the Foreign Minister, the Foreign Ministry exercised only a very general control over his work.
a threat neither to Swiss neutrality nor independence, hoping that the Swiss would sever their ties with the League once it was clear that Germany had no designs on Switzerland.

On the other hand, in 1933 the Foreign Organization began to put into practice the theory of the German "folk-community," which aimed at uniting all Germans in a "greater Germany," based upon self-determination. Unlike the Foreign Office which operated through diplomatic channels, the Foreign Organization appealed directly to the Swiss people through the press, propaganda and political agitation, emphasizing vociferously that the Swiss, because of their long historical association with Germany, were destined to be incorporated in Hitler's Reich. Consequently, the Swiss were impressed with the fact that the new German regime represented a potential threat to their independence.

According to the German Minister to Berne, Switzerland had viewed the Versailles Treaty as unwise if not unjust, but preferred maintenance of the status quo to a new war. The realization in 1933 that Germany had not reconciled itself to defeat came as a shock to the Swiss. Suddenly they saw Nazi Germany as capable of anything--marching on France through Switzerland, overwhelming Austria, and possibly annexing Switzerland's
German-speaking cantons. Simultaneously, Switzerland began to awaken from the misconception that the League had secured permanent peace. The Swiss still considered the League to be better than nothing, for it at least provided a speaking platform for the smaller countries and served as a court of appeals. For these reasons Switzerland continued to support the League and tried to persuade Germany to co-operate again.

In 1933, the Swiss government, although concerned about German designs on Switzerland, adopted an entirely correct attitude toward Nazi Germany. Initially, the press and public opinion followed the lead of the government, but both quickly became critical of developments to the north.

Recalling that the Swiss had experienced a similar reaction to Italian Fascism, Germany adopted a philosophical attitude toward Switzerland. It was assumed that the Swiss would eventually become accustomed to National Socialism and possibly accept the doctrine themselves.

In contrast to the majority of the Swiss who opposed National Socialism, the reaction among some rightist circles was positive. In addition to the pro-Nazi parties already in existence, three new parties, the Association of National Socialist Confederates, the Confederate Front, and the Movement for National Revival

2U.S., State Dept., Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Hereafter cited as DGFP, C, II (Wash., 1949), 771.
3Ibid., I, 682.
were formed. While pursuing different individual aims, the three organizations jointly professed a belief in the ideology of National Socialism. The Association of National Socialist Confederates, most extreme of the groups, sought incorporation of Switzerland in the "fatherland" and hailed Hitler as their "liberator." Although the membership of such organizations remained very small, Germany interpreted their formation as a significant gain for the Reich.

The German Legation in Berne, headed by Adolf Mueller\(^5\) and Ernst von Weizsaeker,\(^6\) his successor, began a systematic study of the Swiss mentality and attitude, the results of which were to be used as a basis for Germany's future policy toward Switzerland. Mueller observed that the Swiss desire for freedom had undergone no change since the Middle Ages and that the Swiss still retained the desire for undisturbed freedom. In a memorandum to the Foreign Office, he recommended that Germany issue an

\(^4\)G.E.W. Johnson, "Switzerland is Next," North American Review, CCXXVII (1934), 524-25. \(^5\)Adolf Mueller had held the post in Berne since World War I. Although he was a Social Democrat, he was allowed to remain at Berne for more than six months after the accession of the Nazi Party.

\(^6\)Ernst von Weizsaeker (1882-1951), entered the diplomatic service of the Weimar Republic in 1920, serving as Minister to Norway, 1931-1933. Under Hitler he held the following posts: 1933-1936, Minister to Switzerland; 1936-1938, Head of the Political Department in the Foreign Ministry; 1938-1943, State Secretary; 1943-1945, Ambassador to the Holy See.
official statement of respect for Swiss neutrality. In regard to Nazi propaganda in Switzerland, he observed:

For the propagandistic treatment of Switzerland and particularly for the German section, it is my experience that great reserve and unobtrusiveness are necessary. Abrupt advice and long-winded polemics would only provoke more resistance, whereas with a calm attitude by us the correcting will occur in the country by itself. For indeed the basic mood in German Switzerland is entirely German, and the furor Helveticus awakens only when misgivings are aroused concerning infringement of Swiss independence.

From the beginning, the Foreign Organization branches in Switzerland had an adverse effect on the Swiss. Their overzealous agitation most often met with opposition. More importantly, however, very few Swiss were attracted by Nazi Germany's emphasis on race and the possible inclusion of Switzerland in Hitler's "greater Germany." The Confederation would not have survived long, had its three national elements--German, French and Italian--emphasized their own superiority and tried to subdue the others. The result would have been the dissolution of the state and its partition by Switzerland's powerful neighbors. It was, in fact, the de-emphasis of German, French and Italian nationalism that had enabled Switzerland to continue its existence. Hence, no Swiss, particularly the German Swiss, were interested in seeing Nazi racism gain a foothold in Switzerland.

The immediate effect of the propaganda directed toward Switzerland was to cause concern among Swiss leaders.

7DGFP, C, I, 682-83.
over the country's ability to defend its neutrality and independence.\textsuperscript{8} The Head of the Swiss Military Department, Federal Councillor Minger,\textsuperscript{9} in a speech on July 9, 1933 asked for a considerable increase in the nation's military budget. He justified the increase on the belief that in a future war there would be a race between the belligerent neighboring countries to gain control of strategically located Switzerland.\textsuperscript{10} Since Switzerland alone would never be a match for the French or German forces, the Swiss planned to detain any invading force at the frontier until the other neighbor came to its assistance. Thus Switzerland would automatically become the ally of France should Germany attack Switzerland. On the other hand, the Swiss would ostensibly ally themselves with Germany in the event of a French violation of the Swiss frontier.

The approval of Minger's request by the Federal Council was in Germany's political and military interest. Maintenance of Swiss neutrality by a sufficiently strong and adequately armed force provided a flank protection exceedingly desirable to Germany in case of military

\textsuperscript{8}A characteristic example of Nazi propaganda was a declaration in which Germany declared itself ready to "free the 2,000,000 Germans living under the Swiss yoke." Quoted from the \textit{New York Times}, Aug. 29, 1933, 1.

\textsuperscript{9}Rudolf Minger (1881-1955); Chief of the Swiss Military Department, 1933-1945; elected President of the Swiss Confederation in 1929.

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{DGFP}, C, I, 680.
conflicts between Germany and France. The possibility of a French preventive war against Germany could not be dismissed in the early period of the Reich, particularly in view of Germany's attitude toward the Versailles Treaty. In such a circumstance, Switzerland's ability to defend its territory and prevent a French march through the country into southern Germany was unquestionably an asset to Germany.

In July 1933, Mueller received notice from a "western source of information that had been reliable for many years," that the French General Staff had made definite plans for reoccupation of the Rhineland in the event of German rearmament. Taking this information into account, he recommended that Germany observe the greatest circumspection in its treatment of Switzerland, compelling propaganda in Switzerland to be as inconspicuous as possible. Mueller undoubtedly hoped to use the alleged threat of French intervention to curb Nazi propaganda and its adverse effect on the Swiss. As usual his recommendations were ignored, and the Foreign Organization continued its agitation.

A month later, Mueller analyzed the political atmosphere in Switzerland as still favorable to Germany,

11 DGFP, C. I, 680.
12 Ibid., 681.
but noted that the Nazi organizations, in understandable zeal for publicizing their ideology, were making too much noise. He further cautioned that any sort of cooperation with the leadership of the Swiss pro-Nazi fronts would be detrimental to German-Swiss relations.\textsuperscript{13} By August, it was already obvious to many observers that Nazi propaganda was not having the desired effect, for a decline in Nazism in Switzerland was discernable. Now there were meetings at which large crowds declared their attachment to Swiss democratic ideals and to the Swiss army. On the other hand, meetings of the Swiss "grey shirts," the local Nazi sympathizers, were still numerous and well-attended, but failed to raise the same interest or attract the same audiences as before. The decline in Nazism can be attributed to psychological errors in Nazi propaganda which resulted in a patriotic revival among the Swiss.\textsuperscript{14}

Such propaganda did have one positive effect, since it prompted the Swiss to accelerate rearmament for defense of their neutrality. On October 12, 1933, the Federal Assembly voted to appropriate 20,000,000 Swiss francs to replenish arms and military equipment.\textsuperscript{15} In the course of the debate on the defense bill, Minger stated

\textsuperscript{13}DGFP, C, I, 684-85.  
\textsuperscript{14}New York Times, Oct. 12, 1933, 1.  
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., Aug. 29, 1933, 1.
that a German plan for the invasion of Switzerland existed, explaining that it was the type of plan that all general staffs drafted, but what was disquieting about it was the small importance attached to the Swiss army and its power of resistance. Minger did not mention his source for the alleged invasion, and Germany denied the existence of such a plan. Whether true or not, Minger’s statement, when coupled with the threats inherent in Nazi propaganda, had the desired effect on the Assembly. With the initiation of a program for modernization of its armed forces, Switzerland took the first steps toward implementing a policy of active, or armed neutrality, and declared itself ready to resist any aggression by force of arms.

Swiss public opinion, as well as the opinion of government leaders, had turned strongly against Germany in the months prior to the debate on the rearmament bill. Further, a series of violations of the Swiss frontier by

16 The appropriation of 20,000,000 francs was only the first portion of a 120,000,000 franc request. Since 1928 when only 750,000 francs were expended on defense, the military budget had steadily increased. By 1937 defense appropriations had reached 235,000,000 francs ($80,000,000).

17 It was in the interest of France to play upon the Swiss fear of a German invasion, and the French press frequently carried reports of such German plans. The "Auger" Articles, written by "Auger," Vladimir Poliakov, and carried by Le Petit Parisien on September 24 and October 8 reported that a German invasion of Switzerland was imminent. The "Auger" Articles were introduced into the debate to arouse and intensify the fear of Germany which was prevalent among some Swiss officials.
Nazi agents increased Swiss hostility toward Germany. A violation at Otterbach was under investigation in late September 1933, after Switzerland had protested the violation. Weizsäcker assured Federal Councillor Motta that if the Germans concerned were guilty they would be punished. A month earlier, the Swiss Minister to Berlin had protested a violation of the frontier near Ramsen where German police officers reportedly arrested a Czech citizen and dragged him bodily across the frontier into Germany. Party functionaries carried on their activities among Germans in Switzerland by attacking old German societies and individual Germans, and generally distinguishing themselves by their presumption. To come into conflict with Swiss authorities was a proof of courage for them. Anyone who was deported from Switzerland could expect to be rewarded on his arrival in Germany.

Germany's banning of three Swiss newspapers, the Neue Zuercher Zeitung, the Zuercher Volkzeitung, and the Basler Nachrichten added to the hostile feeling in Switzerland. The Swiss government, as well as the German Foreign

18 DGFP, C, I, 843-44. Giuseppe Motta (1870-1940), Chief of the Swiss Political Department (Foreign Ministry), 1920-1940; President of the Swiss Confederation, 1915, 1920, 1932 and 1937.


Office, were anxious to dispel Swiss fears and restore friendly relations. Foreign Minister Motta, hoping to secure an official German declaration of respect for Swiss neutrality, used the Geneva Disarmament Conference in September as an opportunity to explain Switzerland's position to the German delegates. Germany, too, was concerned about the anti-German feeling in Switzerland, particularly since Swiss rearmedament appeared to be directed solely against Germany. Meeting with the German Foreign Minister, Konstantin von Neurath, and the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, he emphasized the anxiety that reigned in Switzerland regarding alleged Nazi ambitions in Switzerland. The German Ministers categorically told Motta that such fears were absurd. In Germany, "no reasonable person thought of endangering the existence of the Swiss Confederation." Neurath explained that Germany was not in a position to make an official declaration of respect for Swiss neutrality since a declaration of respect

---

21 Konstantin Freiherr von Neurath (1873-1956), served as German Ambassador to London prior to his acceptance of the Foreign Ministry in von Papen's "Cabinet of Barons" in 1932. In 1938 Hitler retired him in favor of Joachim von Ribbentrop. As a reward for his service, Neurath was appointed President of the newly created Cabinet Council, a body which was to advise the Fuehrer on foreign affairs, but never met.

22 Dr. Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945), Reich Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, 1933-1945.

23 DGFP, C, I, 843-44.
for Swiss neutrality would have made similar declarations to all neutrals necessary. Consequently, no official steps were taken by either government to calm the situation, although Motta was encouraged by Neurath's statement.

By the end of 1933, Germany's policy in Switzerland had had very limited success. The pro-Nazi fronts had lost some of their initial supporters, while the Swiss had experienced a patriotic revival and were becoming increasingly anti-German. Nazi propaganda was alienating the Swiss rather than converting them. Weizsäcker noted that, for the time being, the over-all balance in Switzerland was negative, and he re-emphasized the fact that the Swiss were not impressed with the usual Nazi propaganda. Any German success in Switzerland would be prevented as long as the Swiss feared loss of their independence to Germany.

On January 30, 1934, Hitler himself increased the anxiety in Switzerland, when in a speech to the Reichstag, he stated:

"... it is self-evident that an aggressive intent which has gripped and stirred to its depths the whole German nation will not halt at the frontier posts of a land which is German, not only in its people, but in history as well, and which for many centuries was an integral part of the German Empire."

24DGFP, C, II, 774.
Hitler was referring specifically to Austria, but the Swiss were fully aware that Switzerland fell into the same category. Nazi propaganda had emphasized the fact during the past year.

In the same month, a Swiss fugitive from justice, Erich Maey, was given command of a Berlin Storm Troop detachment composed of Swiss citizens living in Germany who declared themselves dedicated "to clean up the Swiss pig sty." In response, the Swiss press intensified its attacks on National Socialism and German officials. Finally, on March 27, 1934, the Swiss Federal Council passed an ordinance which authorized the government to ban Swiss papers if their attitude disturbed relations with a foreign power. The ban, however, was not enforced. To ban a Swiss paper would have made the banning of German papers a necessity, a step which the government hoped to avoid.

The Reich resorted to a pre-censorship of Swiss papers in order to force the Swiss press to moderate its comments on Germany. From time to time, the Basler Nachrichten was confiscated and the National-Zeitung subjected to a pre-censorship by the Gestapo. German authorities failed to announce the reasons for the bans and confiscations, and consequently their action seemed to be arbitrary.

26 Johnson, "Switzerland is Next," 529.
27 DGFP, C, II, 872.
and haphazard acts of police authority. An attack on the Swiss press by *Der Angriff*, a semi-official paper edited by Goebbels, brought a strong reaction from the Swiss. Public opinion gradually forced the government to adopt reprisals. On July 6, Switzerland banned *Der Angriff*, the *Berliner Boersen-Zeitung*, and the *Voelkischer Beobachter* as counter measures to the discrimination against Swiss papers in Germany. Two days later, Germany retaliated by banning the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, *Der Bund*, and the *Basler National-Zeitung*. With the reciprocal bans in effect, the press war subsided for the next five months.

In the meantime, debate on Swiss rearmament proceeded. Germany observed with appreciation the continued rearmament of the Swiss military, whose determination to defend Swiss neutrality met with popular approval of all Swiss parties. Even the Social Democrats set aside their pacifist line to support Minger's defense bill. Tentative plans called for lengthening the term of military service, construction of frontier fortifications, and expansion of the air force. Even with these measures, Switzerland could not reach a strength that would enable the state to defend its frontiers without the help of a third party.

Swiss defensive plans were made regardless of which frontier appeared to be threatened at the moment. Army maneuvers were not directed at any one side, and the fortifications were to be constructed in small numbers and
spread over all exposed parts of the frontier. In 1934, the Swiss gave proof of their intention to remain neutral and defend their territorial integrity during the crisis in Austria.

When civil war erupted between the supporters of Chancellor Dollfuss and the Austrian Socialists, the question of foreign intervention arose. Such a possibility was dispelled on February 21, when the Federal Council announced that Switzerland refused transit to any foreign troops. In July, a Putsch carried out by Austrian Nazis led to the assassination of Dollfuss. In this instance, Swiss neutrality proved to be an asset to Germany since the possibility of intervention was raised in France. Switzerland discouraged active intervention by refusing to allow any foreign military force pass through Switzerland. In November 1934 Weizsaeker noted:

Thus far the Swiss concept of neutrality is quite clear. . . . It also fits completely with Germany's interests. As matters stand today, we can not wish for anything better on our southern frontier between Lake Constance and Basel than a firm buttress and a guarantee against surprises.

Although Switzerland would ostensibly defend its frontiers against any aggressor, including France, Germany was well aware that the Swiss had departed from neutrality

28 DGFP, C, III, 144.
29 Ibid., 581.
30 Ibid., 872-73.
as far as their sympathies were concerned. Obviously, with this condition prevalent, Switzerland would be likely to place the blame on Germany should a European crisis develop. Germany's task in Switzerland was to modify the condition by adapting its propaganda to win over Swiss sympathy.

By December 1934 the Swiss press had toned down its anti-German attitude. With the bans on the papers due to expire on January 10, 1935, three days before the Saar plebescite, the Foreign Ministry and the German Legation in Berne suggested that the bans not be renewed, since it was hoped that the plebescite would be favorably reported in the Swiss press. Hitler, however, "doubted the wisdom" of lifting the bans, since Switzerland had not completely abandoned its attacks on National Socialism.\(^{31}\)

On January 1, 1935, Motta's Deputy approached Bernhard von Buelow\(^{32}\) on the subject of an official German declaration of respect for Swiss neutrality. Buelow replied that it would be difficult to find any authoritative quarter in Germany which would be prepared to make such a statement. "They would not run the risk of making themselves look ridiculous, as no serious person in Germany was thinking of interfering with the integrity of Switzerland in any way."\(^{33}\) On the following day, Buelow again

\(^{31}\text{DGFP, C, III, 732.}\)

\(^{32}\text{Bernhard von Buelow (1885-1939), State Secretary in the German Foreign Ministry.}\)

\(^{33}\text{DGFP, C, III, 890-91.}\)
rejected a similar request, pointing out that such a declaration to Switzerland would be followed by requests by other countries, "so that Germany should eventually be in the awkward and ridiculous position of having to give assurances to all sides that we are not robbers at heart and were not lying in wait for our neighbors." For the time being Germany saw no reason to issue a declaration of respect for Swiss neutrality. As far as the Foreign Ministry was concerned, there were no definite plans regarding Switzerland's possible incorporation in the Reich. The Swiss state was more valuable to Germany as a neutral buffer against France on the southern frontier of the Reich.

In March, the tension in Switzerland was increased when German agents in Kleinbasel kidnapped Berthold Jacob, a German emigre working against the Nazi regime. German authorities refused to admit the fact and refused to release Jacob. Swiss sovereignty had again been violated, and Weizsaecker was left with the difficult task of exerting a calming influence in Berne until he succeeded in overcoming the obstinancy of German official quarters. The Swiss government protested the incident vigorously and and invoked the German-Swiss Arbitration Treaty of 1921.

34 DGFP, C, III, 890-91.
35 Weizsaecker, Memoirs, 93.
Forseeing the probable verdict of a court of arbitration, Weizsaeker finally convinced Berlin of the futility of holding Jacob. On September 9, Hitler ordered the victim's release; he was handed over to Swiss authorities a week later.

As a result of this last violation of Swiss sovereignty, the Federal Council took up the question of dissolving all Nazi organizations in Switzerland. In an attempt to repair the damage done by the "Jacob case," Hitler in a speech on May 21 emphasized Germany's intention to pursue a policy of peace and friendship with its neighbors, stating that:

The German Reich—and in particular the present German Government—have no other wish than to live on friendly and peaceful terms with all neighboring States. We entertain these feelings not only toward the larger States, but also toward the neighboring smaller States.  

The Fuehrer made special reference to the relations between the Reich and Switzerland:

I myself believe that no regime which does not rest on public consent and is not supported by the people can continue permanently. If there are no such difficulties between Germany and Switzerland, which is to a large extent German, that is due to the fact that the independence and self-reliance of Switzerland is a reality, and because nobody doubts that the Swiss Government represents the real and

\[36\text{Adolf Hitler, My New Order. ed. de Sales (N.Y., 1941), 322. (Hereafter cited as Hitler, My New Order)}\]
legal expression of the will of the people.  

Foreign Minister Motta was impressed by Hitler's "deep and sincere desire for peace which made itself felt throughout the speech" and expressed his pleasure at the recognition of the independence and autonomy of the Confederation. For the present at least, Hitler was content to allow the Swiss Confederation to continue its independent existence on the Reich's southern frontier. By assuring the Swiss of his respect for their independence, Hitler successfully calmed public opinion and prevented temporarily the dissolution of National Socialist groups in Switzerland.

The calming effect of the May 21 speech was short-lived. Germany revived the press war by imposing a new ban on the Basler Nachrichten, alleging that the paper had been publishing anti-German articles. Switzerland retaliated by imposing bans on Der Reichsdeutsche, the organ of Germans in Switzerland, Der Stuermer and Der Alemmane. Berlin continually cited the anti-German Swiss as the basic cause of trouble between the states. Switzerland for its part hesitated to place any restrictions on its own press, particularly after it was banned throughout Germany.

37 Hitler, My New Order, 326-27.
38 DGFP, C, III, 239-40.
The Swiss Government honestly tried to maintain its policy of neutrality but could do nothing to correct the attitude of the public. "The Swiss papers had every right to be critical. Their readers demanded that they should express a definite point of view in regard to the Third Reich. In a sound democracy this could only be negative. Hitler and his advisers were not inclined to take advice from abroad and reacted to it with frontier incidents or other criminal acts. The diplomatic reports from Berne were not believed in Berlin, since local and regional representatives of the party in Switzerland rose above the diplomatic personnel in importance. As a whole, these officials had been recruited from the ranks of those who had been failures in their professions and who now thought that their time had come. "As in every revolution, the social misfits, tub-thumpers, and informers came to the surface." The role of the German Minister to Switzerland was not a dynamic one; it was his function to act as a brake.

Swiss public opinion held that foreigners living in Switzerland had diplomatic and consular representatives for their protection. Dual state controls, such as the

39 Weizsäcker, Memoirs, 96.
40 Ibid., 94.
41 Ibid., 90.
The Nazi regime had established in Germany, could not be tolerated in Switzerland because the unofficial representatives of the party in power created only confusion and trouble.

In the fall of 1935, the Swiss left-wing press initiated a campaign to bring about the expulsion of Wilhelm Gustloff, the Landesgruppenleiter of the Foreign Organization in Switzerland. Gustloff had angered Swiss socialists by organizing Germans in Switzerland in support of Hitler. On February 4, 1936, David Frankfurter, a Jugoslav medical student in Berne, assassinated Gustloff in his home in Davos. The assassin declared to the cantonal police that he was a Jew and wished to avenge the persecution of Jews in Germany.

Reaction in Germany created a sensation which crowded all other events into the background. Hitler immediately sent the following telegram to Gustloff's widow:

In the heavy loss you have suffered I express to you in the name of the whole German people my sincerest sympathy. The nefarious crime that put an end to a truly German man has created deep

---

42 The Landesgruppenleiter were the regional leaders of the Nazi Party organizations abroad. Gustloff generally coordinated the activity of the Party in Switzerland. To assist him, Gustloff relied upon Party leaders in each canton, known as Kreisleiter. Gustloff himself was a fanatic follower of Hitler, adoring the Fuehrer to the point of idolatry. According to Weizsaeker, he often gazed at the Fuehrer's picture for hours "to gain strength." Weizsaeker, Memoirs, 94.

emotion and resentment in the entire nation.\textsuperscript{44} Morning papers in Germany carried the story in banner headlines. The \textit{Voelkischer Beobachter} used the assassination for an attack on Judaism, stating that the assassination provided justification for National Socialism's stand on the Jewish question.\textsuperscript{45}

Weizsäcker called on Motta and demanded a strict investigation of the assassination. He emphasized the complicity of the Swiss press in inciting the assassin, pointing out that he could not recall a conversation with Motta in the past two years in which he did not have to strongly protest the Swiss press. The German Minister explicitly stated that the press campaign had not only represented the murdered man as the embodiment of National Socialist disruption in Switzerland and had consistently demanded his expulsion, but had also, at least covertly, encouraged violence against him.\textsuperscript{46} The Propaganda Ministry instructed the German press to emphasize the point that Frankfurter did not commit an act of revenge, did not know the victim, and had arrived from Jugoslavia three years earlier from whence he had derived no motive for the act.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{New York Times}, Feb. 5, 1936, l.
\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{46}\textit{DGFP}, C, IV, 1095.
\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid}., 1093.
The motivation for the crime had come from the Swiss press and Frankfurter's exposure to the campaign against Gustloff.

The assassination provided Germany with a new martyr for National Socialism as well as an opportunity to exact concessions from the Swiss government in the form of restrictions on the Swiss press. German authorities continued to emphasize the complicity of the Swiss press as the sole cause of the crime, confident that the Federal Council would finally take steps to tone down the press.

Unfortunately for Nazi propagandists, the forthcoming Olympics which were to be held in Germany, made it necessary to avoid anti-Jewish excesses for a time. Germany intended to present its more civilized side to the nations of the world, so the Frankfurter trial was not allowed to develop into a "Jewish Monster Trial." The Voelkischer Beobachter, most vitriolic of the German papers called for the death penalty for Frankfurter, but this too was avoided. The Swiss Constitution excluded the death penalty for political crimes, and the Canton of Grisons, in which the crime was committed, had abolished capital punishment years before. Ultimately, Germany's only policy was to press for restraint of the Swiss press, hoping to remove or at least moderate a major source of

---

criticism of the Third Reich.

Swiss reaction to the assassination came as a complete surprise to Germany. On February 8, 1936, the Federal Council ordered the suppression of all cantonal (Kreisleitungen) and regional (Landesleitung) Nazi organizations in Switzerland.

As usual, the Voelkischer Beobachter led the protest and called for reciprocal action against Swiss citizens in Germany. Neurath immediately protested the ban, stressing that Switzerland had subjected the NSDAP to an exceptional law which was not compatible with the general law relating to aliens and that the resolution plainly displayed an inner and direct connection with the murder of the Landesgruppenleiter. Under these circumstances, the German Government expected the Swiss to rescind the prohibition of February 18. Switzerland refused, and officially all National Socialist organizations in Switzerland were dissolved, leaving the Nazi Party without representation in Switzerland. To compensate for the loss of the Landesgruppenleiter, Germany transferred the work of that department to the Legation in Berne and appointed a new member to the Legation to carry on Gustloff's duties.

The assassination and its consequences made necessary
a new evaluation of the position of Germans in Switzerland. Weizsaeker noted that a very large number of Reichsdeutsche (German citizens in Switzerland) still displayed a temporizing or even negative attitude toward the Reich. This did not imply that all previous propaganda had been in vain, but rather that rapid progress was not to be expected because of the Swiss fear of National Socialism. He reiterated his earlier program for successful work in Switzerland, which had been set forth in 1933. If the fear of Germany's annexing a part of Switzerland were reduced, successful work among the German-speaking Swiss would increase.\footnote{DGFP, C, IV, 1195-96.}

Germany's denunciation of the Locarno Pact on March 7, 1936 produced no major reaction among the Swiss. Motta, with whom Weizsaeker discussed the German plan for reoccupation of the Rhineland, described the step as a "dangerous gamble."\footnote{Ibid, C, V, 54.} The Swiss Foreign Office viewed the situation calmly, showing understanding for Germany's position, and on March 10, affirmed that Switzerland was not obliged to take part in sanctions imposed on a violator of the Locarno Pact. After the reoccupation of the Rhineland, Switzerland stepped up work on its national defenses. Previously, Germany had erected new defensive
installations on its side of the Swiss frontier. In an interview with Defense Minister Minger, Weizsaeker praised the Swiss determination to defend its neutrality and discounted a critical article in the Boersen-Zeitung as not taking exception to Swiss rearmament but only to its apparent one-sidedness. Minger pointed out that it was Switzerland's duty to safeguard its frontier so as to make an advance into Switzerland not worth the risk for either France or Germany. The new German installations in South Baden and in the Black Forest had caused concern in Switzerland. Weizsaeker discounted the rumor of alleged German designs on Switzerland and assured Minger that Switzerland had nothing to fear from Germany.

Although Hitler had no designs on Switzerland while Weizsaeker served as Minister to Switzerland, an official declaration of respect for Swiss neutrality had become necessary. Certain party leaders had had a markedly disturbing effect on German-Swiss relations. Strong language by Goering, such as "The Swiss have muck in their heads," and threatening speeches directed across the Rhine by the Gauleiter of Baden, as well as the attitude of some South German newspapers, kept alive the Swiss fear of annexation.

53 DGFP, C, V, 687.
54 Ibid., 688.
55 Weizsaeker, Memoirs, 90.
On January 30, 1937, Hitler, in a speech to the Reichstag, referred to the German guarantees to Belgium and Holland, renewing his pledge "to recognize and guarantee these States as untouchable and neutral regions for all time." The Fuehrer made no mention whatsoever of Switzerland. The omission caused immediate concern in Switzerland where the people regarded Swiss neutrality as the model for all neutral states. Hitler's failure to guarantee Swiss neutrality led to a visit by ex-President Schulthess to Berlin, where he was received by Hitler. The Fuehrer expressed his belief that Switzerland was a European necessity and that the Reich desired to have the best relations with the Swiss. In closing, Hitler affirmed: "Through all time and whatever happens, we will respect Switzerland's neutrality and integrity. I affirm it categorically. Never have I given occasion for a contrary opinion." The Federal Council took note of the statement with satisfaction, hoping that the Reich would live up to the promise. Hitler's declaration coincided with a declaration by Mussolini that Italy had stopped all irredentist propaganda in Italian Switzerland following Swiss recognition of his Ethiopian conquest.

Hitler's statement to Schulthess was the first

56 Hitler, My New Order, 410.
official attempt by Berlin to follow the policy advocated by the German Legation in Berne. The statement succeeded in improving relations between the two states, but Nazi agitation and propaganda directed toward Switzerland did not stop, and the Swiss continued to display a strong anti-German attitude in their press.

Hitler apparently agreed with Weizsaeker's belief that Swiss neutrality was in Germany's interest since a neutral Switzerland provided a "firm buttress and guarantee against surprises" on the southern frontier of the Reich. On March 10, 1937, Hitler expressed his approval of Swiss neutrality to Weizsaeker. Switzerland in the south and Belgium in the north were to be pivots, and between them Hitler intended to fortify the frontier very strongly. "That would, Hitler observed, "be the best thing for us." 58

In November 1937, the pro-German circles in Switzerland momentarily set aside their Pan-German agitation and resorted to legal means to secure their objectives. According to the Basler Nachrichten, the pro-Nazi circles hoped to place a proposal before the Swiss electorate which would repudiate the London Declaration of 1920 and force the Swiss to readopt their traditional, prewar policy of absolute neutrality. 59

Although unsuccessful, the

58 Weizsaeker, Memoirs, 113.
German attempt to use legal channels indicated a change in Nazi policy. An attempt had been made earlier to bring the states closer together through a proposed conference between representatives of the German and Swiss press. However, the success of the conferences was blocked by a speech at Nuremberg, in which the German press chief, Dr. Dietrich, attacked Swiss independence. Switzerland consequently shelled the proposed conference.

By February 1938, it was again necessary for Hitler to reassure the Swiss that they were not an object of the Reich's racial policy. Hitler's reassurance helped to mollify the hostile feeling created by Dietrich's Nuremberg speech and calm the situation in Switzerland in preparation for Germany's Anschluss with Austria.

On March 14, after the German army had moved into Austria, the German Minister to Berne called on Motta to assure him, in the name of Hitler, that Germany had no evil intentions in regard to Switzerland and that the Fuehrer would respect the integrity of the country. A day earlier, the Swiss had reinforced customs guards along the Austrian frontier, explaining that the precautions taken were meant to deal with the possibility of an influx of

60 DGFP, D,V, 674.

refugees. The Swiss government took a grave view of the Anschluss, partly because of Hitler's methods and partly because of what these methods and Hitler's program for unifying the whole German race implied for Switzerland. On March 15, Weizsäcker again stressed Hitler's pledge to Switzerland in an attempt to counter the Swiss press which drew a lesson from Austria's fate. The annexation of Austria led the Swiss army to speed up the completion of its defenses all along its borders with the Reich. During the crisis, bridges across the Rhine and roads leading to the frontiers were mined, but this was the extent of Swiss action at the time.

In regard to the Anschluss, the Swiss Minister to Berlin, Hans Froelicher, expressed the opinion that Switzerland was naturally interested in having Austria remain a buffer between Germany and Italy. On the other hand, the internal stability of its neighbors was equally important to Switzerland, and the Swiss were not blind to the fact that Austria was unable to bring about domestic conciliation on its own. The Swiss Government did not take a strong stand against Germany's action in Austria, even though it implied a similar fate for the Swiss.

63 Hans Froelicher, Swiss Minister to Berlin, 1933-1945.
64 DGFP, D, V, 674.
After the Anschluss, Germany reopened its press campaign against Switzerland. Vienna bookshops displayed maps of the new Reich including Austria and the territories outside the Reich's frontiers considered to belong to the "fatherland." Among the territories were included the German-speaking portions of Switzerland. The Frankfurter Zeitung published an article which stated: "No branch of the German race has the right of the possibility of withdrawing from the common destiny of all the Germans." In the same vein, the Deutsche Bergwekzeitung wrote that Austria had "had the experience called Verschweizer (Swissing), meaning the tragedy of a people which has been made to believe that they were a nation while in reality they were only part of a community of the same language." Both statements gave notice that Switzerland could not expect to continue its independent existence outside of the Reich. Ultimately the Swiss Government lodged a protest in Berlin against the agitation which marked German-speaking regions of Switzerland as future German territory.

While the German press carried on its Pan-German demands, the German Minister in Berne pressured Foreign Minister Motta to exercise more control over the attitude

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
of the Swiss press. The Swiss Publishers' Association had already in January 1938 cautioned the press to exercise restraint in questions of foreign policy. But no official pressure was exerted to restrain the press, and the Publishers' Association's cautioning was not taken seriously by many papers.

Hitler's success in Austria completed the destruction of Switzerland's faith in the League of Nations and convinced the Swiss that their only hope of escaping involvement in hostilities was to revert to the traditional policy of absolute neutrality. On May 14, 1938, the League accepted the Swiss decision and agreed that Switzerland, while still remaining a member of the League, would not be called upon to join in the enforcement of economic sanctions.

Minister Denichert presented the new German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, with a note on Swiss neutrality informing him of Switzerland's decision. Ribbentrop expressed no enthusiasm for Switzerland's return to absolute neutrality and referred to the "possible untoward consequences in wartime of Swiss hospitality to the League." He also criticized the still objectionable

68 Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893-1947), succeeded Neurath as Foreign Minister in 1938. Previously he had served as Ambassador to London and with his "Bureau Ribbentrop" dabbled in Foreign Policy.
character of the Swiss press. Germany intended to withhold a declaration of respect for Switzerland's new status until concessions were made concerning the anti-German Swiss press and the position of the Nazi organizations in Switzerland which had been banned in 1936. The Swiss retreat to absolute neutrality was a victory for German policy, but the problem of the League's location in Geneva still remained.

Not until June 14 did Hitler again express his determination to respect Swiss neutrality "in all circumstances," promising that the policy would not be changed in the future. Mussolini simultaneously notified the Swiss government of Italy's intention to respect Swiss neutrality. The joint declarations, for which the Swiss government expressed "very great satisfaction and gratitude," led to a brief period of improved relations between Germany and Switzerland. But as the autumn of 1938 approached, Germany began to intensify its press campaign against Switzerland. However, the agitation in the Nazi press differed from the previous propaganda. Germany now made an effort to force Switzerland to adhere tightly to its policy of absolute neutrality. The Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte attempted to extend the concept of neutrality beyond the

69 DGFP, C, V, 671.
70 Ibid., 688.
acts and pledges of the government to cover even the attitude of individuals and private institutions.\footnote{Arnold Toynbee and Veronica Toynbee, \textit{Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946}: The War and the Neutrals (London, 1956), 205. \textit{Hereafter cited as Toynbee, War and the Neutrals}.} Switzerland was led to believe that if it did not follow this policy of neutrality Germany might disregard its assurances to Switzerland.

Militarily, Switzerland regained its importance as a buffer between France and southern Germany. In the event that France attempted any intervention against the Reich, a neutral Switzerland prepared to defend its neutrality against the French would be a definite asset to the Reich. Germany relied heavily on the belief that France would respect Swiss neutrality. Therefore Hitler was reasonably sure that French intervention, if any, would come somewhere along the French-German frontier, and necessary German forces could be concentrated in that area.

On September 13, 1938, the Swiss Government again ordered mines placed under all bridges and tunnels near the frontiers as "preventive measures."\footnote{\textit{New York Times}, Sept. 13, 1938, 14.} Two weeks later, in order to further emphasize its intention to maintain absolute neutrality, Switzerland addressed a note to Hitler resolving to remain outside any conflicts and not to engage in controversial questions, or even express an opinion on
the procedure that might solve such questions.74

During the Munich crisis, Switzerland hesitated until the last moment to undertake measures for mobilization and in the end avoided mobilization completely. The Swiss Government intended to maintain strict neutrality, although public opinion strongly protested the German action in Czechoslovakia. During the crisis, life became strenuous for Germans in Switzerland. Tradespeople were subject to a boycott, and numerous insults against Germans took place. Germany considered similar measures against Swiss citizens in Germany but dropped the idea since countermeasures would have increased the difficulties of Germans in Switzerland. The Swiss press carried its attack on the Munich settlement so far as to attack Daladier and Chamberlain for their participation in the dismemberment of the Czech state.

Germany's success at Munich caused Switzerland to revise its attitude toward France. Some circles among the Swiss began to wonder about the effectiveness of the French military, particularly since Switzerland counted on French assistance in the event of a German attack on, or invasion through, Switzerland.

Swiss agitation against Germans reached its high point in November 1938. The Berne newspaper, Der Bund,

published a letter, allegedly addressed by a German lawyer to a client in Switzerland, referring to the "future Reich Governor of Berne." Demonstrations against Germans in Berne followed, and the boycott against merchants continued. Ultimately, an investigation of the letter by the Swiss Government found it to be a forgery. The announcement of this fact served to calm public opinion in Switzerland.

To pacify Germany, the Swiss Minister to Berlin, in an address to the Swiss residents of Munich, spoke favorably of the Munich Agreement and recognized the right of self-determination of peoples. Switzerland essentially took the lead in restoring the relations which had been disrupted by the forged letter and the consequences of its publication. Germany further warned the Swiss that if they intended to be regarded as a neutral power, the anti-German agitation in the Swiss press must come to a halt.

By the end of 1938, German pressure on the Swiss Government had successfully forced the Swiss to rely upon armed neutrality as the best possible means to avoid involvement in any conflict. During 1939, Hitler was determined to see that Switzerland adhered to this policy and if necessary would defend its frontiers against a possible threat.

75 DGFP, D,V, 701.
76 Ibid., 702.
from France.

The Franco-British "Gentleman's Agreement," when announced in the press on March 27, 1939, brought immediate reaction from Berlin. By the terms of the Agreement, France and Great Britain agreed to recognize a violation of Swiss, Dutch, or Belgian neutrality as a casus belli. Weizsäcker demanded an immediate elucidation of the extent of Swiss participation in the affair. Switzerland, in fact, had had no knowledge of the Agreement until March 21, when the French informed the Swiss Minister to Paris, whereupon the Swiss merely took note of the Agreement while emphasizing that it remained for Switzerland to decide when intervention was necessary. Germany interpreted the Swiss answer as a formal acceptance of the guarantee and charged that the Swiss were following a one-sided policy incompatible with neutrality. The controversy continued until July 20, when under German pressure, Switzerland issued a note on its neutrality stating that Switzerland's right to invoke the help of other states in the event of a breach of neutrality was uncontested. Such help could only be afforded in response to Switzerland's explicit request. Unsolicited intervention of a third state had to be viewed as a violation of neutrality. The note did little to convince

79 DGFP, D, VI, 286-287.
80 Ibid., 949.
Berlin of Switzerland's nonparticipation in the Agreement. German interests demanded that Switzerland remain neutral in all respects, and the alleged Swiss participation in the Franco-British guarantee was seen as a Swiss move into the French orbit.

Germany continued to maintain pressure on Switzerland until late August to insure that the Swiss would remain neutral should the Reich become engaged in a conflict in the East. On August 13, 1939, Foreign Minister Motta publicly emphasized the importance of Switzerland's "unfettered neutrality" and restated the Swiss position that the Franco-British negotiations were conducted without Swiss knowledge. Switzerland, as always, would rely upon its own military forces for defense and would accept help only upon its own request.  

Shortly after Motta's speech, the matter of the "Gentleman's Agreement" was allowed to drop, and Hitler once more declared his intention to respect Swiss neutrality.

On August 25, Ribbentrop sent notes to the European neutrals assuring them of Germany's respect for their neutrality and demanding in return that these states resist attempts by third parties to infringe on their neutrality.  

On the following day, Switzerland declared its intention to

81 DGFP, D, VI, 949.
82 Ibid., VII, 286-87.
maintain the "strictest neutrality" in case of war.\textsuperscript{83}

In August and September 1939, Switzerland took measures to safeguard the country. Frontier forces were called up, and the sales of food stuffs suspended. A state of active service was declared on August 29, and the Assembly elected a commander-in-chief for the Swiss army. General mobilization took place on September 2, and the usual mining of bridges and tunnels was ordered. Thus at the time of the invasion of Poland, Switzerland had followed the course of action which Germany had worked to insure in its relations with Switzerland.

As further proof of its intention to remain neutral in all respects, Switzerland, on Germany's demand, requested that the League session of November 10 be exclusively confined to discussion of the Russo-Finnish conflict.\textsuperscript{84} After the fall of Poland, the Swiss had no choice but to defend their neutrality, since only this policy offered the possibility of escaping involvement in war. The failure of France to aid the Poles further undermined Swiss faith in France, although secret military talks continued with the French General Staff.

Germany's attitude toward Swiss neutrality over the preceding seven years had been determined by a mixture

\textsuperscript{83}\textit{DGFP}, D, VI, 312.

\textsuperscript{84}\textit{Ibid.}, VIII, 495-96.
of diplomacy and propaganda which inadvertently led Switzerland to adopt a course most favorable to the Reich. Nazi propaganda, rather than converting the Swiss to National Socialism, succeeded only in alienating them. No Swiss was anxious to see German-speaking Switzerland absorbed in Hitler's "greater Germany." German propaganda, which continually emphasized this point, convinced the Swiss that the Nazi regime represented a threat to Swiss independence. As a result, Switzerland emphasized its neutrality and undertook a program of rearmament in order to be able to defend its neutrality if necessary. In reality, a rearmed and neutral Switzerland was in the political and military interest of Germany and met with German approval, since, in Weizsaeker's words, Germany could "wish for nothing better on its southern frontier than a firm buttress and guarantee against surprises."

German success in Austria and Czechoslovakia undermined Swiss faith in the League of Nations, and the Swiss reverted to their traditional policy of absolute neutrality in May 1938, announcing their intention to defend the country against all aggressors. By the beginning of the war, the Swiss were firmly entrenched in their policy of neutrality and determined to prevent any violation of the Swiss frontier by force of arms.

The failure of Nazi propaganda offers an explanation for the failure of the Reich to attempt an Anschluss with
Switzerland. Swiss Nazi organizations never achieved a following similar to the Sudeten and Austrian Nazi Parties. The stability of the Swiss state and the loyalty of the Swiss to their established form of federal government preserved Switzerland from the fate of newly created Austria and Czechoslovakia. The idea of an Anschluss, however, remained a hope of Nazi leaders throughout the war, but conditions for a successful attempt failed to materialize.
CHAPTER III

SWITZERLAND IN GERMAN STRATEGY, 1940-1943

After annexing the Saarland, Austria, the Sudetenland and Danzig, the Third Reich lacked only one region in Europe with a sizable German-speaking population. Switzerland alone retained its independence, but there was no doubt in Berlin that sooner or later the "Suedmark" would be incorporated into Hitler's "greater Germany." As in the prewar years, Nazi party members continually talked of incorporating Switzerland, but such talk represented only unofficial rumors which were utilized for their psychological effects on the Swiss. The threat of a German invasion was sufficient to prevent Switzerland's aligning itself with Germany's enemies. Whether official plans for such an event were ever drawn up by the Foreign Ministry or by the Foreign Office is obscure.

Stuttgart, the nearest large German city to Switzerland was made the seat of various official and unofficial German agencies assigned to operate in Switzerland—to conduct propaganda, organize spying, and carry out acts of sabotage.¹ A small number of German nationals living in Switzerland were organized into a section of the Nazi Party,

¹David J. Dallin, Soviet Espionage (New Haven, 1964), 191. [Hereafter cited as Dallin, Soviet Espionage.]
while Swiss nationals with National Socialist leanings were united in the "National Front" and other such organizations, all of them controlled and financed by Berlin.

Of all the German-speaking countries and areas in Europe, Switzerland was the least sympathetic toward Nazi Germany, and the majority of Germans living in Switzerland were especially antagonistic toward Nazism. Efforts in northern Switzerland to build up a movement like the Henlein movement of the Sudetenland were small and could be suppressed by the cantonal police when necessary. This state of public opinion was one of the reasons for Germany's decision not to invade Switzerland, and in the long run it saved the country from occupation and devastation.\(^2\)

During the period of the "phony war," Germany gave no indication that a change in its attitude toward Switzerland was imminent. In an address to the Reichstag on October 6, 1939, Hitler issued peace appeals to France and Great Britain and reviewed Germany's friendly relations with the European neutrals over the past seven years. In reference to Switzerland, the Fuehrer observed:

\>[\ldots]\textit{Germany adopted the same attitude toward Switzerland. The Reich Government has never given the slightest cause for doubting their desires to establish friendly relations with the country. Moreover, they themselves have never brought forward}\]

\(^2\text{Dallin,}\textit{Soviet Espionage,}\text{191-92.}\)
any complaint regarding the relations between the two countries.³

The Reich's new Minister to Switzerland, Dr. Otto Koecher,⁴ met with President Henry Vallotton in February of 1940 and assured him that it was "urgently necessary" for Germany to leave Switzerland out of the war.⁵ Since the Minister's statement was unauthorized, he requested that Vallotton not repeat it to the Swiss press. At the same time, he tried to impress upon the President that it was equally necessary for the Swiss press to adopt a new attitude toward Nazi Germany.⁶

Strict control over the press was not yet imposed, although some officials began to consider this policy necessary to insure that the press would not provoke a German attack on Switzerland. The strongly anti-Nazi Swiss press, as noted above, had been one of the main causes of friction between Germany and Switzerland since 1933. In view of the fate of the Austrians, Czechs and Poles, restriction if not complete government censorship did not appear to be an unreasonable policy.

Switzerland for its part continued to regard the

³Hitler, My New Order, 742-43.
⁴Dr. Otto Koecher replaced Weizsaeker as Minister to Berne and served in that capacity from 1937-1945.
⁵DGFP, D, VIII, 772.
⁶Ibid.
maintenance of armed neutrality as the only means by which the country could maintain its independence and escape involvement in the war. The Swiss mobilization of September 1939 was not a strategic deployment of forces but merely a measure to enable the army to combine in the north against a German attack, or in the west in the event of a French attack. The Commander of the Swiss Army, General Henri Guisan, believed that Hitler would not be content with the acquisition of Poland and feared that Switzerland might be Germany's next objective. He therefore utilized the period of the "phoney war" to prepare an operational plan in case of a German attack across Switzerland's northern frontier.

After his so-called "peace speech" of October 6 failed to elicit a favorable response from the British and French, Hitler began to consider preparations for an attack on France. On October 22, he designated November 12 as the date for the beginning of the western offensive. However,

7In Switzerland the position of Commander of the Swiss Army is elective. In peace time the Swiss Army, which is a militia army, is commanded by men of the rank of Colonel. In the event of a war, the Swiss Federal Assembly elects a commander of the Army, who is given the rank of general for the duration of the crisis. On September 29, 1939, the Assembly elected Henri Guisan, a well-to-do farmer from French-speaking Switzerland to command its army. The "General," as he was known, represented Switzerland's will to resist and enjoyed immense popularity throughout the war.

8General Henri Guisan, Bericht an die Bundesversammlung ueber den Aktivdienst, 1939-1945, (Zurich, 1946), 13. /Hereafter cited as Guisan, Bericht./
unfavorable weather conditions forced postponement of the November deadline, a process which was to be repeated fifteen times before the end of 1939.

On January 1, 1940, Hitler was once again forced to postpone the offensive. On this date, an entry in the journal of General Halder, Chief of Staff of the Army (OKH or Oberkommando des Heeres), indicates that Hitler was considering the possibility of undertaking an advance into southern France. General Halder noted the following in his Journal:

Italy: Mussolini has sent word that he will approach the Fuehrer with proposals by the middle of January. Use of Italians in German operations in the West: The Fuehrer is thinking of independent missions: Southern France, through Savoy, to the southwest: Even our promise to Switzerland would be no real obstacle.

Even before Germany's attack on Poland, Mussolini had been forced to admit to Hitler that his army could not be prepared for a European war before 1942 and could not enter the war without extensive German supplies. In a letter to Hitler in January 1940, Mussolini made no mention

9 General Franz Halder succeeded General Ludwig Beck as Chief of Staff in 1938 and served until September 1942, when, because of numerous conflicts with Hitler, he was dismissed. Halder came from a Catholic, Bavarian family with a tradition of producing general staff officers. Because of his Catholicism and general staff outlook, he seldom got along with Hitler, particularly during the Russian campaign. In 1944, he was arrested in connection with the events of July 20 but not brought to trial.

of any Italian action in southern France but suggested instead that Hitler conclude a compromise peace. Opposed to an extension of the war in the west, he urged Hitler to turn back and seek Germany's Lebensraum in the east. Mussolini's reluctance to undertake an operation against the French forced Hitler to abandon his plans in this area and to reconsider the offensive in the north.

In the same month, a German Air Force staff officer was forced to make an emergency landing in Belgium, and a portion of the plans for the western offensive fell into Belgian hands. Following the incident, Hitler postponed the offensive until the spring of 1940, since it was necessary to consider modifying the plans for the offensive.

With the western offensive out of his mind for the time being, Hitler devoted his energies to preparing for an attack on the Scandinavian countries. On February 20, he appointed General Falkenhorst, who had served in Finland in 1918, to take over preparations for the attack on Denmark and Norway. It was not known definitely whether the attack on the Scandinavian countries would precede the western offensive until March 26 when on the recommendations of the Navy, Hitler affirmed that "Weser Übung" the attack on the Scandinavian countries should come before the attack on France. A week later, the Fuehrer designated

April 9 as the date for the beginning of the operation. Germany's attack on Norway and Denmark deeply shocked the Swiss to whom it was incomprehensible that the two democracies should yield to Nazi demands. Even more incomprehensible was the fact that there were men willing to cooperate with the aggressor against their own homeland. The Swiss now assumed that they saw the Nazi system exposed: the methodical undermining of morale in neutral countries, creation of disorders, and the organization of defeatism.\textsuperscript{12}

On April 18, the Federal Council and General Guisan issued a joint call for mobilization in the event of a surprise attack and prepared to take measures to combat defeatism among the populace.\textsuperscript{13} The Swiss press reacted so violently to the German attack in the north that the government was finally required to request that the press exercise restraint. The criticism of the Swiss press did not escape the notice of the German Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop. On May 2, he announced to Hans Froelicher that the Reich, which had already shown "angelic patience" in regard to Switzerland, would tolerate no more abuse from the Swiss press and intended to retaliate in its own press. At the same time, Ribbentrop stated that the Reich would regard Switzerland's

\textsuperscript{12}DGFP, D, IX, 220.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 219.
granting of an *agréement* to the Polish Exile Government as an unfriendly act and intended to recall its minister from Berne if the *agréement* were granted.\(^\text{14}\)

Faced with the possibility of a break in diplomatic relations, the Swiss Government informed Berlin that "in order to comply with the request expressed to Herr Froelicher by the Foreign Minister, the Swiss Government would not grant the *agréement* to a Polish Minister for the time being."\(^\text{15}\)

During April, the Swiss General Staff concentrated on strengthening the German-Swiss frontier in preparation for a German invasion from the north, a measure which necessitated further weakening of the country's defenses in the west.\(^\text{16}\)

German planning for the attack in the west took its final form in the "Hitler-Manstein" plan. On May 10, the plan was put into operation with Army Group B thrusting through the Low Countries toward northern France, while Army Group A simultaneously advanced through the Ardennes with the task of cutting off the enemy forces in northern France from the south. Farther south, opposing the French between the Moselle and the Swiss frontier, Army Group C

\(^{14}\text{DGFP, D, IX, 270.}\)

\(^{15}\text{Ibid., 271.}\)

\(^{16}\text{Guisan, Bericht, 26.}\)
took no offensive action until June 16, when it advanced to southern France.

The Swiss General Staff knew of German plans in advance through a secret channel of communications, known as the "Viking Line," which was maintained by the Chief of the German Military Intelligence, Admiral Canaris. Through the "Viking Line," Canaris was able to inform the Swiss of discussions in the High Command of the Armed Forces (OKW or Oberkommando der Wehrmacht) which involved the possible invasion of Switzerland. Between May 5 and May 7, the Swiss were warned of the possibility of an imminent German invasion and advised to mobilize. However, there are two possible motives for the Admiral's initial warning. Possibly he suspected that the Ardennes offensive would be unsuccessful, forcing Hitler to thrust his left flank through Switzerland and the Belfort Gap. On the other hand, it is equally possible that Canaris made this feint to alarm the French and lead them to tie down strong forces in the Belfort area at a time when such forces would have served a more useful function farther

17 Admiral Wilhelm Canaris: Chief of Amtsgruppe Ausland/Abwehr (intelligence in OKW) 1938-1944, when dismissed owing to frequent quarrels with the SS; involved indirectly in the plot to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944; hanged in Flossenburg concentration camp in April 1945. He has been described as "the secret genius of opposition" and his "inner circle" as the very cabinet of the resistance movement, yet there is little evidence to substantiate these claims.
north. 18

In any event, the attack on France came as no surprise to the Swiss military who had awaited the event, but among the populace of northern Switzerland a general panic resulted which reached its high point on the night of May 14. At this moment, it appeared to Guisan that Switzerland stood in actual danger of an attack. If the German offensive at Sedan had not been successful, he expected the release of a supplementary operation in the south with the intention of skirting the French defensive positions. German forces appeared to be prepared for this objective, which would probably have run its course through Switzerland. 19

Fortunately for the Swiss, the Ardennes offensive was a complete success, and the immediate danger diminished. As the western offensive progressed, the German press increased its caustic and insolent tone toward Switzerland. Over the radio, songs of the Hitlerjugend scorned Swiss independence and hinted that the Reich would deal with Switzerland after the French were defeated. 20

After Italy's entry into the war and the subsequent

18 Ian Colvin, Chief of Intelligence (London, 1951), 114. /Hereafter cited as Colvin, Chief of Intelligence./
20 Peter Duerrenmatt, Kleine Geschichte der Schweiz waehrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges (Zurich, 1949), 63.
fall of France, German respect for Swiss neutrality decreased proportionally. While the Swiss frontier was generally respected on the ground, German pilots on flights between Germany and occupied France tended to ignore Swiss neutrality. The Swiss Air Force, in turn, defended the air over the country, engaging the Luftwaffe whenever a violation of Swiss air space occurred. On five occasions, both Goering's Luftwaffe and the Swiss Air Force suffered losses of planes and pilots. Field Marshal (later Reichsmarshal) Hermann Goering was determined to halt the losses to his Luftwaffe over Switzerland and, on his own authority, concocted a plan for a sabotage mission against the Swiss air fields. On June 14, nine saboteurs entered Switzerland with the objective of sabotaging airfields at Lausanne, Payerne, Biel-Boezingen, Duebendorf and Spreitenbach. The operation, designated as "Unternehmen Wartegau," was strictly an amateur operation and failed completely with most of the saboteurs taken into custody within twenty-four hours.  

"Unternehmen Wartegau" was but one of a number of Nazi attempts at sabotage and espionage in Switzerland.

---

21 Hermann Goering, Reich Minister for Air, Reich Minister for the Four-Year Plan, Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe throughout the war.

22 H. R. Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung der kriegsführenden Mächte während des Zweiten Weltkrieges (Biel, 1957), 14. (Hereafter cited as Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung.)
which eventually began to have a definite effect on Swiss morale. Switzerland was completely surrounded by Axis Powers and occupied France, except for a narrow corridor from Geneva to Vichy France. Chances of being able to pursue an independent policy were limited. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that some people felt that Switzerland should, by economic and political adaptation, qualify itself for a favorable position in Hitler's "New Europe." During the summer of 1940, there was considerable public and press discussion of renewal and adaptation of Swiss institutions and policies. President Pilet-Golaz, in a speech on June 25, encouraged the advocates of adaptation when he spoke of the need for economic adaptation and warned his countrymen that they would have to accept changes in their way of life. Moreover, he noted that the government would no longer be able to explain and justify its decisions to the public.  

The President's speech came under immediate attack by the opponents of adaptation. But at the same time, the speech stimulated the defeatist element which began to center on the President.

During the Battle of Britain the Nazi press attacked the Swiss press for its alleged lack of impartiality and accused the Swiss of a violation of neutrality. Restrictions finally became a necessity; the Swiss papers were not

---

23Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 211.
allowed to publish articles and comment of a hostile or unduly critical character which might make relations with Germany more difficult. In spite of the restriction, the Germans and their junior partner, Italy, remained unappeased. Additional concessions to the Axis Powers became necessary as the war progressed. Shortly after the German-French Armistice, Switzerland agreed to hand over to Germany the war material belonging to interned Polish and French soldiers. German pressure also brought about the blackout of Swiss towns at night, since their lights served to guide Allied pilots to Axis targets.

The German High Command did not seriously begin to consider the possibility of an attack on Switzerland until after the fall of France. In comparison to Belgium and Holland, Switzerland was only of minor operational significance during the course of the war, and in the first part of the war an outflanking of the Maginot Line through Switzerland was never seriously considered. German troop movements which the Swiss intelligence detected in the vicinity of the Swiss frontier were not preparations for an attack on Switzerland but were designed merely to deceive

24 Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 212.
25 Ibid.
26 Bernhard von Lossberg, Im Wehrmachtfuehrungstab: Bericht eines Generalstabsoffiziers (Hamburg, 1950), 102. [Hereafter cited as Lossberg, Im Wehrmachtfuehrungstab.]
the French General Staff. The mountainous character of the country made it unsuitable both for troop movements and as a staging area from which an attack on France could be launched. With Italy's declaration of war, Switzerland increased in military and economic importance to the Axis, since the main connection between Italy and Germany depended on Swiss railways and tunnels. In addition, Swiss deliveries of precision machines to Great Britain, as well as the country's role as a rendezvous for international espionage, tended to focus Hitler's attention on the country.

After the victory in the west, General Jodl ordered the Operations Staff to investigate the possibility of an attack on Switzerland but not to share the information with OKH or other headquarters. The Staff based its plan upon the occupation of the Swiss "middle-land"--the region between the Juras and the Alps. This region was considered to be militarily accessible. Equally important, it contained the major Swiss industrial centers, including the clock, machine,


28 Colonel General Alfred Jodl, Chief of the OKW Operations Staff, 1938-1945. In Hitler's reorganization of the German military in 1938, OKW was created as a kind of personal working staff--an office that supplied him with information and circulated and supervised his orders. In essence, OKW was a half military and half political organization with no relation to real general staff work as carried on by OKH.

29 Lossberg, *Im Wehrmachtführungstab*, 102.
textile and aluminum industries. Major transportation routes led from the Rhine and Rhone valleys into the "middle land" and then over the Alpine passes into Italy.

The OKW plan projected an advance by light motorized forces into Switzerland west of Lake Constance. After crossing the Rhine, the force was to continue advancing toward the southwest. A second force, composed of mountain troops, was to begin its advance from the north on both sides of Basel and proceed directly south. Simultaneously, a third force was to advance up the Rhone Valley into southeastern Switzerland. OKW's operational plan was strictly a German undertaking with no consideration given to the possible use of Italian forces. If successful, the operation would encircle the mass of the Swiss Army in the "middle land."

Occupation of Switzerland offered considerable economic benefits for the Reich as well as control of the Swiss tunnels and railways which provided the main connection between Italy and Germany. The strategically important railway lines, especially the Gotthard Line and the Simplon Line, carried most of Germany's supplies to Italy.

30 Lossberg, Im Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab, 103-104.
31 Ibid., 104.
and also to the Axis forces in Africa.\textsuperscript{32}

OKW's plan was never to attain operational significance during the course of the war. Upon its completion, the plan was presented to General Jodl, who filed it in his desk for use should a favorable opportunity present itself.

A second operational plan for military action against Switzerland, known under the code name Operation Tannenbaum, was undertaken at approximately the same time as the OKW plan. Tannenbaum, however, was initially drawn up by the OKH Operations Staff. On June 25, the Operations Staff prepared a memorandum concerning the "possibility of a surprise occupation of Switzerland by German troops from France and Germany, on the assumption that Italian troops will attack simultaneously from the south."\textsuperscript{33}

In view of Switzerland's long frontiers, OKH planners expected no offensive by the Swiss Army which they assumed would have to be restricted rather to a defense of the completed frontier positions. At this time (late June 1940), the Germans took into account the fact that

\textsuperscript{32}The Swiss tunnels were among the longest in the world—Gotthard, nine miles; Simplon, 12.4 miles; Loetschberg, nine miles. The three tunnels provided the most effective connection between Germany and Italy, which depended heavily upon Germany for supplies, especially coal for its steel industry. An alternate route via the Brenner Pass could not accommodate the amount of supplies necessary for Italy and for the Axis forces in Africa.

\textsuperscript{33}Kurz, \textit{Die Schweiz in der Planung}, 28.
the weakest Swiss forces lay along the French-German border and that a Swiss attempt to move troops to the western frontier would correspondingly weaken the northern defenses.

Success of any operation against the Swiss depended upon the surprise and speed with which the country could be occupied. The initial OKH plan recommended that the advance against the Swiss Army should be undertaken from several directions to prevent formation of a unified command or an organized withdrawal into the impassable mountainous terrain. OKH realized that a successful Swiss withdrawal into the central massif would delay and possibly prevent a decisive victory.\(^{34}\) The main emphasis of the attack was placed in the west where the Alps were to be crossed near Savoy and the Juras penetrated at several locations while the Rhine was being crossed in the north. For political and morale reasons, it was deemed necessary to capture the capital and military districts quickly and while they were still intact.\(^{35}\) As a final note, the initial memorandum stated that the possibility of settling German differences with Switzerland by peaceful means still existed.\(^{36}\)

Further work on the operation was discontinued until August, but by this time it was necessary to consider

\(^{34}\)Kurz, *Die Schweiz in der Planung*, 29.

\(^{35}\)Ibid.

\(^{36}\)Ibid., 30.
two new problems in regard to Swiss strength. During the interval, Switzerland had increased the strength of its field divisions and it could perhaps count on the help of 40,000 interned French and Polish soldiers.

The operational plan designed in August deviated little from the guidelines set down by the initial memorandum. The aim of the operation was to defeat the enemy quickly before it could retreat into the Alps. The major blow was to fall on the western border, since Swiss forces in this area remained weaker than those in the north and Swiss industrial centers could be reached most easily from the west. An attack across the Rhine in the north was designed mainly as a deceptive measure, while no attack was planned on Switzerland's eastern frontier. Heavy fortifications, as well as the difficulties of terrain, presented the attacker with too many obstacles in the east. Italian forces were allotted the occupation of the Chur-Davos area, as well as the Rhone Valley.

The task of executing Tannenbaum went to General von List's Twelfth Army, which included three army corps—the XII, XV and XVIII. Included in the three corps were five infantry divisions, three motorized divisions, and a mountain division and a Panzer division. Two motorized SS regiments completed the force. Because the Battle of

*Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung, 30.*
Britain was still in progress, the degree of participation by the Luftwaffe was not clearly determined, although it was assumed that the Luftwaffe would conduct independent bombing missions and provide ground support.38

While the single mountain division was to effect a crossing of the Juras, the infantry divisions were to lead the breakthrough of the fortified positions and move toward the closer objectives. To prevent a possible evasion of the Swiss to the south or southeast, paratroop landings (which were also limited because of the Battle of Britain) at the Linthkanal and at Sargens were planned. The Luftwaffe was assigned the tasks of destroying the enemy air forces and providing air support for the ground troops. By landing Luftwaffe units at Olten, the Operations Staff hoped to close that exit through the Juras.39

The timetable for the operation provided a minimum of six days. Berne, Lucerne and Zurich were to be taken during the first two days, while the remaining operations, depending on the success of the Italians, would take another three to four days. The operation was to take place in the summer months, since from October to May snowfall in the mountains would cause delays and fog might impair the activity of the Luftwaffe. OKH designated September as the

38Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung, 30.
39Ibid.
most favorable month.\textsuperscript{40}

The next phase of planning for Operation Tannenbaum occurred within Army Group C, commanded by Field Marshal Ritter von Leeb, General von List's immediate superior. On August 26, General Halder signed a memorandum directing von Leeb to submit an operational plan for an attack on Switzerland.

Von Leeb's plan assigned Operation Tannenbaum to the Twelfth Army but restricted its objective to a line running from Lake Geneva northeast to Sargens. South of the line, Italian forces were to undertake independent operations, and southern Switzerland was designated as an Italian sphere of influence. In the north, the Twelfth Army was to destroy the Swiss forces quickly by attacks from several directions and occupy the capitol, industrial and armament centers. Von Leeb forwarded the skeleton plan to the headquarters of the Twelfth Army for von List's comments. As a result, the plan was delayed until September 7, after which von Leeb made a final revision.\textsuperscript{41}

In contrast to the earlier plans, von Leeb shifted the main emphasis from the center of the Jura front to its outer flanks. Superior Panzer and motorized forces were to advance on the southern flank between Lake Geneva and

\textsuperscript{40}Kurz, \textit{Die Schweiz in der Planung}, 31. See Appendix A.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., 33-34.
the Neuenburgersee while a similar force effected an entry in the north between Waldshut and Lake Constance. By this means a deep and fast advance along the western edge of the Alps would be achieved, initiating an outflanking and encirclement of the major enemy forces in the Swiss "middle land." In spite of the greater distances, flanking movements were preferred to frontal attacks through the Juras.42

For the operation, von Leeb divided the Twelfth Army into five attack groups (Angriffsgruppen). Group A, composed of two Panzer divisions, two infantry divisions, a mountain division and a motorized division, was to cross the Swiss frontier in the south between Lake Geneva and the Neuenburgersee. The southern prong of the group was assigned the task of seizing Geneva while the major portion of the group advanced toward Berne, Fribourg and Thun. The mountain division and infantry division of Group B were to penetrate the Juras near Biel and advance past Biel to Burgdorf. Group C, with two infantry divisions and a Panzer division, was to cross the frontier in the north on both sides of Basel and advance generally south toward Huttwil. The strongest northern unit (Group D) included two Panzer divisions, two infantry divisions and a motorized division. Its five divisions were to cross the German-Swiss frontier between Waldshut and Lake Constance and advance southward toward

42Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung, 35-36.
Zurich. Group E was to mount the only attack in the east with a mountain division and an infantry division. Its objectives were St. Gallen, Gams, Glarus, Chur and Llanz. 43

The Luftwaffe was assigned the usual tasks of destroying the enemy air force and the communications systems by attacks on Berne, Lucerne, Thun, Interlaken, Zurich and Solothurn. 44

If successful, von Leeb's plan would encircle the Swiss Army in the "middle land" before an organized retreat could be carried out and before the Swiss could effectively destroy the Gotthard and Simplon tunnels.

To disguise the assembly of motorized and Panzer units near the Swiss frontiers, it was proposed to allow an "aggravation of the occupation of France in connection with the failure to fulfill the Armistice stipulations" to precede the attack. Simultaneously, the Swiss were to be further deceived by "benevolent handling in the German newspapers and through economic agreements." 45

Von Leeb's plan found unconditional support neither with the OKH Operations Staff under Colonel Heusinger nor with General Halder. Heusinger found the proposed troop

43 Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung, 36. See Appendix B.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
estimates disproportionately high in comparison to the Swiss defensive forces. He recommended the removal of Group E and restriction of the operation to a single army group of eleven divisions. 46

General Halder also recommended removal of Group E, but he further suggested the uniting of Groups A and B and C and D under a single command. The goals were modified in the sense that A and B, the western units with a strong motorized right flank, would break through the frontier between Geneva and the Neuenburgersee and advance to Berne and Lucerne. The unified northern groups with a strong motorized left flank were to cross the frontier near Waldshut and advance southward to Lucerne. Thus, while the motorized outer flanks were encircling the "middle land," the non-motorized units were to advance on Basel, Waldshut, Olten, Solothurn and Berne. In this way, Halder created two operational spheres—an inner sphere in which the non-motorized forces operated and an outer sphere allocated to the movement of motorized units. The area seized between the motorized and non-motorized forces would contain the mass of the Swiss Army before an organized withdrawal into the mountains could be accomplished. 47

Halder's revision represented the final stage of

46 Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung, 38.

47 Ibid. See Appendix C.
Operation Tannenbaum, but by this time (October 17, 1940), the favorable time for execution of the operation had passed. Hitler was preoccupied with several other major problems, namely the attacks on Great Britain and Russia. In relation to these operations, Switzerland was insignificant. In any event, the country was surrounded by Axis territory, and there would be abundant time to deal with the Swiss after Britain and Russia were subdued. For the time being, the Fuehrer was content with economic concessions from the Swiss. Planning for Operation Tannenbaum, while seriously studied between June and October 1940, remained in the nature of preparations in adventum.

The Swiss were alarmed by stories and rumors that Hitler intended to invade the country. But such information was spread by Nazi agents in Switzerland as well as by the German press in order to encourage Swiss defeatists and to insure that Switzerland would not allow any Allied breaches of its neutrality. State Secretary von Weizsaeker, former Minister to Switzerland, noted in his Memoirs that such stories were in the nature of warning shots, but had no foundation in fact. "If there had really been any intention of invading Switzerland, this would not have escaped the notice of my still existing informants at OKW."48

While planning for Tannenbaum continued throughout

48Weizsaeker, Memoirs, 243.
the summer of 1940, the Swiss undertook measures to combat the growing defeatism in Switzerland and to revise the defensive measures to be taken in the event of a German attack. On June 25, General Guisan issued the order of the day to his troop commanders assembled on the Ruetli Meadow, the legendary spot where the Swiss Confederation had been founded in 1291. Guisan urged his officers to ignore the defeatists and remain steadfast in their resistance. The defeatist atmosphere, which had been intensified by Mussolini's declaration of war and the fall of France, had made serious inroads among both the civil population and the army. At the Ruetli Meadow, Guisan made a patriotic appeal to the nation as a whole. To the army, he stated that as long as the slightest expectation of military success existed the duty to defend Swiss honor must be observed to the utmost.49

To facilitate defense of the country, the general introduced the concept of the "National Redoubt," a natural defensive system based on the Alpine fortresses of the Gotthard, Sargens and St. Maurice.50 In the event that the Swiss Army could not prevent a German breakthrough of the frontier fortifications, the "National Redoubt" provided

49H.R. Kurz, Die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Das grosse Erinnerungswerk an die Aktivdienstzeit, 1939-1945 (Thun, 1960), 16. /Hereafter cited as Kurz, Die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg./

50Ibid., 181.
a well-provisioned stronghold into which an organized retreat could be conducted. In essence, the villages and towns of Switzerland were to be left to the invader. A successful withdrawal into the Alps offered the Swiss an opportunity to carry on partisan and guerrilla warfare against the occupier, thus preventing a quick defeat and forcing Germany to engage in a long and extensive operation. The Swiss intended to destroy factories, armament centers and the tunnels themselves rather than allow them to fall into German hands intact.

Taking account of the concept of the "Redoubt," German planning for an attack on Switzerland emphasized the necessity of a quick victory over the Swiss while simultaneously blocking all routes of escape into the Alps.

Only a few days after Guisan's address at Ruetli, a preliminary compilation of French documents captured at Dijon indicated collaboration of the Swiss General Staff with its French counterpart. Official staff conversations had not taken place, but semi-official conversations between Guisan and a French liaison officer, Lt. Colonel Garteiser, had occurred between May 1939 and March 1940. The documents provided no evidence of French plans for marching into Switzerland for offensive reasons, but French intervention had been foreseen in case of a German attack on Switzerland.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{51DGFP, D, XI, 14-15.}
Although the evidence provided Hitler with a valid excuse to attack Switzerland, no German action followed. Hitler was deeply concerned with British reaction to German peace feelers, hoping that Great Britain would be willing to consider peace negotiations. Quite possibly Hitler did not want to engage in further aggression until sure of Britain's position. In any case, events in Switzerland were proceeding to Germany's advantage and satisfaction. Swiss defeatists began to clamor for Guisan's dismissal and the demobilization of the Swiss Army.  

It appeared possible that Germany might achieve its goals in Switzerland without resorting to an attack. Weizsaeker, who feared that Hitler might use the documents as an excuse to attack Switzerland, informed the Swiss through Theo Kordt, one of Canaris's agents in the Berne Legation. In Berlin, the State Secretary used his position to convince his colleagues in the Foreign Office that an attack on Switzerland would mean the immediate destruction of the Swiss tunnels and a subsequent paralysis of Italy's steel industry for lack of coal. Admiral Canaris worked closely with the State Secretary to discourage a German invasion of Switzerland, and it is possible that their activity played an important role in Germany's

52DGFP, D, XI, 14-15.
53Weizsaeker, Memoirs, 243.
decision not to take any action.

After October 1940, Switzerland received little attention from the German High Command. Military and political considerations elsewhere in Europe occupied Hitler and his advisers. The Swiss utilized the time to fortify and provision the "National Redoubt," while various economic concessions sufficed to allow Switzerland almost two years of relative peace.

The German press retained its arrogant tone, reminding the Swiss that they were originally part of the Reich and generally giving the impression that Germany was too busy to concern itself with Switzerland at the moment. In a speech at the Sportpalast, Hitler made reference to the "bourgeois states that would not survive the war." Switzerland represented the most obvious example of such a state. Paul Schmidt, Press Chief in the Foreign Ministry, threatened Swiss editors and journalists with deportation to Siberia or liquidation after the occupation of Switzerland. Between the fall of 1940 and the fall of 1942, Germany generally paid little attention to the presence of a neutral, democratic state in the midst of Axis dominated Europe. The German press occasionally reminded the Swiss that their independence would be terminated when Hitler finished with Britain and Russia. But even the press had little time to delegate to Switzerland during the

54 Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 221.
Russian campaign. 

Switzerland utilized the interim to discourage defeatist and treasonable activity. Nineteen officers and men of the Swiss Army were sentenced to death for treason, while an additional number were given life sentences. Arrests for espionage and sabotage totaled 312 by 1942, most of them Germans and Italians. In addition, the pro-Nazi National Front Movement was banned, press censorship and rule by decree introduced.

It was not until the fall of 1942 that Germany again began to consider an invasion of Switzerland. Feeling that the Allies might in the future be thrusting into the "soft underbelly of Europe" the position of neutral Switzerland attracted Ribbentrop's attention. In a note to the Legation in Berne he requested a report on the length of time for which the Swiss were equipped with provisions and raw materials. The Legation pointed out in a detailed report that the Swiss had stored enough raw material and provisions to enable them to hold out for as long as two years in the "National Redoubt." Realizing the motives behind the Foreign Minister's inquiry, Koecher emphasized that the Swiss would provide obstinate resistance and would on no account allow the vital communications routes through

Weizsaeker, Memoirs, 90.
the Gotthard and Simplon Tunnels to fall intact into German hands.56

Admiral Canaris, informed of Ribbentrop’s inquiry through the Berne Legation, set his communications line into operation and warned the Swiss military of Ribbentrop’s plans. However, the Admiral’s warning in this case differed from his earlier warnings. Abwehr had information of Allied pressure on the Swiss to cut all rail communications between Germany and Italy, and allow Allied agents to blow up the Gotthard tunnel. Through the warning, Canaris intended to convey a threat to the Swiss and so keep rail communications open.57

In September 1942, Colonel Masson, Chief of the Swiss Federal Intelligence Service (Nachrichtendienst), established contact with SS General Walter Schellenberg, head of the SS Foreign Intelligence. Schellenberg suggested a meeting for the purpose of discussing a possible German "preventive occupation" of Switzerland. Certain circles in Germany were doubtful of Switzerland’s intention to defend its neutrality, especially in view of an Allied landing in Italy. Masson and Schellenberg met at Laufenburg in late September 1942, and Masson assured him of Switzerland’s intention to resist any violation of the nation’s neutrality.

56 Abshagen, Canaris (Stuttgart, 1957), 346-47.
57 Colvin, Chief of Intelligence, 205-206.
The Swiss General Staff hoped to use the opportunity of contact with Schellenberg to impress upon the Reich leaders that an attack on Switzerland would be an undertaking too costly to be profitable.\textsuperscript{58}

Although Hitler had been irked by Switzerland's neutrality and independence, the advantages which would have accrued from its invasion and conquest had been clearly outweighed by the drawbacks. The Germans were well aware that an attack would be strongly resisted by the Swiss whose first defensive step would be to destroy the Gotthard and Simplon tunnels. Restoration would be a lengthy undertaking even under favorable conditions, but harassed by guerrilla warfare by the Swiss the task of rebuilding the tunnels would present the conquerors with almost insuperable difficulties. Moreover, Switzerland's main assets, which were economic and financial, would be wiped out. As there would be no compensatory rewards in the shape of raw materials and surplus food, a devastated and impoverished Switzerland would be a liability rather than an asset.\textsuperscript{59} However, as the Allies continued to turn the tide in Africa and it became apparent than an invasion of Europe through Italy was imminent, Switzerland's strategic location increased

\textsuperscript{58}Bernard Barbey, \textit{Fuenf Jahre auf dem Kommandoposten des Generals} (Berne, 1948), 144-45. /Hereafter cited as Barbey, \textit{Fuenf Jahre}./

\textsuperscript{59}Toynbee, \textit{The War and the Neutrals}, 221.
in importance to Berlin. In March 1943, OKW again took up the question of a "preventive occupation" of Switzerland.

General Schellenberg again contacted Masson and informed him that "Case Switzerland" ("Fall Schweiz") was being considered by OKW. Masson’s assurances of the previous September no longer sufficed in Berlin; therefore a meeting with a leading Swiss personality was desired.

General Schellenberg’s motives in March 1943, as well as in September 1942, remain obscure. Allegedly he intended to use the meetings in Switzerland to warn the Swiss to prepare for a possible German attack. In so doing, his objective was to force the Swiss to take defensive precautions so that he could use the fact as an argument against Hitler’s intended onslaught. 60

Colonel Masson arranged a meeting between Schellenberg and General Buisan on March 9. Before Schellenberg was allowed to travel to Switzerland, Hitler expressed certain doubts about the conference. He feared that Schellenberg might use the opportunity to escape to England by plane and be held there like Rudolf Hess. On the other hand, the Fuehrer feared that the Italians would get word of the affair since Schellenberg was known to be an important personality in frequent contact with Himmler. Schellenberg’s trip to Switzerland might be interpreted by the Italians as an omen of defeat, since it appeared that

60 Wilhelm Hoettl, The Secret Front (N.Y., 1954), 64.
Rommel's defeat in Tunisia was imminent. After some hesitation, Hitler finally gave his approval, and Schellenberg met Guisan at Biglen. The SS general expressed the fear that the Swiss were not determined to defend the country's neutrality against the Allies if it should be necessary. Guisan assured him of the determined conviction of the Swiss Army to fulfill its task under all circumstances and its intention to fight against anyone who should violate Swiss neutrality.

Whether Schellenberg on his return to Berlin decidedly influenced Hitler's decision is difficult to determine. In his memoirs, Schellenberg asserted that through his influence with Himmler he was able to prevent the German occupation of Switzerland in 1943.

On March 19, the Swiss learned that OKW intended to examine the location of Switzerland in relation to the general situation in Italy and the Mediterranean. Additional reports reached the Swiss that General Dietl, the "Hero of Narvik," had assembled in Munich a special "Kommando Schweiz" whose task it was to lead the advance on Switzerland. In particular, paratroop units were said to

61 Barbey, *Fuenf Jahre*, 167-68.
62 Ibid., 168.
63 Guisan, *Bericht*, 52.
be assigned to Dietl's force in large numbers. It was their task to open an access into the "National Redoubt." During the following days it was learned that the "SS Circle"—above all Himmler and Sepp Dietrich—were in favor of the plan, while the generals and economic advisers opposed it. 66

Finally, on March 23, Schellenberg's personal envoy appeared at the headquarters of the Swiss General Staff and announced that the Swiss could be satisfied with Schellenberg, for the danger of an attack had passed. On the same day, word came via the "Viking Line" that "Case Switzerland" had been called off. 67

Research since then, in particular the questioning of reliable German personalities who were involved in the events of March 1943, indicate that the German leadership entertained no immediate aggressive intentions toward Switzerland. It is certain today that General Dietl was present almost without interruption at the headquarters of the Twentieth Gebirgsarmee in Finnish Lappland, where he was occupied with preparations for defense against an expected Russian offensive on the German-Finnish front. The assertion that Dietl was to provide the leadership for the attack on Switzerland served a propagandistic function, for the use of the name of the successful mountain general and "Hero

66Kurz, Die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg, 66.
67Barbey, Fuenf Jahre, 172.
of Narvik" promised psychological results. The March alarm, in essence, had no military significance. Its main objective was to convince the Swiss that failure to defend their frontier against possible Allied infringement might lead to a German preventive occupation of the country. Preventive occupation also provided a means to extract additional economic concessions from the Swiss. On December 31, 1943, the German-Swiss trade agreement of 1941 was to expire without Germany fulfilling its stipulated commitments. It is therefore possible that Germany used the March alarm as a means of applying economic pressure.68

In December 1943, the possibility of a German invasion of Switzerland was discussed for the last time. Unlike the previous operations, this final episode originated with the SS. The SS version was designated as a "Memorandum on the military location of Switzerland under special consideration of necessary German intervention."69 The operational planning took place in the Waffenhauptamt of the SS under the direction of Colonel Boehme. The Axis encirclement of Switzerland represented a favorable operational position, permitting consideration of a minimum of forces to achieve two goals simultaneously—destruction of the Swiss army and elimination of support by the Allies. Boehme planned the

68 Kurz, Die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg, 66-67.
69 Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung, 49.
offensive in two phases, the first of which was designed to capture the "middle land," its air fields and the major portion of the enemy forces. The second phase consisted of a thrust into the "National Redoubt" and occupation of its transportation routes. Above all, Boehme counted on the paralyzing effect of surprise coupled with the physical shock of massed artillery and tanks. He believed that he could be successful with about twelve divisions in addition to Sondertruppen and expected losses of approximately twenty per cent.\footnote{Kurz, Die Schweiz in der Planung, 49-51.}

Boehme's memorandum bore the date December 20, 1943 and was planned as a "War for the Summer Months." Therefore, at the earliest the plan would be executed in the summer of 1944, at which time the Allied invasion was already in progress. In addition, by this time Germany no longer possessed a significant number of paratroop divisions which Boehme intended to use in the operation against the "National Redoubt." Since the whole operation was based upon assumptions no longer attainable, it never proceeded past the planning stage.\footnote{Ibid. 50-51.}

By 1944, the threat of a German invasion of Switzerland had largely disappeared. German forces were engaged in Russia, Italy and France. Militarily, Germany could not
risk tying down valuable forces in Switzerland, even if enough forces could be found. On the other hand, as Nazi power declined, the appeal of Nazism and the Swiss fear of an invasion also declined proportionally. Germany was left with no choice but to depend on the Swiss to defend their neutrality against the Allies, if necessary.

Swiss fears that the Allies might violate their frontier proved unfounded. After D-Day, General Guisan wished to call up additional forces, but upon considering the effect of mobilization upon the existent food supplies, the mobilization was restricted to frontier forces. After the Allied landing in southern France on August 15, 1944, further partial mobilization was ordered. Advance guards of American forces reached the Swiss on August 28, allowing Switzerland to resume contact with the outside world.

With the exception of the British Isles, Spain, Portugal and Sweden, Switzerland was the only European state to maintain its independence during the war. For three basic reasons, Germany failed to incorporate Switzerland into the Third Reich.

First of all, Nazism failed to gain a foothold in Switzerland as it had in Austria and in the Sudetenland. Switzerland's initial fear of German designs on Swiss territory prevented the growth of a substantial Nazi movement among the Swiss. The Swiss, in general, were not interested
in seeing their independent state merged with a "Greater Germany," and Nazi racism failed to make converts. Thus, conditions failed to materialize for a bloodless conquest.

Secondly, during the course of the war, Hitler and his advisers were continually absorbed with problems more militarily and economically significant than an operation against the Swiss. France, Great Britain, the Balkans and Russia were immeasurably more important to the Reich than was Switzerland. In essence, Switzerland's position on Hitler's agenda came after the completion of the campaign against Russia.

Thirdly, the occupation of Switzerland carried with it certain risks. The destruction of the Gotthard and Simplon tunnels by the Swiss in the event of a German invasion was a possibility that the High Command could not completely rule out. If this were accomplished, the German venture would yield no positive gains. The Swiss Army, although relatively small, would have offered determined resistance before withdrawing into the "National Redoubt." In the event that the Swiss could carry out an organized withdrawal into the "Redoubt," Germany would be faced with a long and costly campaign.

For these reasons, Hitler was content to allow the Swiss to continue their independent existence in the heart of Nazi dominated Europe. From time to time, political and military pressure was applied to prevent a possible
Swiss deviation toward the Allies, while economic concessions were extracted to aid the Reich's war effort. Rumors of an imminent invasion and threats of a preventive occupation, which were circulated throughout the war, were utilized to achieve psychological and economic goals. Germany, in essence had no immediate intention to invade Switzerland until completion of the war with Russia.
CHAPTER IV

SWITZERLAND AND NAZI WAR ECONOMY, 1938-1945

Germany and Switzerland, both highly industrialized states, had a long tradition of close economic cooperation. Switzerland, however, being a landlocked state and poorly supplied with native raw materials, depended heavily on imports to maintain its existence. Major deficiencies existed in its supply of coal and iron as well as in textiles and fertilizers. In general, Swiss prosperity depended upon the state's position as an "international workshop," while imports provided a considerable proportion of food stuffs and raw materials. Payment for such imports was met by the export of high-quality manufactured goods. In addition, Switzerland was an important banking and financial center which derived considerable income from its tourist trade and the trade in luxury items. Only twenty per cent of the 2,000,000 Swiss following a trade or profession were engaged in agriculture, and the income of agricultural workers amounted to only nine per cent of the total national income. On the other hand, fifty-two per cent of the people were engaged in industry, trade, commerce and banking.¹

Swiss prosperity and the state’s high standard of living depended on Switzerland’s ability to maintain a high level of foreign trade.

Traditionally, Germany had been among the major suppliers of raw material to Switzerland as well as one of its most important customers. By 1938, the Reich was both the greatest supplier of raw material to Switzerland and the state’s best customer. France, Italy and Great Britain followed Germany as the major European exporters to Switzerland. After Germany, Great Britain had been the largest importer of Swiss goods before the war.2

Although Switzerland had declined to a mere object of the Great Powers in world politics, that object became of great importance in wartime because of its peculiar situation in military strategy. The most important transportation route between the north and south of central Europe, the Gotthard Tunnel, lay in the territory of the Swiss state. One of the most important routes between east and west, which had often served as a convenient transit route in the past, also crossed Switzerland. These factors gave Switzerland a controlling key position in the central Alpine region.3 The Gotthard line (Essen-


3 Bonjour, Swiss Neutrality, 102-103.
Basle—Milan) represented the most efficient connection between Germany and Italy and proved to be a major asset to Swiss bargaining power in negotiations with Germany.

Economically, Switzerland's position was potentially more vulnerable than its military position, since the state was bounded on the north and south by Axis powers. The Anschluss of 1938 left Switzerland enclosed on three sides by Axis territory and led the Swiss to take measures for defense of the country as well as to undertake preliminary preparations for establishing a wartime economy. On April 1, 1938, the Federal Council enacted a law designed to "safeguard the country's supply of goods of vital necessity . . . in the event of economic isolation or of war."4

In September of the same year, the Swiss Minister to Berlin initiated efforts to secure from Germany a declaration in principle that the Reich would maintain a supply of essential material to Switzerland in time of war. Similar requests were made in Paris and Rome. Negotiations were carried on until June 1939, when it was agreed that both sides would maintain freight traffic "so far as possible" in the event of war. Further negotiations were undertaken to consider to what extent the mutual exchange of goods could be maintained.5

4Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 204.
5DGFP, D, V, 693.
By 1938, it was obvious to Germany, as well as to Great Britain and France, that in the event of a major war many of Switzerland's traditional sources of income, particularly the tourist trade and the luxury trade, would be hard hit and that the Swiss would have to place greater reliance on their export of products which served the war needs of the belligerents. Both sides needed Swiss manufactures of war material, technical instruments and machines.

Swiss economic policy after the Anschluss was influenced not only by Germany but was subject to intense pressure from Great Britain as well. Swiss concessions to the Reich carried the danger of British economic retaliation, particularly extension of the blockade to include Switzerland after the war began. On the other hand, concessions to Great Britain involved the danger of German occupation of Switzerland. The danger from Germany represented the greatest threat, and the Swiss tended to align themselves closer to the Reich as Europe moved toward war.

In an attempt to restrict Swiss exports to Germany, Great Britain proposed in November 1938 that Switzerland undertake not to export to Germany specific products produced from raw materials which were imported and to limit exports of commodities produced in Switzerland from domestic resources. Britain, in turn, was prepared to take from Switzerland guaranteed quantities of certain commodities. In addition, the Swiss were invited to restrict their
imports from all sources to global figures corresponding to their imports over the past three years, less any exports to Germany, and to furnish guarantees that none of the goods admitted would be re-exported to Germany. The proposals were considered in Berne, but no further action was taken until after the beginning of the war.6

In the meantime, German-Swiss negotiations for a war-trade agreement were initiated, and on October 24, 1939 an agreement was concluded. By its terms, Swiss exports to Germany were to be limited to approximately half of the value of Swiss imports from Germany. The balance of the German exports to Switzerland were to be devoted to repayment of Germany's debt to Switzerland. Swiss exports to Germany, according to the agreement, were not to be increased but were to be maintained at the stipulated level, which approximated the normal peacetime level. The Swiss assumed that Germany would be unable to maintain its exports to Switzerland, and the consequence by the terms of the agreement would be a proportionate diminuation of Swiss exports to Germany.7 The Swiss were particularly anxious to maintain their economy by exporting manufactured products to Germany, even though such products might contain raw materials from other countries. The Swiss Government,

6Medlicott, Economic Blockade, I, 224.
7Ibid., 225-26.
however, assured Britain that such exports would be restricted to goods, the value of which was determined to a large degree by the Swiss labor put into them.  

Because of Italian neutrality and friendship in the early months of the war, the Swiss were able to import large quantities of goods to increase their reserve stocks. While the first months of the war were marked by a large decrease in foreign trade, there was a rapid rise in the following months, particularly of imports, which exceeded those of normal years in both value and weight. During the "phony war," the Swiss experienced little difficulty with the Reich, which adopted a generous export policy toward Switzerland. Until the collapse of France, Germany was content to adapt to the changing economic situation by minor alterations of the German-Swiss Transfer and Payments Agreement which was due to expire on June 30, 1940.

During the first six months of the war, Switzerland found itself under pressure, not from Germany, but from Great Britain, which threatened to include Switzerland in its blockade of German-occupied Europe. After several months of negotiations, an Anglo-French-Swiss war-trade agreement was reached on April 25, 1940 which lightened

8 Medlicott, Economic Blockade, I, 226.
9 Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 209.
to some extent the effects of the blockade on Swiss exports and imports. In essence, the agreement stipulated that certain classes of goods could be re-exported to the enemy or to neutral countries under specified conditions. However, goods comprising valuable raw materials were allowed through contraband controls only upon production of "certificates of guarantee," which guaranteed that such goods would not be re-exported. Allied policy toward Switzerland was to allow carefully regulated imports through the blockade as long as the Swiss Government seemed able and willing to strive for some degree of independence of Axis control. Switzerland merely had to guarantee that the goods would not be exported in the same condition as that in which they were imported. Quantitative restrictions were not imposed, and the Swiss were free to export to the enemy, to the Allies and to other neutrals.

In late April 1940, Germany and Switzerland began preliminary negotiations for a new transfer and payments agreement. Since the old agreement was due to expire at the end of June, Germany made the following demands in advance as a pre-requisite for an extension of the clearing agreement:

1. Transfer of all assets in special accounts in cash foreign exchange to Berlin.

10Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 209.
2. Free choice of purchases drawn on the clearing balance.
3. Treatment on a footing of real equality with enemy states as regards deliveries of war material, . . .
4. Transfer to us [Germany] of current Dutch, Belgian and Norwegian orders of war materials, or the raw materials and production facilities earmarked for that purpose.12

The Swiss accepted only demand one, and three weeks later Germany stopped its coal exports to Switzerland. Upon resumption of the talks in Berne on June 15, 1940, the Swiss agreed to demands three and four and by decree carried out an absolute embargo for war material and transferred twenty-eight million francs to the Reichsbank, even without restoration of the coal exports by Germany.13

Germany viewed Switzerland as "a huge armaments plant which was working almost exclusively for Britain and France."14 Consequently, the German negotiators took the stand that, under the "changed circumstances," lifting of the coal embargo would be possible only if:

1. The entire former deliveries of aluminum to England from Switzerland (i.e., 12,000 tons of raw aluminum plus 5,500 tons of aluminum alloys) are absolutely delivered to Germany in the future;
2. watch mechanisms, watch jewels, and industrial diamonds are opened to export in the future without restriction;
3. the unimpeded export of raw materials needed for the active finishing (conversion) process is opened at once;
4. considerable additional orders for machine tools

12DGFP, D, X, 175.
13Ibid., 175-76.
14Ibid., D, IX, 446-47.
and war material can be placed at once on a short

term basis and the necessary nonferrous metals for

this are contributed from Swiss stocks;

5. these orders and in addition considerable deliver-

dies of food stuffs are carried out through the

coal-iron account and the agricultural account

on the basis of a credit in the amount of a total

of 120 million Swiss francs. 15

Finding themselves almost completely surrounded

by the Axis Powers and fearing a possible invasion of their

own country, the Swiss delegates were forced to make conces-
sions--but on the condition that the coal embargo be lifted

and necessary deliveries be assured. In regard to the first

demand, Germany received from Switzerland all the aluminum

formerly delivered to Great Britain on the condition that

Germany assure delivery to Switzerland of the necessary

aluminum oxide from Italy, France and Germany. The Swiss

accepted demands two and three without reservation. By

demand four, additional ordering of machine tools and war

material was agreed upon up to the limits of the actual

capacity of the Swiss factories. In regard to the fifth

demand, the Swiss promised to make available a credit for

payment of the additional articles of demand four and for

agricultural products in the amount of coal deliveries actu-

ally made. This meant that for every ton of coal delivered

Germany received deliveries of the same value in return and

an equivalent once again as credit for payment of the addi-
tional orders of war material. 16

15 DGFP, D, X, 175-76.

16 Ibid., 176.
Field Marshal Goering, whose Luftwaffe had suffered several losses over Switzerland, emphasized his general dissatisfaction with the attitude of the Swiss during the negotiations. He suggested that the Swiss be handled "very toughly" and demanded during a discussion at Karih-hall that Switzerland must be denied coal until the ninety Messerschmidt airplanes delivered to Switzerland in 1939 and 1940 were returned to Germany. However, the German negotiators impressed the Field Marshall with the hard line already taken in regard to Switzerland and expressed doubt that the planes could be returned.\(^17\)

By July 9, 1940, the German delegates were satisfied with the course of the negotiations and notified Berlin that it was possible that the amount of credit as measured against the coal deliveries actually made might be further increased and possibly doubled. The head of the German delegation, Dr. Hans Hemmen,\(^18\) cautioned that the Reich should not attempt demands beyond that and should not make the return of the Messerschmidts a prerequisite for lifting the coal embargo.\(^19\)

The new Transfer and Payments Agreement was signed

\(^{17}\text{DGFP, } C, X, 110.\)

\(^{18}\text{Dr. Hans hemmen; Chairman of the Special Commission on economic questions with the German Armistice Commission.}\)

\(^{19}\text{DGFP, } D, X, 176.\)
on August 9, 1940. Its most significant result was the alteration of Swiss imports against Swiss exports to Germany, which comprised seventy-five per cent of German payments to Switzerland. Germany undertook to deliver coal to the same extent as in 1939, a favorable year. Switzerland agreed to supplement the agricultural and industrial exports and, in order to prevent delays in delivery to Germany, made advances to Swiss exporters. Exports of weapons to Britain ceased, and there was a corresponding increase in such supplies to Germany and Italy. The value of the latter in Swiss francs was estimated at 33 million to Germany and 34 million to Italy in 1940 and 122 million to Germany and 61 million to Italy in 1941.20

Germany took advantage of the negotiations to introduce a counter-blockade against Great Britain. For some time, Germany had overlooked the Swiss export of goods by rail through unoccupied France. Goods for Britain and the United States were freely consigned by this route via Spain to Portugal. Various transit arrangements in August 1940 put an end to this route. On August 29, Germany issued an ordinance stating that, as of September 1, 1940, certain commodities named in the German tariff had to have transit permits (Geleitscheine) issued by the legation in Berne for transit in Germany and German-occupied territory;

20 Medlicott, Economic Blockade, I, 588.
similar instructions were issued to Italian customs. Previously, the French Government had agreed that transit via both occupied and unoccupied France should be subject to license and to German export control. The effect of these regulations was to give the German legation in Berne a rigid control over Swiss exports to all destinations. A comprehensive list was drawn up defining war materials, and such goods could not be exported at all. A further list comprised goods requiring the Geleitschein; all goods and raw material of war potential fell within this list. Finally, there was a provision whereby the residue of Swiss exports, not covered by any of the lists, could be exported in "normal quantities" based on the years 1937 and 1938. Transit permits were necessary for approximately sixty per cent of Swiss exports to Britain.  

Germany continued to strengthen its control over Switzerland by other measures. By September 1940, an increased amount of Swiss letter post was routed through Germany via Stuttgart. Germany also exerted influence on Swiss trading and financial arrangements with occupied and satellite states. Between August 28 and September 20, 1940, negotiations in Berne led to new arrangements affecting traffic and payments to Bohemia, Moravia, Norway, Holland and Belgium. Trading and financial relations

21 Medlicott, Economic Blockade, I, 588.
with Poland were regulated by a provisional agreement arranging for transactions to be carried out on a compensation basis. From January 1, 1941, trade with territories incorporated in the Reich were settled through the German-Swiss clearing, a special account being created for former Polish territory.22

The Anglo-French-Swiss war trade agreement of 1940 still remained, although the French had withdrawn and the remaining two governments recognized that few of its provisions were still applicable. German economic dominance of Swiss trade caused concern in London, where an extension of the economic blockade to include Switzerland was considered. However, in the Ministry of Economic Warfare there still existed considerable support for the view that as long as the Swiss Government struggled to preserve some degree of independence Britain should offer the encouragement of only carefully regulating exports to Switzerland. The British were understandably reluctant to allow the Swiss to import through Axis-controlled territory, goods which might be taken by the Axis Powers. They also feared that the Germans might bring pressure on the Swiss to disgorge goods imported for their own use. After prolonged discussion, an agreement was reached on October 15, 1940 under which Britain agreed to relax the blockade in order

\[22\text{Medlicott, Economic Blockade, I, 589.}\]
to allow Switzerland to import certain essential commodities when its existing stocks did not exceed two months' supply. This concession was to be cancelled if it became evident that the Swiss had been obliged to give way to German pressure for the re-export of imported goods, or if the goods were retained by the Italian or Vichy governments on the way. Britain also agreed to release some more of the ships which had been chartered by the Swiss and which had been detained by the British after the fall of France. It was agreed that on political grounds there were major advantages to be gained if the risk of continuing imports were taken. The possibility of obtaining from Switzerland much-needed goods of small bulk—precision instruments, watches, fuse mechanisms—still existed, but such exports depended on the good will of Swiss authorities which might be lost if the blockade were enforced. Furthermore, Switzerland served as a clearing house for prisoners of war, and it would be an inconvenience not to have Switzerland in charge of German interests. Finally, information on Germany from the British legation in Berne was of great importance for war purposes. Hence, economic contacts with Switzerland were accepted for the time being. Great Britain felt that it was "a little unfair to the Swiss to class them with Vichy—a discredited

Switzerland's policy was based on the belief that neutrality could be maintained throughout the course of the war, and accordingly it sought to strengthen its one great bargaining counter: control of the Gotthard Tunnel which had become the life-line of the German-Italian war effort. Italian industry imported practically all of its coal from Germany. Since early 1940, when the British put an end to shipment of German coal to Italy by water (down the Rhine to Rotterdam and then around Spain to Genoa), the coal needed to operate Italian industries— one million tons per month—had to be transported by land. The Gotthard line, which ran from Basle on the German-Swiss frontier to Chiasso on the Italian-Swiss frontier, provided the most direct route. In addition to coal, Germany supplied Italy with other important raw materials, including iron, steel, wood and base metals. The Gotthard route was not used for the transport of German forces to Italy. When necessary, the Reich utilized the Brenner Pass route to transport additional forces to Italy.

As previously mentioned, new Swiss military plans were drawn up which provided for withdrawal of the army

25Ibid., II, 207.
26E.S. Hediger, "Switzerland in Wartime," *Foreign Policy Reports*, XVIII (1943), 263.
into the central masiff, or "National Redoubt," in the event of an invasion. The army was maintained on a war footing, defense works undertaken, and Germany left with no doubt that the destruction of the tunnels would be certain in the event of an invasion.

Great Britain hoped to encourage Switzerland's will to resist German pressure by adapting the economic blockade to Switzerland's peculiar position, but by April 1941 it was obvious that the Swiss were drifting more and more under Axis influence. The fact that the Swiss economic machine was largely at the disposal of the Axis was endorsed when Swiss authorities announced, under German pressure, that unrestricted exports of goods in two-kilogram packets were prohibited, further reducing the flow of Swiss exports to the outside world. In June and July, there followed a series of new economic agreements with Germany, Italy and the satellite states. Between July 6 and July 14, exchange problems between Switzerland and Slovakia were ironed out, and a regular commercial treaty with a mutual agreement to increase trade as much as possible followed. On July 11, the Swiss press announced the conclusion of arrangements to improve the transport of goods from Rumania, Bulgaria and other countries in the Near and Middle East through Germany to Switzerland. The major discussions

27 Medlicott, Economic Blockade, II, 208-209.
were concluded after eight months of negotiations by the signing of a German-Swiss trade agreement on July 18, 1941. By the terms of the agreement, which was to last up to the end of 1942, Germany agreed to deliver 200,000 tons of coal per month to Switzerland. The amount before June 18 was 150,000 tons per month. Negotiations over iron ore had caused a great deal of difficulty and Germany finally agreed to deliver 13,500 tons per month of iron and steel without imposing conditions as to its use. This amount did not include the 5,000 to 6,000 tons of iron and non-ferrous metals which Germany supplied to Switzerland for the manufacture of goods ordered for German use. Copper and other metals for such manufactures were also to be supplied. The Reich agreed, in addition, to supply each month 14,500 tons of petroleum products, including petrol (4,650 tons), fuel oil (1,000 tons for industrial use only), diesel engine oil (1,000 tons) and lubricating oil (1,200 tons). These products were to be delivered principally from Rumanian stocks, but if Rumanian supplies were not forthcoming Germany promised to keep up the supply from its own stocks. Payments were to be made through the Swiss-Rumanian clearing. As in the past, Switzerland was to send its own tank wagons to fetch the oil. The remaining German exports to Switzerland consisted of sugar (5,000 hectoliters), seeds (4,000 tons, the usual amount), potato seeds (200,000 quintals), oats (20,000 quintals), barley (20,000 quintals)
and fertilizers (250,000 quintals). 28

Switzerland, in return, agreed to continue exports of certain agricultural produce and manufactured goods to Germany and to grant Germany advances on the clearing agreement. Such advances were not to exceed 450 million Swiss francs at the end of 1941, 650 million by June 30, 1942, and 850 million by December 31, 1942. The Swiss advances were subject to Germany's supplying the raw material required for goods to be manufactured, to the export capacity of the country, and to the import of goods produced in Switzerland. Repayment of the outstanding amounts by deliveries of coal and iron by Germany after 1941 was foreseen. 29

When informing Britain of the agreement, the Swiss estimated that twenty per cent of their exports were controlled by Germany and Italy by Geleitscheine. Of the remaining eighty per cent, ten per cent was on the "free list," while the Swiss controlled the rest on the basis of normal exports in 1937-1938. 30 Concessions to Great Britain by Switzerland in the form of increased export quotas amounted to only 100 million francs and were found to be of little practical value. 31 Britain consequently

29 Ibid., 210-11.
30 Ibid., 212.
31 Ibid., 211.
decided to withdraw facilities for practically all Swiss imports with the exception of foodstuffs, fodders and oil and fats for soap-making. In essence, Britain refused to allow any further imports of raw material by Switzerland which could benefit the Axis countries. In short, British, and later Anglo-American efforts, to secure restrictions of Swiss exports in this period failed.\(^{32}\)

British proposals to sever economic connections with Switzerland and to include the Swiss in the blockade of the Axis countries were frequently considered but always postponed. In addition to reasons previously considered, it became more important to avoid pushing the Swiss into a diplomatic rupture, or worse, with Germany, since Switzerland had undertaken the diplomatic representation of British and American interests in enemy countries. Switzerland's situation negated Allied attempts to obtain real concessions throughout 1942 and the first half of 1943. Negotiations to reach an agreement proceeded throughout 1942, but it gradually became evident that the Swiss were not prepared to risk offending Germany.

The Swiss Government did not feel compelled to change its policy markedly in the Allies' favor, even after the Allied landings in North Africa. The British soon realized that it was not merely concern for neutrality,

\(^{32}\text{Medlicott, Economic Blockade, II, 212.}\)
nor even a healthy fear of German retaliation, which determined Swiss policy. Although these circumstances were certainly important, they were additional to the influence of Swiss manufacturers who were conducting a highly profitable wartime trade with Germany.\textsuperscript{33} The situation at the end of 1942 found Switzerland and the Allies prepared to agree on a "compensation deal," whereby goods would be exchanged between Switzerland, Britain and the United States to the value of 2½ million francs. An agreement along these lines was signed on December 14, 1942, but it was subject to Germany's consent on the one hand and on the other to Swiss acceptance of a formidable Allied demand for progressive reduction of Swiss exports of arms and machinery to Germany. Neither condition could be secured.\textsuperscript{34}

Germany made its adherence to the "compensation deal" conditional on the conclusion of a new German-Swiss trade agreement but as an interim measure agreed to a reduction in the amount of Swiss goods sent to Germany. When German-Swiss negotiations were suspended on January 15, 1943, the Swiss Government suspended the credit facilities granted to Germany in 1941 and discontinued its guarantee of Swiss exports to the Reich. In the meantime, trade continued on a "hand-to-mouth" basis with a considerable decrease

\textsuperscript{33}Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 77-78.
\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}, 78.
in Swiss exports to Germany.35

By January 1943, Germany was already behind in its coal deliveries to Switzerland, as defined in the 1941 agreement. Germany now demanded that Swiss exports to the Axis countries of raw materials and machinery for the duration of the new agreement be maintained at not less than their previous levels, although Switzerland would be compelled to go short of products for its own economic and defense needs. Further demands included restoration of Swiss exports of agricultural and dairy products to the early 1942 level and reduction of Swiss exports of machines and machine tools to neutral countries such as Spain, which had recently placed large orders.36 The Swiss were prepared to finance orders to the extent of the balance remaining out of the 1941 agreement, but refused to agree to fresh financing of exports to Germany on the same lines.

Although the Germans used the threat of a "preventive occupation" of Switzerland as a means of economic pressure in March 1943, it was not likely that the Reich would attempt an occupation. Effective reprisals could be applied by reducing or cutting off Swiss supplies. Even this measure was not necessarily in Germany's interest, since it meant corresponding loss of Swiss exports. It

appeared to the Allies that Switzerland was not doing enough to secure from Germany the maximum limit of concessions. On the contrary, there seemed good reason to believe that Switzerland was seeking the maximum limit of Allied concessions in the interest of its exporting industries.37

The American Minister to Berne cabled Secretary of State Cordell Hull on April 9, 1943 that the Swiss were about to conclude a new trade agreement with Germany but that the Swiss officials had assured him that everything possible was being done to bring about a satisfactory reduction in what the Allies considered to be undesirable exports to the Axis. Hull, in reply, ordered Leland Harrison, the American Minister in Berne, to make clear to the Swiss that, "pending clarification of Switzerland's position, we would suspend, with certain exceptions, all export licenses and navigerts covering Swiss imports."38

However, the Swiss Government, influenced by Swiss industrialists and the fear of the political consequences of unemployment resulting from the fall of Swiss imports to Germany, more than by serious belief in German invasion, virtually surrendered to German demands in April 1943. Germany undertook to supply the arrears of coal and iron outstanding under the 1941 agreement, leaving the Swiss

37 Medlicott, Economic Blockade, II, 498.
Government with no choice but to restore its guarantee on all orders placed by Germany. Moreover, the Swiss had been surprised to discover that there were still about 350,000,000 francs' worth of former credit outstanding; the whole of it was taken up by orders placed in early January 1943, indicating that there would be a substantial increase in Swiss deliveries to Germany in the next months. During the previous three months German coal deliveries had been one-third less than the agreed 150,000 tons per month. Total arrears under the old agreement were roughly 950,000 tons. Germany proposed to liquidate the balance over a four month period, while Switzerland continued to execute the orders covered by the credit balance. Germany was to be given further credit facilities based on the extent to which coal deliveries exceeded 150,000 tons per month, and delivery of an additional 1,800,000 tons of coal and coke products was visualized over a period of a year.39

The Swiss concessions amounted to a reversal of the trend of February and March 1943 when Swiss exports to Germany declined. The agreement reached between Germany and Switzerland reduced by twenty per cent some of the headings in which the Allies were interested but did not rule out the granting of further credit facilities to

Germany based on coal deliveries. The Allies, therefore, placed a temporary embargo on the issuance of navicerts and export licenses for Switzerland.

The June 1943 agreement represented the last time that Germany was able to impose its will on Switzerland economically. Militarily the tide had turned against the Axis with the loss of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad, the Allied landing in North Africa and the subsequent defeat of Rommel's forces. As defeat of the Axis became increasingly apparent in 1943, the Allied position in economic negotiations increased correspondingly.

The most potent Allied weapon was the black list, the significance of which at this stage of the war was the fear it created of ostracism from post-war markets. Among the Swiss there developed a corresponding tendency to adopt a bolder line toward Germany, partially through decreased fear of German retaliation and partly through the desire to avoid the bad debts of a defeated customer.

In discussions with Swiss delegates in London, the Allies abandoned their earlier understanding policy. British and American pressure induced one Swiss firm after another to restrict trade with Germany. What the earlier embargo had failed to achieve was quickly granted before the end of 1943. As early as June 1943, a group of Swiss firms

40 Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 78-79.
agreed to limit their exports of fuses to Germany by twenty-five per cent in return for removal from the black list.41

The Allied-Swiss negotiations resulted in the signature of an agreement in London on December 19, 1943 whereby the Swiss agreed to reduce exports of arms, ammunition and machinery to the Axis by forty-five per cent. The export of the most strategic manufactures, such as ball bearings, fuses and precision tools, was even more drastically reduced—sixty per cent below the 1942 level. The Swiss further agreed to prevent concentration of these exports in the early months of 1944, to send no such exports to Italy, to reduce exports proportionally whenever any part of Axis territory was liberated, and to make no credit commitments to the Axis without first consulting the Allies. In return, the Allies restored the food and fodder export quotas to Switzerland as they existed in April 1943 but coupled their restoration with a prohibition against the export of dairy products.42

Following the Normandy invasion and the landing in southern France, the British and Americans made new demands on the Swiss on September 18, 1944. In return for immediate and long-term concessions, the Swiss were asked to embargo all exports to Germany of certain specified

41 Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 79.
42 Hull, Memoirs, 1349-50.
strategic commodities and to reduce to a prewar level the transit traffic between Germany and Italy. On October 1, Switzerland prohibited the export of arms, ammunition, explosives, airplanes and parts and bearings.\textsuperscript{43}

At the end of October, the Simplon, but not the Gotthard route, was closed to transit traffic. Germany no longer represented the major concern for the Swiss, and they concentrated their efforts on future relations with Allies. In January 1945, an Allied delegation met in Berne, and in April all its requirements were met. Carriage of coal iron, scrap iron and steel from Germany to Italy was prohibited. Other traffic was reduced to nominal amounts, total Swiss exports to Germany reduced to token figures and the Swiss supply of electricity to Germany cut off.\textsuperscript{44}

The Swiss Government further agreed to prevent the use of Swiss territory for the disposal, concealment, or reception of assets illegally taken during the war. A Swiss decree had already blocked German funds, and the Government undertook to purchase no more gold from Germany except that needed for diplomatic expenses. In return, the Allies announced that there was no longer any blockade reason for limiting Swiss imports.

\textsuperscript{43}Hull, Memoirs, 1349-50.
\textsuperscript{44}Toynbee, War and the Neutrals, 81.
Germany's economic policy toward Switzerland during the war was directed to attain two objectives. First of all, the Reich intended to assume most, if not all, of Switzerland's exports which it needed. And second, it was equally urgent that the Reich prevent, as far as possible, Allied import of Swiss materials of war potential. From 1939 to 1943, because of British hesitation to extend the blockade to include the Swiss, Germany continually increased its imports from Switzerland and at the same time secured a large credit on which to make further purchases. German control of coal, upon which the Swiss were dependent, provided the Reich with a major bargaining advantage. If the embargo on coal failed to produce the desired results, there remained the threat of German occupation of Switzerland. The embargo of 1941 led to a highly satisfactory agreement for Germany, and the threat of a "preventive occupation" in 1943 undoubtedly influenced Swiss exporters enough to produce another satisfactory agreement even though the Reich had failed to maintain its supply of coal to the Swiss.

After the fall of France, the German occupation of Switzerland appears to have been feared to a greater extent in London than in Berne. Until 1943, the Ministry of Economic Warfare hesitated to take any action that
might force Switzerland into a conflict with the Reich and a possible occupation of that state. In Switzerland, the fear of occupation subsided considerably after the Franco-German Armistice and to a large extent disappeared after the beginning of the attack on Russia. In essence, the Swiss industrialists and exporters carried on a highly profitable war trade with Nazi Germany, just as they had done with Imperial Germany during the first World War. Thus by 1943, Germany obtained extensive Swiss materials while successfully limiting the Allied imports from Switzerland.

However, 1943 proved to be the turning point in the contest for Swiss exports. The Allied victories induced them to adopt a new policy toward the Swiss. Use of the black list achieved immediate results with the Swiss exporters who were now willing to decrease exports to Germany in return for removal from the list. Germany by late 1943 was in no position to make reprisals, and Swiss exports to the Reich continued to decrease throughout 1943, 1944 and 1945. By the end of the war, the Swiss found themselves aligned closely to the Allies, in almost complete opposition to their policy six years earlier.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

With the accession to power of the National Socialist Party in January 1933, Germany initiated its efforts to bring about the incorporation of all Germans in a "great German Reich." The Nazi press and party members in foreign countries played upon the frustration and resentment of Germans living under foreign governments. Such propaganda and agitation was particularly successful in Austria, a predominantly German state favoring union with Germany, and among the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia who were allegedly oppressed by the Czech government. The doctrine of "self-determination of peoples" gained wide support in both countries and provided some justification for Hitler's concept of a "greater Germany."

In Switzerland, however, the opposite occurred. Although the Swiss were predominantly German, Nazi racist propaganda and agitation met with strong resistance. Unlike Austria and Czechoslovakia, Switzerland contained no mass of discontented Germans to whom National Socialism could appeal. In addition to the German-speaking Swiss, the state contained substantial French and Italian minorities, but under its federal form of government the Swiss
had found the answer to the difficulties arising from the conclusion of three separate nationalities within its borders. In essence, the de-emphasis of race held the state together and produced a Swiss nationalism which replaced separate German, French and Italian nationalism. National Socialism, with its emphasis on the union of all Germans represented a threat to Swiss independence, which the Swiss, particularly the German Swiss, had fought to preserve since the thirteenth century. For this reason, the Swiss were not anxious to see National Socialism gain a foothold in Switzerland. The threat of Nazi Germany differed little from the threat presented to the Swiss in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the Habsburg emperors.

Nazi propagandists were unable to differentiate between the Germans of Austria and Czechoslovakia and the German Swiss. Their refusal to adapt their propaganda to the situation in Switzerland represented a major reason for Germany's failure to incorporate Switzerland into the Reich. Even against the continued suggestions from German diplomats in Berne, the Nazi press persisted in its emphasis on incorporating all Germans in the Reich, while attacking Swiss authorities and institutions. By the outbreak of the war, the German press was attacking the Swiss as traitors to their own blood. Consequently, National Socialism made few converts in Switzerland. On the contrary, it led to a
resurgence of Swiss patriotism, and the Swiss began to take measures to improve the country's military forces.

The Fuehrer himself apparently formulated no definite policy toward Switzerland other than the general desire to unite all Germans in the Reich. Since favorable conditions for an Anschluss failed to materialize, Hitler contented himself with Switzerland's gradual return to absolute, armed neutrality. By 1938, the Swiss had been released from the responsibility of participating in League sanctions and restated their intention to defend Swiss neutrality and independence against any aggressor—German as well as French. Switzerland's intention to defend its frontiers against any aggressor coincided with Germany's military interests, for it meant that a potential French attack through Switzerland into southern Germany would be strongly resisted if not prevented.

Hitler's respect for the concept of neutrality played no role in Germany's failure to incorporate Switzerland. Had circumstances or needs demanded an invasion of Switzerland, Hitler would not have been adverse to violating the country's neutrality. During the course of the war the position of Switzerland in German strategy simply did not justify an attack on that state. The success of the Hitler-Manstein plan against France in 1940 made consideration of outflanking the Maginot Line through
Switzerland unnecessary. Postwar accounts by personalities involved in the planning and execution of the operation indicate that an attack through Switzerland was not even considered.

Following the fall of France, Hitler was deeply involved in an attempt to reach a negotiated peace with Britain and hesitated to engage in another operation until sure of Britain's attitude. By late July 1940, it was obvious that Britain intended to continue the war, and Hitler accordingly issued the directive for Operation Sealion, which was followed in five months by the directive for the attack on Russia.

Preparations for an attack on Switzerland proceeded simultaneously throughout the summer and fall of 1940, but no date for execution of the operation was ever issued. The High Command stipulated that September was the most favorable month for an operation against Switzerland but allowed the planning to continue well into October, thus postponing the operation for at least a year. However, by June 1941 Germany had begun its offensive against Russia. It is unlikely that either Hitler or the High Command considered removing forces from the Russian front to engage in a relatively unrewarding attack on Switzerland. The initiation of the Russian campaign, as much as any other event, prevented a German occupation
of Switzerland. Hitler undoubtedly intended to come to terms with Switzerland after Russia was defeated.

During the first four years of the war, Germany and Switzerland were able to come to terms in regard to German wartime economy. After the fall of France, Germany found in Switzerland a source of material which could effectively be channeled into the German war effort. At the same time it was possible to prevent Swiss exports to the Allies since Switzerland was almost completely surrounded by Axis territory. By cutting off its coal supply to Switzerland, Germany could secure favorable trade agreements and reduce Swiss exports to Britain. The Swiss made the most of their situation by exporting manufactured goods and certain agricultural products to Germany and reaping large profits in return. The favorable economic relations with the Swiss during the Russian campaign tended to minimize the necessity of incorporation Switzerland into the Reich.

A German invasion of Switzerland between 1940 and 1943 could offer Germany no advantages which would outweigh the possible consequences. It was well known in Germany that the Gotthard and Simplon tunnels would be destroyed by the Swiss in the first hours of the attack. Unless this could be prevented, Germany faced the loss of the most efficient transportation route to Italy. In addition,
the devastation of Swiss industry, or its destruction by the Swiss before retreating into the central massif, meant the end of Switzerland’s contributions to Germany’s war effort. Militarily, the occupation of Switzerland threatened to be a long and expensive campaign in the Alps against Swiss guerrilla forces. For these reasons, Germany was not anxious to attack Switzerland while engaged in an attack on Russia. The threat of an invasion was usually sufficient to obtain economic concessions.

By 1943, the Allies had turned the tide, allowing Great Britain to adopt a hard line in economic negotiations with the Swiss. The use of the black list proved effective in breaking Nazi domination of Swiss exports without greatly risking a German invasion of the country since Germany’s military position was continually deteriorating. Swiss exports to Germany declined after 1943 as an Allied victory became more of a certainty. By the fall of 1944 Germany had lost most of its control over Switzerland. The Swiss in turn worked to insure themselves a favorable position with the victors.

There is no question that Nazi Germany intended to force the Swiss into the Reich sooner or later, but a definite decision was never taken. The most favorable method would have been an Anschluss, but National Socialism failed to make significant converts among the Swiss.
Hitler consequently had to be satisfied with Swiss neutrality and economic concessions until an attack could be undertaken. However, German involvement with France, Britain and then Russia prevented serious consideration of an occupation of Switzerland until the major enemies were disposed of, a task which Germany failed to complete. Switzerland, in the meantime, remained the only independent country in central Europe.
OKH Operations Staff's initial conception of Operation Tannenbaum.
Operation Tannenbaum as revised by General von Leeb.
Operation Tannenbaum as revised by General Franz Halder.
Bibliography

Documentary Sources


Foreign Office. Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War. New York: German Library of Information, 1940.


Schweiz. Armee. Bericht an die Bundesversammlung über den Aktivdienst, 1939-1945. Zurich: No Publisher,


The two series of *Documents on German Foreign Policy* are the most important sources concerning German policy between 1933 and 1941. The fifteen volumes compose a translated selection of captured material from the German Foreign Office and other archives published jointly by the British, French and U.S. Governments. Another State Department publication, *National Socialism*, is a collection of photostated documents concerning the history and organization of the party's Foreign Organization. The work is particularly valuable for its account of the activity
and goals of the Foreign Organization in countries outside the Reich. The *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939* contribute little to describing German-Swiss relations. However, the third series provided important information on the Franco-British negotiations concerning the joint guarantee of Swiss, Dutch and Belgian neutrality. The three collections concerned with the trials of war criminals at Nuremberg provided little information on Nazi activity in Switzerland. Since no major crimes were committed in Switzerland, the Allied prosecutors generally did not question the defendants on the subject of plans for an operation against Switzerland. The *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommando des Wehrmacht* is essentially the OKW diary for the war years and provides a day by day account of activity at OKW headquarters.

The work contained no mention of *Operation Tannenbaum* in 1940 nor of plans for a preventive occupation of Switzerland in 1943. Planning for the attack on Switzerland during 1940, however, was basically a task of the High Command of the Army (OKH), and evidently OKW was not concerned with the operation. In addition, the diary begins in August 1940, while the initial orders for *Operation Tannenbaum* were given in June. General Guisan's *Bericht an die Bundesversammlung* is a summary of planning and activity undertaken by the Swiss Army under General Guisan. His report proved valuable for
its discussion of the danger to Switzerland during the German western offensive of 1940. The discussion of the possible preventive occupation of Switzerland in 1943 indicated that OKW was seriously considering the operation, and that the Swiss were seriously expecting an attack.

Nondocumentary Primary Sources


Of the nondocumentary primary sources, The Memoirs of Ernst von Weizsäcker provide an account of the influence of the Nazi Party in German diplomacy in Switzerland. Although decidedly biased, Weizsäcker traced the course of German-Swiss relations during his stay in Switzerland from 1933-1936 as Germany's Minister to Switzerland. He maintains that Germany had no intention of ever attacking Switzerland. The diary of Bernard Barbey, Guisan's personal Chief of Staff, proved valuable as a source of information on the Swiss General Staff and its activities during the war. Like Guisan's Bericht an die Bundesversammlung, Barbey's diary indicates that the Swiss were prepared for a German invasion of Switzerland in 1940 and feared a possible attack in March 1943. Von Lossberg's Im Wehrmachtfuehrungstab provides an account of the OKW planning for an attack.
on Switzerland after the fall of France. Unfortunately, his account is brief and quite vague; the author was unable even to supply the date for the operation. Lossberg believed that Hitler gave the initial order for planning to begin. Walter Schellenberg's Memoirs is the only other account concerned with Switzerland in any detail. Schellenberg maintains that through his influence with Heinrich Himmler, he was able to influence Hitler's decision not to attack Switzerland in March 1943. However, postwar investigation indicates that Germany had no real intention of attacking the Swiss in 1943. Consequently, Schellenberg's account seems less reliable.

Neither Manstein's Lost Victories nor Warlimont's In Hitler's Headquarters make mention of a possible attack on Switzerland. General Halder's Private War Journal contains several brief references to Switzerland, indicating that OKH may have been concerned with an operation against the Swiss. However, no definitive plan for Operation Tannenbaum is discussed. Bor's Gespräche mit Halder, an account of the author's postwar conversations with the former chief of staff, is similarly silent on the subject of Switzerland.

Secondary Sources


Kurz, Hans R. *Die Schweiz in der Europäischen Strategie.* Zurich: Albert Bachmann Verlag, no date.


The major secondary sources concerning Swiss neutrality, *Swiss Neutrality: Its History and Meaning*, and *Neutrality as the Principle of Swiss Foreign Policy*, are both short, concise works which trace the development of Swiss neutrality from its inception to the present day. *The History of Switzerland, 1499-1914* was valuable for the same reason and provided considerable material on the early history of the Swiss Confederation.

The three works by the Swiss author, H.R. Kurz, formed the basis for the discussion of Switzerland's position in Nazi strategy. *Die Schweiz in der Planung der Kriegführenden Mächte wahrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges* is based upon the records of the OKH Operations Staff which was responsible for the preparations for Operation Tannenbaum. *Die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg* provided additional information on German plans for an invasion of Switzerland as well as general information concerning organization of the Swiss Army and certain aspects of Swiss defensive strategy. Duerrenmatt's *Kleine Geschichte der Schweiz wahrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges* covers the effects of the war on the Swiss in general terms, including activities of Nazi agents in Switzerland, Allied bombing of Swiss towns, the Swiss mobilization and war effort. *Spying for Peace* is based on General Guisan's *Bericht an die Bundesversammlung* and General Barbey's diary. Basically the work is concerned with Guisan's leadership during the
course of the war. The author credits the general with preventing a German occupation of Switzerland in 1940, and in general, maintaining the army in a state of readiness which discouraged a German invasion.

*Chief of Intelligence, The Secret Front, and Canaris* all provided an insight into the activities of Admiral Canaris and General Schellenberg in Switzerland, both of whom allegedly worked to discourage a German attack on Switzerland.

*The Economic Blockade*, based upon records of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare, provided the most complete discussion of German-Swiss economic relations during the war. Additional information on economic matters was found in *The War and the Neutrals*, edited by Toynbee. However, both sources cover the subject from the British viewpoint.

*The Drafting of the Covenant* by D.H. Miller, who attended the Versailles Peace Conference with the American delegation, covers in depth Switzerland's efforts to secure entrance into the League. The work is based on primary sources.

Newspapers and Periodicals


The New York Times represents one of the most valuable sources of information on Germany's relations with Switzerland, particularly for the period 1933 to 1940. Accounts of German violations of Swiss neutrality, Swiss protests, Nazi activity in Switzerland and Swiss defensive measures were useful in determining Germany's attitude toward Swiss neutrality. In addition, the Times carried important accounts from German and Swiss papers.
Periodical sources, in general, were valuable for contemporary accounts of German activity in Switzerland. The articles by R.A. Friedman, Ernest Hediger and G.E.W. Johnson provided the best accounts of Switzerland's situation during the Nazi era and German attempts to extend National Socialism to Switzerland.

Trevor-Roper's short article on Admiral Canaris generally disproves the myth of Canaris as the head of the German resistance and casts considerable doubt on the Admiral's ability as head of Germany's military intelligence.

H.J. Morgenthau, R.C. Brooks and Walter Zahler discussed Switzerland's position in the League of Nations and provided additional information on Switzerland's attempt to reconcile neutrality and collective security.