

# **DAS BRAUNE HEER**

**100 BILDDOKUMENTE: LEBEN, KAMPF UND SIEG DER SA UND SS**

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## **THE BROWN-CLAD ARMY**

100 Documentary Photos:  
Life, Struggle and Victory of the S.A. and S.S.

Photos compiled by

Heinrich Hoffman

Official Photographer  
of the  
National-Socialist German Workers' Party  
(N.S.D.A.P.)

**Bildzusammenstellung**

**Heinrich Hoffmann**

**Photoberichterstatter der Reichsleitung der NSDAP**

German Original: 1932

English-Language Reissue: 1976

## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE REISSUE

Available here for the first time in English, *The Brown-Clad Army* (Das Braune Heer") is an important document for students and historians of the Third Reich. The book is doubly important because it first appeared in 1932, on the eve of Hitler's appointment as German Chancellor, and because the book contains such a widespread photo history of the struggling Nazi Party in its first decade.

In the book you'll find none of those monumental stadia with their dramatic pylons and searchlights so characteristic of National-Socialist spectacles in the mid-30's. Instead, the look of the Party prior to 1933 was that of the brawling, impoverished classes who flocked to Hitler's colors . . . before it was "safe" to do so.

Although Hitler, Himmler, and Goering went on to greater things after 1933, the S.A. ("Sturm Abteilung"—Storm Detachment) was to decline sharply in influence after the 1934 purge of Ernst Roehm and the S.A. leadership. Therefore, this volume remains the most complete photo record of the S.A. ever issued. Indeed, the book became a rarity even on German bookshelves following the purge.

You'll note in these pages the outlines of the coming Reich—not just in banners and uniforms, but in such "shadow" institutions as the Reich's Labor Corps and the National-Socialist Leadership Schools. There's even a forecast of the *Anschluss* with Austria. Much that Hitler would institute later was already present in rough draft before 1933, as the camera of Heinrich Hoffman attests.

We should mention that our translations of captions take a few liberties with the German originals. First, many of the photos in "Das Braune Heer" had only a few lines from National-Socialist marching songs for identification. This English version attempts to duplicate the meter of these songs, and even the rhyme scheme in a couple of cases. To do so, we've had to take "poetic license" here and there, while striving to stay true to the general wording of the original.

Second, the German original made brief references to men and events which needed no explanation for German readers in 1932. Nowadays these references require further background; and we've supplied it where necessary.

R.H.F.

# WHY S.A.?

GERMAN MINISTER ERNST ROHM  
CHIEF OF STAFF

ADDRESSING THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN BERLIN  
ON DECEMBER 7, 1933

National Socialism is a new philosophy (Weltanschauung). A time will come when National Socialism will become the political philosophy of the entire world, modified by racial and geographical differences and adapted to the character and needs of the various nations.

**The roots of National Socialism lie in the trenches  
of the World War.**

It would be contrary to all experience if a catastrophe such as the World War were to occur without leaving a permanent impression on the inner consciousness of the nations.

Nearly all the peoples of the earth stood, at one place or another, in arms against each other. No corner of the earth was spared from recruiting for the melting pot of humanity on the battlefields of Europe. In all parts of the world mothers and sisters, widows and orphans, are mourning those whom the World War summoned to the halls of death. The scars of this most fearful scourge of God which has ever flayed humanity are some twelve million graves, the direct or indirect results of the War.

*It is inevitable that an event of such gigantic proportions and such monstrous results should have left its indelible marks on the face of the earth. And not alone on the face; for the spiritual structure of humanity has undergone, and had to undergo, a profound change.*

A political, social and economic system which succeeded in setting the whole world on fire, or at least was not able to prevent the conflagration, which compelled men who had no personal grudge against one another to slaughter each other by the million, which allowed millions of innocent women and children and old people to die of starvation, such a system, I say, can no longer regulate the relationships of individuals and nations after such an overwhelming demonstration of its futility.

It was only right and natural that the soldier in the trenches, who suffered most directly from the effects of this false system and philosophy, should begin to think over these things.

On this side of the line as well as on the other.

**The realization of the madness of this war had nothing to do with cowardice, nothing to do with the idea of victory or defeat.**

To the soldier pacifism is cowardice elevated to a principle. Cowardice is no philosophy but a defect of character. The two statesmen and leaders who have developed from the philosophy of the soldier in the trenches an entirely new philosophy and an entirely new response to life among their countrymen—I mean Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini—were no cowards but fought in the front line and proved by their courage and the shedding of their lifeblood that they made no unmanly attempts to avoid the consequences of war. *Nor can one say that National Socialism or Fascism, two philosophical systems which are at least related to the soldierly spirit, are philosophies either of the victors or of the vanquished.*

At the time when Mussolini first thought of Fascism, i. e. during the War, Italy had every reason to feel herself on the losing side, and Adolf Hitler first evolved his idea of National Socialism when he was a soldier whose comrades were victorious in all parts of the world. When these two unknown soldiers of the Great War presented to their compatriots the philosophies which they had won on the battlefield, the situation was reversed.

Both reached almost identical results starting from utterly different premises. It was years after the War before either was able to present to the nation what he himself had won from the War.

*This shows that these ideas of the two soldiers have nothing to do with war or peace, with victory or defeat, but have a broad and valuable application which has nothing to do with either the one or the other. That is what we call a new „Weltanschauung“.*

**Bolshevism is no „Weltanschauung“.**

There are some people who regard Bolshevism, which is a doctrine of a completely opposite type, as a result of the War. We absolutely refuse to see in Bolshevism a „Weltanschauung“. Bolshevism does not spring from the same sources as National Socialism does, it has not its roots in the trenches of the Great War. Not one of the spiritual fathers of Bolshevism stood in the trenches, not one was a soldier. Only an exhausted nation,

spiritually shattered by defeat, by false leadership, by hunger, privation and death, a nation which had become embittered or stunned by the blows of fate could fall a prey to this false doctrine. The spirit of destruction and civil war, the ecstasies of hatred which are a part of Bolshevism, have nothing whatever to do with the soldierly spirit which is the source of National Socialism. It is, on the contrary, the very negation of all that the soldiers of all nations and all times have stood for.

I venture to doubt whether Bolshevism will ever permanently be the view of a large part of the world. Hatred and negation alone do not possess sufficient staying power to be principles of state and of the relationships between nations. Even now we can see how, under the pressure of circumstances, a basic change is being brought about in this system.

Bolshevism could only hope to maintain itself as a creed if it succeeded in winning Germany as its point of entry into the rest of the world. Had the German nation taken over this alien philosophy and, thanks to its energy, its intelligence and its determination, given it a new constructive force, then Bolshevism would have been a serious menace to the world and—let me say so frankly—a deadly poison for humanity.

**Germany is the cradle not only of Europe's fate  
but of the fate of the world.**

The history of the last few months is far more than the history of a German revolution. The fate of Bolshevism has been sealed in Germany, which has broken once and for all the back of this menace to the world.

At the moment when National Socialism destroyed Marxism and all its works in the heart of Europe Bolshevism lost for ever its hope of a world revolution, which hope alone had been nourishing it throughout the years.

**Through National Socialism Germany has become, instead  
of a gate of entry for Bolshevism, a bulwark protecting the  
whole world from it.**

Since the political and spiritual rebirth of Germany, brought about by the spirit of National Socialism, Marxism is definitely on the down grade throughout the world.

So long as a strong National Socialist Germany exists in the heart of Europe the world has nothing more to fear from

the danger of Bolshevization. Humanity has only National Socialism to thank that it has been freed from the nightmare which has been weighing down on every nation.

The fact that Bolshevism is doing its utmost to-day to come to terms with the rest of the world as it now is, compels one to recognize that the strongest force in the life of peoples and of nations is mutual love and the will to cooperate, and not hatred and negation.

It is a lie that war teaches men to hate. The soldiers who stood at the front with their arms—however terrible those arms were—did not hate each other. They did their duty as they were ordered by the responsible leaders of their nations. The hatred which has poisoned mankind by inventing atrocity stories about the German soldier was not spread by those who stood face to face with him in the trenches.

*These poisonous libels did not arise in the front lines where death ruled and the same need and the same danger wove an invisible bond between the combatants, whatever uniform they wore.*

**On the contrary: the German soldier is proud to see in his former enemy of the front line his fairest and most unprejudiced judge.**

When one stood daily face to face with death all that was only outward appearance faded into insignificance, all that was worthless disappeared. Only the genuine, the true and the manly kept its worth. The hatred which others were spreading abroad found no place in the heart of the soldier because he simply did not feel it. He saw that those on the other side were suffering under the same tragedy, were doing the same duty and dying the same death as he—were indeed but mirrors of himself. One does not hate one's own reflection for then one would have to hate oneself.

There is no truer touchstone of character than the front line. Hunger and thirst, rain and frost, suffering and danger, wounds and death strip the mask from all pretence and face each man with the challenge: Show what you are! Under this pitiless searchlight nothing can lie hidden and men's thoughts turn inevitably to the essential. There can be no swerving aside, each one must ask himself the question: Why?

And then the soldier of the World War saw that there were powers above him who determined his fate—life and death—without sharing in it. He realized that the soldier on the other side, whom the law of self-preservation compelled him to kill, was also nothing but a tool in the hands of forces which one could not grasp. He recognized that he could kill the warrior on the other side again and again and yet again—but the war lived on.

As he pondered and searched for the real reason of the war it gradually became clear to the soldier that he, who in sweat and blood bore the whole burden of this ghastly tragedy, was nothing but a pawn of the war.

The soldier realized a bitter truth:

*The soldier marches and fights, kills and is killed. This has been his task and his fate from the beginning of time and it will always be so. War obeys its own laws. These are hard and pitiless and must be so if war is not to become a permanent state. The natural duty of the soldier is to make war as hard and pitiless as possible, and this is also the most humane way, since the sooner the war is over the sooner will there be peace. The blood which is thus shed is no stain on the soldier's honour.*

The soldier has no influence on the causes of the war. A decision by force of arms between two nations, war, is the last resort of politics, and up until now politics have always been made by others and not by the soldier who has to pay the final price with his life-blood.

The politicians and the intellectual and material supporters of the ideals or interests in support of which the sword has been seized did not stand side by side with the soldier on the field of battle. They sat at home in parliaments or in the comfortable chairs of ministers and presidents. They pulled the wires, moved the figures, calculated and did business. In their hearts was nothing but coldness and the business of dying for their political or business interests they left to the soldier.

It was against this that the soldier rebelled.

**The soldierly spirit is an attitude of mind which by no means needs to be connected with the use of weapons.**

For the soldierly spirit means to stand up for a thing to the very last.

If the politicians, the big stock brokers, the captains of industry, the oil "generals" and the "admirals" of the commercial marine, all those whose interests were fought for on the battlefields of the World War, had gone to the front themselves and been men enough to risk their own persons and their own lives for their own cause, whether good or ill, the soldier would have appreciated that, for that would have been soldierly.

But the fact that they did not do so, that they caused the world to suffer nameless misery for four and a half years while they sat in the peaceful quiet of their meeting and board rooms, and that they let millions of men die has made the soldier's demand a moral right:

*If the soldier is to fight and die for a good or bad policy, it must be for him to decide what this policy is to be.*

If policy were only dictated by soldiers, who are convinced that the mistakes of their policy revenge themselves first and last on them themselves, mankind would be spared much misery, for it would be governed with more feeling of responsibility.

We can all remember how agitation in favour of war was carried on year after year. The result was a poisoning of international public opinion, and the consequence—as one of the then leading statesmen in the world admitted—that the nations stumbled into the World War. It was not the soldiers who agitated in favour of war, for they knew only too well that they personally would have to stake their lives. Every war, even a successful war, demands frightful sacrifices, and the man who has to make these sacrifices will therefore never wantonly bring about a war.

The soldier who bears arms, who kills or is killed with them, and who wins or loses honourably knows that every war must come to an end some day and that a state of hostility cannot last for ever.

**Those who have fought honourably can come to terms  
again honourably.**

But the way in which the World War was ended was dishonourable, unmanly and unsoldierly. The so-called "Peace" Treaty of Versailles with its dishonouring and impossible conditions was nothing else but a continuation of the war with other means and a perpetuation of hate. It was



not the soldiers who lay opposite each other during the war who made this treaty and added fuel to the fire of hateful propaganda which, in spite of the so-called peace, was and is still being conducted against Germany. The forces behind it were and are still the same which drove mankind into this World War.

In the course of the last few months in particular, since National Socialism assumed the reins of power in Germany and liberated the German nation from its internal party dissensions, we have been experiencing a fresh wave of hate directed against the young Germany of Adolf Hitler. And here again we recognize perfectly clearly that *those* people are again at work who are quite certainly not ready to take up arms on behalf of their intrigues.

The emigrants who were driven out of the country, not by National Socialism but by their own bad consciences, are engaged in adding fuel to the flames of the agitation against Germany. And unfortunately there is a section of the press, that is controlled by interests whose business is war, which permits its columns to be used for this action which poisons international relations.

In the pamphlets of these irresponsible, unscrupulous and expatriated vagabonds the same lie occurs again and again, namely, that the political fighting organizations of National-Socialist Germany are military in character and might therefore become a menace to the peace of the world.

At the beginning of my remarks I emphasized that National Socialism had its origin in the trenches during the World War; that it means the rejection by the soldierly spirit of the mad principle of the control of policy by men and forces which are neither ready to nor capable of defending the consequences of their doings with their bodies and lives; and that National Socialism asserts the soldier's claim to political leadership because the conviction that he himself will have to bear the brunt of all sins and mistakes in his policy offers the best guarantee of responsible leadership.

As the responsible Chief of the Staff of the whole of the German Storm Troops, in view of the fact that we have nothing to conceal and that the new Germany is still ready to disarm down to the last machine-gun, if the other states do the same, I address myself to world public opinion in order to explain what these units really are.

**The Storm Troops cannot be compared with any army, any militia or any other military system in the world.**

For they are none of these things. All the aforementioned may suitably be described as armed forces. But this is absolutely not the case with the Storm Troops according to Adolf Hitler's expressed will. On the contrary, in all the proclamations which deal with relations between the Reichswehr and the Storm Troops he has clearly and unmistakably indicated the dividing line: the Reichswehr is the sole armed force in the state and *the Storm Troops are the representatives of the will and ideas of the National Socialist German Revolution*. The Reichswehr is charged with the defence of the frontiers and the protection of the interests of the Reich as against foreign countries. The task set the Storm Troops is to form the new German state in mind and will on the basis of National-Socialist ideas and to educate the individual German as a living member of this National-Socialist state. There is no connection whatever between the Reichswehr and the Storm Troops. Thus the German Army took no part whatever in the National-Socialist Revolution, a fact which is probably unique in the history of revolutions.

In spite of their numerical strength of about 2,500,000 men, the Storm Troops are not concentrated in barracks and rationed in common, as is the case with all formations belonging to any military system in neighbouring states. They are not paid and are not provided with service clothing. To-day, as in the past, service in the Storm Troops is based on the absolutely voluntary system. The Storm Trooper pursues his civil vocation, and merely devotes his leisure hours, in the evening and at night, to Storm Troop service.

The Storm Troops were created as a protective and fighting force for dealing with the internal political opponents of National Socialism, namely Communism and Marxism. For fourteen years the Storm Troops waged the moral fight to obtain power in the state. Their prime task is now to secure the victory of the National-Socialist Revolution.

The Storm Trooper is the exponent of the National-Socialist conception of human existence and its apostle who conveys the principles of National Socialism to the remotest cottage and to all his fellow-countrymen without exception.

In the course of the years of struggle the Storm Troops, with enormous sacrifices, have given convincing proof of their

absolute loyalty to the Leader and to the movement, and thus showed themselves qualified for their task. It will always be a glorious page in the history of Germany that in times of the greatest need hundreds of thousands of men came forward who were ready, from pure idealism and absolutely voluntarily, to defend their principles to the last.

As there is a fondness abroad for pointing out that these associations receive military drill, I must expressly emphasize that this is a means and not an end. From the very start, Adolf Hitler's object was to regenerate Germany on the basis of well-tried discipline and order. Large masses and, above all, the exponents of a revolutionary conception of human existence, cannot be held together without the strictest discipline and absolute order and without the absolute authority of the leaders and discipline on the part of their followers.

Do you believe that the German revolution would have been carried out so bloodlessly if all the fighters had not been imbued with this iron discipline?

And it is just because the German nation wishes for the well-ordered and peaceful construction of its new state that the discipline and order which foreign countries fear under the name of "military drill" is the best guarantee against the Bolshevization not only of Germany but also of the whole of Europe.

So far it was simply and solely due to the fact that the Storm Troops in the heart of Europe stood for years with consciously anti-Bolshevist aims as a bulwark protecting peace and order in the world, that Bolshevism was unable to lay hands on the western European countries as well. Hence it is absolutely in the interest of foreign countries to see order and discipline firmly established in the German nation. The world ought to be thankful for that, *instead of distorting the facts and representing the Storm Troops as a menace to peace.*

The uniform clothing is also constantly used as an excuse for representing Germany to the world as ready and determined for war. But the brown shirt, both as regards material and cut, is completely unsuitable as service dress. It affords no protection against inclement weather. I do not believe that an unprejudiced military expert in any army in the world can honestly describe the brown shirt as serviceable in wartime. Besides, I have so far not heard that anyone has objected to the wearing of uniform by the numerous men's and women's associations in neighbouring countries. And yet, at the present

time, nearly the whole of the young people in England, France, Italy, the United States, Poland, and Russia are not only dressed in uniform which resembles that of their armies in cut and colour, but they are even trained quite openly in the use of arms for war service by military men on the active and reserved lists. The service shirt of the Storm Troops, on the other hand, is not suited to render its wearer invisible against a natural background, as is required in the case of service uniform. But it is intended, on the contrary, owing to the unusual luminosity of its colour, to distinguish him from his surroundings and to enable friend and foe to recognize him as the exponent of the National-Socialist conception of human existence.

### **No war could be waged with the SA.**

There is no occasion to explain in detail that, with men so strikingly clothed and in view of the complete lack of war-like weapons, no war whatever could be waged.

Even the objection that the brown battalions could be easily and rapidly armed and equipped with the technical means of modern warfare will be overruled by every expert. Those who make such assertions merely show that they have no idea of the enormous difficulties connected with this particular point.

On the contrary, I know of numerous military experts in neighbouring countries who describe such a rapid armament as an impossibility. But I may mention that these opinions were always given when it was a question of insisting upon their own demands for armaments.

Apart from the fact that Germany has completely fulfilled the obligations to disarm imposed upon her in the Treaty of Versailles in the certainly unprejudiced opinion of the Commissions of Control, she does not even possess the financial and industrial possibilities for rearmament. Germany is conscious of her unfavourable geographical position from a military point of view, and has therefore the greatest interest in the maintenance of an honourable peace. The German industrial areas are nearly all within range of our neighbours' artillery. Germany has not a single military aeroplane with which to protect herself against the many thousands owned by the states surrounding us.

*Unarmed men with no regular training in the use of arms cannot be converted overnight, merely by putting arms into*

*their hands into formidable soldiers menacing the safety of the world.*

Some very smart observers have also meanwhile discovered that my appointment as Reich Minister and the consequent embodiment of the Storm Troops in the State is a most suspicious measure on the part of the new Germany.

I constantly regret the vast quantity of calculations, based on probabilities and efforts of the imagination, which international public opinion wastes on complicating the simplest and most obvious things.

The world and the peace of the nations would be much better served if all the clever people who rack their brains to find the most wrong-headed explanations possible for any facts whatever would take a little trouble and regard National Socialism and its view of things as facts, and study its laws.

I am telling you no secret and nothing new when I invite your attention to the totalitarian claim of the National-Socialist state. That is to say, the National-Socialist idea has seized the power in the State and thus broken the chains which bound the party.

**National Socialism has itself become the State and brooks no movements of any kind beside itself.**

It is clear that the nation as a whole is not yet fully penetrated by the new ideas, and cannot yet be fully penetrated by them.

**The complete victory of a new conception of human existence takes time.**

I may recall to you how many centuries were required before Christianity won the day.

Nothing is, therefore, more natural than that the National-Socialist State should make use of the old and well-tried champions of this new political faith to educate the entire population to accept in their hearts and really live in accordance with the principles of National Socialism. It would be a contradiction of the totalitarian claim of the National-Socialist State if the State were not to include the party as representing the idea upon which the State is based. This applies even more to the Storm Troops who, as regards their ideas, organization and fighting qualities, are the strongest expression of the power of National Socialism as such. The Storm Troops have got

rid of a form of government in spite of the most embittered resistance on the part of its supporters. They have replaced the vanquished state of the November revolution and the Weimar National Assembly by their own State, the National-Socialist state.

**Adolf Hitler has now incorporated the Storm Troops in the State. The Storm Troops have thus become not only the representatives of authority but also the bearers of responsibility in their, the National-Socialist, State.**

The National-Socialist State is a final and irrevocable fact—and that must be accepted by its enemies at home and abroad. For the State is the nation, and the nation is the State.

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**DAS IST DAS BRAUNE HEER!**

**THE TRUTH SEEKER**

Post Office

San Francisco, California 94112

\* 32 PAGE PHOTO  
SECTION INSERT  
FOLLOWS (P.65-96)



Rubber truncheons . . . and comradeship

. . . and, even so, "Heil Hitler!"



From youngsters to grey-beards, one thought motivates all: Germany!  
66





The people's strength lies in these men.



Today hardened youths; some day, harder men



Bold sons of the farm as guardians of the new Reich



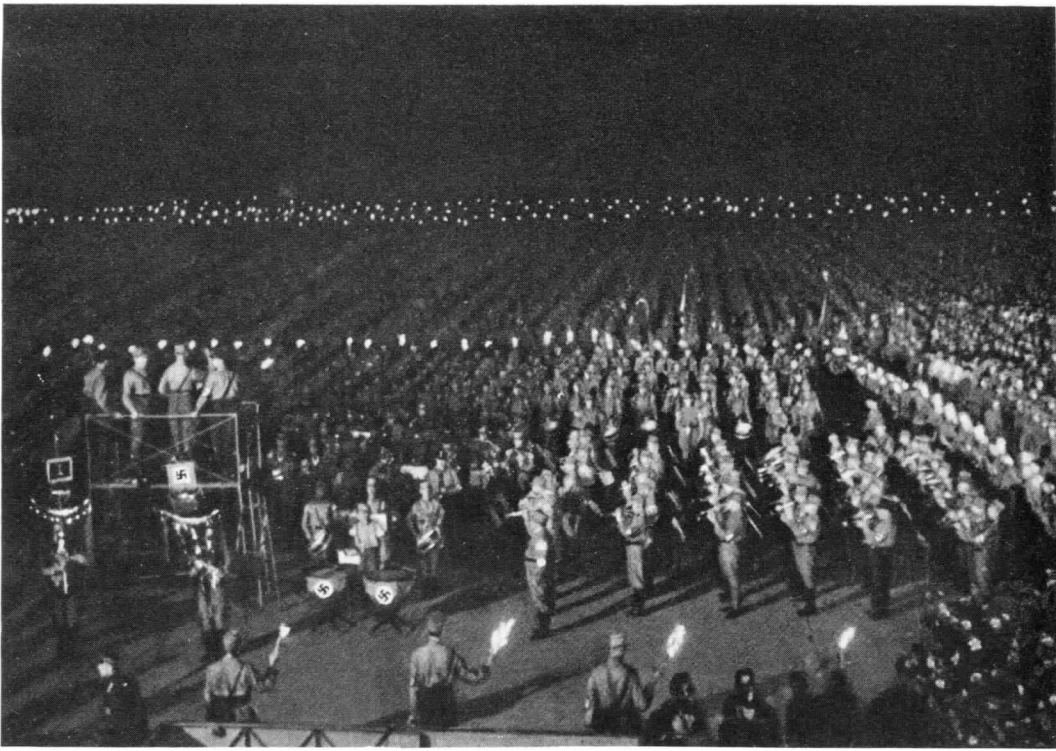
CHIEF-OF-STAFF ROEHM with the leaders of the S.A.



S.S. LEADER HIMMLER with the officers of the S.S.



The Leader speaks to his soldiers.



Immense masses fill the wide arc of Berlin Stadium on the occasion of the 1932 election campaign.

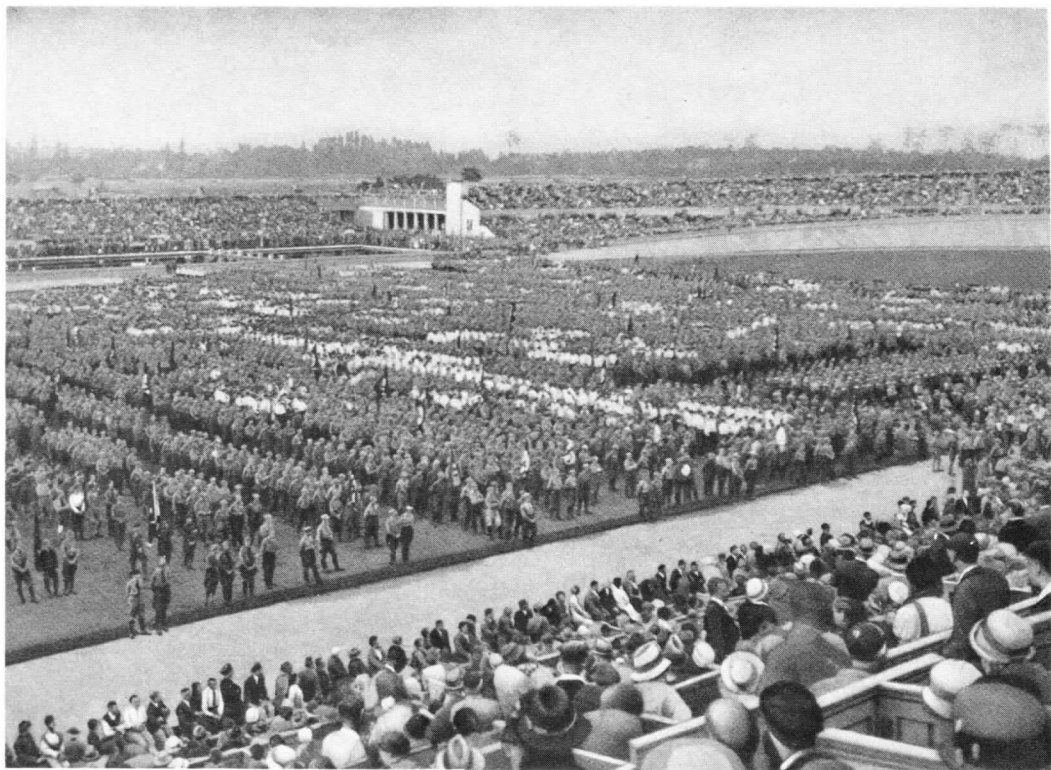


Wordlessly, in columns of bronze, march the soldiers of the S.S. (Weimar).





All goes smoothly without police, when S.S. men oversee security.



The mighty deployment of the S.A. and S.S., in Berlin Stadium, 1932.



As a bastion against Polish recklessness stand the S.A. and S.S. in Danzig.



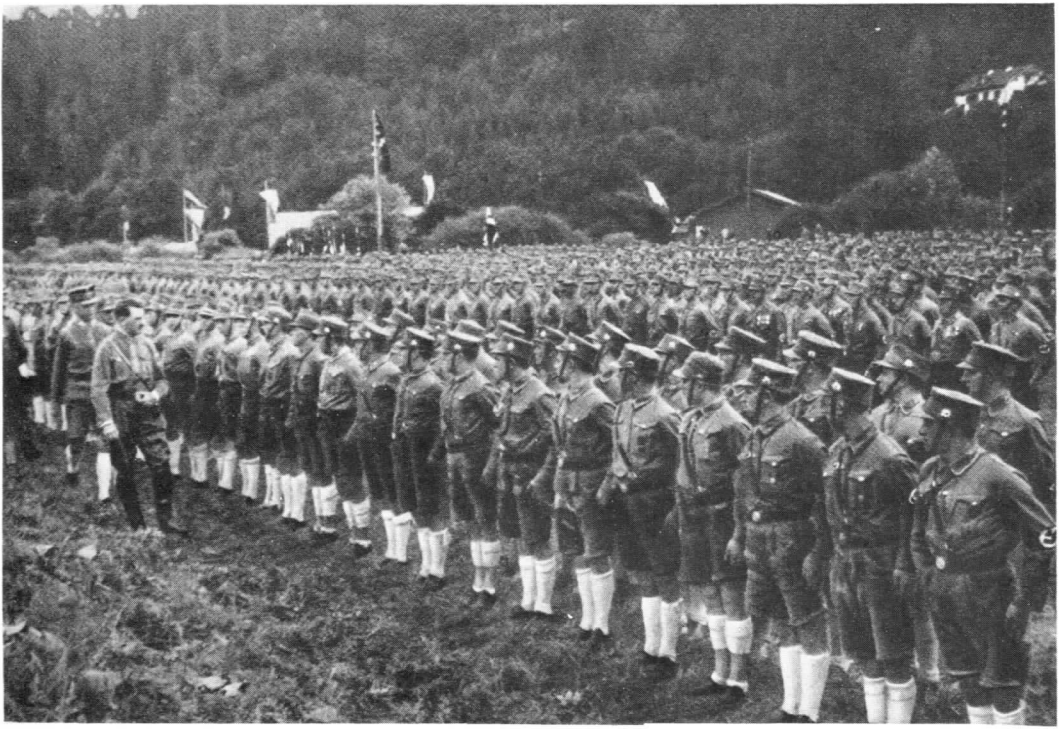
### THE HITLER YOUTH

“We march with never-flagging steps;  
Young Germany awakes!”

Koenigsberg, 1932



The alliance of combat greets the alliance of love.



**AUSTRIAN S.A.**

The great S.A. deployment in Berchtesgaden, 1932



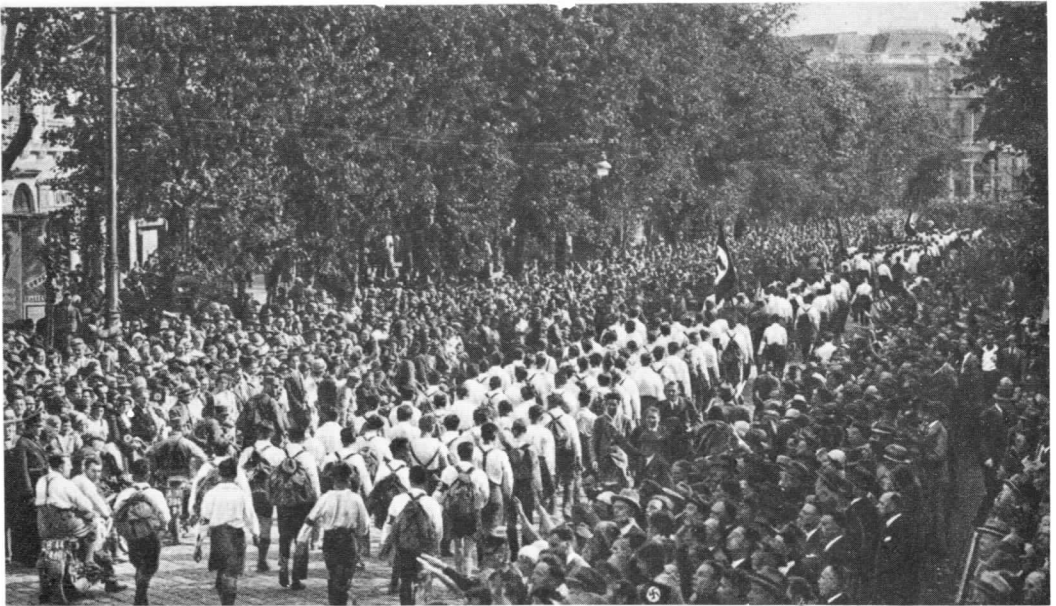
AUSTRIA'S OLDEST HITLER BANNER  
Berchtesgaden, 1932



### VIENNA, 1932

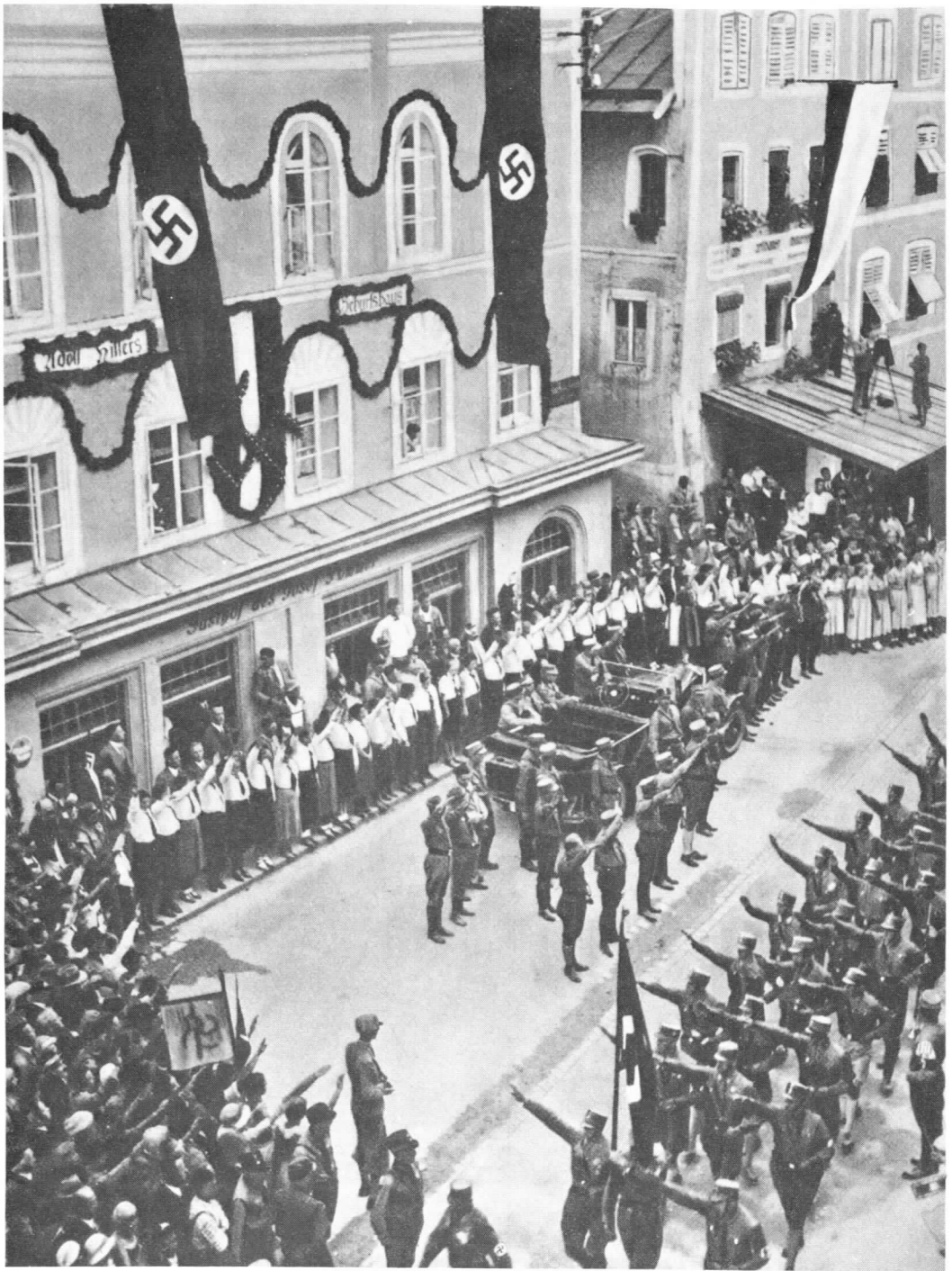
Before the gate of the palace once belonging to the Hapsburg Emperors now stands the Leader of the coming "Greater German Reich."



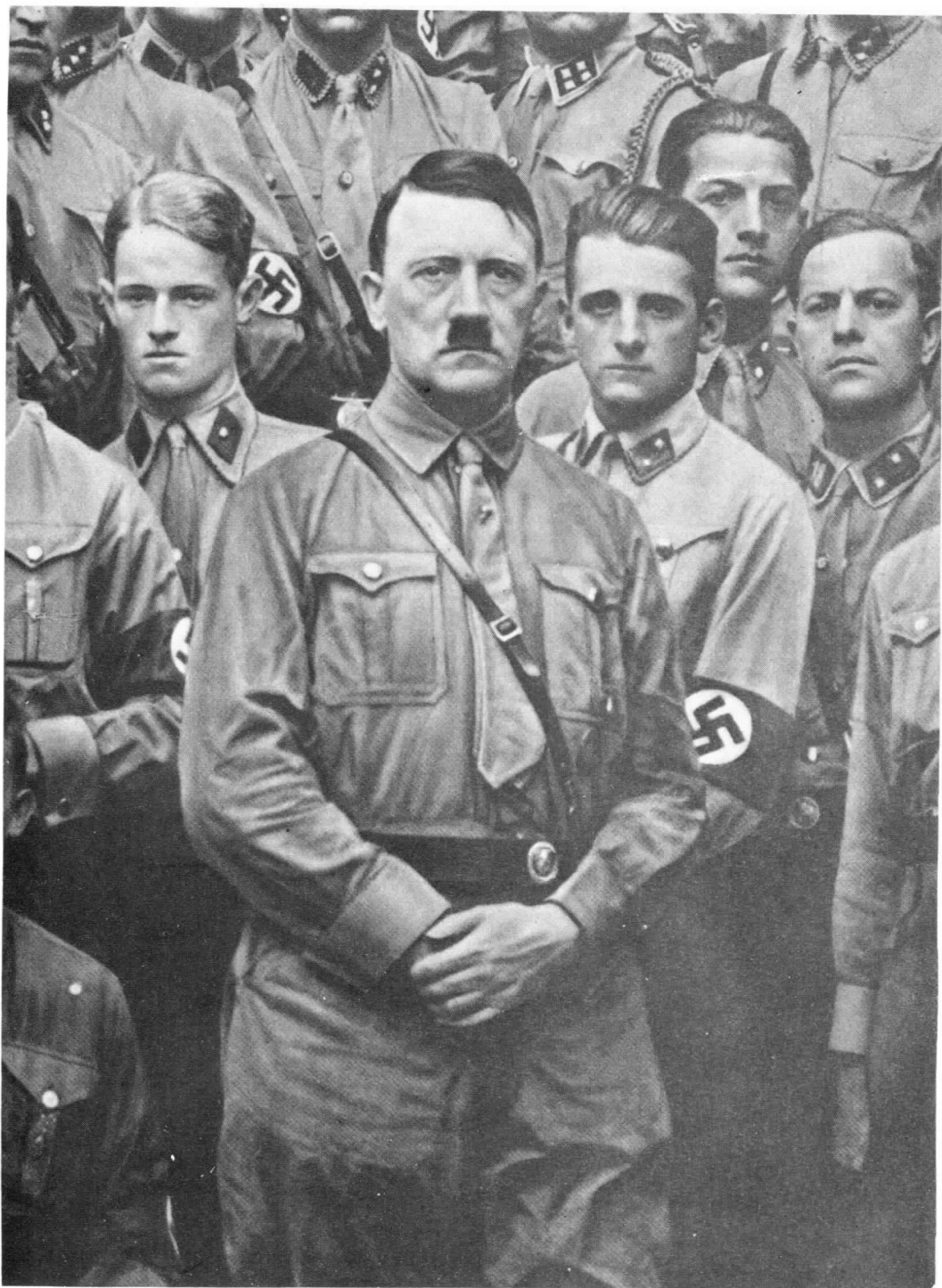


VIENNA, 1932

Above: The Leader reviews a march-past.  
Below: Whether with or without brown shirts,  
the S.A. marches.



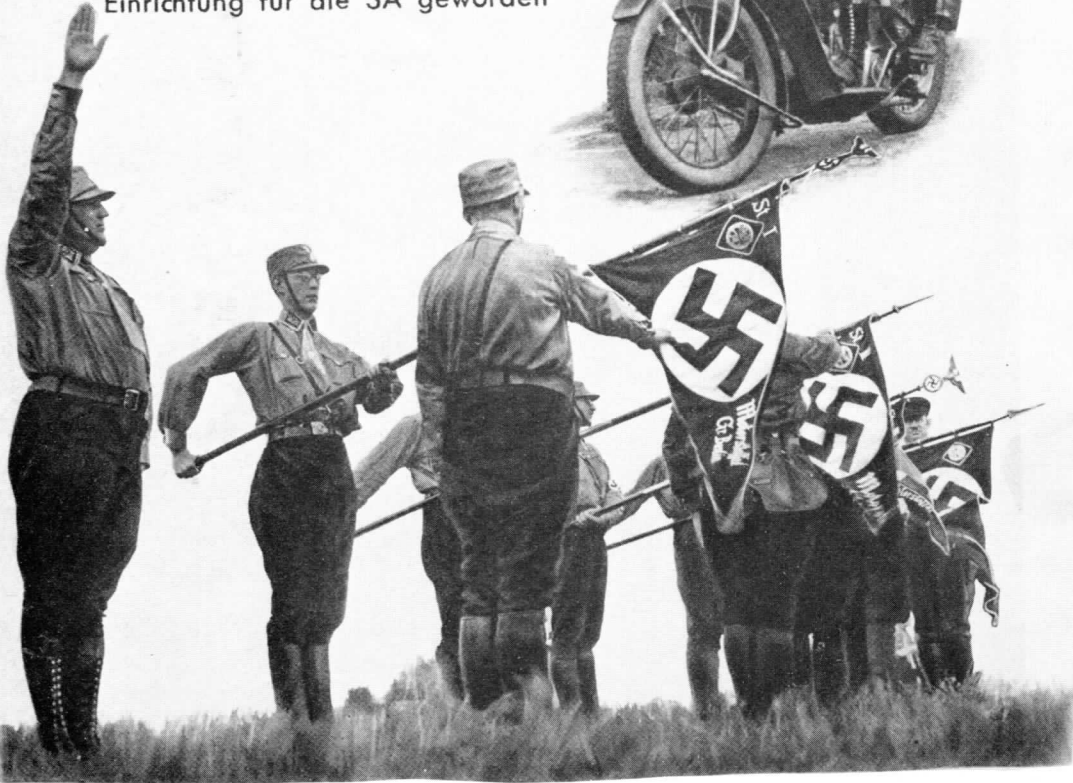
Forty-four years earlier, in this house in the Austrian town of Braunau-on-the-Inn, Adolf Hitler was born. The year 1932 found a mighty deployment of German and Austrian S.A. men here instead.



10,000 hearts and a single beat!

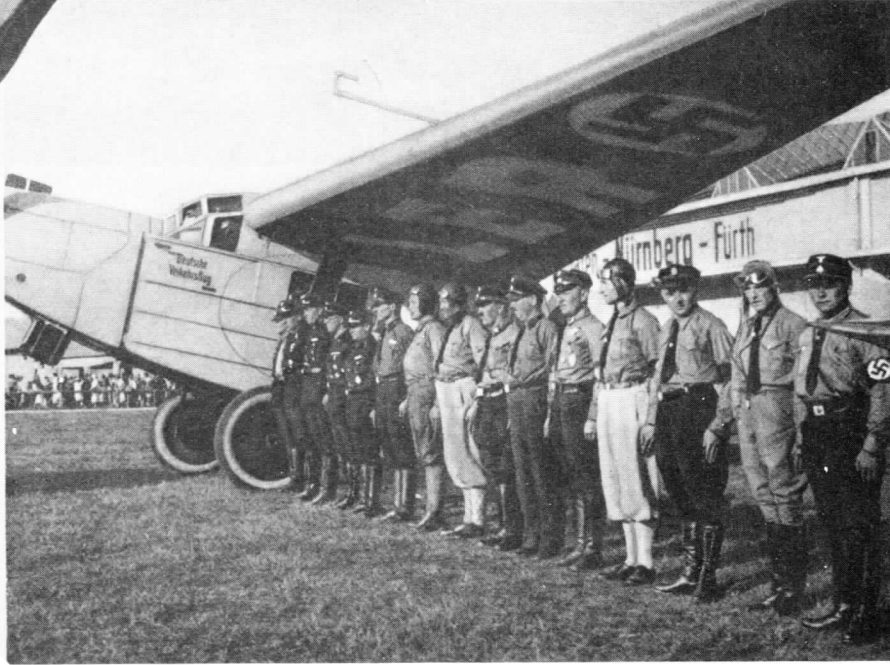


**MOTOR-SA IN BRAUNSCHWEIG 1931**  
Die Motorstürme sind eine unentbehrliche  
Einrichtung für die SA geworden



**MOTORIZED S.A. IN BRAUNSCHWEIG, 1931**

Motorized storm units have become essential components of the S.A.  
Dedicating the standards of a Berlin motorized storm unit



In all parts of Germany, S.A. aircraft units meet to train new recruits.



A mounted storm unit drills in open country.



FIRST BAVARIAN S.A. SKI COMPETITION IN THE TYROL, 1931  
S.A. skiers on the march to the starting point

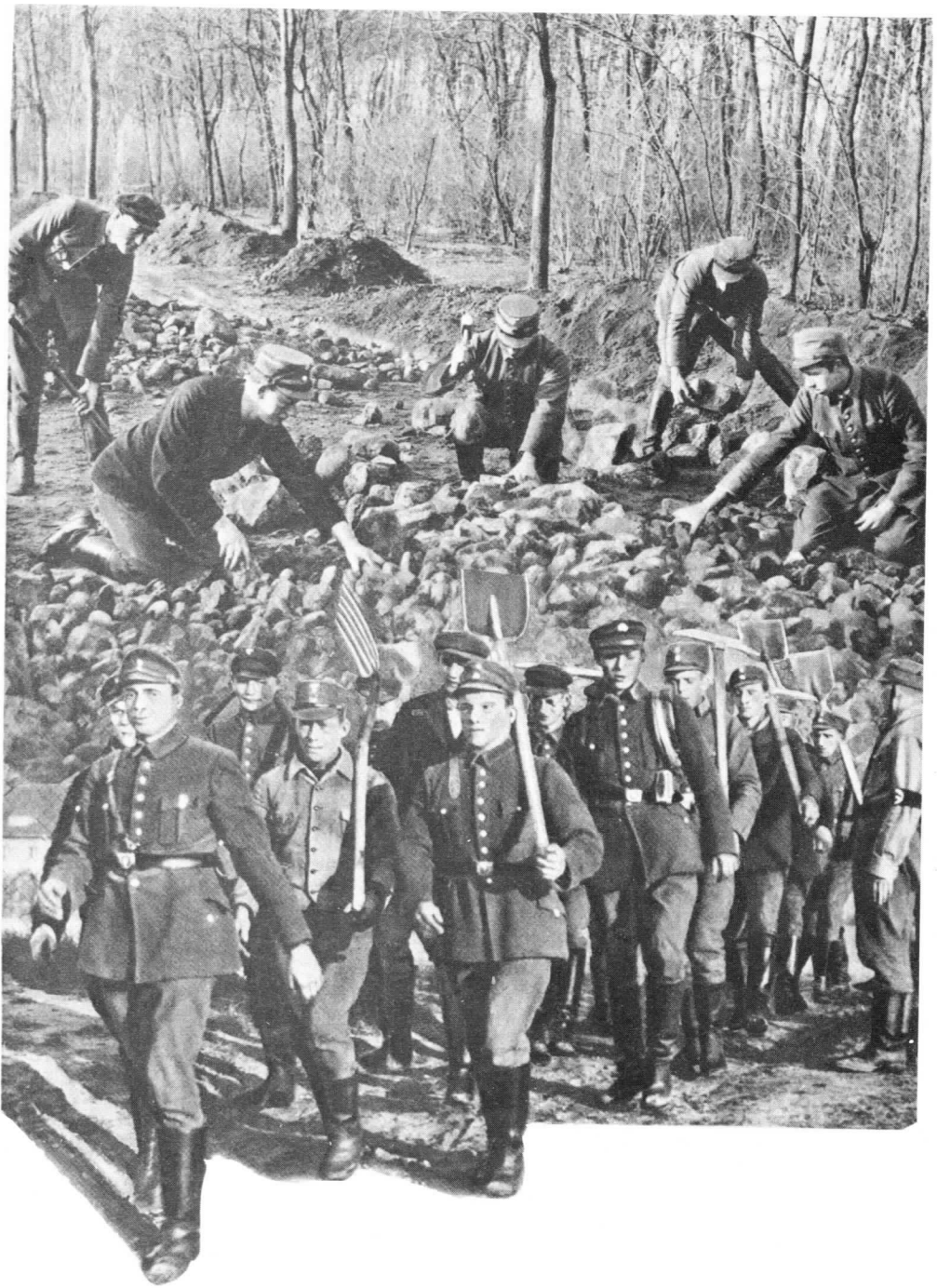


All S.A. and S.S. storm units pursue sports keenly.





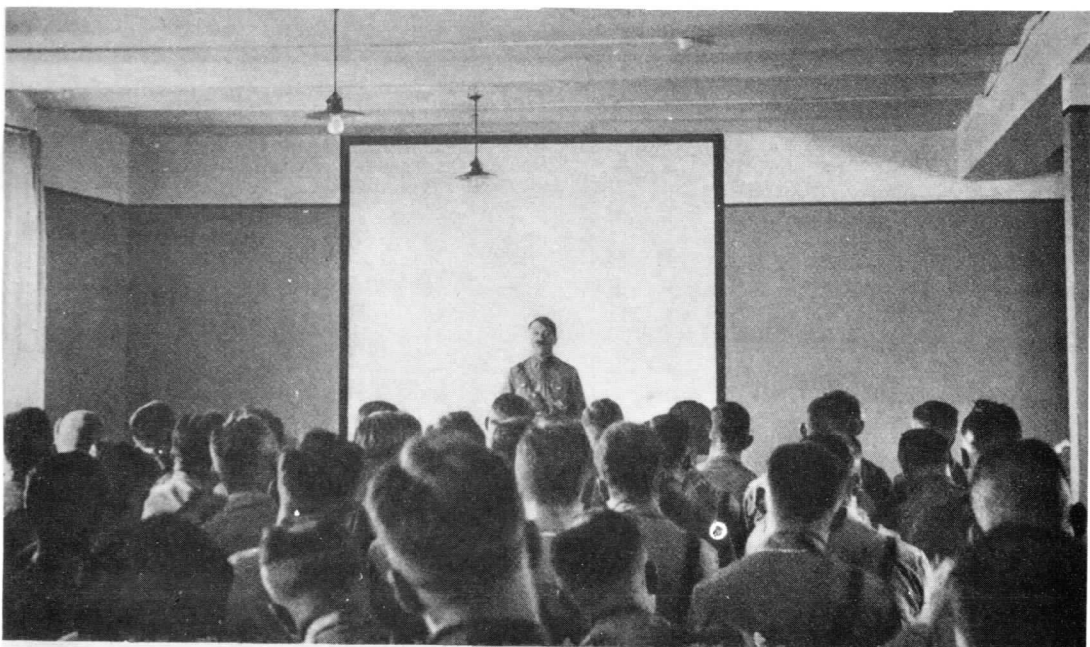
The feeding of masses of people during the great S.A. deployments requires extensive preparations.



The S.A. has turned to public work-service with great willingness. Work-service volunteers of the S.A., for instance, are building this road.



Since its inception, the S.A. has known that defense against poison gas could be a matter of survival for the German nation.



A course of instruction at the Reich's Leadership School, Munich

S.A. leaders from all parts of Germany listen intently to the words of their Commander-in-Chief



## MORNING WASH

And then, off to the drill field!



“Unfurl the banner proudly,  
So that our foes can see it;  
We’ll always be triumphant,  
If we but stand together.”

Into the remotest towns, truck columns of the S.A. roll, to recruit  
for Adolf Hitler’s Movement.