

CONFIDENTIALEquals British **CONFIDENTIAL**Task and Rôle of the SA¹

By Stabschef of the SA Wilhelm Schepmann

As Stabschef responsible to the Fuehrer for the SA, I consider it right that I should once more define explicitly the task and rôle of the SA within the Party and the nation, in order to clear up once and for all any obscurity concerning the task of the SA.

During the early years of the movement it was the SA which, in accordance with the will of the Fuehrer, as part of the Party brought together the activist forces as the sword-arm of the National-Socialist movement. For the National-Socialist who was ready for action, membership in the SA was a matter of course. It was just as much a matter of course that the SA man became a party member and considered himself first and always a National-Socialist. As an SA man, it was his pride and his honor always to be in the forefront of the fight. Where propagandists, collaborators within the inner circle of the Party, dare-devils, helpers for Party members in trouble, everywhere where men ready for action were needed, the SA was there and naturally the SA was called upon. In his calling the SA man was at all times a fanatical representative of the National-Socialist Weltanschauung. The Party was unimaginable without the SA, just as the SA was never an independent power outside the Party, but exclusively a part and an organ of the movement. From this rôle of the SA as the organization of the activist men of the Party, from its indispensability for the carrying out of National-Socialist activities, and not from the training of the SA or any other branch of their self-education, is derived the justified self-confidence of the SA man. From this rôle resulted also the esteem of the SA within the whole movement. Tested SA men, capable as political leaders, were continually transferred to the political directorate of the Party, to advance there to leading positions. Almost every one of the old men in authority (Hoheitstraeger) in the Party was also an SA man in the years of struggle.

Prerequisite to this success of the SA in the party struggle was its construction according to military principles, was the SA man's unconditional duty to obey, his education in discipline, was above all the constant schooling of the SA man to become a conscious and fanatical political soldier of the Fuehrer. In the narrow sense this is the goal which the work of the SA served. Just as, however, the peace-time training of a soldier does not have significance except as future or at least possible action is in view for the actual defence of the life of the nation, so work within the SA was only a means to an end. The end was the completion of the manifold tasks of the SA in support of the Party's struggle in the field of internal politics, was the victory of the National-Socialist movement.

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After Hitler came to power the SA was at first in danger of developing into a defence organization with a military foundation, as a result of a misconception of the order given by the Fuehrer from the beginning that it should educate all German men to have a military, National-Socialist attitude. This led to a loosening of its spiritual ties to the Party and thus necessarily to serious setbacks. Open and veiled alienation between political leaders and SA leaders was the inevitable consequence. The result was unsatisfactory for both sides and disadvantageous to the Party. Many a Party endeavor would have attained easier success if the right use had been made of the largest and strongest formation of the Party, the SA--tightly organized and disciplined down to the last detail, and comprising millions of zealous men from all classes of the people. By and large, however, the SA got stuck in its own field of service. SA work in the narrow sense, the training of units in the evening and on Sundays, became too exclusively the sum and substance of SA activities in general. Above all, this work determined, to too great an extent, the conception of the present task of the SA which was held by the German people, by the Party, and finally even by many SA men.

To be sure, the Fuehrer himself again and again provided fresh impetus, for example, by his order for the military education of German manhood by means of SA training for the "military badge" (Wehrabzeichen) and by other assignments. These assignments, however, because they were often not approached in the right way, did not come to fruition. Partly in the Party, partly in the SA itself, they were regarded too much as independent individual tasks of secondary importance and too little as important constituents of the entire Party's work of educating and leading the whole German people. Thus for a long time the position of the SA and the self-confidence of the SA men remained shaken. They remained so, even though the SA, in this time of outward stagnation and self-imposed limitation achieved results of which they are fully entitled to be proud.

One could not judge as well in peace-time, and even the SA man himself was often never aware, what a great work of education had been done. Especially in the psychologically difficult conditions in which he had to lead his men, the SA leader gained almost unequalled experience in the field of human leadership. In a wide measure, as well, he gained organizational knowledge in the course of the numerous SA internal undertakings. The entire SA, however, became a body of men who had learned how to be strict with themselves and to stand by the Fuehrer and Party in the most difficult circumstances. Now, during the war, it has been shown how valuable this work of the SA was in itself. The SA men in the units on the fighting front have stood the test, like all real National-Socialists, and have proved to be the backbone of the forces. The SA leaders who remained at home, however, put their knowledge and experience at the disposal of the Party and justified, by their achievements, the Fuehrer's order to instil the spirit of National-Socialism in the German men eligible for military service.

Thus we have every reason to do away with the old inhibitions. It is the will of the Fuehrer and my task as Stabschef of the SA to clear up these questions conclusively. Every SA man and every Party member, no matter what his position, must come to realize:

As in the period of struggle, it remains the task of the SA to stand to the fore in all matters in which the Party needs an active representation among the people of its will and its measures. The SA man must be the most active propagandist of the Party, the most courageous warrior of the Party in the air war, the most active collaborator with the political leaders in war-time welfare work, the most active National-Socialist in the armed forces, and also, if must be, again the most active fighter against grumblers and defeatists.

The SA is nothing outside the Party's field of duty, and the Party cannot deny itself the use of an army, millions strong, of staunch National-Socialists, comprising the best men of all classes of our people. The National-Socialist leadership of the Wehrmacht knows that the SA men in its units with the other men of the National-Socialist Party represent a nucleus of determined warriors. It cannot refuse to call upon these men--these political soldiers, in the best sense, educated to display unswerving zeal even in difficult situations--it cannot fail to call upon them for leadership, education, and spiritual strengthening of the troops.

The SA man himself must know, however, that he is always committed, wherever he may be, as an SA man, as the most active champion of the will of the Party.

It makes no difference whether he does SA service in his unit in continuation of his peace-time work, whether he helps with the pre-military training of untrained citizens, whether he conducts military sports contests or military shooting contests, whether in groups or alone, in uniform or mufti, he works in the air war, in the auxiliary police, in the NSV relief work, or in one of the thousand other fields of war service: he is always committed, first of all, as an SA man, as a warrior of the Party, and performs definite tasks in this capacity.

To a special degree all those SA men who have been called up as soldiers today must consider themselves as SA men at work--they more than the rest of the SA. It does not matter whether they are used as generals or staff officers, as leaders of military units or National-Socialist guidance officers, as non-commissioned officers or common soldiers. They all have, along with their military tasks, the political assignment of being examples of the National-Socialist will-to-fight, of sternness and comradeship, the embodiment of the will of the movement. They all have to carry out this assignment as part of their SA service.

Thus every SA man, down to the last one, gains the self-confidence which he absolutely must have to perform his great and wonderful, timeless task. The SA man will, then, always be judged by all other members of the Party and by the whole German nation in the way which the SA and he himself deserve and must claim. The heart of the matter is and remains: The work of the SA can only be understood correctly as an integral part of the Party's task of leading the German people and infusing into them the National-Socialist ideology. In this it is not a number of subordinate auxiliary tasks which is involved, but the utilization of the units of the Party in all fields of the Party's work. The SA man is everywhere and always on duty as an SA man.

I demand this attitude of every SA man, no matter whether he be a general (SA) or a private, no matter whether active or not, no matter whether honorary or paid. But I also ask all other National-Socialists, from Reichsleiter and Gauleiter down to Blockleiter and even to inactive Party members, from National-Socialist guidance officer to unit leader, to make this attitude the basis of their co-operation with the SA. This will only be of benefit to the National-Socialist movement.

Nothing of this will change after the war, for what is involved is the lasting task of the SA within the framework of the Party. In our work one task will come to the fore: the SA will be charged with the extra-military National-Socialist education for defence. It will have to bring together the mass of men capable of bearing arms after their discharge from the armed forces, for the preservation and education of their National-Socialist readiness for defence and for the preservation and training of their valiant capacity for action. Naturally special consideration will be given psychologically to the soldiers returning from the front. The service in the reserve corps of ex-service men will be so arranged that it can be performed by everybody. This assignment, too, has to be regarded in the first instance as an essential part of the National-Socialist educational duty of the Party to the German nation. The aim of making every German man into a resolute warrior for the National-Socialist Reich, into a thoroughly convinced and loyal follower of the Fuehrer, is our first and most important aim. The means to this end is training in defence. Detached from the political goal, however, this training would be only a job half-done.

That is how we SA men regard our task, that is how we value it, and that is how we wish, thereby, to serve the Party, our people, and our beloved Fuehrer. In order that cowardice and treachery may never again be able to creep into the German nation and that our children and grandchildren may be able in the future to lay the final stone of the mighty, storm-defying edifice of the National-Socialist Greater German Reich of Adolf Hitler!