

THE CREATION OF THE MODERN GERMAN ARMY

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General Walther Reinhardt and
the Weimar Republic, 1914–1930

William Mulligan



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Archives

BA-K: Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
BA-MA: Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg
BArch: Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde
BHStA: Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv
BKA: Bayerisches Kriegsarchiv
GLAK: Generallandesarchiv, Karlsruhe
HStASt: Hauptstaatsarchiv, Stuttgart
MAE: Ministère des affaires étrangères, Paris
PA-AA: Politisches Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt

Journals

CEH: *Central European History*
HJ: *Historical Journal*
HZ: *Historische Zeitschrift*
GG: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*
GH: *German History*
JCH: *Journal of Contemporary History*
JMH: *Journal of Modern History*
LBIYB: *Leo Baeck International Yearbook*
MgM: *Militär-geschichtliche Mitteilungen*
VfZ: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*

Political terms

DDP: German Democratic Party
DNVP: German Nationalist People's Party
DVP: German People's Party
KPD: Communist Party
IMCC: Inter-Allied Military Control Commission
SPD: Socialist Party

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William Mulligan, Dublin, August 2003.

INTRODUCTION

In general surveys of the Weimar Republic, the figure of General Walther Reinhardt appears at two points – as the quixotic opponent of the treaty of Versailles, who advocated continuing the war on German territory in order to save the honour of a nation, and as the one honourable general who sought to rally the *Reichswehr* behind the government during the Kapp Putsch in March 1920.¹ He is then ushered off the stage. Yet Reinhardt is a significant figure in the history of the *Reichswehr*, and – as this study will argue – the most significant figure between November 1918 and March 1920. After resigning in the aftermath of the Kapp Putsch, he continued to serve in the army until 1927, and after he left the army he lectured on military affairs to young officers in Berlin. He has been overshadowed by his successor as head of the army command (*Chef der Heeresleitung*), Hans von Seeckt, by his fellow Württemberger, Wilhelm Groener, and by the *éminence grise* of the Weimar republic, Kurt von Schleicher, all of whom have rightly received substantial attention from historians of the period.²

This study is concerned principally with the period between November 1918 and March 1920, when Reinhardt was the officer responsible for the transition to the peacetime army. During this period as head of the Demobilization Department in November and December 1918, as Prussian Minister of War from January 1919 until October 1919, and finally as *Chef der Heeresleitung* from October 1919 until the Kapp Putsch

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1. See for example, Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic. The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, London, 1991, 69; Heinrich August Winkler, *Weimar, 1918–1933. Die Geschichte der ersten deutschen Demokratie*, Munich, 1993.
 2. Gerhard Rakenius, *Wilhelm Groener als erster Generalquartiermeister. Die Politik der Obersten Heeresleitung*, Boppard am Rhein, 1977; Hans Meier-Welcker, *Seeckt*, Frankfurt, 1967; Johannes Hürter, *Wilhelm Groener. Reichswehrminister am Ende der Weimarer Republik*, Munich, 1993; Claus Guske, *Das politische Denken von des Generals von Seeckt. Ein Beitrag zur Diskussion des Verhältnisses Seeckt-Reichswehr-Republik*, Lübeck, Hamburg, 1971; Friedrich-Karl von Plehwe, *Reichskanzler Kurt von Schleicher. Weimars letzte Chance gegen Hitler*, Esslingen, 1983.

in March 1920, Reinhardt established the institutional framework for the new *Reichswehr*. He undermined the soldiers' councils, he established the regulations on service within the *Reichswehr*, he centralised the military ministries of the individual states, and he set up the structures of the *Reichswehrministerium*. He was also a central figure in the two major dramas of the period, the debate over the Versailles treaty and the Kapp Putsch. After resigning as *Chef der Heeresleitung* in March 1920 he became commander of *Wehrkreis V* in Stuttgart. In this capacity he exercised plenipotentiary powers in the state of emergency in 1923 and sent the *Reichswehr* into Thuringia, effectively overthrowing the KPD-SPD coalition. Before his death in 1930 he was involved in important national debates on military policy and he gave courses on military thought to young officers in the late 1920s. He had as varied a career as any of his peers, and he left an important legacy in terms of ideas and institutions.

Even contemporaries who recognised his contribution to the establishment of the *Reichswehr* after 1918 acknowledged that he did not figure in the public's pantheon of famous generals. In February 1934 General Werner von Fritsch, newly appointed *Chef der Heeresleitung*, recalled his predecessors, Generals Kurt von Hammerstein, Wilhelm Heye and Hans von Seeckt, names familiar to the public. He continued: 'One name is missing, that of an exceptional man who was there at the beginning, of whose work the public does not know all that much, but whose imperishable service will always remain, the founder of the post-war German army: General Reinhardt.'³ In 1936, Reinhardt's successor as commander of 5th Division, General Hahn wrote 'that the contributions of General Reinhardt to the creation of the army are not even known, much less even acknowledged.'⁴ Georg Wetzell, the editor of *Das Militärwochenblatt*, agreed that while 'within the army [his achievements] may be known', his name had passed the public by.⁵

Reinhardt, in fact, was regarded by those who knew him as one of the central figures during the revolutionary period. Hermann Metz, who sat on the Preliminary Commission for the Peacetime Army (*Vorkommission für das Friedensheer*) which drew up the regulations on service for the *Reichswehr*, wrote after the Second World War:

It fell to the then Minister of War, General Reinhardt, to lay the basis for the new army. He is the creator of the army, not General von Seeckt, as people now believe. The latter was its designer and trainer. Rabenau's books on Seeckt have too much influence on the historiography of this period. Reinhardt gets too little attention. Reinhardt was not much liked by Seeckt, Groener or Loßberg, but he had great prestige within the officer corps.⁶

3. HStASt M 660/034, Bü 54, newspaper cutting, dated 1 February 1934.

4. HStASt M 660/014 Heft 54, Hahn to Wetzell, 6 February 1936.

5. HStASt M 660/014 Heft 54, Wetzell to Hahn, 12 February 1936.

6. BA-MA RW 1/13, Hermann Metz to the *Bundesarchiv*, 4 September 1955.

His adjutant, Fleck, credited him with finding the 'right path' for military policy in 1919.⁷ Wilhelm Heye, who had been *Chef der Heeresleitung* between 1926 and 1930, claimed in a draft biography written in 1942 that Reinhardt 'laid the groundwork for Seeckt and Hitler', though he later returned to this passage and crossed out 'Hitler'.⁸ Wolfram Wette, in his biography of Gustav Noske, the SPD *Reichswehrminister* during Reinhardt's period as Prussian Minister of War and *Chef der Heeresleitung*, partly concurred with these judgements and called him 'the spiritual father of the temporary *Reichswehr* law', which laid the basis for the establishment of the post-war army.⁹

Heye's amendment is symptomatic of a wider confusion about the nature of Reinhardt's contribution to the history of the Weimar Republic and the German military.¹⁰ In the January 1936 issue of *Wehrfront*, a Nazi-backed military magazine with a circulation of 150,000, one Johannes Häußler argued that Germany had been defeated in 1918 because of a Jewish-Bolshevist plot, which aided their materialistic western allies. Moreover:

the mutineers' government, but above all General Reinhardt (who is not to be confused with the *Freikorps* leader Colonel Reinhard, now leader of the *Kyfhäuser* League), were completely under the influence of the Central Soldiers' Council. With his decrees and regulations he hastened the collapse of the demobilized army; among other things he decreed the destruction of the imperial badges of rank and the political surveillance of the officers of the old army.

In the face of 'persecution and treachery' German nationalist groups had to set up volunteer units to fight further left-wing uprisings. It was these *Freikorps* groups which kept alive the spirit of national liberation from Jewish Bolshevism, while men like Reinhardt sacrificed principles in order to further their careers.¹¹ Häußler's condemnation of Reinhardt repeated many of the arguments that officers who refused to come to terms with the political reality of the Weimar Republic used against him in early 1919. In some respects it was a negative interpretation of Reinhardt as the general who supported the Republic. Within the context of military policy in the 1930s it was also a forlorn attempt to claim the military tradition for the *Freikorps* over the professional officer corps whom Hitler had flattered as 'the second pillar of the state.'

7. Cited in Fritz Ernst, 'Aus dem Nachlaß des Generals Walther Reinhardt', *Die Welt als Geschichte*, 18, 1958, 95.

8. BA-MA N 18/4, 'Lebenserrinerungen des Generaloberst Wilhelm Heye. Teil II, Wie ich den Weltkrieg erlebte, 1914–1942', fos. 221–22; Heye's phrase was 'Vorarbeiter Seeckts und Hitlers'.

9. Wolfram Wette, *Gustav Noske. Eine politische Biographie*, Düsseldorf, 1988, 358.

10. On views of the *Reichswehr* in the Third Reich see Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik: der Erste Weltkrieg. Die amtliche deutsche Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1914–1956*, Paderborn, 2002, 220–27.

11. Johannes Häußler, 'Wie die Freikorps entstanden', *Wehrfront*, 1 January 1936.

Hahn was quick to counter Häußler's view of Reinhardt. Reinhardt, he claimed, was not an opportunist but a realist who dealt effectively with a difficult situation after the war. Reinhardt had the 'capacity for work and skill' necessary for the task of demobilization which was his first post after the war. As Prussian Minister of War he 'carried out the duties and tasks given to him in the [revolutionary] political environment, in order to rescue what was possible in the interests of the army. ... His straightforward manner and his great expert knowledge gained him general respect.' Hahn concluded that Reinhardt had laid the basis for Seeckt's later work, and therefore he stood 'at the beginning of the history of our young army.'¹² However Hahn's piece was not published by either *Wehrfront* or *Das Militärwochenblatt*. Instead the Commander of the Wehrmacht, Werner von Blomberg, who had been a close colleague of Reinhardt in Stuttgart in the first half of the 1920s, promised to write an article countering Häußler's accusations. In 1942, on the seventieth anniversary of Reinhardt's birth, one Colonel Scherff republished one of Reinhardt's essays, 'Führer- und Feldherrntum'. Scherff prefaced the article by claiming that Reinhardt's views on leadership in war were 'confirmed by today's events and the military leadership personality of the Führer, Adolf Hitler.'¹³ Rather than betraying the German military tradition, Scherff argued that Reinhardt had preserved it until it could flourish in the Third Reich.

Some on the left of the political spectrum might have agreed with this assessment of Reinhardt, although views were divided. In an early biography of Schleicher, two socialist writers, Kurt Caro and Walter Oehme, described Reinhardt as a 'thoroughly loyal officer' whose 'heart belonged to the new state'.¹⁴ Reinhardt's arguments in favour of resisting the military units involved in the Kapp Putsch consecrated his reputation as a loyal supporter of the Republic, and has continued to influence historical assessments of his character.¹⁵ But during the 1920s this reputation was undermined. Reinhardt played an important role in forcing the collapse of the Thuringian KPD-SPD coalition government in 1923, he attacked the DDP and SPD for their military policies, and a series of rumours linked him to right-wing paramilitary groups. In early September 1930, just weeks before the election, which saw the Nazis become the second largest party in the *Reichstag*, the German pacifist Carl von Ossietzky lamented the generals' lack of loyalty to the Republic, but he argued that it was not unsurprising since the case of Reinhardt had shown that loyalty

12. HStASt M 660/014 Heft 54, unpublished manuscript by Hahn, entitled 'General der Infanterie Walther Reinhardt. Eine Richtigstellung.'

13. Colonel Scherff, 'General der Infanterie Walther Reinhardt zum Gedächtnis', *Militärwissen-schaftliche Rundschau*, 1942, 90.

14. Kurt Caro, Walter Oehme, *Sleichers Aufstieg. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Gegenrevolution*, Berlin, 1933, 58, 96.

15. Peukert, *Weimar*, 69.

was repaid with dismissal and relative obscurity. He concluded that 'in his anger [Reinhardt] went to the other side; he died as a convinced supporter of the radical right. That is how one demonstrates to the young lieutenant that loyalty does not pay. So one shows those with good will that they have no prospects.'¹⁶

After the war, Theodor Heuss, the first President of the Federal Republic, invoked Reinhardt as part of a positive German military tradition during a speech at the *Führungsakademie* in 1959. He had known Reinhardt in the late 1920s when they had both taught at the *Hochschule für Politik*, and Heuss admired his teaching style and his historical knowledge. However, he still felt that he had to explain Reinhardt's rôle during the German revolution. In his view, Reinhardt became Prussian Minister of War 'not because he was a revolutionary, but because there had to be somebody, who would risk his life and his reputation, who had courage and understanding.'¹⁷ This was similar to Hahn's characterisation of Reinhardt as a selfless and pragmatic officer and patriot. On the other hand it shifted Reinhardt to a new liberal democratic context, instead of placing him in a tradition that led to Hitler's *Wehrmacht*. In short contemporary politics have shaped Reinhardt's historical reputation.

In the two years before Heuss's appearance at the *Führungsakademie* the Heidelberg historian, Fritz Ernst, had rescued Reinhardt from his almost total post-war oblivion. In 1957 he published an article-length biography, and the following year a collection of documents from Reinhardt's *Nachlaß*.¹⁸ It is possible that these publications were intended as precursors to a full-scale biography of Reinhardt, but Ernst died in 1963. Based almost solely on papers in Reinhardt's *Nachlaß*, the two pieces presented a heroic picture of a conservative officer who took up the reins of military policy at a critical moment. Ernst asked pointedly whether any of the officers in the Supreme Command who took Reinhardt to task for a variety of concessions to the new regime could have done any better.¹⁹ Reinhardt was naïve, compared to Groener who displayed a 'mistrust', and therefore could not understand 'what Reinhardt really wanted and what the motives of his actions were.'²⁰ Ernst accepted Reinhardt's view that the post of Prussian Minister of War was a 'crown of thorns'.²¹ In this preliminary work on Reinhardt, Ernst made two important points. First, he argued that Reinhardt was not 'left-leaning', as Groener and other critics in the officer corps asserted, but shared the conservative ethos of

16. Carl von Ossietzky. *Sämtliche Schriften*, eds Barbel Boldt, Ute Maack, Gunther Nickell, 8 vols, Munich, 1994, vol. 5, 438.

17. Theodor Heuss, *Soldatentum in unserer Zeit*, Tübingen, 1959, 27.

18. Ernst, 'Aus dem Nachlaß'; Fritz Ernst, 'Walther Reinhardt (1872–1930)', *Zeitschrift für württembergische Landesgeschichte*, 16, 1957, 331–64.

19. *Ibid.*, 339.

20. *Ibid.*, 345.

21. *Ibid.*, 339.

the officer corps.²² Second, he recognised the central rôle of the Prussian Ministry of War in the establishment of the new army, an argument which other historians have ignored, as they still concentrate on the activities of the Supreme Command and the *Freikorps*. Ernst's argument presents a more balanced picture of the relationship between the Ministry of War and Supreme Command in 1919.²³

When Ernst was writing his pieces on Reinhardt, the historiography of the Weimar Republic and the *Reichswehr* was still in its infancy, and it is worth reviewing the development of this historiography before outlining the argument of this book.²⁴ The earliest historical writings on the *Reichswehr* focused on its loyalty, or lack of it, to the Republic to which it had pledged allegiance. After the Second World War the German army was discredited due to its association with the National Socialist regime. This, combined with the fact that the historiography on the Weimar Republic was primarily concerned with how Hitler came to power in January 1933,²⁵ prompted historians to look at the rôle of the *Reichswehr*. In an influential study in 1955 by the American historian, Gordon Craig, the German army during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was portrayed as one of the most effective 'opponents of constitutional reform, liberalism and democracy.'²⁶ The introduction of parliamentary liberal democracy in 1918, he argued, made little difference to the position of the army in the 'real constitution', and by 1920 it was becoming a 'state within a state.'²⁷ It is significant that one of the earliest German historians of the *Reichswehr*, Wolfgang Sauer, also tended to see 1920, and the replacement of Reinhardt by Seeckt as *Chef der Heeresleitung*, as a significant turning point in Weimar's civil-military relationship. He argued that the officer corps was broadly split into three groups – a monarchical one under General Walther von Lüttwitz, one willing to accept the new state, represented by Wilhelm Groener and Reinhardt, and one under Seeckt, which followed a policy of *attentisme*, of preserving the army intact until a more "positive" political situation came about. The Kapp Putsch brought the Seeckt group to the fore, and since he moulded *Reichswehr* policy, this non-committal attitude towards the republic prevailed.²⁸

22. Ibid., 359–60.

23. Ibid., passim.

24. Eberhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic*, London, 1988, 154–56; Michael Geyer, 'Die Wehrmacht der deutschen Republik ist die Reichswehr. Bemerkungen zur neueren Literatur', *MgM*, 14, 1973, 152–99.

25. Karl Dietrich Erdmann, 'Die Geschichte der Weimarer Republik als Problem der Wissenschaft', *VfZ*, 3, 1955, 5.

26. Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640–1945*, New York, 1964 edn, xiv.

27. Ibid., 342–43; id, *Germany, 1866–1945*, Oxford, 1978, 396.

28. For an overview of Sauer's work, see his essay in Karl Dietrich Bracher's *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik. Eine Studie des Machtverfalls in einer Demokratie*, Düsseldorf, 1984 edn, 205–53.

Since the appearance of Craig's and Sauer's pioneering work in the 1950s the question of the room for manoeuvre (*Handlungsspielraum*) of the period 1918 to 1920 has been scrutinised.²⁹ Many historians have written pessimistically about the chances of establishing a more quintessentially liberal *Reichswehr*. Francis Carsten, in the only overview of the *Reichswehr*'s history to date, argued that 'The officer corps was bound to consider the revolution and its consequences as an attack upon itself and its whole world. It could only react to the revolution and the new order with strong opposition. That the officers, in spite of this, put themselves at the disposal of the new government was an event which had far-reaching consequences.'³⁰ Both Eberhard Kolb and Ulrich Kluge, in their monographs on the workers' and soldiers' councils movement, argued that the SPD-led Council of People's Commissars, which replaced the imperial regime until the election of the National Assembly, failed to rid Germany of the imperial élites. Kluge concluded that already in early 1919:

Germany had a military system, whose leaders had sworn formal loyalty to the new order, but were far from ready to defend the substance of this order. The influence which the army re-established shortly after 9 November 1918 was too great to be accommodated by the republican constitution. The one chance to create a military system in Germany, which corresponded to the demands for inner consolidation and the intentions of wide sectors of the population, had been missed.³¹

On this reading, the German army is seen as one of those elements of continuity which contributed to the instability of the Republic.³² The persistence of military influence in German politics, despite its shattering defeat in 1918, is commonly attributed to the weakness of the SPD, and its lack of political courage in excluding the old imperial ruling classes.³³

29. Reinhard Rürup, 'Friedrich Ebert und das Problem der Handlungsspielräume in der deutschen Revolution 1918/9', in *Friedrich Ebert und seine Zeit. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung*, eds Rudolf König, Hartmut Soell, Hermann Weber, Munich, 1990, 69–87; Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Imperial Germany, 1867–1918. Politics, Culture and Society in an Authoritarian State*, London, 1995, 233–53.

30. F. L. Carsten, *The Reichswehr and Politics, 1918 to 1933*, Oxford, 1966, 398.

31. Ulrich Kluge, *Soldatenräte und Revolution. Studien zur Militärpolitik in Deutschland 1918/9*, Göttingen, 1975, 356; Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik, 1918–1919* Frankfurt, 1978.

32. Wolfgang Elben, *Das Problem der Kontinuität in der deutschen Revolution. Die Politik des Staatssekretäre und der militärischen Führung vom November 1918 bis Februar 1919*, Düsseldorf, 1966, 126–46; Fritz Fischer, *From Kaiserreich to Third Reich. Elements of Continuity in German History, 1871–1945*, London, 1986.

33. The last major contribution to this debate was Wette's, *Noske*, Düsseldorf, 1988; see also the review article, Leo Haupt, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 249, 1989, 448–9, and Rainer Butenschön, Eckart Spoo (eds), *Wozu muss einer der Bluthund sein? Der Mehrheitssozialdemokrat Gustav Noske und der deutsche Militarismus des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Heilbronn, 1997.

Others have argued that the social origins of the officer corps inclined against support for liberal democracy.³⁴

Ranged against this critique of the *Reichswehr* as a destabilizing influence in the polity is a body of work that argues that the *Reichswehr* saved the Weimar Republic in 1919 from left-wing radicals, and held Germany together in 1923. This idea of the *Reichswehr* as a pillar of the German state was not just popular with interwar writers in Germany, but also found favour with the first historian of the *Reichswehr*, and subsequent Vichyite, Jean Benoist-Méchin:

It was [the army] which prevented Germany from collapse and helped overcome a succession of crises. It eliminated little by little all the men whom it judged were damaging to the nation. Invisible but active, in the shadows in periods of détente, but always intervening at the critical moment, the *Reichswehr* never ceased to arbitrate the situation. It was the cover, thrown over the crevasse that linked the Second to the Third Reich.

Benoist-Méchin identified three factors which allowed the *Reichswehr* to exercise influence in German politics and society. First, the *Reichswehr* was a relatively homogenous group in a deeply divided society. Second, generals spent long periods in office, compared to the swift change of governments. Finally the *Reichswehr* was certain of its political goals when other groups were uncertain of theirs.³⁵ One of the interesting characteristics of Benoist-Méchin's thesis is that he praised the *Reichswehr's* record for the very reasons for which post-Second World War historians lamented its rôle in the Weimar republic, such as its political influence and as an element of continuity between the Kaiser and Hitler.

However the positive contribution of the *Reichswehr* to the Weimar republic has been noted by a number of historians, who either avoid seeing 1933 as a logical culmination of the republic's history, or else argue that the officer corps, and, in particular, Schleicher, offered the last hurdle to Hitler's *Machtergreifung*. Heinz Hürten argues that '[I]f a teleological view of German history with 1933 as its endpoint is avoided, then the policy of co-operation between the Council of the People's Commissars, its successor governments and the military, cannot be simply regarded as an early step towards ruin, but must be interpreted as successful.'³⁶ In defence of the *Reichswehr* he suggests that political realities are not based upon laws, as socialist and liberal critics of militarism might suggest, but upon force. The *Reichswehr* was the guarantor of the

34. Detlef Bald, *Der deutsche Offizier. Sozial- und Bildungsgeschichte des deutschen Offizierkorps im 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 1982, 14–15, 22–23.

35. Jean Benoist-Méchin, *Histoire de l'armée allemande depuis l'armistice*, 2 vols, Paris, 1936, vol. 1, 11–18.

36. Heinz Hürten, *Der Kapp Putsch als Wende. Über Rahmenbedingungen der Weimarer Republik seit dem Frühjahr 1920*, Düsseldorf, 1989, 19.

legal order in the Weimar Republic.³⁷ The establishment of the new state required co-operation between the military and civilian institutions. Co-operation was sustained by a basic consensus on the need for the reestablishment of order, German unity and defence against Bolshevism.³⁸ Harold Gordon, a former officer in the American army, also defended the record of the *Reichswehr*. He inverted the question of responsibility, and argued that the government was in fact a hindrance to the 'law and order' policies of the army.³⁹ Government vacillation, the treaty of Versailles, and the impending dissolution of *Freikorps* units damaged the morale of the *Reichswehr*. The Kapp Putsch is presented as a revolt of the 'disinherited', and he suggestively writes that the disenchanted *Freikorps* soldiers were 'raw material to be moulded by bold and daring revolutionaries.'⁴⁰

Both Hürten's and Gordon's work stress the rôle of the *Reichswehr* as the *ultima ratio* of the state, and that this rôle was underpinned by its monopoly of 'legitimate force'. Recently, this line of argument has been applied to the rôle of the *Reichswehr* leadership in the crisis of the early 1930s. As the major power factor in Germany, the *Reichswehr* had the potential to decide the outcome of events. Eberhard Kolb and Wolfram Pyta concluded that 'a presidential dictatorship supported by the *Reichswehr*' offered the best chance for the Weimar Republic to overcome the crisis, and to return later to a parliamentary system of government.⁴¹ Whereas viewing the history of the *Reichswehr* through the lens of the National Socialist regime led to the castigation of the political activities of the officer corps by Carsten, Wette and others, Pyta presents Schleicher and his allies in the *Reichswehrministerium* as the last barrier to Hitler's *Machtergreifung*.⁴²

Beyond the question of whether the officer corps supported or destabilized the Weimar republic, lies the matrix of rearmament, foreign policy, domestic political stability and the nature of modern industrial warfare. It is from this perspective that the most fruitful insights into civil-military relations have emerged. For example, Pyta argues that Schleicher measured

37. Heinz Hürten, *Reichswehr und Ausnahmezustand. Ein Beitrag zur Verfassungsproblematik der Weimarer Republik in ihrem ersten Jahrzehnt*, Düsseldorf, 1977; id, *Rahmenbedingungen*, 5–7.

38. Ibid., 11–12; see also Winkler, *Weimar*, 33–67, although he argues that more could and should have been done to establish a democratic social and political order; Rakenius, *Groener*, 125–27.

39. Harold Gordon, *The Reichswehr and the German Republic, 1919–1926*, Princeton, 1957, 73–74, 81–89.

40. Ibid., 90, 94.

41. Eberhard Kolb, Wolfram Pyta, 'Die Notstandsplanung unter den Regierungen Papen und Schleicher', in *Die deutsche Staatskrise 1930–1933. Handlungsspielräume und Alternativen*, ed. Heinrich August Winkler, Munich, 1992, 155–81.

42. Wolfram Pyta, 'Vorbereitungen für den militärischen Ausnahmezustand unter Papen/Schleicher', *MgM*, 51, 2, 1992, 385–428; id, 'Konstitutionelle Demokratie statt monarchische Restauration. Die verfassungspolitische Konzeption Schleichers in der Weimarer Staatskrise', *VfZ*, 47, 3, 1999, 417–41.

'the capability of a political system by whether it was in a position to guarantee the central matter of concern to the military: namely rearming Germany and pursuing power politics, backed by military force.'⁴³ Historians have exploited new ideas about civil-military relations to investigate the reactions of the German officer corps to modern industrial warfare.⁴⁴ Michael Geyer, who has made the most significant contributions to research in this area, criticised the inadequacy of sources used in previous studies, and pointed out that the liberal or even the eighteenth-century absolutist conception of civil-military relations was misleading in examinations of interwar military history.⁴⁵ He argued 'that the decisive element of industrialised warfare is the socialisation (*Vergesellschaftung*) of the military and the means of waging war. The conduct of war can no longer be limited to the military instrument, as is the traditional view of absolutist and liberal thought but becomes part of national defence, which encompasses the whole of society.'⁴⁶ The strict division of the civil and military sphere collapsed with the onset of modern industrial warfare. Geyer drew on theorists such as Morris Janowitz and Samuel Huntington, while Ernst Willi Hansen, who wrote about the relations between the *Reichswehr* and industry, used various models of the 'military-industrial complex'.⁴⁷

At the root of the debate on the *Reichswehr*'s reaction to future war lie three questions: what would characterise the war of the future, how did the officer corps prepare for it, and how did the spectre of it impact upon the civil-military relationship in the Weimar years?⁴⁸ Of course, at the centre of this debate stood the experience of the First World War, which did much to shape the expectations of the next war.⁴⁹ Recent research has suggested that

43. Ibid, 419–20.

44. Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914–1918*, Providence, Oxford, 1992 edn.; it was first published in 1966; Michael Salewski, 'Reichswehr, Staat und Republik', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 5, 1980, 271–88. The notion of total war is contentious; see the various contributions, *Great War, Total War. Mobilisation and Combat on the Western Front, 1914–1918*, eds Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, Cambridge, 2000; *An der Schwelle zum totalen Krieg. Die militärische Debatte über den Krieg der Zukunft 1919–1939*, ed. Stig Förster, Paderborn, 2002.

45. Michael Geyer, 'Der zur Organisation erhobene Burgfrieden', in *Militär und Militarismus in der Weimarer Republik*, eds Klaus-Jürgen Müller, Eckardt Opitz, Düsseldorf, 1978, 15–27.

46. Michael Geyer, *Aufrüstung oder Sicherheit. Die Reichswehr in die Krise der Machtpolitik, 1924–1936*, Wiesbaden, 1980, 3–6.

47. Michael Geyer, 'The past as future: the German officer corps as profession', in *German professions, 1800–1950*, eds Geoffrey Cocks, Konrad Jarausch, Oxford, New York, 1990; Ernst Willi Hansen, 'Zum "Militärischen-Industriellen Komplex" in der Weimarer Republik', in *Militär und Militarismus*, eds Müller, Opitz, 101–40.

48. For recent debates on visions of future war in the interwar period, see the contributions in Förster, ed., *An der Schwelle*, and *The Shadows of Total War. Europe, East Asia and the United States, 1919–1939*, eds, Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, Cambridge, 2003.

49. Chickering, Förster, eds, *Great War, Total War*; John Horne, ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, Cambridge, 1997, 1–17.

the First World War was not a total war, and that the concept of total war would be better thought of in terms of a Weberian ideal type which enables analysis of broad issues in the history of warfare in the first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁰ For contemporaries, the military debate started and ended with total war. Chickering and Förster comment: “‘Total war’ became a popular topos during the period between the two world wars of the twentieth century. It was coined during the first of them, and it subsequently played an important role in deliberations everywhere about the future of war.”⁵¹ This does not necessarily mean that soldiers wanted total war. As Markus Pöhlmann, who has examined the German military journals of the interwar period, writes: “‘To avoid or to prepare [for total war]?’ – the central meta-discourse of the German military élite in the interwar period can be framed in this formula.”⁵² There was no escape from the next war, which German soldiers assumed was inevitable.⁵³ The major divisions within the German officer corps concerned the nature of the war.

For many historians it has made more sense to classify the Weimar officer corps on the basis of their theories of war, rather than on their attitude to the Republic.⁵⁴ Thus Wilhelm Deist argues that the group around Colonel Joachim von Stülpnagel, who advocated a theory of Volkskrieg, or the participation of the whole populace in some war-related activity, ‘was not held together by a single political conviction or strategy, but by the common goal of maintaining and increasing the military efficiency of the Reichswehr.’⁵⁵ Stülpnagel’s ideas had superseded those of Seeckt, who had stressed the viability of a small army, in the wake of the Reichswehr’s inability to resist the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923.⁵⁶ Yet the Volkskrieg theory was replaced by a complex new security policy, drafted by Wilhelm Groener after he became Reichswehrminister in 1928. The dispute between the political officers headed by Schleicher and Groener, and the militarist officers, led by General Werner von Blomberg, previously Reinhardt’s chief of staff in Wehrkreis V, has been well-documented.⁵⁷ Groener set clear guidelines for the use of the Reichswehr that recognised the weaknesses of the 100,000 men army. He accepted the primacy of political control over the military forces of the state. Johannes Hürter, author of a monograph on Groener as Reichswehrminister, concluded that ‘Groener’s sense of reality and his conceptual

50. Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, ‘Introduction’, in *Shadows*, 7.

51. *Ibid.*, 3.

52. Markus Pöhlmann, ‘Von Versailles nach Armageddon. Totalisierungserfahrung und Kriegserwartung in deutschen Militärzeitschriften’, in Förster, ed., *An der Schwelle*, 351.

53. *Ibid.*, 323–4.

54. Ernst-Willi Hansen, ‘The Military and the Military Political Breakdown in Germany, 1918 and France, 1940’, in *The Military in Politics and Society in France and Germany in the Twentieth Century*, ed Klaus-Jürgen Müller, Oxford, 1995, 92.

55. Wilhelm Deist, *The Wehrmacht and German rearmament*, London, 1986 edn, 5.

56. Wilhelm Deist, ‘Die Reichswehr und der Krieg der Zukunft’, *MgM*, 49, 1, 1989, 85–6.

57. Deist, *Wehrmacht and German Rearmament*, 4–20; Hürter, *Groener*, 73–98.

ability appeared tailor-made to place the work in Bendlerstraße [Reichswehrministerium] on a planning basis that was at once pragmatic and orientated towards the future.⁵⁸ However Groener's cautious policy was swept aside by the political and economic crisis of the early 1930s, which brought Hitler to power. Hitler appointed Blomberg as Reichswehrminister, and he reversed Groener's gradualist approach. Pragmatism was cast aside, and a dynamic but ultimately flawed rearmament plan was pursued in order to prepare Germany for the next war.⁵⁹ In general, historians have identified four different responses to the challenge of future war in the Weimar era: Seeckt's small but highly trained and mobile force⁶⁰, Stülpnagel's Volkskrieg theory, Groener's realistic concept of German security, and Blomberg's dynamic rearmament programme.

Historians have also identified these different approaches to the question of war with different attitudes towards the republic. Corum argues that 'von Seeckt's decision to retain a disproportionately high percentage of General Staff affairs was right for the army and nation. It was less democratic than Reinhardt's vision, but von Seeckt was correct in recognising the organisational and technical abilities of the General Staff as having first priority.'⁶¹ Groener accepted the primacy of political control, not out of a liberal conviction about civil-military relations, but because it served his purpose. Under Groener the *Reichswehr* began the process of 'moving into the executive', of acknowledging the political framework within which military policy had to be formulated and seeking to utilise that framework for its own ends.⁶² Like Groener, both Stülpnagel and Blomberg sought to bring the *Reichswehr* closer to the state and society. Yet their more radical views on modern warfare had different consequences. Geyer argues that in the 1920s the *Reichswehr* 'set out to organise society for the purpose of war according to its efficiency-oriented maxims in a national scheme for converting civil into military society in case of war. This made the *Reichswehr* into an exceedingly dangerous organisation.' The military mission of the *Reichswehr*, which ultimately aimed at the revision of the treaty of Versailles, led it to destabilize both internal and external politics.⁶³

It is within the context of the primacy of foreign policy and the changing relationship between war, the state, and society that Reinhardt must

58. Ibid, 91; on the debate within the *Reichswehr* see also, Geyer, *Aufrüstung oder Sicherheit*, 201–17.

59. Deist, *Wehrmacht and German Rearmament*, 21–3.

60. James Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg. Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform*, Kansas, 1992; Williamson Murray, 'Armored Warfare: the British, French and German Experiences', in *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, eds Williamson Murray, Alan Millet, Cambridge, 1996.

61. Corum, *Roots of Blitzkrieg*, 34; Murray, 'Armored Warfare', 36.

62. Hürter, *Groener*, 37–8; Geyer, *Aufrüstung oder Sicherheit*, 234.

63. Geyer, 'The Past as Future', 197–9.

be seen.⁶⁴ He was not a conservative, as Ernst argued, but a radical militarist who was close to Stülpnagel in terms of his view of future war. Like all officers he saw Germany's main goal after the war as the restoration of Germany as a Great Power. This was only possible with the use or threat of military force. He shared the pessimistic belief that international relations could not be regulated by laws, customs or institutions like the League of Nations. Ultimately each state had to protect itself with military force from the predatory designs of its neighbours.⁶⁵ The rapid establishment of a reliable military force in early 1919 was essential to the continued existence of Germany. It was not just the Weimar Republic that faced internal unrest, it was also Germany that faced the threat of Polish and Bolshevik invasion and Allied occupation. Only military force, in his view, could prevent the worst consequences of defeat.

If this was a common, and indeed necessary belief, for a professional officer, Reinhardt's view of the future of warfare made him one of the most radical militarists of the interwar period. Reinhardt, drawing on the experience of the First World War, believed that societies, and not simply armies, waged war.⁶⁶ The militarization of society had to be total, down to the use of women at the fighting front, and old men on the home front. His views were presented in a rational and logical manner, but there is no doubt about the radical nature of what he proposed. The institutions of the state were assessed on their ability to function in war, and society was to be militarized in peacetime. Even in 1919 the rationalisation of the *Kaiserreich's* military institutions was implemented with one eye firmly on the conduct of a future war. The military and national interests were conflated. This marked him out from Seeckt, who advocated a professional army, instead of the *Millionenheeren* of the pre-war period, and Groener, who subordinated the military agenda to the broader interests of national security.

Reinhardt's advocacy of the militarization of German society led him to a peculiarly inclusive vision of the *Volksgemeinschaft* or national community.⁶⁷ The creation of a *Volksgemeinschaft* was a central issue in Weimar politics, and there were a variety of competing visions, based on different principles. Reinhardt's aim was to maximize German military

64. Brendan Simms, 'The Return of the Primacy of Foreign Policy'; William Mulligan, 'The *Reichswehr*, the Republic and the Primacy of Foreign Policy, 1918-23' both in *German History*, 21, 3, 2003: special issue: The Primacy of Foreign Policy in German History, eds William Mulligan, Brendan Simms, 275-91, 347-68.

65. See Seeckt's dismissal of hopes for 'eternal peace' in Guske, *Das politische Denken*, 173.

66. Dennis E. Showalter, 'Plans, Weapons, Doctrines. The Strategic Culture of Interwar Europe', in Chickering, Förster, eds, *Shadows*, 66.

67. Gunther Mai, "'Verteidigungskrieg' und Volksgemeinschaft". *Stattliche Selbstbehauptung, nationale Sicherheit und soziale Befreiung in Deutschland in der Zeit des Ersten Weltkrieges*, in *Der erste Weltkrieg. Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse*, ed. Wolfgang Michalka, Munich, 1994.

strength, and therefore anyone within Germany who could contribute to it, Catholic, Jewish or Protestant, working-class or nobility, man or woman, was a potential member. On the other hand, pacifists and internationalists (including communists) were excluded from this community, the latter because they rejected the principle of the nation-state. If the army was the representative of military values within society then it could not afford to alienate or exclude any social groups from its ranks. It was this principle which led Reinhardt to promote the recruitment of working-class soldiers, and most notably to oppose the Kapp Putsch because it would damage the *Reichswehr's* image with republicans. This inclusive vision marked a departure from the conservative military thought of the *Kaiserreich* era when working-class recruits were distrusted as SPD supporters.⁶⁸

If the primacy of foreign policy informed Reinhardt's principles, then the implementation of those ideas was dependent on the political constellations of the day – within the officer corps, within the government, and within Weimar Germany's society. Between November 1918 and March 1920 there was a bitter dispute between the Ministry of War and the Supreme Command (and the General Staff, after the latter's dissolution). This was in many respects the inevitable consequence of having two major bureaucracies dealing with military policy. During the *Kaiserreich* era the relationship between the Ministry and the General Staff had been fraught as they clashed over military budgets and recruitment policy.⁶⁹ After the war it became clear that there would be a restructuring of military institutions, and the struggle began to dominate the *Reichswehrministerium*. Proposals and counter-proposals were heavily influenced by bureaucratic self-interest. The sense of conflict was sharpened by the personal rivalry between Reinhardt, the Minister for War, and Groener, the leading officer of the Supreme Command. While Groener has rightly been seen as a politically astute character, Reinhardt was not naïve, and in the personal and bureaucratic rivalry it appeared as though he had triumphed against Groener and then Seeckt until the Kapp Putsch led to Reinhardt's fall and Seeckt's succession.

Reinhardt's power in 1919 was mainly due to his strong relationship with Ebert and Noske. Within the officer corps Reinhardt was a weak figure, who only enjoyed the support of his closest advisers. He was unable to exert his authority over more recalcitrant and even rebellious elements. Therefore his relationship with the cabinet was fundamental to his achievements in 1919. They trusted his professional expertise, and with their political support he was able to outmanoeuvre his rivals within the officer corps, as well as reform the military administration and

68. Stig Förster, *Der doppelte Militarismus. Die deutsche Heeresrüstungspolitik zwischen Status-Quo-Sicherung und Aggression, 1890–1913*, Stuttgart, 1985, 94–7.

69. See generally Förster, *Doppelte Militarismus*.

command structures. Whereas Seeckt's tenure as *Chef der Heeresleitung* ended due to his deteriorating relationship with Otto Gessler, the *Reichswehrminister*, it is notable that Reinhardt resigned because of a Putsch from within the officer corps. This was a massive blow to the principle of civilian control of the military, although whether Reinhardt would have co-operated with the Republic in the longer term was dependent on whether it would enable the restoration of German military power.

There were other political factors which Reinhardt had to take into account. Military policy was not formulated in isolation from the rest of German politics, and Reinhardt had to compete for scarce resources. The composition of the National Assembly enabled Reinhardt to push through his programme of centralising the states' war ministries. However Reinhardt was less successful at promoting the military agenda in the discussions about the treaty of Versailles. Military defeat meant that German foreign policy was reliant upon business and financial weight, rather than military power.⁷⁰ The government was less willing to 'go to the wall' for concessions on military aspects of the treaty than it was to retain threatened territories. The Reich Finance Ministry was unhappy at the amount of money it spent on the army, and tried to force Reinhardt to speed up the pace of demobilization. The constellation of political power within which Reinhardt operated in 1919 offered opportunities and risks. The revolution meant that the structures of the state would be changed, but in early 1919 it was not clear what changes these forms would take. What Reinhardt had to do, was to make sure these changes favoured the military as much as was possible. To that extent he was a supreme pragmatist.

While his actions in 1919 showed the possibilities for co-operation between the Republic and the officer corps, there were clear limits. The primacy of foreign policy prescribed two aims in Weimar Germany. First, the Reich had to be preserved. The survival of Germany as a potential actor in the continental struggle for supremacy was the first test for the Republic. The officer corps had to co-operate with the Republic to ensure this. Open conflict between the Republic and the army would have led to civil war and the collapse of Germany. By the end of 1923 the test of survival had been passed. But Reinhardt's ultimate goal was the restoration of German military power and the reversal of the outcome of the First World War. Could such an expansionary policy be achieved within the context of the Republic?⁷¹ This remains an open counterfactual question, precluded by the dynamic assertion of German power by the Nazis.

It can be considered at the levels of foreign and domestic policy. By the time of Reinhardt's death, in September 1930, Stresemann's co-operative

70. Peter Krüger, *Deutschland und die Reparationen 1918/9. Die Genesis des Reparationsproblems in Deutschland zwischen Waffenstillstand und Friedensschluß*, Stuttgart, 1973.

71. Henry Ashby Turner, 'Continuity in German foreign policy? The case of Stresemann', *International History Review*, 1, 4, 1979, 519–20.

western orientated policy had been replaced by the more unilateralist approach of the Brüning government, which successfully revised the reparations issues and opened the disarmament conference, which had to lead to either change in the military status quo, or else unilateral German rearmament. Against that Germany stood isolated, having failed embarrassingly to forge a Customs Union with Austria and alienated French good will through its unilateralist approach. Nonetheless Stresemann's multilateral approach was unlikely to allay French nervousness about German rearmament, so from the perspective of military policy, the approach of the early 1930s, combined with the secret programme of rearmament, showed the opportunities for an assertive Germany. The quiet support for rearmament by the SPD cabinet members was a startling contrast to the official military policy of the party, which focused on disarmament, arbitration and institutional guarantees of the international order. The domestic political balance of power, despite the pessimism of officers in the early 1930s, had clearly shifted to the right and support for military values. Yet there was no way in which the governments of the early 1930s had sufficient power to implement the militarization of society on the scale desired by Reinhardt. When he died in 1930, Reinhardt was definitely less enamoured with the Republic than he had been in 1919, but he still did not oppose it.

A biography of Reinhardt is an account of civil-military relations in the Weimar Republic, and thus it goes to the heart of one of the most important issues of Weimar historiography. Reinhardt, even more so than Groener in 1919, realised the opportunities provided by the Republic. Yet not only was he a pragmatist, but he was also a radical militarist, with an almost utopian vision of a militarised national community. Like all military planners, he was future-orientated. This was not simply a matter of rational professionalism, but also of messianic hope in Germany's future as a Great Power. His relationship with the Republic depended on the potential for the fulfilment of this mission. Reinhardt, both a pragmatist and a radical militarist, stood simultaneously at opposite ends of the spectrum of the officer corps. For example, Stülpnagel was a radical militarist, opposed to the Republic from a very early stage; Groener accepted the subordinate place of military power in national strategy and generally supported the Republic. Reinhardt embodied the tension of these positions, and tried to resolve it by pushing for a militarized state and society *within* the framework of the Republic, if possible, but *outside* it, if necessary.

This study is based on a wide range of primary source material, some of which has already been published. If Ernst's collection was the most obvious source for this study, then the collections in the series *Quellen zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus* and *Akten der Reichskanzlei* have also been invaluable. There are also a number of published diaries, most notably those of Colonel Albrecht von Thaer, an officer in the OHL

(German Supreme Command during and just after the First World War), Gustav Böhm and Ernst van den Bergh, both officers in the Prussian Ministry of War.⁷² There are a number of documents which have been published in leading journals, such as Heinz Hürten's collection, which deals with the initial reaction of Württemberg to the centralisation of German military ministries.⁷³ Apologetic memoirs of varying quality also exist.⁷⁴

The chief source for this study is Reinhardt's *Nachlaß*, which is held in the *Hauptstaatsarchiv*, Stuttgart, and in microfilm form at the *Militärarchiv* in Freiburg.⁷⁵ It contains letters to leading officers and politicians of the day, memoranda on military policy, the texts of lectures and articles by Reinhardt, and press cuttings. The *Nachlaß* was held by Reinhardt's daughter, Lotte, a teacher in Stuttgart, after her father's death in August 1930. On 7 September 1939 she gave some papers to the *Heeresarchiv* in Stuttgart.⁷⁶ A year later an archivist wrote to her: 'Noticeably little is available on service and personal presentations, which would have been made during the war.'⁷⁷ Lotte Reinhardt gave the archive some more material, mainly press cuttings and photos.⁷⁸ It is probable that she retained some of her father's papers, because Ernst, who had contacted her, was able to publish extracts from letters between Reinhardt and his wife, Luise, which dealt with Reinhardt's views of the end of the First World War. However these letters are not in the *Nachlaß*, and so an important source of information for Reinhardt's personal views has been lost. Ernst also believed that the letters for the whole of 1919 were lost. This is unfortunate because one must assume that the correspondence between them was copious. Reinhardt had spent four years at war, and then on his return spent much of his time in either Berlin or Weimar, while the family home was in Stuttgart.⁷⁹

72. General Major a. D. Albrecht von Thaer. *Generalstabdienst an der Front und in der OHL. Aus Briefen und Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1915–1919*, ed. Siegfried Kaehler, Göttingen, 1958; *Adjutant im Preussischen Kriegsministerium, Juni 1918 bis Oktober 1919. Aufzeichnungen des Hauptmanns Gustav Böhm*, eds Heinz Hürten, Georg Meyer, Stuttgart, 1977; *Aus den Geburtsstunden der Weimarer Republik. Das Tagebuch des Obersten Ernst van den Bergh*, ed. Wolfram Wette, Düsseldorf, 1991.

73. Heinz Hürten, 'Heeresverfassung und Länderrecht. Württemberg in den Auseinandersetzungen der Weimarer Nationalversammlung um die Bildung einer einheitlichen Reichswehr', *MgM*, 23, 1978, 147–82.

74. See for example, Rüdiger von der Goltz, *Meine Sendung in Finnland und im Baltikum*, Leipzig, 1920; Gustav Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp. Zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, Berlin, 1920.

75. The *Signatures* (references) are HStAst, M 660/034, and BA-MA, N 86.

76. HStAst, M 660/034, Bü 55, Lotte Reinhardt to the Heeresarchiv, 7 September 1939.

77. HStAst, M 660/034, Bü 55, Heeresarchivrat to Lotte Reinhardt, 2 August 1940.

78. HStAst, M 660/034, Bü 55, Lotte Reinhardt to the Heeresarchiv, 11 September 1940.

79. Ernst, 'Aus dem Nachlaß', 39–40; efforts to locate papers in private hands have been unsuccessful, but I would like to thank the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* for their help in this search.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Reinhardt did not leave any memoirs, either published or unpublished. On several occasions he was asked to write a major work. When Reinhardt was promoted to commander of *Reichswehrgruppe II* in December 1924, Dr Otto Berger of Bergers Literarisches Büro, took the opportunity, not only to send him a letter of congratulations, but also to inquire whether he was interested in publishing his memoirs, with particular reference to the period 1918 to 1920.⁸⁰ Three years later Berger renewed the offer, and reminded Reinhardt that the firm was also publishing the memoirs of such eminent people as Wilhelm Blos, the former state president of Württemberg.⁸¹ Verlag Deutsche Wille also expressed an interest in publishing Reinhardt's account of his time as Prussian *Kriegsminister* as part of a collection.⁸² However the persistent attempts of publishers to get Reinhardt to put pen to paper failed. Nonetheless, after his death, his elder brother Ernst was concerned to rescue his sibling from obscurity. He edited a series of lectures which Reinhardt had given in 1928 and 1929, and published them with Ernst Mittler und Sohn.⁸³ Ernst Reinhardt had also contacted many of his brother's former colleagues, and used their most eloquent tributes in the biographical sketch at the beginning of the book.⁸⁴

Together the *Nachlaß* and Ernst Reinhardt's edition of his brother's lectures constitute the core sources for any study of Walther Reinhardt. However the *Findbuch* (catalogue) also contains a word of warning from Major General Sieglin for the biographer: 'The papers cannot give a complete picture of this soldier, who in the first place was a man of action and decision, and made much more of an impact with the spoken than with the written word.'⁸⁵ The normal difficulties of evaluating sources is compounded for the student of German military history due to the bombing of the army ministry building in April 1945. While some material which was believed to have been destroyed in the bombing has been discovered in archives in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, much material has been lost permanently.⁸⁶

To supplement the material in Reinhardt's *Nachlaß* this study has drawn on material from a wide variety of archives. The starting point for

80. HStASt, M 660/034, Bü 30, Otto Berger to Reinhardt, 16 December 1924.

81. HStASt, M 660/034, Bü 30, Otto Berger to Reinhardt, 29 September 1927.

82. HStASt, M 660/034, Bü 37, K. Franke to Reinhardt, 19 August 1927.

83. *Walther Reinhardt. Wehrkraft und Wehrwille. Aus seinem Nachlaß mit einer Lebensbeschreibung*, ed. Ernst Reinhardt, Berlin, 1932.

84. BA-MA, N 247/185, Ernst Reinhardt to Hans von Seeckt, Ulm, 16 September 1930; *Wehrkraft und Wehrwille*, 20–1.

85. *Findbuch* to BA-MA, *Nachlaß* Reinhardt, N 86.

86. Uwe Löbel, 'Neue Forschungsmöglichkeit zur preußisch-deutschen Heeresgeschichte. Zur Rückgabe von Akten des Potsdamer Heeresarchiv durch die Sowjetunion', *MgM*, 51, 1, 1992, 143–49; Helmut Otto, 'Der Bestand Kriegsgeschichtliche Forschungsanstalt des Heeres im Bundesarchiv-, Militärisches Zwischenarchiv Potsdam', *MgM*, 51, 2, 1992, 429–41.