

approach failed, however, when the Wehrmacht invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Only then did the British and the Soviets become allies against the Third Reich.

### The Calculus of Power

The distribution of power among the European great powers and geography can account in large part for the buck-passing behavior of Hitler's adversaries during the 1930s. Germany controlled more latent power than did any other European state from 1930 until 1944 (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4). In 1930, Weimar Germany accounted for 33 percent of European wealth, while the United Kingdom, its nearest competitor, controlled 27 percent. France and the Soviet Union possessed 22 and 14 percent, respectively. By 1940, Germany's share of industrial might had grown to 36 percent, but its nearest competitor was now the Soviet Union with 28 percent; the United Kingdom, with 24 percent, had fallen to third place.

For purposes of comparison, Germany had controlled 40 percent of European wealth in 1913, prior to World War I, while the United Kingdom was in second place, with 28 percent. France and Russia accounted for 12 and 11 percent, respectively. Based on latent power alone, it is apparent that Germany was almost as well-positioned to be a potential hegemon in the 1930s as it was earlier in the century. It is also clear that the Soviet Union markedly increased its share of European industrial might during the 1930s, which meant that it had the wherewithal to build a much more formidable army by the end of that decade than it had in either 1914 or 1930.<sup>121</sup>

Despite all of its latent power, Germany was not a potential hegemon until 1939, because it did not have the most powerful army in Europe before then. Hitler inherited a puny army, and it took time to transform it into a well-organized and well-equipped fighting force with the capability to take the offensive against another great power. The critically important August 1936 Rearmament Program, after all, was not expected to be completed until October 1940. Its goals were realized for the most

part a year earlier (in the summer of 1939), because rearmament was pushed at a dizzying pace and because of the resources Germany garnered from the acquisition of Austria and Czechoslovakia.<sup>122</sup> But rearming at such a rapid pace caused numerous organizational problems, which left the Wehrmacht in no shape to fight a great-power war before 1939.<sup>123</sup> This general state of unreadiness was the main reason that army leaders were at odds with Hitler during the Munich crisis in 1938. They feared that he would drag Germany into a great-power war that it was ill-prepared to fight.<sup>124</sup>

TABLE 8.6

#### Manpower in European Armies, 1933-38

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
United Kingdom	195,256	195,845	196,137	192,325	190,830	212,300
France	558,067	550,678	642,875	642,785	692,860	698,101
Germany	102,500	240,000	480,000	520,000	550,000	720,000
Italy	285,088	281,855	1,300,000	343,000	370,000	373,000
Soviet Union	534,657	940,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,433,000	1,513,000

SOURCES: The numbers for the United Kingdom are from the *League of Nations Armaments Year-Book* (Geneva: League of Nations, June 1940), pp. 58-59. On France, see the annual volumes of the *League of Nations Armaments Year-Book* (dates correspond to volume publication dates): July 1934, p. 259; June 1935, p. 366; August 1936, p. 368; and *The Statesman's Year-Book* (London: Macmillan, various years): 1937, p. 898; 1938, p. 908; 1939, p. 904. The German numbers are from Barton Whaley, *Covert German Rearmament, 1919-1939: Deception and Misperception* (Frederick, MD: University Press of America, 1984), p. 69; Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army* (London: Hogarth, 1939), p. 244; Wilhelm Deist, *The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 44; and *The Statesman's Year-Book*, 1938, p. 968. For Italy, see *The Statesman's Year-Book*, 1934, p. 1043; 1935, pp. 1051-52; 1936, p. 1062; 1938, pp. 1066-67; 1939, p. 1066; and Singer and Small, *National Material Capabilities Data*. The Soviet numbers are from the *League of Nations Armaments Year-Book*, 1934, p. 720; June 1940, p. 348; Singer and Small, *National Material Capabilities Data*; and David M. Glantz, *The Military Strategy of the Soviet Union: A History* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p. 92.