TOWARDS THE HOLOCAUST

The Social and Economic Collapse of the Weimar Republic

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To the Victims of Fascism and the Holocaust

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1

Prologue: Weimar Society in Retrospect

GUNTER W. REMMLING

The social system of Weimar Germany has always been controversial. From the start Weimar society was characterized by a peculiar fluidity: between 1918 and 1933, the German Reich, commonly referred to as the Weimar Republic, was a virtual laboratory of sociocultural experimentation. In the streets of German towns and cities, political armies competed for followers--a process punctuated by assassinations and advertised by street battles embroiling monarchists, imperial militarists, nihilistic war veterans, Communists, Socialists, anarchists, and National Socialists. Parliamentary activity involved about twenty-five political parties whose shifting alliances produced twenty governmental cabinets with an average lifespan of less than nine months. The political circus performed in an economic crazy house: the hungry postwar years skidded into an inflationary period during which the German mark--valued before the war at 4.2 per dollar--plummeted to the value of 4.2 billion to the dollar. At this point, in November 1923, individuals paid a billion marks to send a letter abroad and the German Republic verged on complete financial bankruptcy and political disintegration.

An era of political and economic reconstruction began in 1924; by 1929 Germany had become the leading industrial power on the European continent. The Great Depression, announced by the crash of the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929, brought the Weimar Republic to the brink of disaster: by the end of 1932, nearly half of the German labor force was unemployed. Many jobless men provoked arrest, seeking shelter and food in prison, others swelled the ranks of the Red Front and, ominously, those of Hitler's Storm Troops. In his propaganda the budding dictator exploited the additional economic problem of reparations payments to the Western Allies which the Young Committee had finally set in such a way that the actual payments, including interest, were to total approximately 29 billion dollars from 1923 to 1988.

The Weimar Republic was also a whirling carousel of personal experimentation with differing life-styles. Guitar-playing, poetry-reading, free-loving youngsters roamed the country giving expression to the antibourgeois sentiments of the youth movement; nudist colonies flourished; in Berlin nightclubs phallic symbols became part of interior decoration, naked girls swang from the ceiling, and the staged performance of the sexual act was incorporated in the routine of show business; prostitutes and transvestites took their place in the street scene along with proselytizers for exotic cults.

The controversial character of Weimar Germany found its most intense expression in political conflict. Rightists and Nazis attacked the Weimar Republic as the product of sinister machinations; as a no-man's-land conjured up by the traitorous hands of a cowardly and servile gang: "the November criminals."

Leftists and Communists worked against the new German Reich, which they denounced as an unholy alliance against the workers--the founders of the Republic, they claimed, had betrayed the proletarian revolution.

Many sober and respected citizens experienced Weimar Germany as a necessary evil and turned Vernunftrepublikaner--rational republicans.

The Social Democrats and many liberals worked hard to launch and navigate the new ship of state. Some progressive intellectuals and artists hailed the Weimar Republic as a new golden age, and their enthusiasm was not unfounded. In Weimar Germany, intellectual and artistic innovations transformed science, philosophy, literature, music, painting, the theater, movies, and architecture into images expressing the dawn of a new consciousness. After the collapse of the Republic, political refugees carried the productive spirit of Weimar culture into the four corners of the world, merging it with the creative mainstream that aroused the awareness of people in the twentieth century. The creative process of Weimar culture is rich in conspicuous examples such as expressionist painting, atonal music, Brechtian theater, Einsteinian physics, and revolutionized visual experiences commonly associated with the Bauhaus. But while cosmopolitan audiences cheered successive opening nights, exhibitions, and first editions, conservatives and, increasingly, Nazis, reassured the provincial masses with warmed-over portions of traditional beer-and-sauerkraut culture (see Tilton).

Special political interests as well as past and present controversy have shrouded Weimar Germany in the swirling mists of history and often the contemporary interpreter feels reminded of the blurred outlines of that "ghostly freighter" Lotte Lenya used to sing about in The Threepenny Opera.

But one stark fact rises clearly above the shifting fogs which glide across the historical landscape: Weimar Germany became the demoniacal creator of the monster Nazism.

Nazi mass murder and other manifestations of genocide in the twentieth century have given a special urgency to analyses which pursue anti-Semitism and those frightening changes in political climate that led to the ash-darkened sky over Holocaust Germany (see Kren and Rappoport). Weimar society bubbled to the surface in the crucible of war and revolution. The German revolution followed in the wake of the military catastrophes triggered by the Allied offensives of July and August 1918. By October, Kaiser William II and the German High Command were sufficiently unnerved to allow the formation of a parliamentary government and to prompt its chancellor, the liberal Prince Max of Baden, to request President Woodrow Wilson to take steps for the restoration of peace. The half-hearted maneuverings of the German leaders and the Allied desire for Germany's total defeat prolonged the privations of the war, and in late October and early November sailors of the imperial fleet at Kiel mutinied to prevent a suicidal engagement with the English. By November 4, all German battleships flew the red flag and disgorged armed sailors who spread the revolution from ports to other cities. The soldiers who were sent against the mutineers refused to take action, and many of them joined the revolt (see Tobin). On the morning of November 9, Berlin was in revolutionary turmoil: crowds of workers and soldiers had transformed the Reichstag into an armed camp; Karl Liebknecht, the Spartacist leader, prepared to proclaim a soviet republic from the balcony of the imperial castle; Philipp Scheidemann, a leader of the Majority Socialists, countered this move by proclaiming the German Republic from a window of the Reichstag; Prince Max handed over the office of chancellor to the Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert. On the following day, William II fled across the German border to Holland, and at 5:00 A.M. on the morning of November 11, 1918, four reluctant German delegates signed the armistice.

On the day of the kaiser's departure, the Berlin convention of the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets voted to support Ebert's "social republic." On November 10, as well, Ebert was informed by General Wilhelm Gröner that he could count on the collaboration of the Supreme Military Command. A disgusted Liebknecht denied his support, but the Independent Socialists joined with the Majority Socialists to create a cabinet. The provisional German government, which commenced its activities as the "Council of People's Representatives," lost the cooperation of the Independent Socialists after Ebert had ordered troops to Berlin on December 24 for an unsuccessful attempt to clear the palace of revolutionary "people's sailors."

Ebert's Majority Socialists began to long for a return to law and order by means of a national assembly, elected not only by Socialists, but by the entire population; elections for a constituent assembly were fixed for January 19, 1919. When Ebert tried to dismiss the president of Berlin's police, the Independent Socialist Emil Eichhorn, the Communists joined the Independent Socialists in the manifesto of January 5, 1919, calling upon the German proletariat to stage a great mass demonstration against the government of Ebert and Scheidemann. These developments unleashed the Spartacus Rebellion, which transformed the German capital and other cities into battle zones where radical Independent Socialists and Communists fought against the supporters of the Ebert government. Ebert appointed the former basket weaver and trade union leader Gustav Noske as Supreme Commander of a volunteer corps. Led by bloodthirsty career officers of the old imperial army, Noske's troops entered the center of Berlin on January 11. The Spartacist strongholds succumbed to heavy fire, and by January 15, the volunteers of "bloodhound" Noske had cleared the last snipers from Berlin. The same day the Spratacist leaders Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and Wilhelm Pieck were arrested and beaten by staff members of the Garde-Kavallerie-Schützendivision. Liebknecht was murdered by Kapitänleutnant von Pflugk-Hartung; Luxemburg was gunned down by Leutnant Vogel; Pieck survived to participate in the affairs of the Weimar Republic as a Communist delegate. He returned to Germany from his Moscow exile in 1945 and became president of the German Democratic Republic in 1949.

The murder of Rosa Luxemburg is of special importance: German anti-Semites hated her not only as a professional revolutionary, but above all as a representative of the East European Jews who occupied a special place in anti-Semitic demonology (see Aschheim).

The elections for a national constituent assembly were held, as scheduled, on January 19, and on February 6 the national assembly met at Weimar, the city of Goethe. On February 11, Ebert was elected president of the Reich that was commonly called the Weimar Republic. The next day Scheidemann formed a coalition government made up of Social Democrats, the Catholic Center, and the Democrats. After approving Scheidemann's cabinet, the assembly began drafting a new constitution, which was adopted on July 31 and signed on August 11, 1919.

Ebert's alliance with the High Command of the old army had cleared the way for a democratic republic; but in fighting the extreme Left, the new government bent so far to the Right that it became an accomplice to the defeat of the social revolution. The Weimar coalition neither achieved public control over Germany's reactionary, monopolistic industrialists, nor did it succeed in breaking up the huge landed estates that were the power bases of feudal-minded agrarian overlords. From the beginning, therefore, the democratic leaders of Weimar Germany had sealed their own doom: their actions preserved the economic arrangements and military values of imperial Germany, leaving excessive power in the hands of cartel bosses and Junkers, who hated the Republic and worked for the return of an authoritarian regime. Many workers, disappointed by the failure of social reform, strengthened the left-wing opposition of Independent Socialists and Communists who attacked the Social Democratic party and the Republic from the other corner of the ring. In growing numbers, discouraged bourgeois liberals withdrew into a world of fantasy, where they dreamed of vague and irrational verities. Their ill-defined concerns with the German homeland and German youth tied many Weimar liberals to exponents of neoconservatism, anti-Semitism, and the radical right (see Pois). Bourgeois feminism as well failed to challenge the class structure of German society and became an ally of groups working for the preservation of inequality and social injustice (see Bridenthal).

The year 1920 marks both the beginning of full-scale Rightist counter-revolution and the last successful demonstration of working-class solidarity. In March 1920, a rightist conspiracy, headed by the self-proclaimed "Reich Chancellor" Wolfgang Kapp and supported by the rebellious troops of the Ehrhardt Brigade, a Freikorps unit, assumed power in Berlin for a few days. The Kapp Putsch was defeated by the refusal of the higher civil servants to collaborate with the rebel government and by the crippling blow of a general strike called by the Social Democratic party and carried out by all labor unions.

German labor failed to reap the benefits of its success in the Kapp Putsch; the Socialist parties refused to cooperate with the victorious trade-union leaders, who called for the establishment of a labor government as the unified expression of the will of the entire working class. The rebuffed trade unions accepted the return of the ineffectual Weimar coalition, and thus began their disastrous policy of compromising with the ruling groups. While the workers' leaders permitted organized labor to skid to a secondary power position, General Hans von Seeckt, chief of the army command, used all his cunning to build the army into a state within the state. From then on it was not the life-giving strength of productive labor (see Grossmann), but the death-oriented power of the army that was to exercise the decisive force in the Republic.

At the end of June 1920, the Social Democrats lost their dominant position in Germany; the Weimar coalition was replaced by the new combination of the Center, the Democrats, and the German People's party. The parlimentary delegation of the German People's party was led by Gustav Stresemann, who contributed signally to the further development of Weimar Germany as a bourgeois-capitalist democracy. From August 1923 to November 1923, Stresemann held the offices of chancellor and foreign minister; afterwards--until his death in 1929—he acted as foreign minister.

Stresemann began his political career in the Republic under difficult circumstances. The population was embittered by the severe demands of the Treaty of Versailles, which had become effective in January 1920. Public dissatisfaction was deepened by Allied insistence on reparations payments, more than six billion gold marks annually for forty-two years, and by the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr on January 11, 1923, in retaliation against technical German defaults on reparation obligations in the delivery of timber. People were unnerved by the steady deterioration of the value of German currency and the subsequent inflation which culminated on November 20, 1923.

Stresemann's patient negotiations and careful policies of stabilization averted the worst consequences of these developments; he called off the passive resistance against French occupation forces and ordered the resumption of work and reparation payments. On November 20, 1923, a new currency, covered by a mortgage on Germany's entire agricultural and industrial resources, ended the inflation; in 1924, the Dawes Plan reduced annual reparation payments and provided the German government with an international loan of 200 million dollars. Strengthened by the Dawes Plan, the German economy began its remarkable recovery.

During these years of crisis and slow recovery, the rightist opponents of the Republic missed no opportunity to strengthen their position; free from the responsibilities of government, they peddled cheap and unrealistic slogans designed to incite chauvinistic emotions among the voters. Undaunted by the miserable Kapp Putsch, right-wing conspiracies, such as Organization Consul, elevated murder to an expression of patriotism; many republican leaders fell victim to Fememord. On August 26, 1921, Matthias Erzberger (see Hunt), Catholic Center politician and chief signer of the armistice, was gunned down in the Black Forest; on June 24, 1922, Walter Rathenau, Jewish industrialist and foreign minister, was attacked with guns and hand grenades in suburban Berlin-Grünewald. Rathenau's death motivated Chancellor Josef Wirth to give a Reichstag speech in which he announced that the "enemy stands on the right." Despite mass demonstrations and measures such as the Law for the Protection of the Republic, assassination remained a favored mode of Rightist policies. Ominously, the courts of law developed a tendency to show incredible leniency toward rightist terrorists, while severely punishing even minor infractions on the part of leftist individuals. Indicative of this tendency was Hitler's brief and comfortable stay at Landsberg prison--a virtual sabbatical for subversives--which was the only consequence of his Beer-Hall Putsch of 1923.

The professional army of Weimar Germany did not fail to turn republican problems and achievements to the advantage of anti-republican militarists. The economically significant treaty of friendship that was signed between the Soviet Union and Germany on April 16, 1922, at Rapallo provided the chance for military activities in Russia, which the Treaty of Versailles had withheld from the volunteer army that the Allies had limited to 100,000 men. In 1920 the army delighted in putting down the workers' revolt in the Ruhr; in 1923, the army again made itself "useful" by suppressing attempted Communist coups in the working-class strongholds of Saxony and Thuringia.

For the Germans the year 1925 brought prosperity and further international reconciliation; on the front of internal politics the year spelled disaster. The Dawes Plan of 1924 had initiated a flow of foreign investments and short-term loans to Germany. This stimulated a wave of modernization affecting large portions of the country's industrial apparatus. Rising production and wages were accompanied by decreasing unemployment and by the end of 1928 Germany had become the leading industrial power in Continental Europe.

The internal political disaster began on February 28, 1925, when Friedrich Ebert, president of the Republic, died at the age of fifty-four. On March 29, 1925, the Germans went to the polls to elect a new president, but, as could be expected, not one of the *seven* candidates achieved the required majority on the first ballot. For the second round of voting, the republican groups supported Wilhelm Marx of the Center party as the single candidate of the *Volksblock*; the German Nationalists rallied the forces of the Right around the retired Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, and their major spokesman, Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, persuaded the seventy-seven-year-old Junker to run; the Communists renominated their own candidate, party chairman Ernst Thälmann. By the slim margin of 904,151 votes, the elections of April 26, 1925, gave Hindenburg the simple plurality which the law required for a second-ballot victory. The self-professed monarchist Hindenburg received 14.6 million votes, while 13.7 million votes went to Marx, supporter of the Republic. Thälmann received the crucial 1.9 million votes which withdrew strength from the republican forces and ironically helped the Rightist cause by making possible the election of a man who personified Prussian militarism, German nationalism, and agrarian Junker conservatism. Kurt Tucholsky, one of the company of left-wing intellectuals associated with the radical, but independent Berlin journal *Weltbühne*, remarked after the election of Hindenburg that the Germans now had a "republic until further notice."

This "notice" was not given until 1930, and for five years parliamentary principles continued to govern the political life of the German Reich. The period from 1925 to 1928 was not only a time of prosperity, it was also the core of the "Stresemann era," which some like to identify as those "golden twenties."

While Stresemann acted as foreign minister he signed three major treaties on behalf of Germany, contributing to the development of an era of international good will. The Locarno Pact, signed on October 16, 1925, guaranteed the status quo of Germany's western frontiers, reaffirming in particular the German renunciation of Alsace-Lorraine. In response, the Allies began to withdraw their military units from the Cologne zone of the occupied Rhineland; on September 8, 1926, Germany was admitted to the League of Nations with a permanent seat on the council. On April 24, 1926, Stresemann signed the Berlin Pact, extending the original Rapallo agreement with the Soviet Union; the new Russo-German agreement calmed Soviet fears with regard to German complicity in an anti-Soviet bloc, but renewed suspicion of Germany in most other European nations. On August 27, 1928, Stresemann signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact to outlaw war and was warmly received by the Parisians.

The sincerity of Stresemann's intentions has been questioned by historians, and the problem of his political morality may never be satisfactorily resolved. His policies of international reconciliation, however, combined with economic prosperity to create a period of relative stabilization. In the 1928 elections to the Reichstag, voting practices indicated strong popular support for the original design of the Republic: approximately 65 percent of the ballot went to political parties that were loyal to the Weimar constitution; the Communists received 11 percent of the votes; right-wing parties picked up less than 25 percent, and among them the Nazi party received no more than 3 percent of the valid votes.

The Social Democrats, who had received 30 percent of the ballot, supported Stresemann's foreign policy, but opposed the strong influence that industrialists and businessmen exerted on the government. Especially ominous was the consolidation of monopoly capitalism, which gave far-reaching power to such gigantic trusts as I. G. Farben, Siemens, and Vereinigte Stahlwerke. The right-wing Nationalists, who had received 14 percent of the vote in 1928, fought violently and vociferously against international reconciliation. The Communists remained suspicious of Stresemann's policies and attacked what they considered his plotting against the Soviet Union; when Germany entered the League of Nations, they denounced this move as an anti-Soviet alliance between German capitalists and an international "consortium of imperialist bandits."

In 1929 Germany's prosperous economic development came to a grinding halt. The Great Depression brought the German Reich close to economic collapse: by the end of 1932, almost half of Germany's labor force was jobless. In the Reichstag elections of May 1928, the Nazis had received a mere 3 percent of valid votes, but in July 1932, 37 percent of the ballot went to the Nazi party. Hitler's propaganda campaign--financed by big industrialists and bankers (see Kühnl)--exploited the additional economic problem of reparations payments to the Western Allies, totaling about 29 billion dollars payable until 1988.

The depression brought the beginning of the end for parliamentary government: on March 27, 1930, Weimar Germany's last Great Coalition broke up with the resignation of the Müller cabinet.

The government of Social Democratic Chancellor Hermann Müller collapsed because of its inability to settle a dispute between the Social Democrats and the People's party concerning the elimination of a serious deficit in the unemployment fund. The business-oriented People's party called for a cut in unemployment benefits, while the Social Democrats demanded new taxes on business. The crisis provided Hindenburg and General Kurt von Schleicher, head of the ministerial office in the ministry of defense, with the long-awaited opportunity for authoritarian government.

On March 28, 1930, President Hindenburg asked Heinrich Brüning, parliamentary leader of the Catholic Center party, to form a cabinet without firm party ties; two days later he appointed Brüning chancellor. The new government was weighted to the right and included no Social Democrats (see Breitman). Brüning's deflationary policy and program of economic retrenchment found insufficient parliamentary support, and his unpopular measures were carried out by means of the president's emergency powers under Article 48 of the Weimar constitution. From the beginning Social Democrat Rudolf Breitscheid implored the government not to use Article 48: its employment, he warned, could only lead into the darkness of dictatorship.

These developments encouraged Hindenburg to drop all democratic pretenses and to show himself for what he was--a treacherous, reactionary Junker. The eighty-four-year-old president withdrew his support from Brüning, forcing his resignation on May 30; then Hindenburg sided openly with the large landowners and industrial magnates against the Social Democratic working masses that had supported him against the presidential candidates, Hitler and Thälmann, thereby making possible the old field marshal's reelection on April 10, 1932. Hindenburg's betrayal of the democratic forces sealed the fate of the doomed Republic, which became subject to the dangerous crosscurrents of partisan interests represented by generals, cartel bosses, and East-Elbian landlords, who shared an appreciation of the Nazis as an ill-mannered, but highly useful force counterbalancing the Socialist and Communist hordes. General von Schleicher confided in a letter: "Indeed, if the Nazis did not exist, we should have had to invent them." Under Schleicher's influence Hindenburg appointed Franz von Papen as chancellor on May 31, 1932; this ambitious Catholic aristocrat confronted the people with his "cabinet of barons," a government consisting of military leaders, industrialists, and Junkers. Papen's nonparty government had no popular support, but survived until November 1932, propped up by the president and the army (see Hörster-Philipps).

In 1932 German jails were crowded with close to nine thousand Leftist political prisoners. In the basements of their headquarters, the Nazis tortured their enemies to death; in the streets, Communists and Nazis fought pitched battles. Following the advice of his minister of defense, General von Schleicher, Papen lifted the ban that Brüning's government had imposed on the Nazi SA (Sturmabteilung) and SS (Schutzstaffeln). Hitler was given a free hand, and the Reichstag elections of July 31, 1932, resulted in a triumph for "Adolf Légalité," whose party became the largest in the country, polling over 13,700,000 votes with 230 seats in the Reichstag (see Stachura).

The Weimar Republic came to an end in the Byzantine power games which Papen, Schleicher, and Hitler played against a deadlocked parliament (see Petzina). The November elections of 1932 reduced the Nazi seats in the Reichstag to 196; only the Communists registered significant gains, polling close to six million votes with one hundred seats. The Social Democrats retained 121 seats, but deep-rooted programmatic differences between the two Marxist parties, as well as mutual blindness to the lethal nature of Nazi power, prevented the formation of a leftist coalition government (see Geary). These differences would not interest the SS concentration camp guards, who would later murder Communists and Socialists side by side.

Alarmed by the increase in the Communist vote and Hitler's drive for power, Schleicher forced Papen's resignation and took over the office of chancellor. On December 3, 1932, Schleicher's government began to operate in the hope of dividing the opposition on both the right and the left. Schleicher planned to reduce the Nazi threat by bringing Gregor Strasser's "left wing" into his regime; he also intended to pacify the Social Democrats by inviting the participation of trade-union leaders. Hitler immediately reacted by removing Strasser from the office of party secretary; later, in the Nazi blood purge of June 1934, he had Gregor Strasser murdered, along with Schleicher (see Nagle). The leaders of the Social Democratic party opposed any form of cooperation with Schleicher, and by January 6, 1933, they had succeeded in cutting all connections between organized labor and the chancellor.

On January 23, 1933, Schleicher admitted to Hindenburg that his strategy of forming a parliamentary majority had failed; he asked the president for an order dissolving the Reichstag linked with an indefinite and, therefore, unconstitutional postponement of the prescribed new elections. Hindenburg refused Schleicher's request, trusting in the success of secret negotiations involving Papen, rightist leaders, and the detested, but unavoidable Hitler. On January 28, Schleicher and his entire cabinet resigned and Hindenburg asked Papen to "clarify" the political situation. The nineteen Weimar governments were not noted for longevity: the average life span of a cabinet was less than nine months. With a duration of twenty-one months the Great Coalition of 1928 had survived the longest; with a duration of fifty-four days Schleicher's government was short-lived even by the standards of the Republic.

Papen wasted no time; with the support of Oskar von Hindenburg and Otto Meissner he persuaded President Hindenburg to do what the old field marshal had so far considered inconceivable, namely, to appoint the "Austrian corporal," Adolf Hitler, chancellor of Germany. Hitler and the members of his proposed cabinet, which included von Papen as vice-chancellor, received their commissions from Hindenburg on the morning of January 30, 1933. On the evening of this demonic Monday, a confused eighty-five-year-old German president and an ecstatic Hitler gazed down on the stream of Nazi battalions, marching with flaming torches through the Wilhelmstrasse.

Weimar society was dead. Germany sank into a darkness from the depth of which there soon emerged a ceaseless stream of political refugees.

The proscription of creative activity formed part of the immediate program of Nazi oppression. Shortly after their assumption of power, the Nazis ordered the Berlin newspaper Die Nachtausgabe to publish a "first list" of forbidden authors. The black list, which appeared on April 23, 1933, outlawed all major writers including such Weimar luminaries as Bertolt Brecht, Max Brod, Alfred Döblin, Lion Feuchtwanger, Egon Erwin Kisch, Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann, Theodor Plievier, Erich Maria Remarque, Arthur Schnitzler, Ernst Toller, Kurt Tucholsky, Arnold Zweig, and Stefan Zweig. This first list was followed by others, and soon literate Germans realized that nearly eight hundred writers had disappeared from their cultural environment.

The Nazi attack against German culture proceeded on all fronts of intellectual-artistic creativity and banned all significant thinkers, composers, sculptors, and painters. Soon intellectuals, artists, and writers disappeared in Nazi concentration camps where they were beaten to death along with activist workers and political enemies of the German dictatorship.

But like the later exhibitions of Entartete Kunst, which were meant to demonstrate the evils of "degenerate art," the blacklisting of authors alerted the world to the astounding creative vitality of Weimar culture. People began to realize to what extent the artistic-intellectual community of Weimar Germany had contributed to the transformation of science, philosophy, literature, music, painting, the theater, motion pictures, and architecture into configurations of images expressing the dawn of a new consciousness. The Nazi policy of proscription could not fail to backfire, since it included creative movements of international renown, such as expressionism, Piscator's documentary theater, Einsteinian physics, Dadaist photomontage, the new portraiture, the Dessau Bauhaus, the typographic revolution, functional design, constructivism, photo-journalism, Brecht's epic theatre, agitprop, Proletkult, and New Music (see Meyer).

Weimar Germany's creative avant-garde went abroad. The innovators kept on working in Paris, London, New York, Chicago, and throughout the world.

In Germany the new rulers slapped their own art scene together (see Burns). Nazi public art, mass-produced by and for the media, consisted of sculpture, and architecture that glorified oppression, armament production, combat, and death. The dictator, who had once painted postcards during his residence in a Viennese asylum for vagrants, left the imprint of his taste on paintings. Nazi exhibits showed archaic provincial genre works. The creators of Auschwitz had an insatiable appetite for nondescript nudes, insipid country scenes, and group portraits of simple people. These hyper-German productions of tenth-rate painters came complete with absurd and pompous titles to endow them with "blood and soil" profundities. Nazi art had a dual function. The practitioners of this art were ordered to justify degrading and oppressive social relationships. Nazi artists also had to spread a tattered veil over the real processes taking place in Holocaust Germany: police terror, torture, murder, moronicization of the masses, war planning, genocide, and the repression and destruction of the Jews.

2

Introduction

MICHAEL N. DOBKOWSKI AND
ISIDOR WALLIMANN

There had been considerable work done on the Weimar period and the rise of fascism from a variety of perspectives, including political, cultural, and psychohistorical. Although valuable and important, many of these perspectives have underemphasized what we consider to be key elements in an understanding of the rise of fascism and the collapse of liberal bourgeois democracy in the Weimar Republic as a prelude to the Holocaust, namely, factors directly resulting from the socioeconomic (structural) problems and contradictions of Weimar society. This book attempts to highlight these factors. In particular, the focus of the essays collected in this volume has shifted from the political and constitutional structures of the Republic to the social and economic determinants of this underlying weakness. Rather than examining the Weimar Republic just as a failed democracy, the emphasis herein has moved towards examining Weimar Germany as a developed capitalist society with structural problems which served to undermine the political system that took shape after the defeat in the First World War. The picture that emerges from these essays is that of a republic fatally flawed at the outset by a failure to effect structural changes which would have secured a democratic order--of a republic that consequently was undermined because the bourgeois elements which should have defended it would not do so, and the working-class and minority group elements which tried to defend it, could not do so. Several of the essays dealing with these structural factors are written from a Marxist perspective, a perspective that has been relatively little noticed among American scholars writing on the Weimar period. For that reason, we have included essays from two West German scholars who operate within this tradition. We have also included essays on ideology and culture because they demonstrate that ideology generally reflects the structural dimensions and contradictions of Weimar society. "All myths," as Aschheim points out, "if they are to function, must have some basis, however, tenuous, in social reality."

Petzina's socioeconomic historical analysis provides the reader at the outset with a factual background against which certain political and ideological developments during the Weimar Republic can be seen. Given the fact that the National Socialist German Workers Party's (NSDAP) mass support came primarily from the old and new "middle class," it is important to note that there had been continuous economic pressure to migrate out of agriculture, that monopolization and concentration of industry had been increasing, and that the percentage of self-employed individuals had been decreasing. It is also important to note that post-World War I inflation was most damaging to members of the old "middle class" and that, relatively speaking, the income of the self-employed rose more slowly than that of the non-self-employed and that the civil servants failed to regain their privileged pre-World War I income level. When the NSDAP rose to power during the Great Depression, its supporters did not come, for the most part, from the ranks of the poor or unemployed workers suffering most from the depression, but came instead from the ranks of those whose status and economic standing had become threatened. In many ways, however, their support of the Nazi movement was in vain since, despite the NSDAP's promise to economically save the middle class, relatively more individuals lost their self-employed status during Nazi rule than did during the Weimar Republic.

Internationally speaking, Germany, despite having an industrial potential second only to that of the United States, lagged behind other nations in its ability to increase industrial output relative to pre-World War I levels. The years of the Weimar Republic were characterized by economic stagnation, while many other countries were increasing their industrial output during the same period. However, Petzina maintains that this anomalous situation was not caused by war reparation payments, which in his view had, if anything, a stimulating effect since they were tied to a loan program. All things considered, more capital was flowing into Germany during this time than was flowing out of Germany.

Petzina focuses on socioeconomic developments during the Weimar Republic and how they affected various segments of the population. With this approach, he points to the structural processes and bottlenecks that tended to induce certain groups to support the NSDAP. Tilton also uses this type of analysis in his essay, which deals specifically with reasons for the NSDAP's strong rural appeal. Both Petzina's and Tilton's macrostructural analysis is supplemented by Nagle's study investigating the socioeconomic background of NSDAP deputies to the Reichstag, thus providing a more detailed insight into the nature of the NSDAP's mass support.

Kühnl recognizes the domestic political conditions particular to Weimar Germany that were conducive to the rise of fascism. However, he particularly focuses on Germany's competitive standing relative to other industrialized countries at a time of imperialist expansion. According to him, fascism in Germany was just as much a response to a particular international situation as it was a response to domestic conditions. Kühnl maintains that even though Germany had achieved an industrial potential surpassing that of France and Britain, it had no basis for further expansion. Thus, the First World War, as well as World War II, represented Germany's attempts to break out of this situation, in part by allying itself with other similarly "disadvantaged" nations like Italy and Japan. Germany strove for and demanded a new distribution of the world's territories, markets, and resources.

Kühnl's position is based on the observation that any capitalist economy depends on possibilities for expansion. Germany was no exception. It too relied upon a capital accumulation rate that would allow it to maintain or improve its position relative to other capitalist countries. Since it could not do so satisfactorily, major segments of big business, (including banks and landowners) as well as segments of the military and the top civil servants, had never accepted the defeat during World War II. They were bent on pursuing a strongly expansionary course. Within this scheme, the parliamentary democracy of the Weimar Republic, a result of the worker movement's November Revolution of 1918, would have to be abolished in favor of an authoritarian regime. Under this rubric, an expansionary course could be pursued more effectively. Authoritarianism, furthermore, served as a means to maintain or speed up capital accumulation by robbing the working class of parliamentary mechanisms to articulate demands and effectuate social and economic changes, and by increasing possibilities to stifle workers' extraparliamentary attempts to achieve social change. Fascism then, a particular form of an authoritarian regime, is, in Kühnl's view, only possible with the full backing of the ruling class, which directly depends on capital accumulation if it is to maintain its economic and political position as a ruling class.

While Kühnl gives us a theoretical framework within which the persistent push for expansion, increased capital accumulation, and an authoritarian regime can be understood, Hörster-Philipps documents in detail the ways in which the Weimar Republic was undermined and replaced by authoritarian regimes. She shows how already at an early stage of the Weimar Republic, big business, the military, and certain parties were again aiming for an expansionary course and an authoritarian government.

Although it may be true that fascism generally has not been observed to exist without the consent and backing of the ruling class, Germany during the 1930s being no exception, it nevertheless must be investigated how it was possible for the NSDAP to gain mass support in addition to ruling class backing.

We know that Nazi supporters were primarily not recruited from the ranks of the working class or the poor and unemployed but from the Mittelstand, whose status and economic position had become threatened. Numerous other similar structural circumstances, however, did not result in a fascist mass movement, raising the question as to whether or not the Nazi party had a specific strategy enabling it to exploit the structurally caused anxiety to its fullest. Did the NSDAP resort to a special technique which allowed it to mobilize the masses behind its program? Kühnl suggests that this was the case. He maintains that the NSDAP's mass support was not due to the party's ideology, which in many ways was not unlike that of other right-wing, nationalistic, and militantly anti-Communist parties. According to him, the NSDAP's success in mobilizing the masses lay in the employment of strategies, like mass rallies and meetings, which were known to be successful in the worker movement.

Although the NSDAP was highly successful in mobilizing the Mittelstand and gaining its support, it largely failed to convince the working class. Except for the cases which Stachura shows to be exceptions, the NSDAP (upon assuming power) was confronted with a working-class opposition that had to be broken with terror and violence on the one hand and with techniques of seduction and intensive supervision on the other. According to Stachura, it is not the case that the NSDAP was uninterested in receiving a strong working-class support. Subjectively speaking, its position was not an antiworking class position, although objectively speaking its policies were not in the interest of the working class. Stachura points out that, to a great extent, the NSDAP's failure must be seen in its inability to circumscribe what it meant by socialism and to arrive at a concrete socialist program that, although different from previously existing programs, would at least be plausible and win the support of workers organized in trade unions, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the German Communist Party (KPD). Instead, the Nazi party's radical rhetoric about socialism remained nothing but rhetoric. Stachura maintains that, as a rule, the party showed little interest in going beyond this level of discourse.

If, however, the Nazis failed to get a strong working-class endorsement, why was the working class unable to prevent the NSDAP from coming to power? Tobin explores the nature of the circumstances surrounding the November Revolution of 1918 on the basis of which certain political trends can be detected that tended to weaken the German working-class movement in the long run. She suggests that the failure of the SPD leadership to respond to the rank-and-file demands for democratization of the military, bureaucracy, and industry led to widespread disaffection and political defection to the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) and the KPD. Thus, at the beginning of the Weimar Republic, the working class was split in ways not necessarily conducive to most effectively resisting authoritarianism and the fascist movement. Indeed, as Geary shows in his essay, resistance against fascism was weakened as the split between the KPD and SPD continued and was repeatedly reaffirmed. However, this was not the only reason why working-class resistance to the fascist onslaught was quite weak. Geary mentions that the SPD tended to underestimate the Nazi movement. Breitman explores this issue further. He shows how the SPD largely failed to deal with the fascist movement both in theory and in practice and that the party's perception of the nature of German fascism was, despite the availability of some competent left-wing analyses, seriously flawed.

Parallels can be found between the working-class movement and Catholic political organizations insofar as both were very resiliant to fascist appeals, and both were equally ineffective in preventing the fascists from assuming power. Once the fascists were in control, these organizations tended to become rather passive onlookers. Hunt investigates the role Catholicism played during the Weimar Republic. He demonstrates that the Catholic population before and during the Weimar Republic was structurally in a marginal position, even while slowly becoming more integrated. Thus, the Catholics had a serious dilemma. Wanting to become fully integrated, they could not afford to strongly oppose the persistent trend towards right-wing authoritarianism and fascism.

The Jewish community of Weimar Germany found itself in a similar bind. Split between the newly immigrated East European Jews and German Jews, it failed to decisively combat, as Aschheim shows, the anti-Semitic tendencies directed against the Ostjuden. Rather, while often internalizing these negative attitudes towards Ostjuden themselves, Jews tended to remain ambivalent and ineffective in fighting what, as Aschheim suggests, was the radical right's prelude to an all-out attack on the entire Jewish population.

Similarly, a further subject of concern is the role some women played in supporting the Nazi movement, even when it appeared to be so overtly misogynist. Bridenthal's study sheds some light on the dynamics that may have been involved in women's attitudes towards the NSDAP by analyzing the long-lasting tug of war between the middle-class Housewives Union and the Central Union of Domestic Employees concerning the contractual regulation of domestic work. She points to the circumstances under which the Housewives Union abandoned its officially nonpolitical stand and expressed its gratitude to Hitler in 1933 for his interest in a domestic service year. This was not, however, without cost. It simultaneously also symbolized the submission of many women to Nazi notions and policies concerning the role and rights of women in society. That these notions and policies were in stark contrast to developments during the Weimar Republic is shown by Grossmann's study of the sex reform movement and the fascist response to it in August 1933. She also speaks to the problem of the internal fractionalization of the left, eventually effecting the sex reform movement itself.

To this point we have been speaking of the structural aspects of

Weimar society and how they contributed to the demise of the republic and the rise of National Socialism on the one hand, and the failure of the various subgroups--be they political, labor, religious, or gender--to meet the challenge, on the other. In the process, we have alluded to the ideological notions held at the time. At least in some respects, as Burns, Meyer, and Pois illustrate, the ideology generally reflected the structural dimensions of Weimar society, although the correspondence may not have been a perfect one.

Burns, Meyer, and Pois discuss National Socialism as a cultural phenomenon, not in the liberal or bourgeois sense of culture as having to do solely with literature, art, film, or music in isolation from the social, economic, and political developments in Germany, but rather culture as an attitude, as a reflection and result of the fissures, crises, and fears in society that are structurally determined. They argue that National Socialism and the culture that supported it and that it produced was a culture fueled by a sense of crisis and by an elaborate mythology--a mythology by which people define themselves and their place in the world. But this mythology connects to reality because it functions within a social and economic context. Thus there is a dialectic between people's vision of their place in the universe as expressed by literature, music, and film and reflections on the health and function of the arts generally and the reality with which they live. These authors remind us of the role of culture as a barometer of attitudes and social reality and thus contribute to a Marxist approach that is based on a dialectic.

National Socialism, having a great talent for mass organization, they argue, combined politics and aesthetics. Politics and aesthetics are always combined as long as people think in stereotypes, as long as ideas of beauty and ugliness, be they visual, auditory or literary, are so all-embracing in people's lives that they become political categories. People in Nazi Germany had very definite ideas of what was beautiful and what was ugly and, of course, racism made an alliance with beauty and defined ugliness in its own terms. So in fascist politics, aesthetics played a very important function because politics was defined in a totalistic context as subsuming attitudes toward life.

Nazism put forward a myth--the myth of "bourgeois return," of a restoration of a happy and healthy world, of a simpler, purer, more authentic culture, of a new man, the myth of race in Germany--and then it tried to actualize this myth. It used this kind of appeal to the *vőlkish* populist past, but at the same time it promised a future outside the problems of industrialization, outside the problems of inflation--in other words, outside the problems of the day, including unemployment--all the problems which actually existed. It said that by recapturing a *vőlkish* past, Germans will determine a future which is a German future when every German will get back his individual dignity and sense of worth. The notion of a genuine social revolution as we have seen, was anathema to many Germans, yet they were profoundly dissatisfied with their world. This tension was exploited by the Nazis. They played upon this bourgeois fantasy to create a bourgeois revolution, a revolution of attitude which actually threatened none of the vested interests of the middle class. Instead, *völkish* thought concentrated upon another enemy within. That is why the Jews and the Jewish question are central. The Jew stood for modernity in all its destructiveness. It can be argued (as George Mosse and Pois do) that the attitude toward the Jew provided much of the cement for this thought and gave it a dynamic it might otherwise have lacked. The Jew, or rather the stereotype that *völkish* thought made of him, is therefore central to any analysis and understanding of this ideology. This was appreciated by Theodore W. Adorno, as well, in several works including his sociological analysis of music, described by Meyer. Adorno's extended examination of Richard Wagner, Meyer notes, for example, is crucial for the study of pre-Nazi fascism and anti-Semitism in view of the importance of Wagner as perhaps the outstanding cultural hero of the Nazis who captured, in their view, the spirit of *völkish* Germany in his music.

However, *völkish* anti-Semitic ideology is insufficient by itself to explain Germany's anti-Jewish passion. In most contemporary analyses of German anti-Semitism in the Weimar and early Nazi periods, there has been a disturbing separation of the phenomenon from an analysis of capitalist development, thereby locating the German-Jewish problem in a structural vacuum, independent from other economic or social tendencies. There has been much valuable work done on the role of image, ideology, and myth in the development of German anti-Semitism. There has not, however, been sufficient reflection on socioeconomic factors independent of ethnic, religious, or national characteristics. We know, for example, from sociological literature, that there is a well-established tendency as economic competition increases, whether it be real or imagined, for ethnic antagonisms to increase if competition takes place between discernible groups. This is true for wage-labor, certain economic dependency relationships, or business competition. Max Weber pointed to the antagonisms which can result if a particular group is identified with a particular eocnomic activity or position such as debtor or creditor. Similarly, ethnic antagonism has been observed between retailers and consumers when the two tended to belong to different ethnic groups.[1] Were such mechanisms, for instance, also present in the German-Jewish situation? Was the Jewish community in any way discernible as a competitor of other non-Jewish segments of the German society, and could as such be targeted for political exploitation by a rising Nazi movement?

By 1910, for example, 54.4 percent of Prussian Jewry resided in cities of 100,000 or more and by 1925 half of German Jewry lived in the seven major cities of that country in contrast to

13 percent of the general population. In 1933, on the eve of the Holocaust, 70.7 percent of German Jewry, including foreign Jews, lived in cities of 100,000 or more. The comparable figure for the general population was 30 percent. The urban setting in which an urbane, cosmopolitan culture could thrive was thus highly visible. Peter Gay, who examined that spirit in the Berlin of the Weimar Republic, characterized it as alienated from soul and tradition, "rootless, restless," disrespectful of authority, and distant from the völkish ideals.[2] It was against this culture that the Nazi ideologue Hans Rosenberg and others would rail. What the Nazis despised was what they saw as a contrived, artificial, non-German culture developed by a minority group whom they considered merely guests in Germany.

There is a danger in overestimating the impact of a small number of Jewish thinkers, writers, and artists who became trend setters. Undoubtedly, most Jews who moved to cities continued to live parochial, circumscribed and fairly anonymous lives. Yet one can note in their hunger for secular education, for example, a portent of potential intergroup conflict. For the period of 1859-1860, when Jews were about 1 percent of the population of Prussia, they composed 6.8 percent of all secondary students. By 1906 a remarkable 58.9 percent of the potential Jewish secondary-school population were receiving such an education, compared to 7.9 percent of the general population. By 1921 the comparable figures had risen to 60.5 percent and 9.7 percent, respectively. The figures for university education are even more remarkable. Despite restrictions in Jewish enrollment, they again emerge as enthusiastic consumers of secular education, especially in the fields of law, medicine, philosophy, and the arts. In these faculties Jewish enrollment was five times as high as that of the general population. Moreover, despite strong opposition to having Jews hold teaching posts in the university, 9.4 percent of university positions, primarily in the lower ranks, were held by Jews in 1874. By the year 1890, the figure had risen to 12 percent, and by 1920, to 14 percent. Jews made up approximately 1 percent of the German population during this entire period. By 1881, Berlin's Jews were already 7.9 percent of the city's lawyers, 11.7 percent of its doctors, and 8.6 percent of its journalists. The figures would rise to even more astounding proportions in decades to come. Table 2.1 summarizes the general outline of the Jewish socio-economic position in Germany.

Table 2.1
SOCIAL AND OCCUPATIONAL POSITION IN 1933

Social Position of Full-time Employed	All full-time employed in Germany (in percentages)	Full-time employed Jews (in percentages)
Self-employed	16.4	46.0
Employed members of the family	16.4	9.6
Civil servants and soldiers	4.6	1.0
White collar employees	12.5	33.5
Workers (incl. cottage laborers)	46.3	8.7
Domestic help	3.8	1.2
Totals	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Vol. 453/2, p. 14, quoted from Esra Bennathan, "Die demographische und wirtschaftliche Struktur der Juden," in Entscheidungsjahr 1932, ed. Werner Mosse (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1966).

There clearly is, then, sufficient evidence to suggest that split-labor market antagonisms and/or middleman minority antagonisms may be a factor in explaining the ferocity of Nazi anti-Semitism. This is a fruitful avenue for further investigation.

In a related but somewhat distinct area, it might be useful, as Martin Jay, Anson Rabinbach, Paul Piccone, and Russell Berman, in their various ways argue, to reexamine the implications of the Frankfurt School interpretations of anti-Semitism, particularly the relevant sections in Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's Dialectic of Enlightenment.[3] The overarching theory they presented was grounded in an analysis that stressed the ambiguous implications of the age-old domination of nature in Western culture and the resulting idealization of instrumental reason. The administered society, epitomized by the Nazi techno-bureaucratic state in its gradual erosion of all lingering individuality and autonomous structures of civil society, generated severe internal crises that were met with even greater repression.

Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis is clearly indebted to the insights of Karl Marx. "Bourgeois anti-Semitism," they wrote, "has a specific economic reason: the concealment of domination in production," or what Cary McWilliams has called in another context, "a mask for privilege."[4] Like Franz Neumann, who was particularly critical of state capitalism in Behemoth, they recognized the function of the Jews as scapegoats for anti-capitalist sentiments. "They were the representatives--in harmony with their particular religion--of municipal, bourgeois and finally, industrial conditions."[5] If this analysis is correct, then the sociological insights mentioned above concerning split-labor market antagonisms and middleman-minority group antagonisms would be even more germane.

Beyond this more traditional Marxist approach with its echoes of Marx's essay, "On the Jewish Question," and of Ferdinand August Bebel's celebrated remark that anti-Semitism is "the socialism of fools," Horkheimer and Adorno provided an analysis of the postbourgeois anti-Semitism that spoke directly to the problem of fascism. They argued that fascism represented a more brutal form of repression than classical liberal capitalism with its reliance on the mediation of the marketplace. When there is no longer any need for economic domination, as was the case in the world of Auschwitz, "the Jews are marked out as the absolute object of domination pure and simple."[6] Fascism is an order of unlimited force led by people who "long for total possession and unlimited power, at any price."[7] In fact, it is only in total power, in the ability to control life and death, that fascists can reach the orgasmic peak of domination. These yearnings are displaced by claiming that it is the Jews who actually strive for total control.

The long-range tendency towards this type of domination, which went through a classical capitalist stage before reaching its conclusions in fascism, had to be understood in more fundamental, more structural terms than the scapegoat theory, or the religious prejudice theory, or the ideological theory, or even the racist theory would allow. For "anti-Semitism is a deeply imprinted schema, a ritual of civilization."[8] It is thus to the fundamental dialectic of civilization (or Enlightenment, as they called it) that Horkheimer and Adorno turned for their structural analysis, and it is here that their insights may prove most suggestive for our purposes.

The essence of that explanation was equating "civilization" with the domination of nature, a domination whose implications were only then becoming fully manifest. (Their essay was written at least a year before the magnitude of the Nazi genocide was fully known.) The implicit link between totality and domination is the central theme of the work. "Those who spasmodically dominate nature," they wrote, "see in a tormented nature a provocative image of powerless happiness. The thought of happiness without power is unbearable because it would then be true happiness."[9] The Jews are singled out for special attack and treatment because they are confused with nature itself, and thus seen as having "happiness without power, wages without work, a home without frontiers, religion without myth."[10] Society, like nature, abhors a vacuum, Hannah Arendt has reminded us.[11] Horkheimer and Adorno thus believe that the projection of power and otherness onto the Jew is not mere appearance, but historically connected to the perceptual system of civilization. In this sense, the "object" is not simply interchangeable (a point which contradicts the usual Marxist claim to the contrary), but is crucial for the development of the logic of anti-Semitic domination.

Throughout this work, Horkheimer and Adorno play with the tension between nationalist anti-Semitism in which the Jew represents a projection outward of the desire for total domination reflected in the image of the Jew as an international manipulator of culture and civilization, the kind of image Henry Ford would exploit in the United States, and bourgeois anti-Semitism, which identified the Jew as an abstraction to be absorbed into society until all traces of his negative essence disappears, the T. S. Eliot or Henry Adams versions of anti-Semitism. Again we have the ancient canard--the Jew as simultaneous symbol of the triumph of Enlightenment (as modernity, urbanity, intellectualism, civilization) and its absolute opposite (as the powerful conspiratorial other).[12] In the bourgeois sense, anti-Semitism is the rage directed against the nonidentical, the "eternal stranger" of Leo Pinsker, that characterizes the totalistic dominating impulse of Western civilization. Some Jews, in their refusal to be assimilated, thus represent an obstacle to the total integration of the "administered world" or "one-dimensional society" as Herbert Marcuse was to call it. Nationalism, on the other hand, constitutes the image of the Jew as the nonorganic Other, the focus of repressed desires for violence and control. The Jew in this context is both the outsider and the insider whose essential character is ambiguous, hence dangerous and to be feared. Thus, for both the Enlightenment and its opponents, the Jew is a paradox. Consequently, two very distinct ideological images of the Jew appeared in Western anti-Semitism, each focusing on two very real social groups: the ghetto Eastern European Jews, who are fundamentally unassimilable (an image also held by German Jews, as Steven Aschheim ably demonstrates); and the assimilated Jew (Disraeli, Rothschild, Rathenau), who represent power, infiltration, and control. Once again, we should investigate the role that real market-labor conditions had on intensifying these images.

The anti-Semitic ideology projects the Jew as the collective other, representing power (capitalism, Marxism, liberalism, Zionism) or putrifaction (miscegenation, filth, pronography, sexuality). This tendency may suggest that anti-Semitism has deeper roots than the other forms of racial prejudice that were prevalent in European society, as Pois intimates. Given the historical roots of anti-Semitism in Christianity and the specific historical role of the Jews as a pariah class in Western culture as articulated by Hannah Arendt, plus their role as a competing economic class, anti-Semitism may have a history distinct from national chauvinism or racial hatred.

This anti-Semitic tendency reached deeply into the fiber of National Socialism. National Socialism represents an equally fantastic joining of two irreconcilables. Nationalism pretended to unite all classes; socialism is based on the class struggle. Nationalism tended towards imperialist expansionism, while socialism claimed to be universalistic. Nationalism deeply respected existing power relations; socialism sought to overthrow them. National Socialism pretended to be a mass movement characterized by reformist aspirations and struggles against a class society on behalf of the workers. Its inherent illogic is such, however, that it was held together as an outlook and movement by fostering aggressive national expansion as the basis for creating the material for a völkish socialism that claims to provide economic benefits for the workers and the poor while in reality it deeply respects existing economic structures; and by a virulent anti-Semitism as the main defining element of the Germanic fantasy-community that leaves class boundaries untouched.

The Nazi drive for community was the assertion, even if made aggressively and brutally, of an abiding need for human connectedness greater than that provided by the depersonalized world of corporate capitalism. In Dialectic of Enlightenment Horkheimer and Adorno emphasized that self-denial and renunciations were inherent in the Western program of the domination of nature. Fascism and, indeed, anti-Semitism are seen as one pole of the dialectic of Western civilization itself: as domination progressed, so did the mad revolt of brutalized nature, culminating in the anti-Semitism of twentieth-century totalitarianism. If Auschwitz expressed the barbarism chosen by those unwilling or unable to join the modern world, Auschwitz also represented the explosion of the repressed side of our long journey away from barbarism and toward civilization.

These brief remarks should be sufficient to demonstrate that the general historical materialist tradition may be helpful in understanding the complicated and problematical phenomena of anti-Semitism in the Weimar and early Nazi periods. But it should also be evident that the specific logic of anti-Semitism also contributes to our understanding of the unique character of the Holocaust, which cannot be explained satisfactorily by discussions of the ideological function of anti-Semitism; by the logic of fascist domination per se; by the role of religious prejudice; by the desire to eliminate surplus populations; by the desire to eliminate an economically competing group. As bureaucratically organized, technological, mass death for the sole purpose of destroying a "defined" racially inferior group that paradoxically was also seen as intent on domination, the Holocaust may be consistent only with the view that the Jew is a powerful, corrupting Other. Although a historical materialist approach, which emphasizes structural considerations in the socioeconomic realms of society, is intriguing and should be explored as well as an explanation for the Holocaust, there still are serious questions that need to be posed: Why extermination and not servitude? Why the secrecy surrounding the apparatus of destruction? Why the bizarre identification and preoccupation with the victim? Did the Nazis need the Jews to be fully themselves? Were the Nazis afraid of being free in Jean Paul Sartre's sense? Did the Jews have to be destroyed because they became the metaphoric equivalent of that stubborn remnant of society preserving negation and the nonidentical; that portion of society that refused to be one-dimensionalized? Here again, Horkheimer and Adorno introduce a complicated discussion of the role of mimetic behavior in civilization and its distortion in Nazism's mimicry of its Jewish victims. "Anti-Semitism is based on false projection," they wrote. "Mimesis imitates the environment but 'false projection' makes the environment like itself."[13] This type of false projection politicized paranoia. To many who fell victim to its appeal, fascism may have provided a mass delusional system that was mistaken for reality. How this reality turned into a nightmare is a question of even greater perplexity.

It is becoming increasingly obvious, as Kren and Rappoport have ably argued, that the Holocaust is a watershed event, one of those which changes or should change our notions of reality, language, meaning, our basic epistemological categories. No assessment of twentieth-century civilization can ignore the fact that science and technology, celebrated as the guarantors of progress, then climaxed in the factories of death and that the unlimited, value-free use of knowledge and science had paved the way for the mass murder of a faceless, mindless bureaucracy. The Holocaust was an advance warning of the demonic potential in modern culture. For Germany was one of the most advanced Western countries—at the center of the academic, cultural, scientific, and technological enterprise. Auschwitz may be what happens when you divorce morality from politics; when you exploit knowledge for nonethical, nonhumanitarian goals, when you allow technology and bureaucracy to run amuck.

It is no accident that the term Final Solution was finally chosen to indicate a program of mass muder. It is an operational rather than an ideological term. The Jews were the problem and Auschwitz was the solution.

It is not enough to say that those who committed these horrible crimes or who condoned them through active indifference were, in some fashion, outside their own culture and civilization. The facts won't allow such an evasion. We must, therefore, formulate as precisely as we can, and press home a much more disturbing question: Were there powerful elements inside humanism, within civilization, within the political, economic, and social structure, that not only failed to impede barbarism but helped produce it? Is the notion of "civilization" itself flawed or tragically implicated, as Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, in the coming of the Holocaust? Did the separation of thought and praxis, in some way incapacitate people's more immediate political reflexes? Was the Holocaust the result of the inevitable crisis in capitalism predicted by Marx? Is it conceivable that civilization represses Eros, thus strengthening Thanatos, the destructive energy? According to Freud, the more intense the repression of primary erotic drives in a society, the greater a mobilization of surplus aggressiveness against the repression. Again, according to Freud, repression is bound to increase with the progress of civilization, and at the same time, aggressive energy is going to be released.

George Steiner, who has written unusually well about the proximity of political barbarism to Western traditions of learning, draws attention to the fact that mass murder had little trouble flourishing side by side with activities previously regarded as guarantees of human conduct; namely, fine literature, music, and the arts. He wonders what the connections are between the mental-psychological habits of high literacy and the temptations of the inhuman. While we are not in a position to answer Steiner's question, its challenge remains constant--Nazi poster and magazine art provide popular illustrations of the ways in which the disciplines of learning, religion, and artistic effort could be put to the service of brutal power. Meyer has shown how music was used for similar purposes. Philosopher and existentialist Martin Heidegger's inaugural address as rector of Freiburg University, aligning the labors of the scholar with those of the soldier, is a muted and more refined example of this complicity. Professor Heidegger's denial of scholarship funds to Jewish students at the university and, contrastingly, the preference he gave to those who fought in the SA or SS are more active and unsettling examples of the same thing. Yet Heidegger was hardly alone. Thousands of such actions can be cited, directly implicating intellectuals, students, artists, scientists, jurists, and churchmen in the day-to-day programs of the Nazi movement. Corruption ran deeply through German culture. Thus we misunderstand modern political power if we focus too heavily on the high-ranking individual. Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich, Eichmann--their roles were necessary, but none was sufficient to produce Auschwitz. We must look for the answer in more structural considerations, not in individuals.

The passage of time, as Kren and Rappoport note, has made it increasingly evident that a heretofore unbreachable moral and political barrier in the history of Western civilization was successfully overcome by the Nazis in World War II, and that henceforth the systematic, bureaucratically administered extermination of millions of citizens or subject peoples will forever be one of the capacities and temptations of government. A barrier has been overcome in what for millennia had been regarded as the permissible limits of political action. The Nazi Holocaust may just be the logical conclusion of the political institution we call "state," a conclusion that even the most critical anarchist could not have foreseen. It may be the logical conclusion of a rampant capitalism that turns everything and everyone into commodities, some to be processed, exploited, sold, and even disposed of once every drop of profit has been squeezed out of their beings, disposed of on the dump heap of history to be burned, literally like refuse, their by-products used for fertilizer and soap.

The Holocaust was an expression of some of the most significant political, moral, religious, and demographic tendencies of Western civilization in the twentieth century. There were, however, unique elements in the Holocaust. It was the first attempt by a modern, legally constituted government to pursue a policy of bureaucratically organized genocide both within and beyond its own frontiers. As such, it must be distinguished from the use of violence by a state against another state or even against its own people for the purpose of securing compliance with its policies. It is fundamentally different from American nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for example. The American assaults, although unbelievably deadly, ceased as soon as the Japanese surrendered, and never had total annihilation as an objective. German mass violence against Jews, gypsies, and other racially defined "inferior" groups, was intensified after the victims had surrendered. Never before have people been so expendable.

The Nazi elite, as Richard Rubenstein has argued in The Cunning of History, acted upon the assumption that the Jews and gypsies were a surplus people, a surplus commodity, not needed for slave labor since there were potentially tens of millions of Eastern Europeans available for labor exploitation, a surplus people whom nobody wanted and whom they could dispose of as they pleased. Given the moral universe of the twentieth century, the most rational and least costly solution of the problem of disposing of a surplus population, may, tragically, be extermination. It is understood that people can act rationally and be absolutely immoral. Again, given a certain utilitarian and instrumentalist mind set committed to efficiency, practicality, order, control, and predictability, extermination may be the problem-solving strategy least likely to have unanticipated repercussions for its planners, assuming, of course, you win the war. This was certainly true during World War II, when the world, by and large, did little to convince the Nazis that it was seriously opposed to the Nazi policies. Joseph Goebbels, minister of propaganda, who read world public opinion carefully, noted in his diary that free-world inaction is proof that the Germans were in fact doing the world's dirty work for it. Heinrich Himmler frequently reminded his commanders that the world would someday be thankful for what Germany had the iron will to achieve. So from a purely bureaucratic perspective, the extermination of Jews, gypsies, and other racially defined inferior groups made eminent sense. Extermination was the logical conclusion of racism.

Yet, will was insufficient; beyond the desire there had to be the capacity. Usually when we focus upon the possibility of mass death in the twentieth century, we focus upon technological advances in weaponry. Far too little attention has been given to the advances in social organization that allowed for the effective use of the new weapons. In order to understand how the moral barrier was crossed that made massacre in the millions possible, it is necessary to consider the importance of bureaucracy in modern political and social organizations. The German sociologist Max Weber was especially cognizant of its significance. In fact, Weber's analysis of bureaucracy is one of the central points in his general sociology. His key concept of rationalization as a distinctive feature of modern society, especially as linked to his notion of a demystification of the world, finds one of its concrete manifestations in bureaucracy and bureaucratization. Rationalization and demystification are in turn linked to Weber's emphasis on power in all social relationships. Writing in 1916 long before the Nazi party came to power, Weber observed:

> When fully developed, bureaucracy stands under the principle of without scorn and bias. Its specific nature which is welcomed by capitalism developes the more perfectly the more bureaucracy is dehumanized, the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is the specific nature of bureaucracy and it is appraised as its special virtue.[14]

Weber, of course, could not predict that the police and civil service bureaucracies could be used as a death machine to eliminate millions who had been defined as superfluous. Even Weber seems to have stopped short of foreseeing state-sponsored massacres as one of the dehumanizing capacities of bureaucracy. In the Nazi state, or more specifically, in the SS offices in Berlin, an inconspicuous series of offices in an even more inconspicuous building, this occurred. Bureaucrats like Adolph Eichmann manipulated numbers on paper, shuffled these papers to other bureaucrats, and a few hundred miles away tens of thousands of people were condemned to brutal death. They never had to and often never did see the results of their paper-shuffling genocide. Bureaucratic mass murder reached its fullest development when gas chambers with a capacity for killing two thousand people at a time were installed at Auschwitz. As Hannah Arendt has observed, the very size of the chambers emphasized the complete depersonalization of the killing process.

So there seems to be a connection between bureaucracy and mass death. In the case of Jews and gypsies, they were defined as inferior and "legally" deprived of their citizenship. People without political rights are superfluous people. They have lost all rights to life and human dignity. The Nazis, as Arendt has indicated, understood that people have no rights unless they are guaranteed by a state with the power to defend such rights. They were perfectly consistent in demanding that the deportees be made stateless before exterminating them. Once the Germans had collected the stateless, rightless, politically superfluous people, they exercised a domination over them more total than was ever before exercised by one people over another. In the past, political or social domination was limited by the ruler's or the slaveholder's need to permit at least a minimal level of subsistence because of the economic value of the subject peoples. Now, the SS felt they had a potential supply of millions of superfluous people. Those they did not immediately exterminate, they worked under the most brutal conditions, usually for about four months, and then they were annihilated. So the Nazis could create a society of total domination because they had a bureaucratic administration capable of governing with utter indifference to the human needs of the inmates and a supply of inmates capable of continuous replenishment, an invaluable natural resource.

The Final Solution utilized the industrial processes and the managerial techniques that enabled European civilization to prosper. Those mountains of shoes, human hair, eyeglasses, and suitcases that have been imprinted on our mind's eye, were by-products of a modern manufacturing process. They were destined to be reintegrated into the consumer economy. In keeping with the most advanced management techniques, an accurate record of production was maintained, so many units (lives) processed per day and week; and constant improvement of efficiency was encouraged. Rudolf Hoess, the camp commandant of Auschwitz, recalled his achievement in this area: "The Camp Commandant at Treblinka told me that he had liquidated 80,000 in the course of one-half year, he used monoxide gas and I did not think his methods were very efficient. So when I set up the extermination building at Auschwitz, I used Cyclon B /sic/. . . .Another improvement we made over Treblinka was that we built our gas chambers to accommodate 2,000 people at one time, whereas at Treblinka their ten gas chambers only accommodated 200 people each."[15] For Hoess the concentration camp was a mundane extension of normal operational procedures.

No sector of German society was immune, certainly not the corporate community. I.G. Farben, Germany's massive chemical combine, was the most important German corporate user of slave labor at Auschwitz. The corporation's activities at Auschwitz are an important part of the story of the camp as a society of total domination. It invested 700 million Reichsmarks in its Buna synthetic rubber plant at Auschwitz. About 35,000 slaves were used, and at least 25,000 such workers died there. The diet fed to I. G. Farben inmates, which included the infamous "Buna soup," resulted in an average weight loss for each individual of about six to eight and one half pounds a week. At the end of one month, the change in the prisoner's appearance was marked; at the end of four months, they were either dead or so unfit for work that they were released to the gas chambers at Birkenau. The more unfortunate (if this can be imagined) inmates served as human guinea pigs for medical experiments conducted by the Bayer division of I.G. Farben. Similar examples could be drawn from among the greatest German industrial concerns who also used concentration camp inmates—Krupp, AEG, Telefunken, Siemens, BMW, and Rheinmetall, to name only the most important. These companies made tremendous profits, paying dividends to thousands of investors. I.G. Farben made particularly handsome profits from its subsidiary, Degesh, which manufactured Zyklon-B, the gas used in the gas chambers. It was a highly profitable business, which paid 100 to 200 percent dividends in 1942, 1943, and 1944.[16]

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels have observed that the triumph of the capitalist class who owned the means of production had "left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous cash payment."[17] Marx and Engels were pointing to the same kind of "dehumanized" rationalization as had Weber.[18] According to Marx, the bourgeoise had reduced industrial labor to a commodity, like every other article of commerce. As soon as profit and productivity became the sole criteria by which a business enterprise was to be measured, it was in the factory owner's interest to work his employees as long as he could and pay them as little as he could get away with.[19] Marx saw how these abuses operated in mid-nineteenth century England. However, for exploitation to be truly systematic, there needs to be a large pool of unorganized people who have no choice but to work or die--or more accurately put, to work _and_ die. The industrial and corporate use of slave labor in the concentration camps and ghettos took this structural propensity of capitalism to its final conclusion. Human life was cheap, exploitable, and expendable.

This may be what happens when corporate profits and bureaucratic efficiency are the only values left. Mass murder was both a highly complex and successful business venture. The men who carried out the business part of the enterprise were not uniformed thugs or criminals. They were highly competent, respectable, corporate executives who were only doing what they had been trained to do—run large corporations profitably. As long as their institutions functioned efficiently, they apparently had few qualms concerning the uses to which they were put.

It is also interesting to note what became of the directors of these companies. Most of them served very nominal jail terms, usually from one to four years. John McCloy, the U.S. high commissioner, wanted to begin a new relationship with Germany, and so in 1951, through a general act of clemency, he released all the German industrialists then incarcerated. They resumed their corporate elitist positions. These men showed no remorse, defending their decisions as necessary in time of war. One industrialist, Friedrich Flick, who annually contributed 100,000 Reichsmarks to the SS, who personally listened to reports from the Einsatzgruppen, whose firms used Jewish slave labor, had glibly declared at Nuremberg: "Nobody of the large circle of persons who know my fellow defendants and myself will be willing to believe that we committed crimes against humanity, and nothing will convince us that we are war criminals." Flick never paid a penny in compensation to his victims, and when he died in 1972 at the age of 89, he left almost one billion dollars to his son.[20]

Why were people who were responsible for the death of thousands and implicated in the death of millions essentially let free while SS guards received stiff sentences? A society whose prosperity depends upon economic virtuosi capable of applying calculating rationality to large-scale corporate enterprise can ill-afford the loss of highly trained managers. It seems that it just may be possible to argue that the horrors committed by the Nazis in their society of total domination, such as medical experiments and corporate utilization of death-camp slave labor, merely carried to an extreme operational attitudes and procedures that dominate the workings of bureaucracy and modern capitalist corporate enterprise.

The administered society, in constantly eroding all lingering individuality and autonomous structures of civil society, generated internal crises whose successful management required the radical reversal of its main strategy. Jürgen Habermas describes these as the economic, rationality, motivational, and legitimation crises. It seems that successful administration requires at least a minimal lingering negativity to regulate its rationalizing agencies. However, when the controller totally determines the controlled, as was the case in the Nazi period, the necessary dialectical tension between the two which operates before total control as a mediating factor and which imparts to both parties a will which could be asserted tends to disappear, and conflict that would otherwise be resolved within a structure is transformed into the annihilation of one party. At that point, the point of the Holocaust, logical systems change, predictable standards of behavior are breached, meaning and values and knowledge itself are challenged, and the system collapses into absolute negativity, into l'univers concentrationnaire, whose only morality is that everything is possible. The Holocaust was an attempt to own life by controlling the process of death. It was hell literally brought on earth as the human world of all the peoples of Europe was literally turned upside down in the Nazi social organization and became the "kingdom of death." Death now ruled as the symbol of ultimate power. The artist Naphtali Bezem very appropriately portrayed this inverted Nazi world in the Yad Vashem Memorial in Israel with the figure of a woman holding two flaming candlesticks upside down with the flames burning her breasts. Precisely because of this absurdity, the meaning of the Holocaust is impenetrable. Language is inadequate to express the inexpressible. "The Holocaust is so agonizing," writes Steven Schwarzchild, "precisely because it is the ultimate paradox. It imposes silence even while it demands speech." But the moral imperative demands an encounter. For to be human, to exercise one's humanity, is to pose questions and suggest meaning, even in the face of the absurd, of nothingness. It is to this quest, the quest to understand, that this volume is dedicated.

In summary, we believe that these essays suggest the connection between the structural problems and contradictions of Weimar society and their relationship to the rise of fascism; the ineffectual opposition of anti-fascist segments of the population in the face of this crisis, an ineffectuality which in itself has structural dimensions; and the way in which cultural symbols, notions, and ideas also reflect structural tensions. We believe, then, that the essays contained in this collection and our reflections upon them, indicate that there is a connection between socioeconomic tensions, processes of objectification, and the level of anti-Semitism that may have contributed to the Holocaust or made it possible. These essays are, of course, not meant to provide a comprehensive history of Weimar Germany. However, given the limitation of space, it is hoped this book will offer a fresh perspective on key problems in the social and economic history of the Weimar Republic. As a developed capitalist society that proved structurally unstable--socially, economically, and politically--and as a political culture which offered fertile ground for the growth of National Socialism, Weimar Germany continues to demand our attention. And the conclusions to be drawn from its history should offer some insights into and warnings about the society in which we live.

NOTES

[1] See Isidor Wallimann, "Toward a Theoretical Understanding of Ethnic Antagonism: The Case of the Foreign Workers in Switzerland," Zeitschrift für Soziologie 3, no. 1 (February 1974), pp. 84-94. See also Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market," American Sociological Review 37 (October 1972), pp. 547-59; and Bonacich, "A Theory of Middleman Minorities," American Sociological Review 38 (October 1973), pp. 583-94.

[2] Peter Gay, The Berlin Jewish Spirit (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1972), pp. 3-4.

[3] See Martin Jay, "The Jews and the Frankfurt School: Critical Theory's Analysis of Anti-Semitism," New German Critique 19 (Winter 1980), pp. 137-49; Paul Piccone and Russell Berman, "Recycling the 'Jewish Question,'" New German Critique 21 (Fall 1980), pp. 113-28; Anson Rabinbach, "Anti-Semitism Reconsidered: Reply to Piccone and Berman," New German Critique 21 (Fall 1980), pp. 129-41.

[4] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, trans. by John Cumming (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 173.

[5] Ibid., p. 175.

[6] Ibid., p. 168.

[7] Ibid., p. 169.

[8] Ibid., p. 171.

[9] Ibid., p. 172.

[10] Ibid.

[11] See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966).

[12] See Michael Dobkowski, *The Tarnished Dream* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979).

[13] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 187.

[14] Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 215-26.

[15] *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1940), VI, pp. 787-90, Affidavit of Rudolf Hess.

[16] See Joseph Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I. G. Farben* (New York: Free Press, 1980); and Benjamin B. Ferencz, *Less Than Slaves* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

[17] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis S. Feuer (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1959), p. 9.

[18] Weber, "Bureaucracy," p. 223.

[19] Marx and Engels, "Manifesto," p. 14.

[20] See Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I. G. Farben*; and Ferencz, *Less Than Slaves*.

3

Problems in the Social and Economic Development of the Weimar Republic

DIETMAR PETZINA

Translated by Irene Stumberger, Michael N. Dobkowski, and Isidor Wallimann

Many historical accounts narrowly interpret the Weimar Republic as a mere prelude to German Fascism. The questions concerning the independent developments and the new social start following 1918 are fewer than those regarding the realm of social problems that seem to have unavoidably led to the political breakdown of the first German Republic. Indeed, such an evaluation of the first German Republic is understandable since not only its beginning but also its end were marked by serious political and economic crises as well as social conflicts. On the other hand, this interpretation fails to sufficiently acknowledge the unmistakably positive beginnings of the 1920s. There was an astounding revival of art and culture, and German Sozialpolitik (the German government's laws and policies affecting the welfare of the people in social, economic, and cultural terms) was the leading role model internationally, at least until 1929, and despite the continuation of authoritarian traditions in German society, there also existed a widespread democratic trend, whose violent end was by no means predetermined.

The following explications do not claim to be a new interpretation of social behavior and economic processes in the 1920s. Nor do they limit themselves solely to socioeconomic reasons for the collapse of the political system. Rather, they focus upon this epoch's prospects for development which distinguishes the Weimar Republic so notably from the Kaiserreich (German empire). Many of these possibilities were permanently crushed by National Socialism, and others forged the way for the new beginning of the Second Republic following 1945. The self-image of the Federal Republic of Germany, her people, and the institutions they rebuilt were greatly influenced by the manifold Weimar experiences. Therefore, the Weimar Republic does not only form the prelude to National Socialism and the Holocaust; it also forms the prelude for the new democratic beginning after the Second World War.

To attempt to give an all-encompassing account of economic and social developments in the Weimar Republic is not the purpose of this chapter. The intent is simply to extract a few questions from the profusion of problems in order that a framework for the analysis of political and ideological aspects can be formed. These questions are as follows:

1. Which economic liabilities resulting from the First World War especially burdened the Weimar Republic?

2. What changes was German society subjected to? Did these developments correspond to general Western capitalistic patterns or was there something particular to Germany's development that created a special potential for conflict?

3. How did the Weimar governments react to social and economic challenges, that is, to what extent were the administrations prepared and capable of stabilizing the economic foundation of the Republic?

4. Finally, why did German society react politically in such a different and disastrous manner during the worldwide economic crisis as opposed to similar industrial societies in Europe and America?

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STABILIZATION

Contrary to the appearance of drastic change and revolution, social conditions were not fundamentally altered by World War I. Certainly, widespread popular consensus attributed the blame for the war and defeat to the ruling elites of the empire. Nevertheless, no overthrow of influence, power, and prestige patterns resulted. Surely, the nobility that once dominated society lost its social and political privileges. Yet even before 1914, there had been disputes about the aristocracy, and now, just as before, the nobility held many of the republic's important positions in diplomacy and in the military. There was also little change in the traditional dominance of the conservative elites in government, the judicial system, and in the universities. The contradiction between the democratic will to change, on the one hand, and the authoritarian-conservative stubbornness in key centers of power, on the other, became a constitutive element of the Weimar Republic.

Of course, this continuity did not imply a solidification of the ruling strata. Rather, it went hand in hand with a noteworthy shifting of influence within the bourgeoisie and between the industrial bourgeoisie and the quasi-feudal elites. As a result of the world war, class differences revealed themselves more distinctly than in preindustrial times and thereby strengthened the role of the industrial bourgeoisie.[1] More so than before 1914, control of the means of production determined one's material standing, working conditions, the level of workers' lifestyles, and the privileges and welfare of those with possessions. Despite the demarcation of class lines, which had been brought about by the war, social conflicts were not primarily discharged against entrepreneurs. The military state's bureaucratic interventionism turned the workers' protest and the displeasure of many entrepreneurs upon the government authorities. The goal of state intervention between 1915 and 1918 was to guarantee mobilization of the war economy, and government agencies had to force great sacrifices from the workers. On the other hand, the government was neither prepared nor in a position to compensate for these financial burdens with concessions in the political arena, such as trade-union participation in war-related economic decisions and the setting of priorities. Hence, among the masses, opposition to and disappointment with the state and against the political system as a whole grew without the masses simultaneously coming to a questioning of the entrepreneurs' position. These experiences were very much in the foreground when the "Produzentenkartell" (producer cartel) was founded in 1918, consisting of organized labor and entrepreneurs. Thus, the coalition of capital and labor set the political direction for the new state.

In comparison to the economic development before World War I and after the Second World War, the German economy in the period between world wars presents a picture of stagnation.[2] In the 1920s the industrial production and the gross national product per capita barely exceeded the level before 1914. A statistical average contributes little to a description of the economic development and its consequences for the social and political history of the period. Historically more significant was the hectic sequence of critical disturbances and short periods of economic growth that can be identified between the world wars, inflation, the 1924 stabilization crisis, the crisis of 1926, and the Great Depression. Just as the trend in economic growth changed, so did the prewar pattern of economic cycles. Before World War I, highs and lows in the economy corresponded to rhythmical changes, which according to the experience over several decades usually led to a higher level of production. The economic development between world wars differs from the pattern of classical economic cycles. It gave reason for a widespread pessimistic outlook upon future social development. The interpretation of these crises as a sign of a secular breakdown of growth seemed to be confirmed by the Great Depression that had been regarded as a transition to a new epoch by many contemporaries. This notion is certainly understandable if one considers that in the period from 1919 to 1933, nine years can be described as times of crises. Economic and subsequently social structural changes (the shifting career structure, for example) must have unfurled an explosive force far greater in this period of stagnating economic growth than it would have in times of accelerated development. It is advisable to examine economic problems individually before turning to the social structural changes and the role of the state.

The Weimar Republic can be divided into three time periods: The period of postwar crisis and inflation (1919-1923), the following phase of stabilization from 1924-28/29, and finally the phase of the Great Depression. Of course, this sort of periodization overemphasizes the persistent twenty-year-long crisis-character of the Weimar Republic, making the years of economic upswing an exception and lumps the "anomalous" years until 1924 together with the other years.[3] It must be said that the commonly held crisis theory can certainly be verified if one only considers the inflation and its economic and social consequences. But if the criteria of employment and unemployment, industrial production, and gross national product are also considered, there arises a distinct contrast to the traditional points of view. For example, the rate of unemployment from 1920 to 1922 was under 3 percent, thereby nearly reaching the prewar full employment level. Only in 1923, at the height of galloping inflation, did unemployment rise above 20 percent, while the comparable figure rarely fell below 10 percent during the entire period of stabilization after 1924. From 1920 to 1922, the real Gross National Product may likely have reached 80 percent of the prewar level, and the growth of industrial production totaled 100 percent between 1919 and 1922. Despite the uncertainty of all data for the period of inflation, the fact of a distinct industrial postwar boom cannot be overlooked. At the same time, in 1921, other important industrial countries suffered serious production losses, emphasizing to an even greater extent the recovery of the German economy from 1920 to 1922.

However, the rapid recovery should not be overrated in view of the very heavy decline in production at the end of the war. During the war, Germany's industrial production fell to 57 percent of its prewar level and entailed disproportions in the production structure that could only be corrected at the cost of a continued decline in production.

Table 3.1
Index of Industrial Production, 1913–1938 (1928=100)

1913	98	1926	78
1914	81	1927	98
1915	66	1928	100
1916	63	1929	100
1917	61	1930	87
1918	56	1931	70
1919	37	1932	58
1920	54	1933	66
1921	65	1934	83
1922	70	1935	96
1923	46	1936	107
1924	69	1937	117
1925	81	1938	125

Source: Wagenführ, *Industriewirtschaft*, pp. 23 and 64; *Industrie im Kriege*, pp. 166 and 191; *Bevölkerung und Wirtschaft*, S. 176; *Stat. Jb. f. d. Dt. Reich 1941–42*, p. 192.

Until 1922, the upswing (disregarding the greatly lowered production level in comparison to 1913) alleviated problems that immediately followed the war. Above all, it allowed for an easier integration of the returning soldiers into the economic process--although at the cost of a lower productive standard whose extent and consequences were initially covered up by the inflation.

A second divergence from the worldwide economic development appeared when inflation unavoidably led to an economic breakdown while in England, France, and the United States, there was an upswing after the cyclical depression in 1921. At the end of the first five-year period following the war, and at the same time as the beginning of the "normal upswing," the power of the German economy had clearly diminished internationally. According to calculations by the League of Nations, the world industrial production index stood at 121 (1913=100) in 1925, while Germany's production volume had not yet reached its prewar level.

Table 3.2
An International Comparison of Germany's Industrial Production in 1925 (1913=100)

Japan	222	France	114
Italy	157	Sweden	113
USA	148	Austria	95
Australia	141	Germany	95
Czechoslovakia	136	Great Britain	86
India	132	Russia	70
Canada	117	Poland	63

Source: League of Nations, Industrialisation and Foreign Trade, Geneva (1946), p. 134.

Although economic development from 1925 until 1929--the Weimar Republic's period of stability--compared well with prewar levels, Germany still lagged behind the relative development of the majority of other industrial countries at the end of the 1920s. The industrial production of France surpassed its prewar level by 38 percent, that of the United States by 70 percent, and the world average rose approximately 47 percent. In contrast, German production rose by a modest 13 percent, based on its 1920 level. Germany was thus among the losers of the industrial race after the war, even though she placed second to the United States in total potential. Measured by total economic performance, the upswing from the middle of 1926 had already passed its peak by 1928. Just before then, however, from the summer of 1926 to the autumn of 1927, there was a short, hectic rise in economic activity that caused a 50 percent gain in industrial production and even a 70 percent rise in the production of capital goods within a year. Already by the third quarter of 1927, the peak of economic activity had been passed--a sign of the instability of the cyclical upswing. Early indications of the world economic crisis surfaced by 1929. In that year, capital investments and industrial production were below the previous year, and by 1932 the national income declined by as much as 43 percent in relation to 1929. The data of various individual economic sectors confirm, if with varying degrees of intensity, the development of the national economic output. In 1932-1933, the production index of German industry fell to half of its 1928 standing and to one-third in capital goods production, which are particularly sensitive to crises. During the world economic crisis, there was not only a decline of the industrial investment volume, but also an absolute decrease in the existing capital stock. Over a span of years, signs of a crisis emerged everywhere, a crisis which was without precedent in the history of industrial capitalism. The extremely quick rise in unemployment was the most severe social indicator of the crisis. At the peak of unemployment in 1932, statistics indicated that six million people were unemployed in Germany. The actual number was probably considerably higher, since many who had been unemployed for years no longer received state aid and therefore weren't included in the statistics. It is most likely that every third worker was unemployed in 1932. The quota of unemployed in industrial trade unions clearly rose above 40 percent. A review of unemployment in selected countries points to the special problems which confronted German society in its crisis.

Table 3.3
Unemployment in Selected Countries, 1919-1939 (Percent of labor force unemployed)

Year	Germany[a]	Great Britain[b]	USA[c]	Sweden[d]	France[e]
1919	3.7	5.2	3.4	5.5	
1920	3.8	3.2	5.8	5.4	
1921	2.8	17.0	16.9	26.6	5.0
1922	1.5	14.3	10.9	22.9	2.0
1923	10.2	11.7	4.6	12.5	2.0
1924	13.1	10.3	8.0	10.1	3.0
1925	6.8	11.3	5.9	11.0	3.0
1926	18.0	12.5	2.8	12.2	3.0
1927	8.8	9.7	5.9	12.0	11.0
1928	8.6	10.8	6.4	10.6	4.0
1929	13.3	10.4	4.7	10.2	1.0
1930	22.7	16.1	13.0	11.9	2.9
1931	34.3	21.3	23.3	16.8	6.5
1932	43.8	22.1	34.0	22.4	15.4
1933	36.2	19.9	35.3	23.3	14.1
1934	20.5	16.7	30.6	18.0	13.8
1935	16.2	15.5	28.4	15.0	14.5
1936	12.0	13.1	23.9	12.7	10.4
1937	6.9	10.8	20.0	10.8	7.4
1938	3.2	12.9	26.4	10.9	7.8

Source: Stanley Lebergott, *Annual Estimates of Employment in the United States 1900-1950*, Walter Galenson, Arnold Zellner, "International Comparison of Unemployment Rates," in *The Measurement and Behavior of Unemployment*, ed. by NBER (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

a) Only trade union members until 1932.
b) Unemployed determined on the basis of unemployment insurance.
c) Unemployed as percent of the non-agrarian work force.
d) Trade union statistics.
e) Unemployed covering non-self-employed wage and salary earners in mining, construction, and industry.

The statistical indicators, particularly the data on unemployment, suggest that next to the United States, Germany was hit the hardest by the Great Depression. Between 1930 and 1934, the average rate of unemployment fluctuated around 30 percent in both countries. Nevertheless, this crisis pattern was also typical for other industrial nations although characterized by less intensity or by a certain time lag. In Germany and in the United States, the economic world crisis reached an exceptional magnitude due to mutually enforcing causes after an economic boom lasting several years covered up the unstable character of the countries' economic systems following the war. On the whole, the United States experienced a more stable development than Germany. This can be recognized by the low rate of unemployment from 1924 to 1929 amounting to merely 5.6 percent in the United States as opposed to 11 percent in Germany.

ECONOMIC SECTOR SHIFTS DURING THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

Disregarding the inhibitors of growth and the cyclical irregularities, shifts typical for the industrialization process continued during the Weimar Republic. They were to the advantage of industry and the tertiary sector and to the disadvantage of agriculture.

Table 3.4
Working Population according to Economic Sectors, 1907-1939
(percent of labor force)

Year	Agriculture and Forestry	Industry and Trade	Tertiary Sector			
			Total	Trade and Commerce	Public and Private Services	Domestic Help
1907	35.2	40.1	24.8	12.4	6.2	6.2
1925	30.5	42.1	27.4	16.4	6.6	4.4
1933	28.9	40.4	30.7	13.5	8.3	3.9
1939	25.9	42.2	31.9	17.5	10.5	3.9

Source: *Stat. d. Dt. Reiches* Vol. 203, p. 2 f. (1907); Vol. 757, H. 24, p. 2 f. (Saargebiet 1939); *Stat. Jb. f. d. Dt. Reich 1941/42*, p. 33 (1925-39).

By approximately 1890, the industrial sector--measured by the number of people employed and their productivity--had already moved agriculture to the second position in the national economic structure. Thereafter, agriculture continuously lost economic importance although no corresponding decrease of influence in society and government occurred. Even so, this process still emphasized the rapid decline in the social impact of the agrarian socioeconomic sphere and life-style on the total social development of Germany between the world wars. From 1907 to 1925, at least 1.5 million people left their jobs in agriculture. The sample years, chosen on the basis of occupational census data, do not reveal the entire process of sectoral change. The displacement of agriculture and its social manifestation--the migration from the country to the towns--experienced periods of acceleration as well as deceleration.

The First World War, the agricultural business cycles, and the absence of an industrial pull during the Great Depression held up the migration out of agriculture, while the relative industrial prosperity of the latter half of the 1920s strengthened it. It is noteworthy that the agrarian migration reached a climax during the reign of National Socialism even though its ideology allotted the farmers a privileged position. In view of the long-term pattern of change in the sectoral structure, this is by no means surprising. While the number of people engaged in agriculture continued to decrease during the economic world crisis, the corresponding increase in the industrial sector was halted for the first time. A development that had persisted throughout the First World War and the great inflation was thus thrust back to prewar conditions at the end of the Great Depression. This slowdown of industrialization, even if just temporary, illuminated the social irregularities caused by the economic crisis. At the same time, the overproportional increase of people employed in trade and commerce is also an expression of a crisis phenomenon. The rush into trade professions was frequently the desperate attempt of the unemployed to find jobs at any cost.

The characteristic process of development for an industrial society--increasing wage and salary employment and decreasing self-employment--continued through the 1920s. Every fifth person employed in 1907 was self-employed; only every eighth by 1925. Of course, this overlooks different processes that took place within economic sectors. Independent craftsmen, whose decline had been predicted by contemporaries before the First World War, were actually able to expand operations between the wars. The number of people employed in craft trades rose from 2.5 million to 4.9 million between 1895 and 1939.[4] The social consequences of this development were significant. Craftsmen found their place within industrial capitalism after fighting the threatening dominance of industry for decades. Accordingly, the trades gave up their anticapitalistic position and started to align with industry on social-political questions. In turn, industry realized that consideration of petty bourgeois segments would be in the interest of their own stability.

On the other side, the number of self-employed farmers had already been decreasing before the First World War. This development accelerated even farther in the 1930s. While the number of independent farmers decreased to about 300,000 from 1907 to 1925, this category stabilized from 1925 to 1933, only to again fall by 200,000 during the period of National Socialism. The Great Depression's motto, "Selbständigkeit aus Not" (Independence out of Necessity), was responsible for this slowdown in the shrinking process during the Weimar Republic. Remarkably, despite the fascists' claim upon "Rettung des Mittelstandes" (Saving the Middle Class), a relatively larger portion of the middle class had to give up their self-employment after 1933 than during the Weimar Republic.

With the decline in self-employment brought about by the accelerated concentration of factories and the means of production, there was a corresponding predictable rise in number of blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, and civil servants. Here, however, the crucial social-structural changes took place in relation to the proportional growth of these groups. Only the industrial working class remained relatively stable. Their share of the total labor force fell from 55 percent to 50 percent between 1907 and 1925 and remained at that level during the 1930s.

In contrast, the size of the white-collar employee class changed dramatically. In 1883, white-collar workers numbered 300,000; in 1925, there were approximately 3.5 million. They fell into the fields of commerce, transportation, banking, and insurance. The increase of white-collar employees in industry was not quite as steep; only every eighth employee belonged to the "new middle class," whereas in the tertiary sector more than half of the wage laborers could be considered white-collar employees. A better-than-average representation was held by those white-collar employees in new industries--which had already expanded heavily before the First World War and were also the leading sectors of industrial growth in the Weimar Republic. The emergence of scientific methods in production, swelling bureaucratization, and the growing share of tertiary production represented in the gross national product triggered and fostered this movement. The difference between white-collar and blue-collar employees cannot be clearly established economically and is of little practical significance. Yet these differences were fundamental for understanding social roles and political behavior. The efforts to cut oneself off from classes below in the interest of securing one's own personal status, created an antiproletariet self-image that seemed to be especially susceptible to fascist slogans during the Great Depression.[5] In this way, large numbers of white-collar employees, along with the old Mittelstand, made up the mass basis of the National Socialist regime.

Theodor Geiger's[6] data clarifies how great the potential for radical movement was by showing--with data based on a population and business census--how German society was stratified in 1925. He estimated that at least half of the population belonged to groups that felt their status was threatened from "oben" (above) and "unten" (below), by big business and the proletariat, in the event of a crisis.

Table 3.5
Stratifications of German Society, 1925

Strata	Percentage	Groups	Mentality
Capitalists	0.92	Large entrepreneurs, large landholders, wealthy retirees	Shocked by the "crisis in capitalist thought"
Old *Mittelstand*	17.77	Self-employed individuals in medium and small businesses in trade, craftsmanship, and agriculture	Tendency to revert to the "culture of early capitalist society"; defensive posture in order to maintain one's own social status
New *Mittelstand*	17.95	Civil servants, white-collar employees, academics	"their social positions are historically new"; ideologically unsteady
Proletarianized	12.65	Old *Mittelstand* which has lost previous socioeconomic position; small farmers, cottage laborers, craftsmen working without employees in tertiary sector	Tendency to resign, but during times of crisis tendency to "harsh rebelliousness"
Proletariat	50.71	Workers in industry and agriculture	Moderately Marxist

Source: Th. Geiger, *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes*, Stuttgart 1932, pp. 73, 77, 82–105, quoted from Werner Abelshauser, *Sozialer Wandel zwischen den Weltkriegen*, unpublished manuscript (Bochum, Ruhr-Universität, 1980).

ECONOMIC CONTINUITIES AND GROWTH DURING THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

It has become clear that the economic structures and problems characteristic of the two decades after the First World War are basically so different from those of the period before 1914 that every comparison of these two periods of German history becomes problematic. For the contemporaries of the 1920s and early 1930s, prewar conditions may have seemed like a golden age, particularly in the realm of economics, where continuing expansion until World War I mitigated the struggle between classes over the distribution of the national product. In contrast, the decades between the wars were characterized by stagnation, serious economic crises, inflation, and self-aggravating social conflicts. It is not surprising, then, that a majority of the German people often viewed the Weimar Republic as a dismal reflection of the prosperous times before the war.

Of course, identifying the source of the difficulties exclusively as the military defeat and its effects was only half the truth. It is true that the world war placed too heavy a demand on national resources and simultaneously destroyed the international currency, finance, and trade system with serious consequences for Germany; it is also likely that, during the war, traditions of state and administrative bureaucracy arose which blocked a swift, private, capitalistic reconstruction as well as a clear Socialist alternative. It is also indisputable that the war frequently strengthened tendencies that had already been formed before the war and thus influenced the future economic development of the Weimar Republic.

The continuation of earlier trends is applicable to the monopolization of the economy and the changes that were thereby brought about in the economic system. The military bureaucracy hastened this process with the help of the war industry, the establishment of state production controls, and the regulation of resources and goods, but it did not initiate it. In Germany, a collapse of the liberal-capitalistic competition mechanisms and a changeover to a system organized by syndicates, big business associations, and state bureaucracy had been already noticed by the 1890s. Therefore, it would be a reversal of cause and effect if one merely wished to view the monopolization of the 1920s as a result of the war.

Further continuities exist. Although the ruin of the liberal world-trade system after 1918 was a direct consequence of the war, there were signs as early as the 1880s of a neomercantilist protection of trade. Such tendencies appeared in all of the European countries after the turn of the century. The government's influence upon the economy, however, intensified during the course of the war. Out of the humble beginnings of the War Nutrition and Resources Administration, a bureaucratized war economy developed as of 1916 and subjected every phase of production and distribution to public regulation. But even here, at least in the very important raw material industries, prices and sales usually ceased to be determined by market mechanisms and were increasingly submitted to cartel agreements in the various spheres of production.

Finally, in Germany, governmental influence was traditionally more significant than in other large industrial countries. Decades before the First World War, the government obtained significant shares of heavy industry and developed into one of the largest bankers. The Gemeindesozialismus (socialism of the communities) promoted an expansive public assistance program even before the turn of the century. In addition, Germany's individual social security system for old age, illness, and invalids had already been carried over from the Bismarck era's quasi-governmental institutions. The example of governmental intervention therefore demonstrates that many social and economic political problems after 1918 only can be understood if the interventionist mechanisms created since the 1890s and the corporatist penetration of the economy are taken into consideration. This, however, does not mean that the significance of the war should be underestimated because without it, these tendencies would probably have just appeared in weakened form and after a time, dissipated.

The immediate economic problems of the new Republic were without question direct results of the war. They partially resulted from the stipulations of the peace treaty and partially from the economic waste of the war years. According to the peace treaty, Germany had to surrender one-tenth of its territory and population. Although East Prussia and parts of West Prussia were less economically important agricultural regions, the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, East-Upper Silesia and the Saarland were a heavy burden on the economic balance. It was in these areas that a large part of German industry's valuable natural resources were located--for example, one-fourth of the coal production. The turning over of the merchant marine without compensation and the loss of German assets abroad caused similar difficulties since their revenues before the war were important elements of Germany's positive balance of trade and payments. The losses of these assets directly affected only the large banks and the relevant industries, but even the social democratic government could not remain indifferent to the wide-reaching consequences. After 1918, the revenues from services and foreign capital were no longer available for leveling a trade balance that had already been negative before the war. Yet, more than ever, the German economy needed a positive balance of payments because of political burdens. This was above all true because, with their reparation demands, the victorious allies, at least immediately after the war, had counted upon hindering Germany for several generations.

The allies actually carried through more realistic policies within a few years, due above all to pressure from the United States, which was persistently interested in an economic exchange with Germany. Notwithstanding the importance of the question of reparation for the Weimar Republic's foreign and domestic policy, the economic politics and the economic development of Germany were on the whole less affected by it than was feared in the first few years following the war. The original astronomically high reparation claim of 132 billion marks (which was double the nation's prewar income) did not harm the German economy, since there was no point in time when it was required to carry the full burden. Between 1924 and 1932, 20 billion marks were transferred abroad, but simultaneously, the same amount of foreign capital flowed back into Germany, particularly from the United States. As paradoxical as it may seem, the reparation problem worked like an economic stimulant, thanks mostly to the lending policies to which it was tied. Close analysis unmasks as mythical the connection between economic instability and payments abroad, claimed by all German parties at the time. Still, this economic relativity does not diminish the political weight of the reparations. Reparation payments served as a permanent leverage for right-radical agitation up until the 1930s and had considerable political and psychological significance.

The second major economic problem of the 1920s developed out of the inflation. The German public also simplified the causes of inflation by seeing its origins solely in the reparations requirements. Actually, the inflation was a liability resulting from the war, specifically from the method of financing the war. In 1918, Germany's debts amounted to 150 billion marks--approximately twice the sum of the national income in 1913. To pay this debt and the interest upon it would have required greater means than the entire national expenditures before the war. To have avoided the development from war-time inflation to galloping depreciation of the currency, the imbalance between the circulation of money and the real production possibilities should have been corrected. That, however, would have meant cutting the nation's debt drastically by splitting the value of the currency and by not allowing the national budget to be a continuing source of inflation.

Each of these alternatives was unpopular, and actually, all of the European countries that had participated in the war were harassed by inflation after the war. Of course, the clearest sign of this was the devaluation of the German currency, since the government did nothing until 1922 to limit the potential of inflation. On the contrary, the government contributed to the process of inflation through the increasing budget deficit and through the large-scale printing of money. The government's revenues amounted to 13.2 billion Marks from 1920 to 1922, whereas expenditures came to 33.3 billion, based upon the value of the gold mark before the First World War. This immense deficit economy not only promoted the devaluation of the currency, but caused the postwar boom at the same time. In this fashion, the state remained capable of engaging in Sozialpolitik, which was significant in view of the revolutionary pressures at home. The accompanying full employment policy helped to create jobs, thus easing the worker's integration into the new system, particularly since the government spent twice as much as in 1913 despite a greatly diminished gross national product.[7]

Those hurt by this inflationary policy (which did not end until the complete collapse of the currency in 1923) were, above all, the old middle class. Employees and industrialists profited from the inflation in their own way, whether through full employment or through large profits. Thus, a silent coalition of interests arose (consisting of government, big business, and trade unions) against which small businesses and owners of money wealth were powerless. Until 1923, their wealth and claims on government and business were worthless paper. It is difficult to determine who was really harmed, since even within the Mittelstand, there were groups who, as debtors, profited from the inflation. Farmers and owners of tenement buildings belonged to such groups. Then there is, finally, the insoluble question of to whom the "inflation gains" on the part of the state can be attributed, since plausible estimates are not available of how public expenditures during the inflation affected the various classes. In any case, the temporary advantage for the governments was politically insured; it could credit itself with the liquidation of state debt and the avoidance of unemployment. The owners of tangibles, generally including entrepreneurs, also benefited. Yet in the long run, damages to the German democracy far surpassed the advantages to individual groups. The economic ruin of a part of the Mittelstand increased their susceptibility to right-wing political radicalism. The radicalization of the Mittelstand was also encouraged by the economic concentration promoted by inflation and the connected loss of status suffered by small manufacturers, traders, and craftsmen.

All groups benefited from the prosperity phase following the stabilization crisis of 1923-24. However, they did so to markedly different degrees. The civil servants could not regain their privileged prewar position. For workers and white-collar employees, however, the real wages and salaries increased relatively significantly, that is, 26 percent and 16 percent respectively.[8] Considering the impoverishment of the population during the war and inflation periods, this did not mean that mass prosperity had set in, as was the case in the United States. Nevertheless, the population enjoyed a relatively low level of unemployment and experienced political and social stability on the domestic front. During the five years from 1924 to 1929, important progress in the Sozialpolitik, improvements in living conditions, and an expansion of the public infrastructure could be achieved. The distribution of income within German society shifted in favor of workers and employees at the expense of those who derived their income from money wealth or property.[9] The share of wage and salary incomes increased from 70.9 percent of the GNP in 1910-13 to 87.3 percent of the GNP in 1925-29.

Only after the fascists rose to power did this percentage—during a period of growth in the military industrial complex (1935-38)—fall again to 78 percent of the GNP.

The development in private income confirms this trend favoring wage and salary earners. Between 1913 and 1928, private incomes increased from 66.1 billion to 72.7 billion marks. Simultaneously, the income of the self-employed segments decreased from 23 billion to 18 billion marks, and the income derived from wealth and rent decreased from 10 billion to 3.6 billion marks. In contrast, wages, salaries, pensions, and various supporting transfer payments jumped from 33.6 to 51 billion marks.

After World War I, the most severe losses were experienced by those who derived income from money wealth. Inflation erased the rentier category just as it erased a large portion of the self-employed and dependent Mittelstand's wealth. In this manner, income derived from wages rose in the 1920s faster than the income of the self-employed. In 1925, the average income of the non-self-employed amounted to 48 percent of that of the self-employed, as compared to 40 percent in 1913.[10] All in all, the non-self-employed could count themselves among the modest beneficiaries of an economic development in which their real income reached the prewar level sometime between 1925 and 1929. In part, this was also due to increased state transfer payments, which to a larger extent went to the non-self-employed than to groups with a higher income. Average figures, however, hide the redistribution of income within the wage-and-salary-earner category, which consisted primarily in a decrease of the spread in inequality.[11] Before the First World War, the income gap between the skilled and unskilled workers was markedly larger than in 1918. The same pattern also held for civil servants and white-collar employees.

The farmers' income trend deviated from that of the wage and salary earners. The years of relative prosperity were accompanied by a worldwide depression in agriculture so that, by 1928, the income gap between the farmers and the rest of the population amounted to 44 percent.[12] During the last prewar year, however, this gap was only half as large. Decreasing yields per acre during the war, an international price collapse for agricultural products, and, finally, the stagnation in the consumption of agricultural products led to a noticeable worsening of the farmers' social position. Although most of the farmers could pay back their debts during the inflation period, only a few years later they became just as indebted as before. By the end of the 1920s, therefore, the farmers proved to be a source of political radicalism, particularly in Germany's Protestant north and east. Also, this turning away from the republic, as reflected in voting behavior, could not be prevented by the voluminous support and subsidy programs, of which agriculture was the main beneficiary. On the contrary, Brüning, the last not openly antidemocratic

Chancellor of the republic, failed despite his active agricultural policy in the fall of 1932 because of a coalition of dissatisfied entrepreneurs and large landholders. The fruits of this crisis, here as elsewhere, were reaped by the National Socialists.

CONCLUSION

Through its policies, the state influenced the course of development in the economy and society for some years. However, it did not provide the German population with a fundamentally new, anticapitalist perspective. Similarly, the Social Democrats showed little inclination in 1919-20 to put into effect the prewar demands (which were part of their party program) for state planning and the socialization of the means of production. The question must even be asked whether or not they would have been able to do so since, in parliament they depended on the cooperation of the left-liberal bourgeoisie. In place of fundamental reforms, capitalist market mechanisms began to assert themselves again throughout the economy after a short transition period. Facing the extra-parliamentary worker and soldiers' council movement, the parliamentary left--given the relative strength of the council movement--shied away from a conflict with traditional powers. It believed itself to be dependent on the cooperation of the conservatively minded state bureaucracy. The parliamentary left was also afraid that fundamental socialistic changes in the economic system would prevent rather than facilitate, solutions for the Republic's already grave economic problems. It therefore was logical that, of the socialization promises of 1919, only the rudiments remained, concerning primarily state influenced cartels in coal and potassium production. However, these arrangements had little in common with socialism, since large enterprises again enjoyed the most influence.

It would nevertheless be unjustified to blame the Social Democratic chancellors of the first postwar years for merely restoring traditional capitalism. A shift of power in favor of the state and away from private capital did occur, since the various governments gained influence in many, mostly indirect, ways.

The increased volume of government spending alone strengthened the role of the state as a redistributing agent of the GNP. Thus, Weimar coalition governments were at least in a position to correct some of the undesired social effects of the private market system. This new interventionism also caused a strengthening of the federal government's institutions at the expense of the competencies of various states and communities. It therefore promoted a trend that countered the historically fostered German federalism.

The most remarkable area of the state's new activities--and at the same time expressive of the most positive political changes as compared to the Kaiserreich--was that of Sozialpolitik.

Because of its multidimensionality, it became in many ways a model for the new post-World War I German welfare state interventionism. Three areas of this Sozialpolitik were particularly exemplary: The continued development in (1) labor law, (2) housing and public health, and finally, (3) the extension of communal services. The introduction of the eight-hour day (which was one of the first measures taken after the revolution) became symbolic of a number of labor-law changes through which relations between classes were to become newly regulated. Of particular importance for the social reality of the 1920s was the introduction of the collective labor law, mainly because it included an official recognition of collective bargaining. In part, however, these laws, supplemented by the law regulating the introduction of worker representation on the factory level (Betriebsräte) of privately owned firms, had only tended to confirm what had become social reality. The relationship between labor unions and entrepreneurs had already begun to change by the First World War. This found its expression in the founding of a central cooperative body (Zentrale Arbeitsgemeinschaft), which included unions and business associations. Within this framework, new industry-wide labor contracts and new limited forms of cooperation were agreed upon. Although this body rapidly lost its practical significance after 1921, its political-psychological significance was nevertheless important at the beginning of the Republic. On the one hand, it pointed the way for the collective labor law that later became a part of the Weimar Sozialpolitik; on the other hand, it demonstrated labor's and business's will to independently deal with labor market issues, particularly since the state had not yet become fully stabilized. The cooperation between these organized social forces had been questioned from the very beginning, initially within labor unions and later, after consolidation of their own power position had taken place, among entrepreneurs. Many union members saw in this cooperation merely the continuance of the truce maintained during the war and believed that the entrepreneurs' concessions reflected their fear of a revolutionary change in society. Indeed, this cooperation was initially more advantageous for the entrepreneurs than for the workers since it implied that capitalist power relationships were in principle accepted by the unions. In the face of the growing self-consciousness evident among union rank and file members--which in part was due to the drastic increase in union membership--the union leadership, after 1920, had to distinctly emphasize the gap between itself and the entrepreneurs. This was not easily possible within the Zentrale Arbeitsgemeinschaft. No small matter, union membership increased from 3 million in 1913--after a low of 1.2 million during the war--to 9.2 million in 1920. The unions' cooperation with the class enemy, coupled with this expansion in membership, allowed them to strongly influence legislation concerning work and collective bargaining. At least at the beginning of the Republic, they could also affect the state's Sozialpolitik. This was short-lived, however, since union power peaked by 1921-22. During the period of inflation, membership decreased by 50 percent and, after 1924, the unions were only one interest group among others. They enjoyed more influence than they had had before 1914, but it was a meager accomplishment if measured by the hopes and expectations held by a majority of the workers in 1918.

The Weimar state was relatively late in beginning to influence the producer cartel of entrepreneurs and unions. The constitution had provided a many-faceted role for the state in the area of Sozialpolitik.

The governments, however, limited themselves initially to securing, on the labor market, the social compromises made by the parties. Even the already mentioned worker factory representation law (Betriebsrätegesetz) of 1920 was only the continuation of a policy initiated during World War I. Only when, during the period of inflation, the unions' and entrepreneurs' ability to compromise declined, was the state practically forced to increasingly influence the nature of collective bargaining agreements and wage policies by resorting to forced arbitration. Virtually all important collective bargaining agreements between 1924 and 1932 were the result of such forced arbitration. This indicates that the 1918 agreed-upon free play of forces on the labor market did not function. For their part, unions evaluated the state's intervention positively until the Great Depression. With wage disputes, state arbitration tended to be more in favor of workers than of entrepreneurs, which induced the entrepreneurs to fundamentally question this system in 1928.[13] Only during the Great Depression and at a time of rigorously pursued deflationary and economic cleansing policies was state arbitration used against the workers. These different experiences during the various phases of the Weimar Republic explain why in 1945 neither entrepreneurs nor unions were willing to institutionalize state arbitration.

A quantitative expression of the state's Sozialpolitik was the quadrupling of public expenditures for social purposes since 1913. This occurred despite a stagnating GNP.[14] During the same time span, 1913–30, total public expenditures doubled and the expenditures for education increased by 60 percent. In contrast, defense expenditures decreased to less than one-third of its prewar level. An example of this new form of Sozialpolitik was the state's public housing program. Before the war, only about every tenth apartment had been cofinanced by the state. Between 1919 and 1930 this increased to 80 percent. These measures markedly improved the problem of shortages in apartments, but did not fully overcome it.

The decade from 1919 to 1929, it can be concluded, brought about a qualitatively new welfare-state interventionism, which could have corrected the market's distribution processes but only indirectly influenced the capitalist economic structure. Attempts on the part of the German left to fundamentally change the system; for example, through socialization of means of production or through workers and soldier councils, remained without practical consequences and fell apart almost from the outset. Despite all the opposition against Sozialpolitik and hidden socialization (Kalte Sozialisierung) the entrepreneurs would certainly have been able to live with this sociopolitical class struggle compromise, and farsighted industrialists promoted it. State redistribution efforts seldom hindered free-market activity; often it supplemented or even promoted it. However, even this welfare-state reformism broke apart during the Great Depression because of the consensus destroying tactics employed by big business and big agriculture interests who believed, in 1930, that the time for a turn around had come. Their cry against deficit spending, politically realized by the vigorously pursued deflationary policy at the expense of employees under Chancellors Brüning, Papen, and Schleicher, liquidated all important welfare-state measures even before 1933. As regards to Sozialpolitik, therefore, Hitler did not represent a new beginning. On the contrary, he systematically pursued those conservative ideologies that had become guide posts of German political thinking by 1931-32.

It would be incorrect, however, to conclude from the increase in conservative and authoritarian tendencies, the inevitability of fascism. Until the September elections of 1930, the NSDAP--although making lots of noise--was an insignificant splinter group on the right of the German party spectrum. Only the very critical combination of economic crisis, unemployment, conservative-authoritarian undermining of the constitutional welfare state, and the radical-nationalist agitation gave the NSDAP a chance to quantitatively become an important movement. Despite its power monopoly, however, it even failed in 1933 to gain an absolute majority. Its mass basis did not consist of those who suffered most from the Great Depression--the workers--but of the broad spectrum of Mittelstand groups in the city and the country who became economically threatened and felt socially insecure. They were supplemented by socially uprooted, unemployed, young students without much of a professional future and former soldiers lacking bonds to the civilized order of everyday democratic life. During times of economic crisis, the diffuse anticapitalism of the German population did not stabilize the Republic. Instead it destroyed it because it lacked a progressive change-oriented perspective. It is the ironic tragedy of the Weimar Republic that the National Socialists' anticapitalist slogans became democracy's death song. In its place came a system which not only stood for fanatical racism and the Holocaust, but which also robbed the majority of Germans of the modest fruits gained by the century-long struggle for a constitutional and democratic welfare state.

NOTES

[1] Jürgen Kocka, *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg: Deutsche Sozialgeschichte 1914-1918*, 2d ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht Verlag, 1978).

[2] Dietmar Petzina and Werner Abelshauser, "Zum Problem der relativen Stagnation der deutschen Wirtschaft in den zwanziger Jahren," in Hans Mommsen, Dietmar Petzina, Bernard Weisbrod (eds.), *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1974).

[3] Dietmar Petzina, *Die deutsche Wirtschaft in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1977).

[4] See also Wolfram Fischer and Peter Czada, *Wandlungen der deutschen Industriestruktur im 20. Jahrhundert*, in Gerhard A. Ritter (ed.) *Entstehung und Wandel der modernen Gesellschaft. Festschrift fur Hans Rosenberg* (Berlin: de Gruyter Verlag, 1970), pp. 155-65.

[5] Characteristic of this is the attitude of the *Gesamtverband der Angestellten (GDA)*, a democratically inclined association of white-collar employees. For an analysis, see Jürgen Priamus, *Angestellte und Demokratie* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1979).

[6] Theodor Geiger, *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Enke Verlag, 1967).

[7] Peter-Christian Witt, "Finanzpolitik und socialer Wandel in Krieg und Inflation," in *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung*, Mommsen, Petzina, and Weisbrod, pp. 395-425.

[8] See also D. Petzina, W. Abelshauser, and A. Faust, Socialgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch III, Materialien zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches 1918-1945 (München: Beck Verlag, 1978), Table 18.

[9] D. Petzina, "Materialien zum sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Wandel in Deutschland seit dem Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts," Vierteljahrshefte fur Zeitgeschichte, vol. 17, 1969.

[10] Sozialgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch III, p. 106.

[11] Ibid., pp. 98, 107.

[12] George Castellan, "Zur sozialen Bilanz der Prosperität," in Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung, pp. 104-110.

[13] Hans-Hermann Hartwich, Arbeitsmarkt, Verbände und Staat 1918-1933 (Berlin: de Gruyter Verlag, 1967).

[14] As to the structure of government expenditures, see Suphan Andic and Jindrich Veverka, "The Growth of Government Expenditure in Germany since the Unification," Finanzarchiv, N.F., 23 (1964).

4

The Social Origins of Nazism: The Rural Dimensions

TIMOTHY A. TILTON

The Nazis attracted disproportionately large support in rural areas. Their greatest electoral successes came in such rural districts as Schleswig-Holstein (the only electoral district to give the Nazis an absolute majority before the party came to power), Lower Saxony, Pomerania, and Mecklenburg. Within these provinces, the Nazis drew their strongest support in rural areas; in Schleswig-Holstein, for example, rural communities cast 63.3 percent of their votes for the NSDAP in July 1932, while urban centers cast 44.3 percent for the NSDAP.[1] The percentage of peasants and farmers joining the party sometimes lagged behind the voting results, but the intensity of rural support for Hitler was strong. The Strategic Bombing Survey reported that rural areas manifested the highest war morale.[2] Above all, it was the party's breakthrough in the countryside from 1928 to 1932 that gave it political importance.

How can one explain the susceptibility of the countryside to Nazi appeals? First, one must discern which rural voters backed the NSDAP. Then, by analyzing the party's development, its appeals, its organization, and its opposition, one can hope to understand why these voters enlisted under the Nazi banner. Both of these steps are essential: Only by comprehending which individual voters lent their support is it possible to appreciate the causes of the Nazis' success. To bring intellectual order to the plethora of sociological and psychological explanations of nazism, it is essential to penetrate to the motivation of these individual voters. Who the rural Nazi supporters were and why they gave their support constitute the focus of this chapter.

Hitler's early plans for the seizure of power envisioned a coup similar to that of Mussolini's in Italy. By building support in the cities and by developing an armed force, the Nazis could seize control of the dominant means of production, transportation, communication, administration, and violence. The turn from this strategy to a more rural and electoral orientation took place between 1924 and 1928. Two factors conditioned this change of emphasis: First, Hitler's dismal failure in the Beer-Hall Putsch of 1923, his subsequent imprisonment, and the restrictions upon his political activity convinced him that the NSDAP must pursue a strategy that would at least appear legal and parliamentary. Second, the party's unimpressive showing in urban areas in the 1928 Reichstag elections and its surprising success in such rural regions as Schleswig-Holstein, parts of Hanover, and Franconia prompted a redirection of effort.

A week after the 1928 elections, the party newspaper carried an article demonstrating how the party's rural successes produced a shift in strategy:

> The election results in the country show that with less expenditure of effort, money and time greater successes can be achieved there than in the large towns. National Socialist mass meetings in small towns and market communities are important events and form the topic of daily conversation for weeks afterwards, while in the large towns meetings even with 3,000 and 4,000 people sink into insignificance and pass away.[3]

From this point the NSDAP, in Orlow's words, "deliberately set out to become the political party that gave the most blatant expression to the fears and prejudices of the middle- and particularly the lower-middle-classes in the rural and small-town regions of Germany.[4]

These efforts bore fruit in the 1929 local elections and then dramatically in the 1930 Reichstag election when the NSDAP became the second largest party in the state, attracting 6.4 million voters and electing 107 Reichstag deputies. The party's greatest support came from agricultural and middle-class (especially lower-middle-class) regions in Protestant northern Germany. In Catholic districts and urban working-class districts, the party fared much poorer. In 1931 and 1932 the NSDAP seized control of major agricultural interest organizations, gaining power from the grass roots up. In the July 1932 Reichstag elections, the party registered impressive gains virtually everywhere, but again its greatest strength lay in the rural north; it lagged in southern Germany and industrial areas. The November elections and subsequent local elections produced NSDAP setbacks everywhere, but the March 1933 elections (held after the Nazis controlled the state machinery) produced enormous Nazi majorities in rural areas, although the Nazis still failed to achieve a majority of the votes in the nation as a whole. These global data demonstrate the Nazis' appeal for the Protestant rural middle class, but for a more discriminating view one needs to consult regional studies.

Rudolf Heberle's pioneering research continues to be the most valuable of a growing collection of excellent regional and local investigations. Heberle's sensitive analysis of electoral patterns in Schleswig-Holstein begins with a sketch of the three major geographic areas of the province: The lush west coast marshes with a risk-filled economy based on cattle-grazing and cabbage-growing and a society marked by sharp class differences between the wealthy farmers and the comparatively small stratum of farm workers; the eastern hill area with a social and economic structure characterized largely by estate agriculture; and the rolling, sandy Geest, a backward region of small peasant farmers and Dorfgemeinschaft (village community). The Nazis succeeded best in the Geest:

Table 4.1
NSDAP Vote (percent of total vote)

	Marsh	Geest	Hill Area
1928	7.9	15.9	2.0
1930	41.2	45.9	24.3
1932 (July)	61.6	78.7	57.1

Source: Rudolph Heberle, From Democracy to Nazism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1945), p. 99.

In the marshes and the hill area the rural working class voted steadily and dominantly for the Socialists or Communists, whereas the smaller rural proletariat of the Geest shed its allegiance to the Social Democratic Party (SPD) to vote first for the German National People's Party (DNVP) and then for the Nazis.

Heberle's analysis of the variation in voting patterns within Schleswig-Holstein strongly suggests that an abundance of family farmers and the relative absence of a distinct upper and especially of a lower class, as on the Geest, promoted Nazi gains. His correlations between voting and occupational status confirm this finding. The correlation between Nazi voting in July 1932 and the presence of small farmers is an eye-catching +.85. Nazi success also correlates highly with the percentage of independent proprietors, but negatively with the presence of wage earners. A typical Nazi supporter voted for the liberal parties immediately after the war, then for the German Nationalists in the mid-1920s, and finally for the Nazis. In short, the Nazis drew their adherents from family farmers who had previously supported liberal parties.

Gerhard Stoltenberg, the prominent CDU politician, has supplemented Heberle's analysis in two useful ways. First, he shows how the DNVP pursued a radical and antirepublican nationalism that attracted a broad rural following in the mid-twenties: It proved particularly compelling for the estate owners of the eastern hill area, who remained faithful to the DNVP into 1933. The DNVP's success in mid-decade indicates that the rural population had abandoned its allegiance to the Republic before the Nazi upsurge.

Stoltenberg also shows how the liberal and rightist parties failed to establish local organizational roots. In local elections the bourgeois parties yielded to local alliances claiming to be above parties. These minor "apolitical" local groupings evinced the rural property holders' and artisans' distrust of the urban middle-class parties and of the parliamentary system as a whole.[5] All this evidence indicates that the rural population, particularly the farmers, craftsmen, and merchants, did not switch abruptly from a staunch liberalism to nazism, but rather that they had never shown great enthusiasm for the Weimar Republic.[6]

The political situation in Lower Saxony (the Prussian provinces of Hanover, Oldenburg [excluding Birkenfeld and Lübeck], Brunswick, and Schaumburg-Lippe [excluding Bremen]) and its evolution closely resembled developments in Schleswig-Holstein. In both areas the NSDAP's first supporters were radical rightists with ties to older Freikorps, *völkisch*, or rightist organizations. Prior to 1930, party members came largely from the *Mittelstand*--peasants, artisans, shopkeepers, small businessmen, and white-collar workers; they tended to be young and many had served in World War I. In Lower Saxony, Jeremy Noakes reports, two-thirds of the membership "was under forty, with slightly more falling in the twenty-one to thirty age group than the thirty-one to forty group; 37 percent of the members were ex-servicemen.[7] Their devotion to the party was fanatical.

In 1930 the NSDAP vote in Lower Saxony increased to 23 percent from 4.5 percent in 1928. The new NSDAP voters came from among previous nonvoters and defectors from the bourgeois parties. The party's strongholds lay in North Oldenburg and East Friesland and *Kreise* like Diepholz and Hoya--remote agricultural areas with poor *Geest* or moor conditions. The Nazis fell below average in two areas, first in Catholic areas in South Oldenburg and Osnabrück, where "religious loyalties were strong enough to withstand even the severest economic crisis," and second in Lüneburg, where deeply conservative peasants remained suspicious of the Nazis and retained their traditional loyalty to the Guelph party.[8]

The July 1932 Reichstag elections demonstrated a further radicalization of the Lower Saxon electorate. The Nazis garnered

45.2 percent of the ballots. The Nazis' strongest bastions lay in remote, backward areas, where modern communications and social and economic organization penetrated only slowly, and traditional rural communities persisted.[9]

The Bavarian countryside, with its predominantly Catholic population, offered sterner resistance to Nazi inroads. The Nazis were slow in recruiting the Catholic peasantry. Available evidence indicates that the small-town bourgeoisie formed the backbone of the party in Bavaria, but the peasantry was distinctly underrepresented. As late as 1928, Bavaria remained the center of Nazi support in the country as a whole; the party received 6.3 percent of the vote in Bavaria, but only 2.6 percent nationwide. Nonetheless, Geoffrey Pridham observes, "the NSDAP had failed . . . to make much impact on the country areas, which in the predominantly rural state of Bavaria was crucial."[10] Only in some Protestant areas of Franconia did the Nazis attract a sizeable rural following: Disenchanted Catholic peasants supported the local Bayerischer Bauern--und Mittelstandsbund (BBMB).

As elsewhere, in Bavaria the 1930 Reichstag elections marked a substantial Nazi advance, even though the provincial vote fell slightly below the national average, and the party's center of electoral gravity shifted north and east.[11]

The Nazis drew support from previous DNVP and BBMB voters who had become disillusioned by their parties' participation in government coalitions; rather than continue with parties tainted by their collusion with the Weimar system, these voters opted for the undiluted radicalism of the NSDAP. The Nazis also seem to have benefited from the rise in voter participation: In Bavaria as elsewhere "the overwhelming majority of new voters seem to have supported the NSDAP."[12]

The Nazi rural propaganda campaign produced results after 1930. As Pridham states, "the stampede of peasant voters to the NSDAP finally came in the Reichstag Election of July 1932, although this did not happen in the former BBMB stronghold of Lower Bavaria until the election of March 1933."[13] By capturing disillusioned BBMB voters in even greater numbers, enlisting almost all the Deutsche Landvolk supporters, and attracting many new voters, the party registered enormous advances in rural areas. In the September 1930 elections, the towns of Franconia had voted 24.4 percent for the NSDAP, the rural areas 22.7 percent. In July 1932, the towns produced 39.0 percent, the countryside a striking 59.8 percent Nazi votes. With some local exceptions like the city of Passau, Catholic areas proved far more resistant to Nazi appeals than Protestant districts; not until the March 1933 elections, when the Nazis' control of the state allowed them distinctly new opportunities for propaganda and coercion, did the NSDAP finally win strong backing from Bavaria's rural Catholics.

This regional evidence allows one to conclude that the rural population of the Weimar Republic, never staunchly supportive of its institutions, began abandoning the Republic in the aftermath of the inflation crisis of 1923-1924. It turned first to right-wing parties like the DNVP and to local coalitions and then to the Nazis. The rural middle class, the small farmers, artisans, shopkeepers, and businessmen, formed the core of the Nazi electorate; in many regions they enlisted or intimidated farm workers and domestic servants into supporting the Nazi cause. Everywhere the Nazis succeeded in bringing new voters to the polls, people who had previously abstained from elections. Catholics resisted the Nazi appeal more steadfastly than did Protestants, but even in Bavaria most of them eventually voted for the NSDAP.

The facts regarding the Nazis' ascendancy in the German countryside and the major sources of their support are relatively undisputed; explanations for their ascent are, however, distinctly more controversial. To many contemporary Germans and to a segment of the academic community, the economic depression offers a satisfactory explanation of the Nazi upsurge.[14] To others, the economic suffering of the rural population was more imagined than real; for them the rise of rural nazism represents either an irrational reaction to economic and social fears or a conscious commitment to extreme right-wing nationalism. Given the enormous number of individuals who voted for the NSDAP and the potential complexity of motivation in each individual case, it is unlikely that any single explanation will suffice; a variety of explanations must be advanced to account for the various grounds for NSDAP support. This commitment to a more synthetic and integrated explanation does not imply, however, that all explanations are equally valid; to understand the causes of the Nazis' rural victories requires more detailed scrutiny of the factors contributing to their advance.

Economic hardship certainly promoted the rise of the NSDAP. The ravages of the great inflation left many farmers with substantial debts. This was complicated by the general structural crisis of German agriculture (engendered by the pampering of German farmers behind high tariff barriers) combined with cyclical agricultural crises and declining urban consumption in the late 1920s, German farmers suffered genuine distress. Farm prices descended precipitously, incomes dropped, indebtedness and rural underemployment grew, and the rate of foreclosures rose sharply.[15] Farmers' sons, who had hoped for urban jobs or stable rural living, saw their hopes dashed; the growing number of restive young men in the countryside was a conspicuous sign and result of the general economic slump, but the depression alone did not make them Nazis.

The economic determinist explanation of rural nazism, as Petzina has already indicated, suffers from numerous flaws. First, many strong Nazi supporters sustained little economic loss. Bodo Uhse recalled that many of the rebellious Schleswig-Holstein farmers were "not exactly the poorest;" they "sat like lords on proud and splendid estates." And Rudolf Heberle suggests that "increasing economic insecurity rather than an actual suffering from the agricultural depression" accounts for the turn to nazism in Schleswig-Holstein's marshes.[16]

The fit between agricultural distress and Nazi success is far from perfect. As noted earlier, the Nazis advanced far more slowly in Catholic than in Protestant areas even when economic conditions were similar. Organized rural farm workers, who endured privations at least as severe as those of other rural groups, largely retained their traditional allegiance to the Social Democrats, or if they defected, they veered to the Communist left rather than the Nazi right. Regional aberrations also occurred; Angeln in Schleswig-Holstein did not feel the impact of the economic crisis until late 1932, yet in July the Nazis had already gained 70.8 percent of the rural vote.[17]

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that economic misery alone cannot constitute a sufficient explanation of nazism's rural appeal comes from international comparisons. Denmark, Norway, and Sweden--to cite just three nearby European cases--all underwent agricultural depressions in the same period, but rather than yielding to nazism, rural Scandinavians proved largely immune to fascist appeals, retained their allegiance to democratic parties, and in many cases supported Social Democratic initiatives.[18] The Scandinavian experience does not demonstrate that the depression was unimportant, but only that economic events do not produce political results in a rigid and mechanical fashion; people interpret the significance of economic events in the light of their experience and intellectual tradition. In Germany and in Scandinavia what proved decisive was not the severity of the depression, but rural people's reaction to it, their interpretation of its causes, and their choice of remedies. As Barrington Moore, Jr., has written,

> The partial failure of a set of institutions to live up to what is expected of them provides an atmosphere receptive to demands for a more or less extensive overhaul of the status quo. At this juncture the future course of events depends heavily upon the models of a better world that become available to various strategic groups in the population.[19]

Thus, a more adequate explanation of the drift towards nazism requires a consideration of traditional rural ideology, the nature of the political system in rural areas, and the character of Nazi organization and propaganda.

The German rural population never warmed to Weimar democracy. In Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Bavaria, and other areas incorporated by Prussia into the new Germany, the rural people longed for the simplicity of local government in a preindustrial setting. They disliked modern bureaucratic government with its distant structure of authority, regulations, and higher taxes. In particular, they disliked the Weimar Republic; at the time of the Kapp Putsch, farm organizations expressed support for Kapp's regime. As the 1920s unfolded, the rural people came to see the Weimar system as the tool of the Social Democrats who used it to harass religious education, channel benefits to urban workers rather than farmers, and permit what they regarded as decadent cultural phenomena.

A host of extremist right-wing and nationalist organizations, playing upon these attitudes and the belligerent nationalism of the countryside, stoked the fires of discontent. Ludendorff's Tannenburg League, the Stahlhelm, the Freikorps brigades, Werwolf, and *Landvolk* movement, the Schleswig-Holstein Bond, and the various *völkisch* organizations propagandized widely among the rural population; even more respectable organizations like the *Landbund* and the DNVP kept up a steady barrage of antirepublican propaganda. The constant virulent attacks upon the Versailles treaty, the great inflation, and the Republic's social, cultural, and military policy helped create a climate in which rational political debate ceased to be effective and in which tendencies to political irrationality could flourish.

The reigning climate of opinion predisposed rural folk to interpret the depression in the categories of radical reaction, but their deep-seated distrust of urban outsiders made them suspicious of Nazi overtures. The Nazis overcame this reluctance by recruiting prominent local figures as their spokesmen; especially in the early phases.[20] Using the right man gave the Nazis immediate respectability; where such figures did not exist, the Nazis' legitimacy as a political alternative grew with their electoral successes and their association with more established conservative movements as in the Young Plan referendum.

Even if the antidemocratic, antisocialist, nationalist, and militarist content of traditional ideology biased rural people, drew them toward Nazi-like understandings of their situations, and lured them away from support of the Republic, the Nazis still had to assemble them under the swastika. This process occurred late and rapidly. In 1928 rural protest rallies raised largely economic demands. In Lower Saxony, for example, disgruntled rural groups called for protection against imports, lower and simpler taxes, cuts in public expenditure and bureaucracy, and the provision of long-term credit at low rates of interest. Not merely farmers, but all those dependent upon agricultural prosperity participated in a united demonstration of rural dissatisfaction. They firmly believed in the justice of their cause and remained confident that the state would assist them. Once their expectations of assistance were shattered and the traditional rural interest groups and parties were discredited by their failure to obtain aid, the rural population's patience with traditional arrangements was at an end. They were ready to heed appeals for more radical measures.

The failure of the traditional rural parties and lobbying organizations merits further consideration, for the turn to nazism occurred in two stages. First there was a withdrawal from the liberal parties and farm interest organizations and then adherence to nazism. The very structure of the Weimar political economy obstructed the possibilities for governmental aid to farmers. The Social Democrats, the staunchest supporters of the Republic, hesitated to extend help to agriculture because they feared that higher food prices or higher taxes would alienate their urban working-class supporters. Furthermore, they were slow to recognize that the family farmers of western and southern Germany differed significantly from the Junkers; not until 1928 did the Social Democrats promulgate a more attractive agricultural program. This situation allowed the Nazis to argue that farmers, as a permanent minority in an industrial democracy, could never gain satisfaction of their just demands and that only in the coming Third Reich would they receive their due.

The Weimar party system further facilitated the Nazis' triumph in two significant ways. First, the liberal bourgeois parties failed to organize in rural areas; they remained Honoratiorenparteien, loose groupings assembled around local notables. When their program and performance no longer appealed and their local leaders endorsed nazism, there were no organizational loyalties, no local offices, no party services to slow the tide of voters away from their ranks. The local bourgeois electoral alliances for communal and provincial elections likewise offered easy pickings for Nazi infiltration and demolition. Second, the variety of bourgeois parties meant that electoral results alone seldom determined the participants in national coalitions; instead deals among politicians in Berlin created governments. There was no umbrella party like the contemporary CDU to amalgamate bourgeois interests.[21]

In contrast, the energy and organization of the NSDAP were essential conditions of its success. The Nazis pioneered a new style of politics. They essentially militarized politics; an electoral campaign was like a military operation. It penetrated into every village and sought out every potential recruit. It saturated areas with propaganda and followed up with personal canvassing. Meetings were planned like battles; the logistics of moving troops (SA and SS) were carefully attended to.

The Nazis also pioneered a new style of internal organization. To a degree then novel in German politics, the Nazis constituted a Volkspartei, a party appealing to all classes and groups. In its ranks it enlisted not only its middle-class core, but workers, professionals, business executives, and the lumpen proletariat; Catholics, Protestants, and the irreligious; urban and rural elements. This uneasy coalition held together through the hope of success, Hitler's charisma, and the Nazi exploitation of traditional anti-Semitism among German peasants. To many, the Nazis represented the last prospect of social order, national resurrection, and economic salvation. Hitler personified these hopes and personal loyalty to him time and again overwhelmed internal opposition and tension. Anti-Semitism offered an effective target for the conflicting animosities of Hitler's followers; workers need not clash with capitalists nor farmers with urban consumers if Jews rather than structural arrangements created the conflicts. Rather than fall into internal dissension, all classes could unite against the one "foreign" element in the community.

The Nazis sought to organize not merely a political party, but an entire society. In 1930 Darré, the party's agricultural advisor, laid out a strategy to gain control of the traditional rural interest organizations through infiltration at the grass roots and established a special organization, the Agrarpolitischer Apparat, to execute this task. The Nazis swiftly seized control of the Landbund, the Chambers of Agriculture, and the rural artisans' organizations, in effect carrying out a Gleichschaltung of agriculture before Hitler came to power.[22]

Elsewhere Nazi propaganda appeals proved extraordinarily effective with the rural population. To separate the content of these appeals from the style of Nazi propaganda is artificial, for the intensity and emotionality of the effort often outweighed any substantive content; nonetheless it is essential if one is to form a judgment about the motivations of Nazi voters.

The centerpiece of Nazi agrarian propaganda was the Agrarian Program of March 7, 1930. Based largely on the ideas of R. Walther Darré, the agrarian program began with a statement of the centrality of agriculture and the peasantry for Germany's future. It argued that the present international situation and the current German state made a restoration of agriculture impossible; taxation, tariff policies, and the exorbitant profits of Jewish middlemen and fertilizer dealers condemned farmers to penury. The program then proposed a series of measures to ensure farmers against the loss of their farms. It concluded by emphasizing the paralysis of the existing interest organizations and stressing that only the Nazi movement could save the farmers and the country.

The Nazis courted the rural population with specific proposals, but these proposals alone cannot explain their success. In addition, they denounced Marxism, they attacked the liberalism of their major rural opponents, condemning their emphasis on individualism, profit, and internationalism. They held out the prospect of an organic German community in which farmers enjoyed high status and esteem.

They also employed anti-Semitic appeals. The sparse and anecdotal evidence available prevents precise judgments, but it is clear that anti-Semitic attitudes were prevalent among the rural population, although they seldom attained the virulence typical of leading Nazi propagandists. The Nazis regularly used anti-Semitism to appeal to economic self-interest; they castigated the machinations of Jewish cattle dealers, shopkeepers, and bankers as the source of all economic woes. They aroused traditionalist feeling by censuring the encroachment of Jewish entrepreneurs upon long-standing economic organizations; as Noakes nicely says: "The Jews, who in the countryside tended to represent the forces of the market in the flesh and who were rightly seen as pioneers of modern ideas and forms in culture, were made scapegoats for the dislike of modern developments in general."[23] Finally, the Nazis spoke to the most irrational elements of the personality, weaving lurid fantasies about the depravity of Jews.

Just how effective these anti-Semitic ideologies were in attracting support is difficult to judge. Noakes maintains that in Lower Saxony "anti-Semitism appears to have been a major theme between 1925 and 1930, particularly during the Mittelstand campaign of 1928-30. After 1930, however, while remaining an important theme, it was used more as a background to appeals to economic interest and general political propaganda.[24] Pridham contends that in Bavaria

> anti-Semitism did not form specifically one of the major themes of party propaganda in the early 1930s, but it often provided a leitmotiv for the major propaganda themes since the NSDAP's appeal on economic and political issues was frequently couched in anti-Semitic terms. The majority of Nazi voters in the elections of 1930-32 were probably little influenced directly by the racialist ideology of the NSDAP, as they were primarily voting for a change in circumstances.[25]

Similarly, in Schleswig-Holstein the majority of Nazi voters, while susceptible to anti-Semitic propaganda, do not seem to have anticipated the steps to which the Nazis would go. What is striking is the voters' unwillingness to be shocked by the violence and indecency of the Nazis' anti-Semitism and their willingness to accept the Nazi explanation of the Jewish origin of their economic and political troubles.

This brief survey indicates that rural Germans succumbed to the NSDAP for a variety of reasons. Both collectively and as individuals, they succumbed to appeals based on economic self-interest, fears of loss of status, antipathy to modern institutions and culture, the desire for a national revival, intimidation, anti-Semitism, and a host of irrational drives. The greater the economic and political uncertainty, the greater was their susceptibility to irrational appeals and their tolerance for Nazi violence. Finally, many simply yielded to the apparent irresistibility of the Nazi advance.

The Nazis triumphed, then, not because of the depression alone, but because rural people interpreted their difficulties in the categories of nationalist reaction. Modern liberalism had made little ideological or organizational impact upon their traditional way of life and mental outlook. Steeped in conservative, provincial, and anti-Marxist prejudices, they chose, particularly in Protestant areas, to blame their economic problems on the deviousness of international bankers, Jews, and Socialists rather then recognizing them as the result of severe structural and cyclical crises and poor harvests caused by bad weather. The reactionary nationalists, who had never reconciled themselves to a defeated and democratic republic, overwhelmed the poorly organized liberal forces. The sheer energy and organization of the Nazi party allowed it to overcome the few remaining scruples.

NOTES

[1] Rudolph Heberle, From Democracy to Nazism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1945), p. 95.

[2] Charles Loomis and J. Allan Beegle, "The Spread of German Nazism in Rural Areas," American Sociological Review (1946), p. 724.

[3] Cited in Geoffrey Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power: The Nazi Movement in Bavaria, 1923-1933 (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 83-84.

[4] Dietrich Orlow, The History of the Nazi Party: 1919-1933 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969), p. 153.

[5] Gerhard Stollenberg, Politsche Strömungen im schleswig-holsteinischen Landvolk 1918-1933 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1962), pp. 48, 63, 100ff., 160; Peter Wulf, Die Politsche Haltung des schleswig-holsteinischen Handwerks, 1928-1932 (Köln and Opladen; Westdeutscher Verlag, 1969), pp. 35-36.

[6] Timothy Tilton, Nazism, Neo-Nazism and the Peasantry (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), pp. 7-33.

[7] Jeremy Noakes, The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony, 1921-1933 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 141.

[8] Ibid., p. 154.

[9] Ibid., pp. 218-19.

[10] Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power, p. 83.

[11] Ibid., p. 140.

[12] Ibid., pp. 141-42. See also Karl O'Lessker, "Who Voted for Hitler? A New Look at the Class Basis of Nazism," *American Journal of Sociology* 74 (1968), pp. 63-69.

[13] Pridham, *Hitler's Rise to Power*, p. 236.

[14] Broder Christenson, *Hundert Jahre Bauerngeschichte des Kreises Husum* (Husum, 1967), p. 43.

[15] Tilton, *Nazism*, pp. 41-45.

[16] Bodo Uhse, *Söldner und Soldat* (Berlin: Verlag der Nation, 1957), p. 156; Rudolf Heberle, *Landbevölkerung und Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1963), p. 55.

[17] Heberle, *Landbevölkerung*, pp. 74, 76.

[18] Tilton, *Nazism*, pp. 46-51.

[19] Barrington Moore, Jr., *Political Power Social Theory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 7.

[20] Noakes, *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony*, p. 100.

[21] Stoltenberg, *Politische Strömungen*, p. 117.

[22] Noakes, *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony*, pp. 165-70.

[23] Ibid., p. 210.

[24] Ibid., p. 209.

[25] Pridham, *Hitler's Rise to Power*, p. 237.

5

Composition and Evolution of the Nazi Elite

JOHN NAGLE

A continuing topic of debate on the nature of fascism is its class composition within capitalist society. From the analysis of the class nature of fascism follow theories on the connection between fascism and capitalism and often speculation on the likelihood of fascism as a general stage of capitalist development or a possible capitalist alternative to liberal democracy. The analysis presented here adds some further bits of evidence to this discussion without pretense of being either comprehensive or, as it turns out, particularly conclusive.

SOCIAL COMPOSITION--EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

Previous studies of the Nazi movement have examined social composition of its voters, its membership, and its leadership at various levels.[1] Several points of emphasis have emerged from this literature which may be summarized in thesis form as follows:

1. The Nazi movement was drawn predominantly from the lower middle class, those elements of society positioned between the capitalist/big business and landowning class, and the wage-working industrial proletariat.

2. The Nazi movement was drawn predominantly from those elements of capitalist society that were most antimodern and reactionary and threatened by the development of modern industry and increasing employment uncertainty. This would include small farmers, small shopkeepers and artisans, and some lumpen (unskilled, unemployed, or semi-employed) segments of the working class.

3. The Nazi movement was a mass vehicle of a broad range of middle-class elements, a coalition capable of gaining the

confidence of several established elites as an effective weapon for suppressing the organized working class.

4. The industrial working class remained largely immune or impervious to the appeals of the Nazi movement. They remained with the SPD or the KPD. The social base of traditional conservatism, among the business class, large landowners, and peasantry, also were relatively less attracted to the NSDAP. They remained with Alfred Hugenberg's DNVP, Hitler's eventual coalition partner. Practicing Catholics from various strata, stayed with the Catholic Center Party and were less attracted to the NSDAP.

Earlier studies have amassed a good deal of evidence to develop these theses on the basic character of the NSDAP. Analyses of voting behavior by Lipset, Heberle, and Bracher, among others, have developed, on the basis of aggregate voter percentages, voter turnout, and some partial voter surveys, the growth of the voter appeal of the NSDAP from 1928 (2.6 percent of the vote) to the second election of 1932 (33.1 percent).[2] Some analyses have included vote totals from the first Reichstag election of 1933, held under circumstances of already sharply rising intimidation or coercion, and a few have even studied percentages of invalid ballots or nonvoters in the one-party "elections" and plebiscites held after 1933. The rapid growth of the NSDAP into a mass middle-class electoral vehicle and the collapse of the middle-class DVP, DDP, and Wirtschaftspartei (as well as several other regional and minor middle-class parties) have been well documented. The relative weakness of the Nazis in the biggest cities and the apparent gains by the NSDAP from previous nonvoters in the elections of March 1933 (but not particularly from nonvoters in earlier elections) stand as additional basic findings of electoral research.

A limitation on such studies, of course, is that they cannot be used, except for sketchy analyses of nonvoting and invalid ballots, after the suppression of all other parties in 1933. In studies of the Nazi regime, election data can provide findings on the social or class support of the Nazi movement primarily up to the "legal revolution" of 1933. Conclusions drawn from election data about the class nature of the Nazi regime need to be supplemented with data drawn from the period after 1933, as the Nazi movement in power selectively dropped earlier election campaign programs, purged its social-fascist and "disreputable" (Röhm and the SA) factions, and developed a working partnership in coalition with big business administrative and military elites.[3]

Some continuity has been gained from membership and leadership analyses of the NSDAP both before and after achievement of political power. Hans Gerth has reported on the occupational background of NSDAP members in 1933 and 1935.[4] Daniel Lerner developed his theme of "marginality" as the common attribute of the Nazi elite from samples drawn from the 1934 Führerlexicon (a who's who in the early Third Reich).[5] Max Knight compared the thirty-three cabinet members who served under Hitler from 1933 to 1945 with cabinet members from the earlier monarchy (1890-1918) and Weimar (1919-1932) years.[6] Wolfgang Zapf used a composite of top-level political, administrative, economic, and cultural elites drawn from the years 1925, 1940, and 1955 for developing his circulation model of German elites from Weimar to Third Reich to the postwar Bundesrepublik.[7] The present author has compared social and generational backgrounds of Nazi Reichstag deputies with backgrounds of deputies from other parties in Weimar and Reichstag/Bundestag deputy backgrounds sequentially for the period of modern German history (1871-1972).[8]

Each of these studies of the NSDAP elite offers further opportunities to gauge the social composition of the Nazi movement, although not every study has produced lasting insights. Lerner's study, part of the larger RADIR project at the Hoover Institute, compared subsamples of Nazi "propagandists," "administrators," and "coercers" with a randomly drawn control group. Lerner looked for the frequency of certain middle-income skill groups (engineers, lawyers, managers), whose skills were theorized as necessary for any modern political system, revolutionary or nonrevolutionary. He also posited the rise of the "alienated intellectual" (teachers, journalists, artists) especially among those classified as "propagandists" and the "plebeians" (of lower-middle-class origins) among the "administrators."[9] The Lerner study was preoccupied, however, with developing the concept of "social marginality" as the common underlying factor of the Nazi elite (and, as part of the RADIR project, of revolutionary elites in general).

Marginal status was defined as deviation from "predominant attributes in his society."[10] By this definition, the Nazi elite was heavily laden with "marginal men." This concept of marginality has come under considerable challenge, however.[11] The primary question is whether political leaders who came from Catholic backgrounds, or were born in the Rhineland, or had only lower or incomplete higher education, or were enlisted men during military service, or had farming occupations were necessarily to be identified as "marginal." By this standard, all leaders of the Catholic Center Party, most of the SPD leadership, and the great majority of trade union leaders would have to be categorized as marginal also. This would, however, lump these very diverse but definitely nonrevolutionary elites into the same conceptual container as the Nazi leaders. What Lerner more accurately described was how the 1934 Nazi elite differed in many characteristics from earlier German elites. The Führerlexicon, although it deleted about one hundred biographical sketches of people purged in the June 1934 Röhm putsch, represents a compilation of the prominent personalities (not all Nazis) at an early stage of the Third Reich.

Max Knight's comparison of cabinet level elites in the monarchy, Weimar, and the Third Reich, shows a good deal of continuity in occupational backgrounds, with the addition of a strong business, banking, and insurance executives component, and greatly reduced proportions of lawyers and journalists in the Third Reich as opposed to the Weimar period. Teachers, engineers, and military men also figured more prominently in Hitler's cabinet. Overall, however, higher civil service backgrounds continued to predominate as they had both in Weimar and in the Kaiserreich. In terms of social origins, cabinet ministers under Hitler came more frequently from business (18 percent), civil service (12 percent), landowner (12 percent), and military (12 percent) families than from other categories. In some respects, the social composition of the Nazi cabinet represented an expansion of gains made by business strata during the Weimar Republic, a partial return to top posts for members of the aristocracy (through the military and civil service), and a loss of the more modest gains made by the working class.[12] The cabinet-level elite for the entire Third Reich era is a relatively small group of individuals (N=33), clearly a coalition of Nazi party leaders and coopted business, civil service, and military elites. Within the first Hitler cabinet, there were, for example, six Nazi party leaders, and nine members who were not leaders in the party, although most acquired party membership during the Gleichschaltung of 1933.

Wolfgang Zapf's survey of elite circulation includes coverage of fourteen different elite categories, including many individuals especially among church, business, and some administrative and military elites who in 1940 were outside the Nazi leadership, although often acquiring party membership after 1933 for career considerations. Zapf's findings on those elite groupings most closely identified with the Nazi movement itself are in most cases consistent with other studies: The prominent Nazi elites (circa 1940) were more likely to come from lower-middle-class backgrounds, have somewhat lower educational qualification, have been born in southern Germany, and be younger by comparison to the same Weimar-era subelites (circa 1925). When Zapf combines all elite groupings together, however, for the years 1925 and 1940, some surprises emerge. The average age of the total German elite in 1925 (55.3) is little different from that of 1940 (53.6). Within the political elite, furthermore, cabinet ministers in 1940 were in fact older (59.0) than those of 1925 (52.8). Most surprising, party leaders appear by Zapf's reckoning to also have been older on average (48.3 years compared to 46.0 years in 1925).[13] Zapf also finds that the proportion of those from aristocratic origins fell from 16 percent of the total German elite in 1925 to 12 percent in 1940 and only 8 percent by 1955.[14] If one looks at the social origins (measured by father's occupation) of the German elite separated into the major subgroupings used by Zapf, the Nazi regime seems to have made the greatest social impact among the political elite, somewhat less among the economic elite, and least impact among the administrative elite.

Table 5.1
Political, Administrative, and Economic Elite Social Origins, 1925, 1940, and 1955

Political Elite	Social Origins (percentages)				
	A	UM	LM	UL	LL
1925 (N=57)	9	44	33	12	2
1940 (N=64)	8	33	55	3	2
1955 (N=57)	7	39	39	12	4
(Tables do not equal 100 percent due to rounding)					
Administrative Elite					
1925 (N=65)	29	65	6	0	0
1940 (N=62)	27	58	15	0	0
1955 (N=56)	16	66	18	0	0
Economic Elite					
1925 (N=39)	15	77	8	0	0
1940 (N=25)	12	60	28	0	0
1955 (N=36)	14	64	22	0	0

Source: recalculated from Zapf (1965:180).

A - Aristocracy
UM - Upper Middle
LM - Lower Middle
UL - Upper Lower
LL - Lower Lower

The political elite is also the only major subgrouping whose social origins are significantly different from both 1925 Weimar and 1955 Bonn elites. Among the political elite, we see the rise of the lower-middle-class "plebeians" to high office, the squeezing out of the small percentages of elites of working-class origins, and some modest decline in representation of upper-middle-class elites. Zapf's data thus can be interpreted as strengthening the hypothesis advanced long ago by Franz Neumann (1941) that the Third Reich was a coalition of some earlier business, civil service, and military elites with a movement that arose from broader middle and especially lower middle class origins. Zapf himself, utilizing a "totalitarian" concept of the Nazi period contrasted with the pluralist democratic ideals of Weimar and Bonn, does not reach this conclusion, and he earlier had summarized but rejected Neumann's earlier elite analysis and conceptualization of the Third Reich.[15] Zapf thus concludes that

> all organizations are tightly bound to the party through the means of a "cadre policy," that is, the transferral of key positions to loyal party cadre. Membership and renown in the party become on the one hand the only decisive path of social mobility, on the other hand a decisive means of social control.[16]

This conclusion and similar findings by like-minded observers neglect evidence that runs in the other direction, namely, that other nonparty elites, sharing a policy consensus with the NSDAP top leadership over a range of issues, maintained their standing intact while accepting Nazi party membership. For example, Seabury has pointed out that of ninety-two top officials in the German Foreign Office in 1937, thirty-three were indeed NSDAP members, but only seven had joined the party before entering the foreign service. In 1940, eight of nine senior division heads in the Foreign Office were still career officials who had joined the NSDAP after the achievement of power.[17]

NSDAP REICHSTAG ELITES--EVALUATION

My own work has concentrated on the Nazi elite composition at the level of Reichstag deputy, both over time and in comparison to other party elites. The Reichstag membership level allows for analysis of NSDAP elite composition both before and after 1933. The Nazis did not abolish the Reichstag; rather they continued to use it, not as an effective parliament, but as an assembly of those who held important posts in other areas and as a public sounding board for Hitler's oratory. After the suppression (or self-dissolution) of all other parties in 1933, single-slate "elections" were held in November 1933 and again in 1936 and 1938 with an expanded Reichstag membership elected each time. (A small number of Hitler's parliamentary coalition partners of 1933, such as Alfred Hugenberg of the DNVP and Franz von Papen of the Catholic Center (Z) converted to Nazi membership and retained their seats in the Reichstag as NSDAP deputies.)

As a political institution, the Reichstag, of course, declined rapidly to insignificance after the Nazi takeover. Nonetheless, judging from the individual biographic sketches of deputies in sequential Reichstag handbooks through the 1930s, one notes the continuity with which the NSDAP filled Reichstag seats with party leaders of roughly similar standing after 1933 as before 1933. For the specific purpose of examining the evolution of the NSDAP elite at this level from the last years of Weimar through the transformative stages of the Third Reich, this elite grouping provides a useful basis.

Between 1919 and 1938, in both Weimar and the Third Reich, over twenty-four hundred individuals held seats in the Reichstag. For each deputy, we have information (from parliamentary handbooks, who's who registers, and other scholarly works) on year of birth, birthplace, education, occupation(s), military service, religion, and party affiliation. We will concentrate here on occupational background. This information will be summarized for two purposes: to compare on a global basis the social composition of NSDAP deputies with deputies of other parties; and to trace the social composition of NSDAP deputies from the period just before the achievement of power through the 1930s in the development of the Third Reich. To give some idea of how much the Nazi party elite differed from other party elites in social composition, we can compare the nonparty occupations of all NSDAP deputies (N=1101) with those of the two major blocs: the "bourgeois bloc" in Weimar, principally the right-wing nationalist DNVP, the moderate conservative DNP, the liberal democrat DDP, the Catholic center Z, and the middle-class business WV (N=730); and the "left bloc," including the moderate Social Democrat SPD, the more radical but short-lived independent Social Democrat USPD, and the communist KPD (N=583). This type of global comparison has its shortcomings, but it may serve to indicate where the NSDAP deviated from other established social sources of political elite recruitment. It also compares the NSDAP to the two major tendencies (bourgeois and working-class) within the Weimar system.

Table 5.2
An Occupational Comparison of NSDAP, "Left," and "Bourgeois" Party Deputies (in percent)

Occupation	NSDAP	Left	Bourgeois
worker	13.9	24.0	1.2
white collar	16.5	4.1	0.8
military/police	7.4	0.2	1.8
big business owner	5.4	0.9	7.1
farm owner	12.3	0.5	19.6
small business	5.8	1.9	5.3
clergy	0.1	0.2	3.6
higher government	2.9	4.8	16.7
government employee	5.5	0	1.2
housewives	0	2.7	0.8
labor unionists	0.2	17.8	7.9
party managers	2.4	13.2	0.4
interest group leaders	1.0	0.7	5.1
business managers	3.8	0.5	4.1
writers	3.5	20.4	3.7
publishers	1.0	0.9	1.5
professors	0.6	0.7	4.4
lawyers	2.9	2.2	6.8
judges	0.1	0	1.9
teachers	3.6	1.9	1.8
doctors	1.8	0.5	0.5
engineers	6.1	0.2	2.6
unemployed	0.5	0.5	0
other, not classified	2.8	1.2	0.8
	N=1101	N=583	N=730

If we disaggregate the 36 percent of all Nazi deputies in the general classification of workers/employees, we find that 14.1 percent were blue-collar workers or unionists (very few unionists), while 16.5 percent were white-collar employees in the private sector and 5.5 percent were government employees (but not including higher, gehobene, officials). This is in strong contrast both to the left bloc recruitment of workers/unionists (41.8 percent), white-collar employees (only 4.1 percent) and government employees (nil), and to bourgeois bloc representation (9.1 percent, 0.8 percent, and 1.2 percent respectively) in these categories. This indicates the heavy influx of lower-middle-class, white-collar employees into the Nazi movement elite.

Nevertheless, the still relatively prominent proportion (13.9 percent) of all NSDAP deputies from blue-collar occupational backgrounds, combined with the virtual absence of any unionists among the Nazi Reichstag elite, reflects the partial success of German fascism in incorporating anti-unionist worker sentiment within its broad and often contradictory mass base. The percentages of unemployed (0.5 percent) and "not classified" (2.8 percent), while small, also contain, on closer inspection, a number of "lumpenproletarian" types, men without any clear work or vocation, unsettled in society since the front-line days of World War I, rabble adventurers who had found both comraderie and a mission within the NSDAP.

Additionally, it should be noted that Nazi deputy recruitment from small businessmen and artisans (5.8 percent) is only fractionally higher than among the bourgeois parties (5.3 percent) and that NSDAP deputy recruitment from farmer occupations (12.3 percent) is lower than among the bourgeois bloc parties (19.6 percent), although the Nazi group of farmer deputies is quite probably more weighted with small holders than larger landowners.[18] Representation of industrialists and big businessmen is not much less than among the bourgeois parties (5.4 percent to 7.1 percent).

Also notable among NSDAP deputies is the relative frequency of teachers, engineers, and doctors (11.5 percent taken together) relative to the two other bloc profiles (only 2.6 percent on the left, and 4.9 percent among the bourgeois parties).

Most striking on the low side is the total absence of housewives (and women in any category) and the almost total absence of unionists among Nazi deputies. NSDAP deputies also come less often from higher civil service positions than from either left or bourgeois blocs.

The category of writers and party functionaries, prominent among left party deputies, also contrasts sharply with the NSDAP profile. Many of these writers and party leaders for the SPD and KPD were originally of working-class origins and advanced through the union or the party into positions of journalism for the left-union press or functionary positions in the party organization. Other left writers, of higher educational background and often higher social beginnings as well, represent the left intelligentsia. Both of these types are much less in evidence among the NSDAP Reichstag grouping.

There is in this global comparison an additional finding when we disaggregate the single largest (that is, white-collar employee) occupational grouping back to its originally coded occupations; the overwhelming bulk of these fall into two categories, sales personnel (*kaufmännische Angestellte*--9.5 percent), still a relatively broad category encompassing a range of job roles, and bank employees (*Bankangestellte*--2.8 percent), a relatively narrow sector of the white-collar work force.

Interestingly enough, the NSDAP was essentially the only party to recruit any number of its Reichstag deputies from among lower-level bank employees (several bourgeois parties did of course include bank owners or bank directors among their deputy factions). Out of 55 Reichstag deputies from 1871 to 1938 (of a total 4,565 deputies) who at some time in their careers were ordinary bank employees, 47 were NSDAP deputies. The selection of bank employees as Nazi deputies appears in sizable numbers first between the two elections of 1933, when the National Socialist dictatorship was being installed. The question arises as to whether this particular group of Nazi deputies represents part of the general migration of the lower middle class, especially the membership of such white-collar employee associations as the liberal GDA and the right-nationalist DHV, to the Nazis during this period, or whether it represents an infusion of contact men to safeguard banking interests at a crucial point in the transformation of the NSDAP program, which had often sharply attacked finance and banking circles, into state policy. The NSDAP would later abandon this position in favor of an alliance with (non-Jewish) private banking circles. There is a third synthesis of these two possibilities: that the professional associations of white-collar employees, including considerable numbers of bank employees, acted to save themselves by going over to the Nazis in return for some representation within Nazi ranks and that some activist bank employees especially went over to the NSDAP with the blessings of private banking circles.

Those occupational backgrounds among NSDAP deputies with significantly higher representation than found in either left or bourgeois blocs (including white-collar employees, lower civil servants, military/police, teachers, doctors, and engineers--a total of 40.9 percent of all NSDAP deputies) were all quite modern vocations that were not being automated or squeezed out of existence between big business and big labor. With the exception of doctors (only 1.8 percent) these occupations are middle-status positions, whereas the highest-status professions (professor, lawyer, judge, top civil servant) are significantly underrepresented compared to the bourgeois bloc parties.

This global comparison has the limitation of concealing any significant changes in occupational composition over time, either in the Weimar period or for the Nazi party throughout the 1930s. Longitudinal analysis of several individual parties through the Weimar period illustrates some noteworthy trends. The KPD, for example, underwent a radical "proletarianization" between 1924 and 1930 during which the percentage of KPD deputies from worker/unionist occupations rose from 41 to 79 percent. On the other hand, nearly all of the bourgeois parties, in the immediate aftermath of the failed 1918 revolution, quickly recruited some working-class deputies into their Reichstag factions. In 1919, 28 percent of Catholic Center deputies, 15 percent of conservative DVP deputies, and even 14 percent of right-wing nationalist DNVP deputies were from worker or unionist occupational backgrounds. By 1928, however, at the most calm period in Weimar's generally stormy history, these figures had declined considerably (to 19 percent for the Center, 7 percent for the DVP, and 7 percent for the DNVP). Shifts in deputy recruitment are relatable in these instances to changes in the orientation of each party within the changing Weimar system: the KPD transformed itself from a break-away grouping of former Social Democrats into the first mass-based communist party in Western Europe, and the Catholic Center, the DVP, and the DNVP reduced their worker/unionist elements after the leftist revolutionary upsurge of 1918-1919 had been effectively suppressed.

An examination of the evolution in the Nazi Reichstag elite during the 1930s also reveals some interesting shifts. A first

Table 5.3
Trends in Nazi Reichstag Deputy Background, 1932-1938 (Rounded to nearest percent for selected occupations)

Occupation	All NSDAP 1932 II	All new NSDAP 1933-33	New NSDAP 1933 I	New NSDAP 1933 II	New NSDAP 1936	New NSDAP 1938[a]
blue collar	14	13	14	16	11	3
small business	3	7	6	7	6	9
farmers	16	12	19	14	5	7
white collar	10	19	11	16	29	23
lower civil service	5	6	3	6	7	3
engineers, doctors and teachers	11	12	13	11	11	14
military/police	8	6	8	5	8	8

[a] Figures for 1938 exclude 70 Austrian Nazi deputies, who were included in the 1938 Grossreichstag after the annexation of Austria. The Austrian Nazi movement had a different social base and should be studied as a separate entity.

comparison between Nazi deputies in the last (1932 II) pre-Hitler Reichstag and Nazi deputies who were first elevated to deputy status after the Nazis achieved state power shows a considerable rise in the representation of white-collar employees and a decline in the representation of farmers. By separating Nazi deputies according to their first inclusion in the Reichstag membership, these trends appear even more sharply.

The decline in the representation of farmers began not immediately after the NSDAP achievement of state power, but with the 1936 and 1938 Reichstag "elections." For the first three years of the Third Reich, the Nazis did try to implement, against the wishes of big business and the military leadership, a program for the strengthening of the small farm/rural sector of German society. Much Nazi propaganda was anti-urban in orientation, criticizing city life as rootless, cosmopolitan, impersonal, and a purveyor of immorality. The racist notion of Aryan biological superiority was generally combined with idealization of rural village life. Walther Darré, the leading NSDAP agrarian propagandist and later Minister of Agriculture, expressed this connection in his 1928 The Peasantry as the Life Source of the Nordic Race and his 1934 New Nobility from Blood and Soil. At least until the first Four-Year Plan of 1936, the party leaders attempted to put this "Blood and Soil" (Blut und Boden) ideology into practice. A ruralization program was initiated, which was aimed at eventually transforming Germany once again into a predominantly nonurban society. Sale of public lands to build up the class of small independent smallholders, the founding of new rural settlements, and the development of a general plan of land use were main elements of this program.

Nevertheless, the actual results of this program were quite limited, and as the priority of rearmament and aggressive foreign expansionism became more prominent, the party gradually downplayed its ruralization efforts. Unlike the quick victory of big business over the more radical party elements on the banking issue in 1933, the party only gradually divested itself, in practice not in rhetoric, from its romantic-racist idealization of village-peasant life, and then only under strong pressure from its big business and military coalition partners.[19] Even with the shriveling of its ruralization program and the decline in farmer representation in the Nazi elite, NSDAP deputies continued to come predominantly from rural and village origins. The percentage of new NSDAP deputies born in rural/small town areas was 65 percent in the first 1933 Reichstag, 67 percent in the second 1933 Reichstag, 58 percent in 1936, and even 75 percent in 1938. Nevertheless, the gradual shift from ruralism to even greater efforts at industrialization, necessary for rearmament and foreign expansion in search of Lebensraum, are mirrored in the decline of smallholder representation in Nazi Reichstag deputies, especially in 1936 and 1938.

Protection of small business owners was another element of

Nazi pre-1933 propaganda:

> . . . the anticapitalism of the Nazified middle groups was primarily a revolt against big business, whether in manufacture, trade, or finance. The demands were of a counter-revolutionary nature; the anticapitalists wanted to replace big business by small and to transform modern, large-scale industries into a primarily handicraft economy. If realized, anticapitalism would have spelled the end of big business, and Germany would have returned to a preindustrial economy.[20]

There is little doubt that the NSDAP owed much of its electoral success among those small self-employed artisans, business owners, and shopkeepers to its promises to battle big business in their behalf. An important faction of the Nazi leadership supported small business demands for closings of chain stores and consumer cooperatives and that large firms be forced to divest themselves of subsidiaries that competed with small, independent firms. This was reflected in a modest but increasing contingent of Nazi deputies from small business backgrounds. This representation of small business owners at this level of the Nazi elite, both before and after 1933, is about at the same level as among the bourgeois bloc parties in Weimar, and it could hardly be said that this contingent of the Nazi elite composition constituted a radical departure from the Weimar system. Unlike the agrarian smallholder contingent, which clearly declined as the ruralization program was phased out, the small business elite recruitment remained relatively constant, even though the "anticapitalist" faction of the party (and its program for protecting small business and dismantling big cartels) was politically defeated relatively early (mid-1933) in the power struggle with big business interests and the less radical mainstream of the NSDAP elite. The levels of both farmer and small business representation among new deputies by the latter 1930s (7 and 9 percent respectively) would seem to indicate modest, certainly not dominant, elements of Nazi elite recruitment, not qualitatively greater, and for smallholders perhaps even less than among Weimar's bourgeois parties.

On the other hand, those occupations which were overrepresented in our global comparison with both left and bourgeois bloc deputies (white-collar employees, lower civil servants, engineers, teachers, doctors, military/police) increased from 34 percent of all NSDAP deputies in 1932 to 55 percent in 1936 and 48 percent in 1938. Thus the elite recruitment from broad middle-class occupations not identifiable as antimodern or premodern continued and expanded after the achievement of state power.

Nazi Reichstag membership recruited during and after 1933 (a total of some 330 deputies) still represented a diverse coalition of social strata, including older lower-middle-class and anti-unionist worker elements. The Nazi movement in power, however, showed some signs in the 1930s of reorienting its leadership recruitment toward those strata more consistent with, or at least not opposed to, the interests of its political alliance with big business, administrative elites, and military elites.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

These findings with respect to the social composition of the Nazi Reichstag-level elite add some new nuances to earlier studies summarized at the outset. The Reichstag deputy analysis is in agreement with the thesis that the Nazi movement was a mass movement of the lower middle class, if lower middle class is quite broadly defined to include engineers and military officers, as well as bank employees, small farmers, and lower- to middle-level government employees. Certainly, upper-middle-class professions, especially lawyers and higher government officials, are less in evidence among the Nazi Reichstag deputies. Yet this thesis neglects the braoder character of the Nazi appeal within the entire middle class and to important anti-unionist and antileftist elements of the blue-collar working class.

Our findings are also in substantial agreement with the "anti-modern" thesis for the pre-1933 period. There is evidence in our data that the NSDAP attracted support from and mobilized into political action smallholders, small businessmen, and declassé sections of the proletariat. In the period after 1933, the Nazi movement reversed its small business anticapitalism, shelved its anti-urban ruralization program, and bloodily purged its "disreputable" SA street fighters. These policy reversals, in the process of cementing an antidemocratic and antileft coalition with existing business, military, and administrative elites, are partially reflected in changes in the party elite social composition, particularly in the decline of smallholder representation. More important, however, is the considerable expansion of recruitment from a range of middle-class occupations, which were quite modern and functionally necessary to a modern urban industrial society. These findings are more in accord with the "broad middle class" thesis, including both older and newer middle-class elements, but tending towards the more modern strata after the achievement of state power. This thesis tends to neglect the extent to which this broad fascist movement also includes some elements of the blue-collar working class itself. This caveat must be added to the fourth (immunity of the industrial working class) thesis, which is nevertheless correct in relative terms.

It is important to note, for all theses, the gradual but clear evolution of the NSDAP leadership; the NSDAP, as a vehicle for mass mobilization against the left and against the Weimar system that legitimated leftist political and union activity, did not remain frozen in its social composition after 1933, but it continued to change as the developmental stage toward achievement of power had been surpassed, and the new party-in-power discarded selected elements of its pre-1933 program.

Liberal democracies in prosperous and peaceful times tend towards demobilization systems with respect to elite recruitment.[21] That is, both bourgeois parties and left parties (including today's Eurocommunists) tend to recruit more elites from higher social strata. Working-class and ordinary middle-class representation in the pool of elite eligibility declines. The Weimar system did not enjoy an environment most favorable to stable capitalist democracy. The NSDAP, not initially favored by the respectable elites of Weimar society, was able to prove its ability to mobilize a broad mass base, primarily middle-class but including also lower-class elements, was able to convince established elites that it would certainly act forcefully and decisively to destroy the organized working class and the Weimar democracy that allowed its political rights, and was able, in 1932-33, to convince these established elites that it would not, in all probability, act to destroy the economic or social position of big business, the military, or the higher civil service. The Nazi political elite is, in this view, a mobilization elite of unusual composition compared with both bourgeois bloc and left parties, an alternative political elite for capitalism in crisis.

NOTES

[1] See Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960); Karl Bracher, *The German Dictatorship* (New York: Praeger, 1970); Hans Gerth, "The Nazi Party: Its Leadership and Composition," in Robert K. Merton, ed., *Reader in Bureaucracy* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1952); Rudolf Heberle, *Landbevölkerung und Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag, 1963); Daniel Lerner, *The Nazi Elite* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961); Maxwell Knight, *The German Executive, 1890–1933* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952); Wolfgang Zapf, *Wandlungen der deutschen Elite* (Munich: R. Piper and Co., 1965); and John Nagle, *System and Succession* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977).

[2] See Lipset, *Political Man*; Heberle, *Landbevölkerung*; Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*; and Arthur Schweitzer, *Big Business in the Third Reich* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964) for detailed accounts of this evolution.

[3] See especially Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*; and Schweitzer, *Big Business in the Third Reich*, for detailed accounts of this evolution.

[4] Gerth, "The Nazi Party."

[5] Lerner, *The Nazi Elite*.

[6] Knight, *The German Executive*.

[7] Zapf, *Wandlungen der deutschen Elite*.

[8] Nagle, *System and Succession*.

[9] Lerner, *The Nazi Elite*, Chaps. 2–3.

[10] Ibid., p. 84.

[11] See Donald Matthews, *The Social Background of Political Decision Makers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954), pp. 52-53; Alexander Groth, "Revolution and Elite Access," *Comparative Development Series No. 1* (Institute of Government Affairs, University of California, Davis, 1966), p. 62; Zapf, *Wandlungen der deutschen Elite*, p. 21; and Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*, p. 276.

[12] See Knight, *The German Executive*, pp. 41-47.

[13] See Zapf, *Wandlungen der deutschen Elite*, p. 170.

[14] Ibid., p. 189.

[15] Ibid., pp. 54-56.

[16] Ibid., pp. 183-84. Author's translation.

[17] Paul Seabury, *The Wilhelmstrasse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954), pp. 161-62.

[18] See Heberle, *Landbevölkerung*; and Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*, pp. 152ff.

[19] See especially Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*, pp. 334-377 and Schweitzer, *Big Business*, chap. 5.

[20] Schweitzer, *Big Business*, pp. 114-15.

[21] Nagle, *System and Succession*, chaps. 4, 7.

6

The Rise of Fascism in Germany and Its Causes

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INTRODUCTION

Why are we concerned with events that have taken place long ago? Why are we engaged in the science of writing history? A very influential point of view claims that historical events do not repeat themselves and that nothing can be learned from history. If this were the case, the study of history would be mere indulgence in the drama and diversity of historical events, and one might just as well spend the time reading a thrilling adventure story.

UNESCO, on the other hand, has a more sophisticated definition of science. According to it, science endeavors "to recognize and control relationships of causality" and "to benefit from the understanding of processes and phenomena occurring in nature and society"--for the welfare of humankind.[1] Science, then, is anything but a purposeless activity. Rather, it is a form within which human beings deal with objective reality in order to subject this reality to reason and to purposely employ it according to human needs. Science is here understood to be a form of useful human labor, a part of human beings' practical life activity. This understanding corresponds to that of Bert Brecht, who says in "Galilei" that the purpose of science is to "ease the drudgery of human existence."

The science of history is therefore concerned with events of the past mainly because we wish to appropriate the experience of earlier generations in order to learn how we can better manage our own current and future problems. Just as individuals can learn from previous life experience (although the events, of course, never repeat themselves in exactly the same manner), so humankind can learn from the experience of its history. History is not only of interest because of its practical value in mastering concrete problems. It is of value also because--and this is closely related to what has just been said--it allows us to appropriate the results of previous generations' creative activity (for example, in literature and architecture and in the production of tools and scientific theories) in order to enrich our mental and spiritual existence and to stimulate our own creative potential. However, the practical reason for engaging in the science of history is certainly more important.

On account of its potential and real consequences for humanity, fascism, in particular, requires urgent scientific examination. In the areas of terror and mass annihilation, it has developed a potency hitherto unknown in human history. Furthermore, it has enmeshed the world in a war in which 50 million people lost their lives, 30 million emerged as cripples, and in which--particularly in Europe--large areas were left with little but ruins. Although in the summer of 1945 the major fascist powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) were crushed by the common effort of peoples of the world, fascism as a possibility and threat has not been defeated once and for all. Fascist tendencies exist in almost all developed capitalist states and threaten to become stronger and more aggressive especially during periods of crises. And in areas peripheral to the capitalist world, parliamentary-democratic systems have been liquidated by radically anti-democratic forces and replaced with dictatorial terror systems in a number of countries (Greece 1967, Chile 1973, Argentina 1975-76, Turkey 1980, and other countries in Latin America and Southeast Asia). Admittedly, these forces and systems contain partial fascist elements. However, they can all be classified in that group of right-wing radically antidemocratic forces that were also responsible for the destruction of the Weimar Republic after 1930. It is, therefore, of pressing concern to closely investigate the problem of fascism. In doing so, however, it is insufficient to give only a factual account of events. This would be a prescientific mode of analysis that would not correspond to the UNESCO definition of science, since it would not be concerned with relationships of causality and would not attempt to determine the conditions that could have led to the success of fascism. Given the frightening potential for destruction that has been concentrated in today's military technology, the prevention of such systems of domination has become a matter of survival for the whole of humanity.

German fascism was that form of fascist domination which to date has brought about the greatest amount of terrorist potency and mass annihilation. This investigation is concerned with its causes and perpetuating forces. This study can only be sketchy and it will therefore only be possible to refer to a limited amount of empirical material. It must, however, be pointed out, that there exists a huge amount of available documentary evidence and that, on the basis of this material, fundamental questions can be answered clearly and conclusively.[2] (The truth, unfortunately, does not penetrate society easily, for the forces which supported and carried out German fascism have done everything possible to prevent the discovery of its real connections. These forces have promoted instead the dissemination of a host of myths; and since they were again very influential during the cold war, they had considerable success in doing so).

In combination, there were a number of factors that made German fascism victorious. Three factors, however, were of particular importance:

1. the behavior of the ruling strata of big business, military and the bureaucracy

2. the growth of the fascist movement, and

3. the failure on the part of anti-fascist forces.

In the following sections, only the first two factors will be dealt with in some detail, since they were of primary importance in the active promotion of the fascisation process.

THE RULING CLASS

Research on fascism has established a far-reaching consensus that fascism in Germany or elsewhere could not seize political power on its own.[3] On the contrary, it depended on the support of the leadership strata from industry, banking, the military, and the state bureaucracy, that is, from the forces known as "social elites" or "societal leadership strata" (by bourgeois historians and social scientists) or as the "ruling class" by Marxist scholars.[4] The decisive role of these forces in establishing the fascist dictatorship, as well as in the planning and execution of its policies, was well demonstrated as early as the international military tribunal of 1945-46. And because of the role these forces played, leading representatives of the economy and the military, in addition to leaders of the fascist party, were accused of war crimes. Research which has been done since has repeatedly confirmed this judgment.[5] The question must therefore be asked as to what goals and interests determined the behavior of the ruling class and how did they assert themselves?

It is important to note that the behavior of the German ruling class, although different from other European ruling classes in some important respects, nevertheless reflected tendencies that generally characterized capitalistic countries during this period. By the second half of the nineteenth century, capitalism in the advanced countries had become powerful enough so that it began to burst national boundaries in order to conquer new markets and areas with natural resources and to find new spheres for investment and cheap labor. To realize this expansion, the state made its political and military means available. This increased international capitalist competition, this transition to an imperialist strategy, quickly lead to a partitioning of the world, particularly in Africa and Asia, which had not yet been colonially occupied. Ideologically, the transition to imperialism was also reflected in the emergence of racist ideologies and their proliferation among the masses. These ideologies distinguished between superior and inferior races, thereby reducing the capitalist countries' domination over colored peoples to nature's will.

In comparison with the general development of capitalist countries, the German Reich had two characteristics that in combination have generally come to be known as the "extreme aggressiveness of German imperialism." This aggressiveness found its expression in the monumental plans for conquest implemented during the First and Second World Wars.

The first characteristic consisted of the fact that, in contrast to other advanced countries, German capitalistic development was delayed. This was mainly the case because Germany--as Italy--became economically peripheral after America and the seaway to India were discovered, resulting in a shift to overseas trade and stagnation in the development of German cities and the German bourgeoisie. The delayed capitalist development was also caused by the fact that the large feudal landlords' power remained unbroken as the revolt of peasants and plebeian city dwellers was crushed in 1525-29. Lastly, the delay was due to the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), which mainly took place on German territory, decimating the population by one-third, causing tremendous destruction, and thus throwing the country far back economically. The peace treaty resulted in splintering Germany into some two thousand "independent" political units, further hindering economic development.[6]

Only in the course of the nineteenth century, particularly after 1871 when a unified Reich (Reichseinheit) was created, could the country catch up and could capitalism fully develop. It soon became apparent that huge resources were available, which made rapid development possible. By the end of the nineteenth century, the German Reich was leading Europe in industrial production. At this point, however, German capitalism's expansion began to encounter stubborn barriers, since the imperialistic partitioning of the world had already taken place. German capitalism's main problem was the discrepancy between a strong potential and drive for expansion on the one hand and the lack of real possibilities for expansion on the other hand. The data in Table 6.1 illustrates this tension.[7]

Table 6.1
Population, Industrial Output, and Distribution of Colonial Lands

Population (in millions)

	Germany	Britain	France
1870	41	31	37
1910	65	45	40

Share of the World's Industrial Output (in percentages)

	Germany	Britain	France
1870	13	32	10
1913	16	14	6

The Distribution of Colonial Lands in 1914

	Area (million km^2)	Inhabitants (millions)
Germany	2.9	12.3
France	10.6	55.5
Britain	33.5	393.5

Because of this discrepancy, German capitalism developed its demand for a new partitioning of the world, which it was also willing to realize with force. The difference between the German Reich and other capitalistic states, then, was not between being imperialistic or peace loving, but between being disadvantaged, hungry, and bent on change (and therefore being aggressive) on the one hand, and being relatively saturated (and therefore defensive) and bent on maintaining the status quo on the other. This aggressiveness of German imperialism was the main structural cause of the First World War. And the Second World War was essentially a new attempt with even more effective means (and in alliance with other similarly disadvantaged imperialistic powers like Italy and Japan) to realize a new partitioning of the world, even if the first attempt had failed in 1918.

The second characteristic of the German Reich consisted in the fact that the bourgeois revolution was not victorious and that its ideas of enlightenment and human rights did not get realized. That the revolution did not take place was due to the economic backwardness described above, as a result of which the bourgeoisie remained politically weak. The large landholders' social power and the political power of the authoritarian ruler-state remained unbroken until the beginning of the twentieth century. (Thus it also sustained the ideological dominance of the Prussian military caste, its codex of virtues--discipline, duty, obedience and authority, which finally was also accepted by the bourgeoisie.) The bourgeoisie renounced its political ideals of freedom and tolerance in favor of great economic advantages, which it was granted by the emperor and his state. These included a standardized economic realm after the creation of a unified Reich (Reichseinheit) in 1871, the political and military support for its expansionary goals, and the suppression of its main enemy--the worker movement--which grew rapidly in the 1860s and threatened not only the maximization of profit but also bourgeois property relations.

As a result of this uninterrupted tradition of the ruler-state and of Prussian militarism, the transition to an imperialist policy and ideology could occur with relative ease and could assume particularly vicious forms.[3] German capitalism's unique position and direction of expansion implied, however, that other European people had to be defined as inferior in relation to the German master race. This was especially true for the Slavic peoples who inhabited the Eastern sphere--the main direction of the expansionary thrust--and who were defined as "subhuman." In moderated form, this applied also to West European peoples, who were competitors in the fight for domination in Europe. They were thus defined as traders (in comparison to German "heroes") and as "petty merchants" (in comparison to German "warriors"). All this took place before 1918, that is, long before the rise of fascism. Social and natural scientists (particularly those writing in the social Darwinist tradition) and writers (such as Nietzsche) supplied the theoretical legitimation for this tendency.

The radical form of the master-race ideology and the extremely brutal way in which it was politically realized in the First World War, and even more obviously in the Second World War was, of course, also tied to the tremendous importance given to the conquering of non-German territories. If the goal was to suppress all peoples from eastern France to deep into Russia (First World War) and even from the Atlantic to the Urals (Second World War)--and in the case of the Slavic peoples to transform them into work-slaves for the German economy--no means other than those ranging from the most extreme brutality to mass annihilation could realize the stated goal. Only these means were "adequate."

From this position, the ruling class systematically pursued two main goals--although with different means, depending on the circumstances given--from the Kaiserreich through the Weimar Republic to the fascist rule. Domestically, it worked to solidify or re-establish an authoritarian form of domination in order to guarantee capitalist private property relations and the expansionary power of capital and to hold back those political forces that pushed for a democratization of society and hindered the pursuit of the conquest policy. Externally, it worked to prepare and to realize the above-mentioned expansionary policy, which required the concentration of all economic, political, and ideological resources for military and war purposes.

The first attempt to realize this policy failed in November 1918 when the German Reich was defeated and the ruling class simultaneously lost the emperor and his state apparatus as its instrument of power. During the November revolution, the worker movement succeeded in toppling the Prussian military monarchy and replaced it with a parliamentary-democratic state. However, it did not succeed in appropriating the ruling class's basis of power. The economy, the life-blood of the whole society, remained just as much in the hands of the ruling class as did the military, the judicial system, the bureaucracies, and a significant portion of the ideological power apparatus, ranging from the press to the universities and churches.[9]

Because of this, the imperialist forces, although weakened by the military defeat and the November revolution, had not lost the source of their power. After a defensive phase, during which social and political concessions had to be made to the worker movement, and after a consolidation of economic, political, ideological, and military power was accomplished, they remained strong enough to pursue the two goals already established before 1918. These goals consisted in undermining and reducing the social and democratic rights instituted in 1918 and in moving toward an authoritarian state, as well as in commencing a renewed expansionist policy. The latter was perceived to be particularly necessary since, after the mid-1920s, German capitalism was again confronted with the same dilemma it faced before World War I and which was then a major cause of its extreme aggressiveness. Again, the dilemma consisted in German capitalism's enormous potential for expansion--it had once more become Europe's leading industrial producer--and the very limited real possibilities for expansion, which had become even more limited as a result of the loss of colonies and the conditions imposed by the Versailles treaty.

An investigation of the documentary material shows that, after 1918, decisive segments of big business and big banking, the military, large landowners, and leading civil servants had always aimed for the realization of both goals. They were neither willing to accept the military defeat nor the parliamentary democratic form of government, particularly not with the democratic and social rights guaranteed to the working class. Differences between the various factions were mainly limited to strategy and method. Until 1929, the differences turned around the question of whether or not the democratic constitution should be abolished in one sweep (which after the Kapp Putsch of 1920 found only a minority of supporters) or through "legal ways," ("Reichsreform" a slow undermining of the constitution). A further point of contention was whether or not the worker movement should be suppressed with open means of terror (a strategy favored by a majority of new industries, including firms in the chemical and electrical sector) or integrated with certain social concessions while suppressing only radical (revolutionary) segments of the working class. As to foreign policy, the differences concerned the extent to which the shackles of the Versailles treaty—which inhibited expansion—could be thrown off by negotiations with Western powers in combination with illegal rearmament or whether freedom from the Versailles limitations could only be achieved by open confrontation.

Once the Great Depression of 1929 had set in, there soon was an understanding that parliamentary democracy would have to go and be replaced by a more effective, authoritarian system. Several factors favored such a development. First, the bourgeois parties of the center and the moderate right--through whose help the ruling class had hitherto been able to realize its interests in parliament and the government--lost the great bulk of its supporters and the votes received by these parties fell from 40 million to 10 million from 1929-1932. Thus, it was extremely urgent and necessary that the ruling class realize its long-held plans to establish a firm domination, which was no longer dependent on elections and parliamentary majorities. Second, the depression limited the number of social concessions that could be made to the working population and induced capital to impose the burden of the crisis on the masses (through lowering real wages and social expenditures) in order to maintain capital's international capacity to invest, expand, and compete. Because of these developments, a dominating force was necessary, which could assert itself even against the needs and demands of the masses. Third, the crisis represented an opportunity to actively exploit the fears and uncertainties of the population by denouncing parliamentary democracy as weak and unfit to solve complicated problems and by propagating the strong state as the solution to present difficulties. As a consequence, a whole set of dictatorship notions were developed and entertained. They aimed not only at burdening the population with the crisis in the short run (and preparing the political ground for doing so), but at finding the proper form of government capable of also meeting the imperialist, expansionist, long-term interests. In its internal debates, the ruling class was now only concerned with the form the authoritarian state should take and with the extent to which repression against the left was necessary. The majority, particularly firms in the chemical and electrical sectors, were in favor of an authoritarian presidential regime like the one which was in power from 1930 to January 1933. This regime based itself primarily on the state power apparatus and the emergency powers of the president and was relatively independent of elections, parties, and parliamentary majorities. However, it left parliamentary forms and procedures intact insofar as all parties and unions could voice their opinions and had opportunities for mobilization. On the other hand, strong forces located in heavy industry and among large landowners pushed for a radical change in the form of government, for an open dictatorship, and for a complete suppression of the democratic and socialist forces. Since the military coup of 1920 showed that an isolated military intervention without mass support was of little promise (the coup was defeated by a general strike), the problem of obtaining the necessary mass support assumed decisive importance. In this regard, several dictatorship models were developed of which the Schleicher government at the end of 1932[10] (involving an alliance of defense associations from the nationalist Stahlhelm to the fascist SA and the right wing of the unions and the SPD) and that of the 1933 Hitler government were the most important. In discussions among big business and the military (as well as among the producers of ideology in right-wing mass media and theoreticians of state law), fascist Italy (which assumed power in 1922) served as a role model. However, the final decision opting for the Hitler dictatorship model was only made after all other models had proven to be insufficient or unrealizable. The presidential regime proved to be inadequate because it could neither solve the economic crisis nor prevent the left from engaging in a class struggle; because it could neither acquire a basis in mass support nor create the necessary preconditions for a new expansionary policy. After facing the Great Depression, the breakdown of world trade, and the growing protectionism of various countries that increased tariffs and introduced import barriers, an expansionary policy became particularly important. However, a military dictatorship and the Schleicher government plan for mass support also proved to be unrealizable (because in the final analysis the unions, SPD, and NSDAP could not be split).

After the election results of November 6, 1932--the last free elections held during the Weimar Republic--agreement among the various factions came about more quickly. First, it was evident that the bourgeois parties that carried the Papen presidential regime remained without mass basis (despite big business's strong financial support). Second, the anticapitalist tendencies in the country increased again (the KPD's vote increased from 14.6 percent to 16.9 percent and was now almost as strong as the SPD, which carried 20.4 percent of the votes). Third, the NSDAP had peaked and was on the decline (it lost 2 million votes; its share dropped from 37.4 percent to 33.1 percent). As a result, the ruling class feared that its last dictatorship model, based on the Nazi party, might become unrealizable. The Nazi party, therefore, had to be quickly brought to power in order to stabilize it and its power base and in order to create an accomplished fact. Von Schroeder, the banker in whose house the decisive negotiations with Hitler took place in January 1933, spoke to this issue when he was called as witness by the U.S. accusatory body in 1945: "When the NSDAP suffered its first defeat on November 6, 1932, the German economy's support was particularly urgent."[11] In this way, the dictatorship model, which since 1929-30 had been favored by only a minority of factions, came to be realized in January 1933. The Hitler model provided the following key advantages: First, on the key questions of the destruction of democracy and the worker movement, establishing a dictatorship, and embarking on an expansionary foreign policy, the party's leadership fully agreed with the ruling class. Second, the Nazi leadership had proven itself capable of gaining mass support for such policies—a capability that big business and the military did not have and which the right-wing bourgeois parties had lost in the course of the Great Depression.

THE FASCIST MASS MOVEMENT

It is clear from what has been said thus far that the rise and victory of fascism cannot be understood to be the result of an autonomous movement as has been proposed over and over by many adherents of "middle class theories" (Mittelstandstheorien).[12] On the other hand, the strength of the fascist movement was of great importance in liquidating democracy. It is therefore necessary to investigate the causes and initiatives that led to this movement's success.

Immediately after World War I, fascist movements arose in several countries. They mobilized parts of those groups that became fanatic adherents to nationalist and militarist ideologies during the war and those who, as a result of the war, had become derailed in their professional and civil life. The war's brutality had turned them into uncivilized, crude (verroht) individuals whose integration into society was made even more difficult in the post-war crisis. They were often members of armed groups such as free-corps citizen defense leagues and defense associations. These groups were generally used by the ruling class to terrorize and destroy the revolutionary worker movement, which, encouraged by the victorious Russian October revolution, had mushroomed in many countries after the war. In Italy, this development led to the creation of a fascist dictatorship in 1922. In Germany, it led to a considerable increase of support for the NSDAP and similar groups as well as to coup attempts in 1920 and 1923 in which parts of the Reichswehr and its leadership were implicated (in preparations, mutinies, and in refusing to oppose the groups involved in the coups). In 1923 the same Reichswehr, however, destroyed the last attempts by the left to overcome capitalism and to fight for a socialist social order. In Hamburg it fought against the communist uprising, and in Saxony and Thuringia it liquidated the legally formed worker government. With the help of such acts, the bourgeois republic was stabilized. These events, together with the beginning of economic stabilization in 1924 (with the help of U.S. dollar loans) alleviated reasons to join fascist and radical right-wing groups. The ruling class also found fewer reasons to support and employ such movements; as a result, they lost significant political strength and importance.

With the coming of the Great Depression in 1929, a fundamental change took place. Mass unemployment and wage cuts threw significant portions of the non-self-employed work force into social misery (in 1932, only 33 percent were still fully employed, over 44 percent were unemployed, and over 22 percent were on a shortened work week), and the proletarianization of the self-employed increased. People were gripped by fear and uncertainty; they lost their confidence in parties that sat in parliament and obviously had no solution and in parliamentary democracy, which obviously proved incapable of putting an end to misery. With increased intensity, they searched for a way out, for a real alternative. The forces on the political stage began to move. Within four years, the bourgeois parties of the center and the right lost almost three-fourths of its voters. At the same time, the NSDAP grew from a splinter party (2.6 percent of the vote) to the strongest party (37.4 percent). Large changes occurred also within the worker movement. The SPD lost almost one-third of its voters to the KPD, which almost reached the size of the SDP. Table 6.2 illustrates the changes between 1928 and 1932.[13]

Table 6.2
Changes in Voting Patterns from 1928 to 1932

	1928		July 1932	
	Million	Percent	Million	Percent
Worker parties SPD and KPD	12.4	40.4	13.24	36.2
Bourgeois parties of the center and the right	11.9	38.7	3.53	9.6
Catholic parties Center party and Bavarian People's party	4.7	15.2	5.8	15.7

The origin of the mass support now concentrated in the fascist party can easily be discerned. It came mainly from those who had abandoned the bourgeois parties and from those who had hitherto not taken part in elections but who were activated by the crisis. (Voter participation increased from 75 percent in 1928 to 82 percent in July 1932.) The worker parties not only did not lose any supporters during this time, they actually gained almost one million votes. This indicates, as has been shown by historical investigations, that NSDAP voters came from the Mittelschicht (small merchants, craftsmen, farmers) and from those non-self-employed who--based on their origin, the type of work, and privileges that they had, as opposed to the workers--considered themselves as part of the "Mittelstand." They, for the most part, were salaried white-collar employees and civil servants.[14] What drove these masses to the fascist party? Why did they particularly believe that the NSDAP would have the solution to their problems? In order to answer this question, it is important to consider the ideologies and propaganda that helped the Nazi party mobilize the masses. Essentially, the ideologies were the same as those that had been disseminated by German imperialism since the end of the nineteenth century in order to legitimize its expansion and the suppression of democracy and the labor movement at home and to mobilize for these goals large segments of the population, the Mittelschichten in particular. The ideologies included nationalism, racism, anti-Semitism, militarism, authoritarianism, and--with the growth of the worker movement--anti-Marxism, coupled with promises of a "German socialism." It was precisely this mass consciousness, deeply engrained for decades (in 1918 first largely discredited, but, with the growing political and ideological power of the ruling class after the suppression of socialist endeavors, soon again massively disseminated), which was taken up by many radical right-wing, nationalist and völkisch groups that emerged after 1918 and of which the NSDAP was the most successful.[15]

The NSDAP's success was not due to its ideological tenets (as compared to other nationalist, right-wing, conservative, and militantly anti-communist competitors), but due to the ways in which they were propagated. In contrast to other competitors, these ideas were not propagated through elitist and self-affirming honorary circles, appeals to top leadership circles, and a demonstrated disgust for the masses (as was customary with most right-wing conservative forces from the Herrenklub to the Tatkreis) but by taking over the methods of mass mobilization (such as mass parades and mass gatherings), which had proved successful in the worker movement. By presenting itself as the party of the "small man," as anti-bourgeois and even "revolutionary," and through its extreme simplification and vulgarization of traditional right-wing conservative ideology, and its aggressive posture, the organized terror that the NSDAP displayed in meeting halls and street battles conveyed to its supporters a sense of power and ability to assert itself.

The NSDAP built its agitation essentially around four ideological complexes on the basis of which it promised the desperately searching masses a brighter future:

1. The "annihilation of Marxism," the NSDAP announced, was absolutely essential to enable Germany to recover and rise to its former stature. Under "annihilation of the Marxist pest," it

meant the destruction of the ideas and organization of the worker movement. Based on the thesis, propagated for decades by the dominant ideology, that the Marxist workers' movement was composed of enemies of the state and the people and was controlled by rabble rousers, that is, destructive elements, it concluded that these elements were to be annihilated without hesitation. This thesis appealed to entrepreneurs and small, labor-intensive businesses. For entrepreneurs, the organization of wage and salaried employees represented an increase in costs which meant that--especially during the crisis--big capital's international competitiveness was persistently threatened. For small businesses, the workers' movement represented a direct threat to their social existence. Although the latter's real problems mainly originated in the overwhelming economic power of big capital, in their consciousness, however, the culprits were those who demanded higher wages, better welfare provisions for the workers and white-collar employees and who, in general, demanded the abolition of an economy based on private property, which also was the small entrepreneur's basis of social existence. In addition, the thesis that Marxism must be annihilated appealed to those who, fooled by the nationalist demagoguery propagated since the Kaiserreich, had experienced the First World War as Germany's wrestling for a "place in the sun," who therefore considered the November revolution as a crime against the German people, and who believed the worker movement to be responsible for the November crimes "and the resulting downfall of Germany."

2. The second ideological complex, the "disgrace of Versailles," combined well with the first. Germany would have a secure future only when the "disgrace of Versailles" was eliminated, the shackles of the Versailles treaty thrown off, the political and military discrimination of Germany eliminated, and its leading role guaranteed, to which it was entitled on account of its economic output, population size, and racial quality. The existing social misery was not believed to have been caused by the social system but by the actions of other countries taking advantage of Germany. The solution to the survival problems of those people affected by the Great Depression was therefore not seen to lie in a change of the domestic social system but in the struggle of the "whole German people" against the foreign enemy and finally in the conquest of new "living space," new resource areas, markets for goods, and labor power. This conquest was to be at the expense of other countries; in short, it was suggested that imperialism was the key to solving domestic social problems.

These ideological complexes drew on a tradition of thought pursued by German imperialism up to 1918 and were, despite the defeat of 1918, still seen to be a long-range goal. Although the fascist party justified this goal more heavily from a racist point of view, the substance of the imperialist ideology behind it remained unchanged. In this manner, fascist agitation drew upon the fears and hopes of those masses touched by the crisis, and by distracting from the crisis's real causes, it lessened the chances for social protest, while channelling the masses in a direction corresponding to the ruling class's expansionary goals.

3. Fascist agitation proposed in its third ideological complex that the saving of Germany necessitated a strong state; a dictatorship that would cleanse the nation of its rabble rousers and the "Marxist pest" and that would be in a position to firmly engage in power politics abroad. Democracy was said to be slow moving, incapable of acting, and unnatural, because it did not distinguish between talents and achievement differences among people and could not solve the great problems relating to the securing of the future. This part of the fascist solution also corresponded to the interests of imperialist forces. In addition, it drew upon Germany's long-standing authoritarian tradition and on the particularly *Mittelschicht* view that rescue must come from the top and that, especially in times of crisis, only a strong state authority is capable of providing security.

4. All the fascist ideological complexes discussed thus far saw the solution to pressing social problems in a Germany of world-power status. The realization of these promises and predictions lay in the distant future. Creating the precondition for their realization, however, was an immediate domestic task. It involved the creation of a dictatorship and the smashing of democracy and the worker movement, without, however, offering any direct tangible social improvements. Anticapitalism and anti-Semitism served as the ideological complex designed to raise hopes--as well as to compensate for other weaknesses--that fascism would bring about immediate improvements. Anticapitalism and anti-Semitism, although of quite different origin, were thus closely connected functionally.

Fascism's anticapitalism--presenting itself also as German socialism or national socialism--was proof that the idea of socialism attracted the masses and that, particularly after 1918 and again during the Great Depression, significant segments of the *Mittelschichten* were also influenced by it. The desire for a fundamental change, for a real alternative to the status quo, through which one's own pressing existential problems could be solved, was very widespread. The fascist party, therefore, presented itself as the radical alternative in comparison to the established *Reichstag* parties, which were all seen to be impotent. However, the fascist party did not only give the impression that it would radically change the existing situation and create something totally new. It gave its sympathizers concrete hopes of being able to recover economically at the expense of the hitherto privileged, big bosses, the "fat bourgeoisie." The small entrepreneurs were led to believe that their social position would become secured at the expense of big business and that they would be freed from debts and high interest rates. Unemployed white-collar employees (Angestellte) and the mass of SA supporters were attracted by promises that, at the expense of well-situated employees, they would receive secure government positions (as employees or soldiers). These expectations--coupled with the vague idea of Volksgemeinschaft (sharing unity of the people), in which all were to overcome the domestic and foreign enemy in solidarity--constituted national socialism and not, as one might think, the demand for abolishing private ownership of the means of production.[16]

Hopes for "average people's" socioeconomic security at the expense of the hitherto privileged, however, were of potential danger for the rulers, particularly since some segments of the party's following and functionaries took the anticapitalist dimension quite seriously. Therefore, the party had to do something if it was not to risk losing big business's and the military's confidence. The most effective solution was to direct anticapitalist sentiments toward Jews, who were made the symbol of capitalist exploitation. The distinction between Jewish "amassing" capital and German "productive" capital eliminated all fascist anticapitalist elements that could have irritated the ruling class. Already in 1928, point 17 of the 1920 program planning the "collectivization of land for common purposes without compensation" was supplemented with the following: "Since the NSDAP was in agreement with the private ownership of the means of production, it is selfunderstood" that the concern here was with "land which was acquired illegally or which was not used for the welfare of the people. . . . This concerns primarily the Jewish firms speculating in land."[17] In the summer of 1930, the elimination from the party of the circle around Otto Strasser took place. It had resisted this Nazi trend on various points.[18] With some supporters and functionaries, the anticapitalist hopes persisted. After 1933, they threatened to forcefully split the party (they were a Sprengkraft) and were therefore silenced through a mass murder of the SA leadership, called the Röhm affair, in the summer of 1934.[19]

Anticapitalism was thereby made harmless by reducing it to anti-Semitism. This, however, was not the sole function of anti-Semitism. It created--based on experience--scapegoats and diverted social dissatisfaction toward Jews and away from its real causes. The creation of scapegoats and the possibility of not having to articulate one's real aggressions but being able to release them instead in concrete action are common characteristics of all reactionary and fascist forces. Which religious, ethnic, or national minorities are to be treated thusly depends upon the concrete conditions in a particular country. The groups can vary from nonwhites to foreign workers, to others. In Germany, anti-Semitism could take on this function because it had been deeply entrenched in mass consciousness and had already been used under the emperor to divert social dissatisfaction. In addition, special economic groups saw a certain advantage for themselves in eliminating Jewish competitors, particularly in petty commerce, professions such as medicine and law, and in academia. Without any doubt, there is a connection between this self-interest and the disproportionately high number among these professionals who supported fascism.

Certainly, fascist ideology contains a variety of gaps and contradictions. However, an internal unity cannot be disputed. Particularly, the systematically used biological paradigm of the world and of human beings--which legitimized the economic, political, and domestic domination of a minority and the subjugation and plundering of other peoples--formed a kind of common thread throughout all of the ideological complexes. That the combination of these ideological complexes had such an enormous appeal, turning the NSDAP from the 1928 splinter group into the strongest German party in 1932, can, however, only be explained in conjunction with the prevailing general conditions. They consisted in the fact that all ideological complexes had been developed for decades, had been used to legitimize imperialistic policies under the emperor, and had been propagated again soon after 1918. Therefore, when the Great Depression set in and the desperate and fearful population was searching for a solution, the ground had already been prepared, since these tenets were deeply engrained in mass consciousness. Secondly, it must be mentioned that the fascist party, in its agitation and even in its terrorist activities against the left, was hardly hindered and often was protected and encouraged. Antifascist activities, on the other hand, were often blocked and punished. In cases of conflicts between fascist groups and organizations of the worker movement, police and the judicial system generally punished communists, social democrats, and labor union members, leaving the fascists untouched. This induced a strong feeling of power and readiness to use terror among fascist supporters. Both conditions favoring fascism structurally were the result of the failure in 1918 to expell the ruling class from its instrumental positions in the realm of economic and political power (the judicial system, the civil service apparatus, the military, and the police), so that soon it solidified its ideological power again.

A third condition favoring fascism consisted in the weakness of antifascist forces. The masses, who desperately searched for a solution during the Great Depression, were--despite the conditions advantageous to fascism just described--not pre-disposed toward fascism. The outcome of their search depended significantly on the democratic forces' (particularly those of the worker movement) success in developing a convincing alternative and presenting themselves as a force that was determined to fight for a solution to their problems. As is commonly known, the left failed because neither the communists nor the social democrats really had an adequate analysis of the depression from which a political strategy could be developed. However, it mainly failed because the worker movement remained split, even in the face of the rising fascist threat. In order to show the causes of this failure, it would be necessary to investigate the history of the German worker movement since the Kaiserreich, which cannot be done here.[20] However, reference should be made to the documents in which both branches of the worker movement analyzed the mistakes and reasons for their defeat. In particular, they are the documents of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International of 1935 and the Prague Manifesto of the Social Democratic Emigration Council of 1934. In both documents, the worker parties arrived at a fairly realistic analysis of the causes of their defeat.

The worker movement realized the practical consequences of the devastating defeat of 1933 in the spring of 1934 in France and in 1936 in Spain. Common action contained the fascist onslaught in France and in Spain; it would no doubt have defeated France's coup, had it not been for the powerful military intervention on the part of the German and Italian fascist superpowers--favored by the Western powers' declared "neutrality." Finally, the consequences were drawn in the European people's fight against fascist domination during the Second World War which, from Greece to France and from Italy to Yugoslavia, was largely based on the idea of a people's alliance. It follows that the ruling class on the one hand and the fascist movement on the other can be determined as the main forces which purposefully worked toward the liquidation of democracy and which had actively promoted the fascisization process. Politically, however, they became allied only little by little. Although Hitler had aimed at an alliance with the established elites since the refounding of the NSDAP and offered his services to big business over and over[21] in regard to battling Marxism and facilitating the resurrection of Germany, he initially encountered little interest and received little financial support.[22] This changed when the Great Depression set in; when the masses deserted the bourgeois parties; when the NSDAP proved itself capable of gathering the fearful and desperate and began to use them in its terror against the left; and when the urge in the ruling class was to move to authoritarian methods of domination. The ruling-class faction that favored an alliance with the fascist party grew rapidly and became dominant when, at the end of 1932, the other dictatorship models proved to be insufficient or unrealizable. From then on, all significant factions of the ruling class favored the transferral of political power to the leader of the NSDAP. The alliance which was then formed remained fundamental to the structure of domination and the policy of German fascism until its breakdown. It was based on the common interests and goals of the ruling class on the one hand and of the fascist leadership on the other: The destruction of democracy and the worker movement at home and the realization of a new expansionary policy by rearming with the goal of going to war against foreign countries. As early as February 2 and 20, 1933, the outlines of the program were drawn up in conferences with military and business leaders.[23] Systematically, and using the utmost brutality, the program was realized: The worker movement was smashed and its functionaries jailed, tortured, and murdered by the tens of thousands. (The concentration camps were built for jailed members of the worker movement. Only later, after the beginning of World War II, did Jews increasingly become the main victims of fascist terror.)[24] In the workplace, the dictatorship of capital was again fully restored: The entrepreneur was named the "leader of the workplace," workers and white-collar employees were deprived of all possibilities to articulate their interests, and every move to the contrary was punished as a crime against the state. The almost one-hundred-year-old struggle of the worker movement was liquidated. Fascism realized what it had announced: The extermination of Marxism, the securing of peace at the workplace, the elimination of the class struggle, the creation of a shared unity of the people (*Volksgemeinschaft*; and with power, political preconditions were established in order to concentrate all efforts toward re-armament and war). This manner of shaping society and the relations between classes is the substance and essential meaning of fascist domination. It has been the method used by all regimes of fascist or similar nature--from Italy to Germany, from Portugal to Spain, from Austria (1934) to Greece (1967) and Chile (1973). Given fascist domination, it is obvious who the victims are. However, it is equally clear who the beneficiaries are.

NOTES

[1] "Empfehlungen zur Stellung der Wissenschaftlichen Forscher," Eighteenth General Conference of UNESCO, November 23, 1974.

[2] In addition to the forty-two volumes of the *International Military Tribunal* (IMT) see also Reinhard Kühnl, *Der deutsche Faschismus in Quellen und Dokumenten* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1975); D. Eichholtz and W. Schumann, eds., *Anatomie des Krieges: Neue Dokumente über die Rolle des deutschen Monopolkapitals bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1969); Gerhart Hass and W. Schumann, eds., *Anatomie der Agression: Neue Dokumente zu den Kriegszielen des Faschistischen deutschen Imperialismus im zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1972); Wolfgang Schumann and Ludwig Nestler, eds., *Weltherrschaft im Visier: Dokumente zu den Europa-und Weltherrschaftsplänen des deutschen Imperialismus von der Jahrhundertwende bis Mai 1945* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1975); Wolfgang Schumann, ed., *Griff nach Südosteuropa: Neue Dokumente über die Politik des deutschen Imperialismus und Militarismus gegenüber Südosteuropa im zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1973); Reinhard Opitz, ed., *Europastrategie des deutschen Kapitals: 1900-1945* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977); and Ulrike Hörster-Philipps, ed., *Wer war Hitler Wirklich?: Grosskapital und Faschismus, 1913-1945* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1978).

[3] The sources are cited in Reinhard Kühnl, *Faschismustheorien: Ein Leitfaden* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1979), p. 168 ff.

[4] The differences between these concepts cannot be discussed here. Of course, they are not identical in content since they entail different theoretical perspectives.

[5] For general discussions, see Fritz Fischer, Griff nach der Weltmacht. Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914-1918 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1960); Fritz Fischer, Bündnis der Eliten: Zur Kontinuität der Machtstrukturen in Deutschland 1871-1945 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1979); Karl Dietrich Bracher, Die deutsche Diktatur: Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1976); Wolfgang Ruge, Deutschland von 1917 bis 1933 (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1974); and Hans Mommsen et al, eds., Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1974). For a discussion of big industry and banking, see Kurt Gossweiler, Grossbanken, Industriemonopole, Staat: Ökonomie und Politik des staatsmonopolistischen Kapitalismus in Deutschland 1914-1932 (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1971); Bernd Weisbrod, Schwerindustrie in der Weimarer Republik: Interessenpolitik zwischen Stabilisierung und Krise (Wuppertal: P. Hammer, 1978); D. Stegmann, "Zum Verhältnis von Grossindustrie und Nationalsozialismus, 1930-1933," Archiv für Sozialgeschichte XIII, 1973; Georg Wolfgang Felix Hallgarten and U. J. Radkau, Deutsche Industrie und Politik von Bismark bis heute (Frankfurt A.M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1974); Joachim Radkau, "Industrie und Faschismus," Neue Politische Literatur, Heft 2, 1973; and Arthur Schweitzer, Big Business in the Third Reich (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964). For a discussion of the military, see Karl Nuss, Militär und Weideraufrüstung in der Weimarer Republik: Zur politischen Rolle und Entwicklung der Reichswehr (Berlin: Militärverlag der DDR, 1977); Francis Ludwig Carsten, Reichswehr und Politik, 1918-1933 (Köln: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1964); and Axel Schildt, Militär mit Massenbasis? Die Querfrontkonzeption der Reichswehrführung um General Schleicher am Ende der Weimarer Republik (Frankfurt: Campus, 1981). For a discussion of the judicial system, see Heinrich Hannover, Politische Justiz 1918-1933 (Frankfurt: Fischer Bücherei, 1966); and Ilse Staff, ed., Justiz im Dritten Reich (Frankfurt: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1978). For a discussion of bureaucracy, see Hans Mommsen, Beamtentum im Dritten Reich (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1966). In addition, see the bibliography in my book Faschismustheorien as well as my review of the literature in Reinhard Kühnl, "Neuere Ergebnisse und Tendenzen der Faschismusforschung" Politische Vierteljahresschrift, Heft 1 and 2, 1980.

[6] Among others, see also Hans Mottek, Wirtschaftsgeschichte Deutschlands, Vol. 1 (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1968), p. 238 ff.

[7] Reinhard Kühnl, Der Deutsche Faschismus in Quellen und Dokumenten (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1975), p. 22.

[8] In regard to the ideological development, see Georg Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1962); and Walter Struve, *Elites Against Democracy: Leadership Ideals in Bourgeois Political Thought in Germany, 1890-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

[9] All countries in which authoritarian systems of domination are debunked, without democratization penetrating to the social foundation and the instrumental positions of power, face this problem. For this reason, the democracies in the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Spain and Portugal are more threatened by right-wing forces than is the case with democracies with a long-standing democratic-parliamentary tradition.

[10] See also Axel Schildt, *"Querfront"-Die politische Konzeption in der Reichswehrführung um General Kurt von Schleicher am Ende der Weimarer Republic* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1981).

[11] Sworn testimony of Freiherr Kurt von Schroeder given to the U.S. investigation committee. Citation given in Kühnl, *Der deutsche Faschismus*, p. 172 ff.

[12] See also chapter entitled "Faschismus als Mittelstandsbewegung," in Kühnl *Faschismustheorien* p. 39 ff.

[13] Data reflecting electoral developments during the Weimar Republic are available in Kühnl *Der deutsche Faschismus*, p. 84 ff.

[14] See also Theodor Geiger, *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1932); A. Weber, *Soziale Merkmale der NSDAP Wähler* (Freiburg: University of Freiburg, Dissertation, 1969); Wolfgang Schieder, ed., *Faschismus als soziale Bewegung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1976); Jürgen Kocka, *Angestellte zwischen Faschismus und Demokratie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1977); and Heinrich August Winkler, *Mittelstand, Demokratie und Nationalsozialismus* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1972).

[15] Concerning the origins of fascist ideology see, in addition to Lukács, Joachim Petzold, *Konservative Theoretiker des deutschen Faschismus: Jungkonservative Ideologen in der Weimarer Republik als geistige Wegbereiter* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1978); Klaus Fritzsche, *Politische Romantik und Gegenrevolution: Fluchtwege in der Krise der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft: Das Beispiel des Tat-Kreises* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976); and Ulrike Hörster-Philipps, *Konservative Politik in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik: Die Regierung Franz von Papen* (Marburg: University of Marburg, Dissertation, 1980).

[16] For more details, see Reinhard Kühnl, "Waren die deutschen Faschisten Sozialisten?" *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, Heft 11, 1979.

[17] Cited in Reinhard Kühnl, *Der Deutsche Faschismus*, p. 106 f.

[18] See also Reinhard Kühnl, *Die NS-Linke 1925-1930* (Meisenheim: A. Hain, 1966).

[19] See also Charles Bloch, *Die SA und die Krise des NS-Regimes 1934* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970); and Arthur Schweitzer, *Big Business in the Third Reich*.

[20] See also Georg Fulberth and Jurgen Harrer, *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie 1890-1933* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1974); and Barbel Hebel-Kunze, *SPD und Faschismus: Zur politischen und organisatorischen Entwicklung der SPD 1932-1935* (Frankfurt: Roderberg-Verlag, 1977).

[21] See also Hitler's secret memo "Der Weg zum Wiederaufstieg," which he wrote in 1927 at the request of the industrialist Emil Kirdorf and sent to him with the request "to spread these ideas in your circles." The complete text can be found in Henry Ashby Turner, *Faschismus und Kapitalismus in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), pp. 41-59. Excerpts can be found in Reinhard Kühnl, *Der deutsche Faschismus*, p. 116 ff.

[22] Concerning the development of these contracts, see Kurt Gossweiler, "Hitler und das Kapital 1925-1928," *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, Heft 7/8, 1978; and D. Stegemann, "Zum Verhältnis von Grossindustrie und Nationalsozialismus."

[23] Concerning these meetings, see *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 2, 1954, p. 434 f; *International Military Tribunal*, vol. XXV, p. 42, ff; and Reinhard Kühnl, *Der deutsche Faschismus*, p. 200 ff. and 207 ff.

[24] See the empirically sound treatment concerning the development of the persecution of the Jews as discussed in Kurt Pätzold, *Faschismus, Rassenwahn, Judenverfolgung: Eine Studie zur politischen Strategie und Taktik des faschistischen deutschen Imperialismus, 1933-1935* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1975); and Kurt Pätzold, "Von der Vertreibung zum Genozid," in *Faschismusforschung: Positionen, Probleme, Polemik*, ed. Dietrich Eichholtz and Kurt Gossweiler (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), p. 181 ff.

7

Conservative Concepts of Dictatorship in the Final Phase of the Weimar Republic: The Government of Franz von Papen

ULRIKE HÖRSTER-PHILIPPS

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In historical evaluations of the last cabinets of the Weimar Republic before the takeover of Hitlerian Fascism, there are two fundamentally different interpretations.[1] The first is a type of interpretation that tends to include most conservative positions and sees the politics of conservative politicians before 1933 as striving to tame the fascist movement and party. The second interpretation, derived mostly from the liberal or socialist camp, regards the function of the last cabinets of the Weimar years as fascism's "stirrup-holder" or as paving the way for fascism.

The latter view is particularly prevalent with respect to the second-to-the-last cabinet of the Republic, the government of Franz von Papen. For the most part, Papen's political contacts, the political strategy of his cabinet, and its relationship to the conservative party spectrum and the conservative dictatorship models of the Weimar Republic have so far been largely ignored.[2]

After Germany's military defeat in the First World War and after constituting the Republic, two problem areas dominated political discussion and political struggle in the Weimar years. On the one hand, the Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to surrender considerable territory, make reparation payments, and limit weapons. On the other hand, the Republic as a form of government guaranteed citizens the fundamental rights of a bourgeois democracy, recognized the rights of unions to form coalitions, to strike, and to bargain collectively, and introduced the parliamentary system as the foundation for shaping the processes of building political opinion and will. After 1918, in numerous discussions, leading representatives of the political, economic, and military spheres debated how the entire Treaty of Versailles, or at least certain of its stipulations, could be undermined or modified; they also discussed how the parliamentary system could be adapted to their own interests.

Political discussion of these two questions intensified with the outbreak of the world economic crisis. Just before the Brüning government (1930-32) took office, a political program was introduced that implied a massive withdrawal of democratic rights and a reduction in parliamentary powers. The majority of big industrial leaders and bankers initially welcomed the Brüning government. The fall of the Hermann-Müller government of 1930 had deprived the Social Democrats of governmental control and freed the way for a presidential cabinet[3] which could govern, on the basis of Article 48, with far less dependence on parliament.[4] Early on, however, the Brüning government was criticized for its dependency on the Social Democrats' toleration.[5]

After the spectacular electoral success of the NSDAP in the Reichstag election of September 1930, demands that the so-called "national opposition" be represented in the government grew increasingly vocal. (The national opposition included the rightist radicals and fascistic forces from the German National People's Party /DNVP/ of Hugenberg, on up to the NSDAP.) The national opposition culminated in the Harzburg Front of 1931. The circle of industrialists that had established contact with the NSDAP and supported Hitler financially and politically grew significantly broader.[6]

Including the rightist forces in the Brüning government was impossible. But only with the support of rightist forces could the goals and interests be implemented that were common to broad circles of big industry, bank capital, and big agriculture, namely, a big business-oriented economic policy,[7] the revision of the Treaty of Versailles, and the replacement of parliamentary rule by an authoritarian state,[8] which alone could offer guarantees for economic and international expansion and for the planned rearmament.

Papen's cabinet seemed to offer the best possibility for implementing these goals. Its members, most of noble origin, came from the conservative rightist camp. Papen, who had been a member of the Catholic Center party and its delegate to the Prussian parliament from 1921-1924 and 1928-1932, was politically closer to the German National People's party (DNVP).[9] Minister of the interior, Baron von Gayl, a member of the DNVP and a representative of East Prussia in the state council, held to the reactionary Hugenberg line.[10] Reichswehr (Army) Minister Schleicher, generally considered the inspiration for the Papen cabinet, personified the rearmament plans of the Reichswehr leadership.[11] Nearly all the ministers belonged to the German Gentlemen's Club (Deutscher Herrenklub), a fact which earned the cabinet the nickname, "Herrenklub-Kabinett" (The Gentlemen's Club Cabinet).[12]

The Gentlemen's Club has unjustifiably been portrayed in writings as a harmless debating circle similar to an English club.[13] The purpose for founding the Herrenklub in 1924, however, was to gather together a "conservative elite," which drew from the leadership of politics, the military, big industry, and big agriculture. This elite sought to unify conservative political positions in order to increase its ability to realize right-wing, conservative policies.[14] The mentality of the Herrenklub was characteristically chauvinistic and anti-republican. The draft of its charter reads:

> In its name the Herrenklub refers to our people's historical mission towards the East which is symbolic of the idea of an enlarged Germany. The German Herrenklub intends to lay a foundation, as a club, for convening persons with a Christian and nationalistic orientation who have leading or decisive political influence.[15]

The German Herrenklub was closely related to a political movement and deserved special attention as another aspect of the development of the conservatives' models of dictatorship: namely, the young conservative movement.

The young conservatives arose as a reaction to the First World War and the November Revolution. After the collapse of the Kaiser's empire in 1918, conservatives of the old stamp remained true to the political views of the pre-World War II days. But the new conservatives criticized conditions during Wilhelm's empire and held it responsible for Germany's defeat in the war.[16] During the Weimar Republic the young conservatives published an almost inexhaustible wealth of materials. Although these publications differed from one another in numerous ways, all shared three ideological core elements; the desire to create a unified and internally strong German Reich;[17] the demand for a new European order in which Germany would play a leading role,[18] and the claim that an internally and externally strong German Reich would embody the true and specifically German form of socialism.[19]

Franz von Papen never doubted that he should be regarded as being in the tradition of the young conservatives.[20] Leading ideologues of young conservatives such as Heinrich von Gleichen, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, and Max Hildebert Boehm were numbered among the founding members of the German Herrenklub, which was led by Heinrich von Gleichen and Hans Bode von Alvensleben.[21]

In contrast to the NSDAP and to the Hugenberg wing of the DNVP (which had generally pulled back from the German Herrenklub after 1924), the Young Conservatives' and the Herrenklub members' internal policy steered toward a gradual reduction of democratic and parliamentary rights through legal means. By continually making alterations in the constitution, they hoped to reach their long-term goal, a definitive revision of the Weimar Reich constitution. As way stations to this goal, they aimed at strengthening the position of the Reich president and Reich government against the parliament. After 1930, these means were put into practice by applying Article 48. The Federation for Renewing the Reich (Bund zur Erneuerung des Reiches, BER) had been presided over by the former Reich chancellor and later Reich bank president, Hans Luther,[22] from its founding in 1928 until 1930. The BER's drafts for a constitution most nearly matched the Herrenklub's political thinking concerning the constitution.[23]

Among the numerous political models for a constitution that emanated from this circle around the Herrenklub and BER, the proposals of one man particularly stand out: Edgar Julius Jung. He had a close relationship with Papen and his work in certain ways epitomized the Young Conservatives' models of dictatorship.

Jung, a lawyer by profession who was active in various rightist radical groups and organizations since the First World War, was made Papen's private secretary and the ghostwriter of his speeches in 1932. In 1927 he had published a book entitled The Domination of the Inferior,[24] in which he maintained that the Weimar Republic had brought the inferior to power, while letting the potential of Germany's intellectual and moral elite go unused. According to him, it was time to put an end to liberalism and individualism and to create a new Reich in which an educated and cultivated leadership elite, drawn from the bourgeoisie, would hold all power. Specifically, Jung voted for a change in electoral rights to increase the minimum voting age for unmarried persons, to revoke electoral rights for women, and to give additional votes to fathers with several children. He also supported the creation of a two-chamber system: the first chamber was to consist of a leadership elite from the economic, military, and political spheres, with the Reich president selecting 75 percent of membership; the second chamber was to be composed of the elected representatives of the Reichstag, who could not influence legislation or cabinet formation, since the Reich president would appoint the cabinet and maintain his own office for life. Jung also proposed privileging the ministerial bureaucracy.[25]

Although they had certain unrealistic features (especially concerning elections), Jung's constitutional proposals became the foundation for the constitutional program of the Reich government during the Papen chancellorship--a point to be developed later. Already before 1932 these proposals had gained recognition and support in certain corporate circles because of their antiparliamentary and antidemocratic character. In particular, Paul Reusch, an industrialist in the Ruhr and general director of the Gutehoffnungshütte in Oberhausen, a subsidiary of the Haniel Corporation, was interested in Jung and helped finance the publication of his book.[26] Indeed, Karl Haniel; Albert Vögler, the chairman of the board of United Steel Works, Europe's largest mining and steel manufacturing concern; and Fritz Springorum of the Hoesch Company of Dortmund were numbered among the circle of Jung's supporters.[27]

To this policy of a strong state--in which the broad mass of the citizenry (the inferiors) were to be excluded from the development of a political will and in which an institutionally protected elite would govern--was closely linked to the plan for a new European order under German leadership. Jung emphasized the necessity of creating large economic spaces because "the German of the second quarter of the twentieth century (needed) economic spaces, export territories, and secure nutritional bases."[28]

The plan to create a middle-European economic domain was no intellectual plaything for the Young Conservatives; rather it grew out of the interests of German corporations and reflected a development that had taken hold since the mid-twenties. Cartel agreements in Europe, particularly with France, created the economic foundation for business ties and cooperation among various large European corporations.[29] By establishing the "Middle European Business Day" in 1931, leading representatives of chemical, electrical, and heavy industries created an institution that was designed--by reducing tariff barriers, developing trade relationships to southeast Europe, and cooperating economically with France--to create a European economic empire.[30] Carl Duisberg, chairman of the board of the IG-Farben conglomerate, the largest chemical concern in Europe, and also chairman of the Reich Association of German Industry, the top industrial association, introduced this strategy for economic expansion to German companies: "Only a closed economic bloc from Bordeaux to Odessa can give Europe the economic backbone it needs to maintain its importance in the world."[31] It was less openly mentioned that not only peaceful means, but also military actions might conceiveably have to be employed in order to reach this goal; but this point of view is both evident in the definition of the goal itself and became clear in the increasingly overt demands for rearmament.

Papen offered leading capitalist representatives a guarantee that he would support their economic and political plans. Since 1928 he had been a member of the German-French study committee, a coalition for encouraging economic and cultural cooperation between Germany and France. The committee had been called to life by Emile Mayrisch, an industrial magnate from Luxembourg who was general director of the Arbed Corporation, the second largest mining and steel manufacturing concern in Europe, and simultaneously president of the International Crude Steel

Association (Steel Cartel). From the German side, the committee received influential representatives from big industry and banking.[32]

The naming of Papen's cabinet on May 31, 1932, was heralded by big industry and banking representatives. During the Reichstag election of July 1932--as with that of November 1932--the parties supporting Papen, DNVP, and DVP (Deutsche Volkspartei) received massive financial support from heavy industry circles in Rhine-Westphalia. Industrial magnates such as Vögler of the United Steelworks and Springorum of Hoesch, who in preceding years had helped to support Hitler and the NSDAP and to make them acceptable, were among the initiators of election funds for Papen.[33]

This fact has often been used to support the conclusion that the industrialists named--and with them most of heavy industry in the Ruhr--had no interest in establishing a fascist system of domination; rather, they were more concerned with saving conservatism from National Socialism, or at least with "taming" the NSDAP.

But the following points should be observed: First, the NSDAP was politically and financially supported by these powers long before 1932.[34] Hitler had several opportunities to speak before leading representatives of industry. After his famous speech to the Düsseldorf Industry Club on January 27, 1932, he received increased support from industrialists in the Ruhr district--and also from Vögler.[35]

Second, in the summer of 1932, the goal of the industrial group around Vögler was aimed neither at neutralizing the NSDAP politically nor opposing its antidemocratic, anti-union, and chauvinistic demands; on the contrary, they wanted to include the NSDAP in the government.[36]

Essentially there were no differences among the various industrial groups on the views that the parliamentary system should be removed and an expansive foreign policy should be introduced. There was, however, disagreement on the methods and persons to be employed and when the transition to a dictatorship should be accomplished. Fritz Thyssen, the steel industrialist, and the former Reich bank president, Hjalmar Schacht, wielded all their influence in order to affect transfer of the chancellorship to Hitler.[37]

In contrast, the Ruhr representatives of heavy industry around Vögler were not yet prepared to transfer full power to Hitler. They quite openly considered the time premature for various reasons: For one, a too precipitous and direct course toward an open dictatorship would invite resistance from the workers' movement. Despite the deep split in the workers' movement between its social democratic and Communist wings, the possibility of a collective action in the case of a transfer of power to Hitler during the summer of 1932 was not to be dismissed. In addition, Prussia—the largest and economically most significant state (Land) within the German Reich, and the one that commanded a strong, social-democratically oriented police force--was still ruled by a coalition government comprised of SPD and center representatives. To appoint Hitler as Reich chancellor would have resulted in the protests of the Prussian government. Furthermore, Hitler would have never been able to risk deposing the Prussian government, as Papen in fact did.

Internationally, there were important decisions to be made at the Conference of Lausanne. Since this group would ultimately decide the fate of German reparations payments, it was unwise for them to make uncautious moves domestically. In the face of skepticism from without, particularly from France, the Lausanne negotiations would never have been completed successfully had Hitler been chancellor.

In addition, the economic program of the NSDAP was unclear. Although the NS-leadership had left no doubt that they intended to comply with the wishes and interests of big industrialists, on questions of important details they lacked clear plans for enacting economic measures. Precisely for this reason, the so-called "Keppler-Circle" was formed in the spring of 1932 in which representatives of industry and the NSDAP worked out an economic policy together.[38] These were the all-important reasons for supporting the Papen cabinet in the summer of 1932 rather than the NSDAP.

Papen's period of government can be divided into several stages, each of which has a relatively clear major political content and demonstrates specific characteristics pointing to the successive development toward an authoritarian, elitist system of domination.

The first phase, from Papen's inauguration up to the Reichstag election on July 31, was characterized by the unwavering, drastic reduction in social and democratic rights. On June 4, the very day the government was declared, the Reichstag was dissolved to permit Papen to govern "undisturbed" by parliamentary opposition. The first emergency decrees of the government, issued that same June, contained a massive reduction in state expenditures for social welfare (cuts in pensions, in benefits to the unemployed and war veterans, and so on).[39]

Because of the "ordinance against political excesses" (extremism) of June 14, the SA and SS, the paramilitary forces of the NSDAP, were readmitted.[40] While the Nazi paramilitary organizations could freely engage in political agitation, administrative, judicial, and police measures for taking action against republican and socialist forces were intentionally strengthened.[41] On July 20, 1932, the Papen government delivered the greatest blow to the democratic process when, on threadbare pretexts, it deposed the SPD and center government in Prussia.[42] With this coup-like move against a democratically legitimated government, one of the last and most important republican bastions was eliminated. A Reich commissioner installed by the Reich government took over governmental business, and the Prussian police force was placed under the command of the Reich. Hereafter hardly any resistance was to be expected in Prussia against the planned refashioning of the Reich into an authoritarian, fascist state. For fascist forces, Prussia was a test case in which the resistance of the workers' movement to the destruction of the Weimar Republic could be measured.[43]

The Reichstag election on July 31, 1932, closes the first stage and introduces a second stage in which the attempt to include the NSDAP in the government was the primary goal. With 37.4 percent of the votes and 230 Reichstag seats, the NSDAP became the strongest party, while the parties that had supported Papen, the DVP and DNVP combined could claim only 44 seats. Even before the election the newspaper Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (DAZ) which was aligned with heavy industry, called for a coalition of the DNVP and NSDAP under the Papen chancellorship.[44] Immediately after the election, discussions among cabinet members began on how the NSDAP could be made a participant in the government.[45] But the negotiations, which Reich president Hindenberg conducted with Hitler on August 13, were a failure. Hitler--pressured by Thyssen and Schacht--refused to accept a secondary role; rather he insisted on the office of chancellor. This demand had to this point been rejected by the most important forces in heavy industry.

After the failure of negotiations with the NSDAP, the third phase of Papen's government commenced. In this stage the focus was on developing and actualizing an independent governmental policy. The main components of this policy were its economic and constitutional reform programs.

The economic program, hammered out in lengthy and intensive discussions from the end of July until the beginning of September 1932, was shaped with the participation of big business.[46] Its most important elements were tax bonuses and hiring benefits for entrepreneurs[47] and the virtual elimination of the tariff system.[48] By introducing the voluntary labor service and direct (but ineffective) measures for providing work, unemployment was to be lowered.

This economic program paid not the slightest attention to the distressed economic situation of large groups of the population. Rather, it was oriented exclusively toward the demands of big business. Such a program could have been insured only when the democratic rights guaranteed by the Weimar constitution were restricted even further and the government in power was made largely independent of parliament and institutionally guaranteed such independence.

The plans to change the constitution, which Minister of the Interior Gayl developed in agreement with the cabinet, aimed at liquidating "parliamentarism" and establishing a dictatorship.[49] The plans depended heavily on the concept of the state developed by Jung and other Young Conservative authors. Gayl proposed a change in the electoral law. "Independent family providers" (men and women), as well as war veterans, would receive an additional vote, while the age limit for the right to elect and to be elected would be raised to twenty-five years of age. The proportional election system, in which the electorate could vote for a party and for individuals, was to be changed to a system in which the electorate could only vote for individuals. This suggestion, carried to its logical conclusion, would result in doing away with the party system.

Article 54 of the Weimar constitution, which gave parliament the right to depose the government by a vote of no confidence, was to be limited at once and eventually eliminated altogether.

The government was to be freed from the influence of elected officials by introducing the kind of two-chamber system Jung had proposed. Finally, new laws changing the relationship of Reich to the states ("Reich reform") would strengthen the power of the central government against the states.

If the constitutional plans of the Papen cabinet had been put into effect, they would have replaced the parliamentary system with a form of state and government in which every effective democratic control was removed and an elite leadership group exercised all authority (Herrschaft). Actualizing these plans would have meant transforming the Weimar state into an elite, authoritarian state with fascistic features, in which all opposition could be shut out.

In contrast to the NSDAP, the Papen government put little value on mobilizing the masses in favor of its politics. As a result of its policy, directed against the basic needs of broad segments of the population, and of its inability to agitate the masses, Papen suffered a catastrophic election defeat during the Reichstag election on November 6.

But the NSDAP, too—and this was actually the decisive fact of the election--lost more than two million votes. It thereby became clear that the NSDAP had passed the peak of its influence on the masses. It was also evident that the low point of the worldwide economic depression had been overcome. A new upswing in the business cycle was about to begin in which opportunities for demanding sacrifices from the working population, in the name of economic crisis, would be substantially reduced. No one wanted to return to a parliamentary system. On the contrary, the crisis was an opportunity that could be used to get rid of that system.[50] At this juncture, Hitler's being placed into power signified the last opportunity for the right-wing forces from big business, banking, and the military to decisively destroy parliamentary democracy. With help from the fascist dictatorship, they intended to accomplish their long-held, chief interests: destruction of the labor movement and removal of the rights of wage and salary earners, economic expansion, reconquest of the lands lost during the First World War, creation of an integrated European market under German leadership, and rearmament. In this situation, the important heads of big business and banking were unanimous in demanding that Hitler be installed as Reich chancellor.[51]

True, after the Papen government there was a brief intermezzo--namely, the Schleicher government--but the rail switches for the fascist dictatorship had already been set.

NOTES

[1] This paper is based on my dissertation expected to be published in 1982: Ulrike Hörster-Philipps, Konservative Politik in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik: Die Regierung Franz von Papen (Marburg: University of Marburg, Dissertation, 1980).

[2] J. A. Bach, Franz von Papen in der Weimarer Republik: Aktivitäten in Politik und Presse 1918-1932 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1977); G. Seifert, Das Kabinett Papen: Wegbereiter der faschistischen Diktatur (Leipzig: University of Leipzig, Dissertation, 1956); M. Zahn, Öffentliche Meinung Presse während der Kanzlerschaft Papens (Münster: University of Münster, Dissertation, 1953); G. Buchheit, Franz von Papen (Breslau: Bergstadtverlag, 1933); and W. Schotte, Das Kabinett Papen, Schleicher, Gayl (Leipzig: R. Kittler, 1932).

[3] For examples, see also the heavy industry's newspaper Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (DAZ) and F. Klein, "Zur Vorbereitung der faschistischen Diktatur durch die deutsche Grossbourgeoisie: 1929-1932," in Von Weimar zu Hitler, ed. G. Jasper (Köln: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1960), pp. 136-37. Furthermore, consider publications of the Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie (RdI), 1930, Nr. 35, p. 27; citations by Carl Duisberg (of the IG-Farben-Concern and president of RdI) in the Zentralen Staatsarchiv Potsdam, (ZSTA Potsdam), IG-Farben, A 1053, p. 272 (November 1, 1930) and p. 225 (June 24, 1931).

[4] According to Article 48 of the Weimar constitution, the president to the Reich was, under special conditions, empowered to dissolve parliament and to govern on the basis of emergency decrees.

[5] For example, in the private correspondence of big industrialists: "Veltenbriefe" of December 2 and 3, 1930; see also W. Müller

and J. Stockfisch, "Die 'Veltenbriefe,'" Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft (ZfG), Vol. 17, pp. 1577-79. In order to pursue his policies, Brüning depended on the support of the Social Democrats.

[6] For more detail and documents, see Ulrike Hörster-Philipps, "Grosskapital, Weimarer Republik und Faschismus," in Die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik, ed. R. Kühnl and G. Hardach (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977), pp. 38-141.

[7] For example, see the RdI's publication of 1929 entitled "Aufstieg oder Niedergang," in Veröffentlichungen des RdI 1929, No. 49, p. 7ff. and 1930, No. 50, p. 37.

[8] For example, see the private correspondence of big industrialists, "Deutsche Führerbriefe" Nr. 39 (May 24, 1932).

[9] Already in 1924, Papen was opposed to the "Grand Coalition" (SPD, Center, DDP, DVP) in Prussia and demanded the inclusion of the DNVP (J. A. Bach, Franz von Papen in der Weimarer Republik p. 57). In October 1931, a few days before the Harzburg meeting, he demanded--in his much noted speech in Dülmen--the inclusion of the right-wing parties (Ibid., pp. 183-84).

[10] G. Schwerin, Wilhelm Freiherr von Gayl, der Innenminister im Kabinett Papen (Erlangen & Nürnberg: n.p., 1972).

[11] See Axel Schildt, Militär mit Massenbasis? Die Querfrontkonzeption der Reichswehrführung um General Schleicher am Ende der Weimarer Republik (Frankfort: Campus, 1981). Most of the other ministers were normally not party members. However, in orientation, they were right-wing conservatives or right-wing radicals: Baron Konstantin von Neurath (foreign minister), Hermann Warmbold (minister of economic affairs), Count Lutz von Schwerin-Krosigk (minister of finance), Hans Schäffer (minister of labor affairs), Franz Gürtner (minister of justice, DNVP), von Eltz-Rübenach (minister of transport and postal services), Magnus von Braun (minister of nutrition and agriculture, DNVP).

[12] Papen was a member of the board of directors of the German Herrenklub (DHK) since its founding. The list containing the names of the board members is in the Bundesarchiv Militärarchiv Freiburg (BA MA Freiburg), Nachlass Schleicher, No. 7, p. 6f.

[13] See, for example, W. Schotte, Das Kabinett Papen, p. 17. See also F. von Papen, Der Wahrheit eine Gasse (München: P. List, 1952), p. 138ff; K. D. Bracher, Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik (Villingen: Ring-Verlag, 1971), p. 471.

[14] The German Herrenklub emerged from the Juniklub (Club of June) founded in 1919. Its seat was in Berlin. In numerous large cities, Herrengesellschaften (gentlemen societies) were formed according to the model of the German Herrenklub.

[15] The November 11, 1924, charter and statutes of the Herrenklub can be found in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BA Koblenz), R 118, Nr. 35, p. 62. This version of the charter and statutes was not published, however. The final version (BA MA Freiburg, Nachlass Schleicher, Nr. 7, p. 3) lacked any such political content.

[16] For a more detailed picture see J. Petzold, Wegbereiter des deutschen Faschismus: Die Jungkonservativen in der Weimarer Republik (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1978).

[17] See, for example, the works of C. Schmitt, the well-known theoretician of the state. C. Schmitt, Die Diktatur: Von den Anfängen des modernen Souveränitätsgedankens bis zum proletarischen Klassenkampf (München: Duncker & Humblot, 1921); C. Schmitt, Legalität und Legitimität (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1933); O. Spengler, Politische Schriften (München: Beck, 1933); and A. Moeller van den Bruck, Das dritte Reich (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1923).

[18] A. Moeller van den Bruck, Das Recht der jungen Völker (Berlin: Verlag der Nahe Osten, 1932; and W. Stapel, Der christliche Staatsmann: Eine Theologie des Nationalismus (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1932).

[19] O. Spengler, Preussentum und Sozialismus (München: Oscar Beck, 1920).

[20] Franz von Papen, Appell an das deutsche Gewissen: Reden zur nationalen Revolution (Oldenburg: G. Stalling, 1933).

[21] Membership and guest lists are to be found in the BA MA in Freiburg, Nachlass Schleicher, No. 7, p. 6ff. (Direktorium); BA in Koblenz, R 118, No. 35, p. 41ff. and BA Koblenz, Nachlass Rechberg, No. 4.

[22] K. Gossweiler, "Bund zur Erneuerung des Reiches (BER) 1928-1933," in Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, Vol. 1, ed. by an editorial collective (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1968), pp. 195-200.

[23] Also the self-image of the German Herrenklub, according to the BA MA Freiburg.

[24] E. J. Jung, Die Herrschaft der Minderwertigen (Berlin: Deutsche Rundschau, 1927). A third printing of this book took place in 1930.

[25] Ibid., pp. 141-44.

[26] See Jung's letter to Pechel, dated February 21, 1928, BA Koblenz, Nachlass Pechel I, No. 76. Reusch sympathized with the circle's constitutional plans: He promoted the collaboration between Jung and Luther (Ibid.). He was a close friend of Oswald Spengler. See also B. Herzog, "Die Freundschaft zwischen Oswald Spengler and Paul Reusch," in Spengler-Studien, ed. A. M. Koktanek (München: Beck, 1965) pp. 77-97.

[27] Jung's letter to Pechel, dated Novmeber 12, 1927, BA Koblenz, Pechel collection I, No. 76. See also the letter of January 14, 1929, Ibid., No. 77.

[28] Jung, Die Herrschaft der Minderwertigen, 3d ed., p. 692.

[29] For a more elaborate treatment, see Hörster-Philipps, Konservative Politik, p. 129-40.

[30] R. Berndt, "Wirtschaftliche Mitteleuropapläne des deutschen Imperialismus (1926-1931)," Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Vol. 14, 1975, H. 4; documents in ZStA Potsdam, AA 42 996 and 42 997.

[31] C. Duisberg, Abhandlungen, Vorträge und Reden aus den Jahren 1922-1933 (Berlin, 1933), p. 172. Excerpts can be found in: R. Opitz, Europastrategien des deutschen Kapitals 1900-1945, (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977), pp. 581-82.

[32] Hörster-Philipps, Konservative Politik, p. 179ff.

[33] Dingeldeys letter to Schleicher, dated July 12, 1932, BA MA Freiburg, Nachlass Schleicher, No. 22, p. 80, and his letter dated July 18, 1932, Ibid., p. 81. Springorum's letter to Schleicher, dated July 23, 1932, Ibid., p. 84.

[34] Among others, it was supported by the Bergbaulicher Verein (mining association), the Employer's Association North-West, the Gruppe Eisen North-West, Stinnes, Kirdorf, and Thyssen. For more details see Hörster-Philipps, "Grosskapital, Weimarer Republik und Faschismus," Konservative Politik, pp. 77-83.

[35] Ibid., pp. 86-92.

[36] Relevant documents: "Führerbriefe" No. 59, dated August 2, 1932; DAZ of June 25 and August 9, 1932. Possible alternatives: A DNVP-NSDAP government coalition with Strasser or Göring as minister of the interior.

[37] Thyssen's letter to Schlenker, dated November 11, 1932, ZStA Potsdam, Nachlass Bracht, 2, No. 51, p. 130. Schacht's

letter to Hitler, dated November 12, 1932, Document EC-456, in: *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof* (IMT), Vol. XXXVI, Nuremberg 1949, p. 535. The controversy between Thyssen and Schacht on the one hand and the remaining industrialists on the other also had an industrial dimension: Thyssen and Schacht were closely allied with American Morgan capital, while the remaining conglomerates had tried to maintain independent of American capital. For details, see K. Gossweiler, *Grossbanken, Industriemonopole, Staat, Ökonomie und Politik des staatsmonopolistischen Kapitalismus in Deutschland 1914-1932* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1971, p. 266ff.

[38] "Führerbriefe" dated February 6, 1931, published by D. Stegmann, "Zum Verhältnis von Grossindustrie und Nationalsozialismus 1930-1933," in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, Vol. XIII, 1973, pp. 446-48. Schacht's letter to Reusch, dated March 18, 1932, Ibid., pp. 450-451. Furthermore, document NI-903, in *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribumals under Control Council Law No. 10*, Nuernberg, October 1946-April 1949, Vol. VI, Washington 1952, pp. 285-87.

[39] *Reichsgesetzblatt* (RGBl.) I, 1932, pp. 273-84.

[40] Ibid., p. 302.

[41] For more details see Hörster-Philipps, *Konservative Politik*, pp. 259-60.

[42] For an overview see Th. Trumpp, *Franz von Papen, der preussisch-Deutsche Dualismus und die NSDAP in Preussen: Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte des 20. Juli 1932* (Tübingen: University of Tübingen, Dissertation, 1963). J. Petzold, "Der Staatsstreich vom 20. Juli 1932 in Preussen," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 4, 1956, pp. 1146-86.

[43] J. Goebbels, *Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei* 6th ed. (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1934), pp. 131-32.

[44] DAZ, June 25, 1932.

[45] Cabinet minutes of August 10, 1932, BA Koblenz, R 43 I, Vol. 1457, page 274ff.

[46] "Führerbriefe" No. 66 dated August 26, 1932.

[47] For all the business taxes paid from October 1, 1932 to September 30, 1933, the various businesses were to receive coupons to be used in lieu of future 1934-1939 tax payments. See also cabinet minutes in the BA Koblenz, R 43 I, Vol. 1457.

[48] Wages could be cut by as much as 50 percent by firms which were in financial difficulty or which had a certain amount of new employment. For an overview, see also H. Marcon, *Arbeitsbeschaffungspolitik der Regierungen Papen und Schleicher: Grundsteinlegung für die Beschäftigungspolitik im Dritten Reich* (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1974).

[49] See Gayl's speech of August 11, 1932, in *Schulthess' Europäischer Geschichtskalender*, 1932, p. 139; Gayl's *Denkschrift* of August 22, 1932, "Gesichtspunkte für den Staatsneubau," BA Koblenz, *Nachlass* Gayl No. 37, pp. 40-47; Gayl's speech of October 23, 1932 in Berlin, Ibid., pp. 64-68. An abstract of this speech appears in *Schulthess' Europäischer Geschichtskalender*, 1932, pp. 189-91.

[50] Article "Jena oder Sedan" in "Führerbriefe" of November 4, 1932, published by Ulrike Hörster-Philipps, ed., *Wer war Hitler wirklich? Grosskapital und Faschismus 1918-1945* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1978), p. 151.

[51] There was a petition of big industrialists, bankers and large landholders requesting the Reichspräsident on November 19, 1932 to appoint Hitler as chancellor. See also minutes of the big industrialist's "Langnamverein's" meeting of November 26, 1932, Ibid., pp. 154-56.

8

The NSDAP and the German Working Class, 1925–1933

PETER D. STACHURA

Throughout the pre-1933 period, the National Socialist party (NSDAP) projected an image of being a broadly-based Volksbewegung whose aim was to restore the fortunes of all Germans regardless of status or class. The party's ideological and propagandistic appeal was modelled to attract to the swastika as many sections of Weimar society as possible. This approach made sense, after all, if the NSDAP were to expand its electoral constituency to the point where it could establish a popular mandate for power. Following the unsuccessful Munich putsch in 1923, Hitler renounced violent, revolutionary tactics in favor of a long-term parliamentary strategy that would allow him to assume governmental responsibility within the letter of the law. In the end, of course, the NSDAP did win power legally even if it constantly violated the spirit of the law. While failing to attain an overall majority in Reichstag elections in July and November 1932, the NSDAP, despite showing incipient signs of having passed its peak, was ultimately brought into the government, thanks to the last-minute interventionist power politics of industrial and agrarian elitist groups representing propertied, nationalist, and Protestant Germany.[1]

Contrary to Joseph Goebbels's assertion in early 1933 that the Machtergreifung signified "a revolution of a workers' movement,"[2] empirical historical inquiry has established that by 1933 the NSDAP drew its electoral support overwhelmingly from the small-town and rural Protestant Mittelstand, comprising men and women in roughly equal numbers, in northern, central, and eastern Germany.[3] Although by 1930-31 the lower Mittelstand, particularly of the "old" or traditional type, predominated among the party's voters and members, the upper Mittelstand were beginning to flock into the ranks in ever-increasing numbers in 1932,[4] thus making the NSDAP more of a catch-all movement of middle-class protest, a movement of bourgeois integration. Two identifiable groups were manifestly immune to Nazi blandishments: the Catholics, who continued to vote solidly for the confessional Center Party and Bavarian People's party, and the organized industrial working class, who steadfastly maintained their allegiance to the Social Democratic (SPD) and Communist (KPD) parties. Changes in voting patterns among the organized workers usually involved a switch by unemployed, unskilled or semi-skilled urban voters from the SPD to the more radical KPD.[5] Despite some success among workers in certain urban and industrial areas in Westphalia, the Rhineland-Ruhr, Saxony, Thuringia, the Pfalz, and Berlin-Brandenburg, the NSDAP remained a party of middle-class interests, and in terms of its membership, industrial workers were also significantly underrepresented, especially in the leadership cadres.[6] In both proportionate and absolute terms, the working-class element in the NSDAP's constituency from 1925 to 1933 was small, and its claims to be a genuine popular movement had, therefore, no basis in reality. This is the scenario against which any discussion of the party's relationship to the German proletariat must take place. This chapter analyzes this relationship with a view to obtaining a clear perspective on the principal reasons for the NSDAP's failure to win much support among this particular group in Weimar society.

Those industrial workers who did find their way to Hitler were invariably located, for one reason or another, outside the mainstream of working-class, organizational, and ideological development and, in some instances, were drawn from the lumpen proletariat. A small labor aristocracy of skilled workers, dependent craftsmen, and workers with responsibility, such as foremen, were as likely to end up voting for Hitler as not, regardless of whether they were urban- or rural-based. They were joined by another set of workers who did live in small towns or the countryside and who, if employed, were not subject to the supervisory control of a trade union or other kind of workers' group. Most of them were employed in a semiskilled or nonskilled capacity in small businesses and family concerns, such as handicrafts, where the influence of the master/owner and his family was often decisive. In such circumstances, workers were expected to conform to the values laid down by their superiors. In the period of spiralling unemployment during the early 1930s, workers caught in this situation could be reasonably expected to be more careful than usual not to offend their employers for fear of dismissal. Similar types of workers--weakly or not at all unionized--were also to be found in public transport, especially the railways and trams; in postal services; in the gas, water and electricity industries; and among agricultural laborers in socially depressed parts of eastern Germany. These workers lacked, therefore, a developed proletarian consciousness, which prevented them from identifying with the traditional working-class movement. Their scholastic and political education was of a very low standard, and they quite often had no previous record of voting for either the

SPD or KPD.[7] The younger members of this group, whether employed or not, were particularly susceptible to National Socialist emphasis on nationalism, egalitarianism, and the appeal to the "dignity of labor," while the dynamic and pseudo-idealistic style of the party struck a responsive chord in young, immature minds.[8] At the same time, the style and vigor with which NSDAP propaganda was conducted cannot be underestimated as a factor in attracting workers in a depressed social and economic environment.

Another, albeit indeterminate, group of pro-Hitler workers were those fearful of losing their secure, if modest, economic and social status in an era of uncertainty and vast unemployment and being relegated to the lumpen proletariat.[9] Unskilled or semi-skilled workers out of a job usually shunned the NSDAP, but the younger, long-term unemployed in both rural and urban areas were more favorably disposed towards National Socialism.[10] Also, workers who were generally traditionally minded, patriotic, and even anti-Semitic, rejected the international flavor of the working-class movement and saw in the NSDAP the best opportunity of reestablishing the workers and their organizations within a more "acceptable," that is, nationalist, framework. Brewery workers provide an example of this category.[11] Finally, the NSDAP managed to win over small sections of organized industrial workers in a few well-defined regions within the major industrial centers of the country. In virtually all of these regions, unusual industrial and social conditions prevailed, resulting in a reversal of normal voting inclinations. Chemnitz-Zwickau, where small-scale textile manufacturing and a domestic system predominated, is a well-known example of this type of environment. Here, the NSDAP polled well above its normal, low average in industrial areas: for example, 47 percent in the Reichstag election in July 1932.[12]

It is impossible to precisely quantify the different sections of the pro-NSDAP working class until a more detailed investigation is made of local and regional electoral responses, but taken as a whole, the aggregate was not significant. The political motivation of any social group, especially one which in part behaves contrary to accepted class patterns, is a complex phenomenon, involving not only class and occupational status, but other variables such as peculiar local and domestic influences, emotional attachments, age, education, and personal sensitivities.[13]

The mass of organized workers was sufficiently disciplined, socially and politically, to resist National Socialism. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the working class had developed in an atmosphere of ostracism and outright persecution, a sense of group and class identity which, if anything, had been further solidified by the experience of the First World War, the November Revolution, and the economic and political vicissitudes of the Weimar years. In a society as class-conscious as the Republic, where voting preferences were mainly determined by class, social, and confessional allegiances, the organized proletariat was bound to shrug off the NSDAP's advances more easily than most. Like the Catholics, the workers constituted more then a mere segment of the population. They possessed a distinguishable and mature subculture situated firmly within a variegated organizational structure. This situation engendered feelings of class unity, solidarity, and loyalty which, in turn, were reinforced by the effective political representation of working-class interests at the very highest levels of government through the SPD, KPD, and the socialist trade unions. The Catholic working class likewise had their representatives in politics and in the factories. The influence of the SPD and Catholic parties also extended into regional government. Prussia was controlled by the SPD for most of the Weimar period, and in Bavaria, the Bavarian People's party reigned supreme. These parties achieved material benefits for their working-class supporters--higher wages, better conditions of work, and improved welfare facilities. The integrity and vitality of working-class life was thus protected on many sides, at least until the onset of the depression in the early 1930s.

The depression undoubtedly weakened the trade-union movement at a time also when the SPD appeared to be politically paralyzed at the national level and when the two major proletarian parties were mutually hostile. As a result of wage cuts, short-term employment, reduced consumer spending, inadequate unemployment insurance, rising cost of living, intense competition for jobs, and, of course, unprecedented levels of unemployment, the trade unions suffered severely and in 1933 were in no condition to resist National Socialist onslaughts.[14] However, while tragically split at the very moment of fascist resurgence, because of the KPD's ultra-leftist strategy, which identified the SPD as "social fascists," the working class remained loyal to their interests and organizations. There was no question of disillusionment with socialism among the vast majority of workers. The boundaries of the National Socialist appeal were thus marked only a few degrees inside the proletarian constituency. Racist anti-Semitism, chauvinism, militarism, imperialism, and other salient features of Hitler's doctrine were simply incompatible, ideologically and historically, with the traditions and ethos of the German working class. On the other hand, it is wrong to argue, as the Oxford historian Timothy W. Mason has done,[15] that the NSDAP was a conscious crusade against the working class.[16] Similarly, Trotsky's comment that Hitler's triumph was "the greatest defeat of the proletariat in the history of the world"[17] falls into the same category of gross exaggeration. The interests of the NSDAP and the German workers may have been, objectively speaking, diametrically opposed, but it is quite another matter to depict the Party as an actively antiworkers movement above all else. The NSDAP has to be understood instead as the spearhead of a broader restorationist, racial-chauvinistic movement in German society directed at the many facets of modernism: industrialization, democracy, liberalism, Marxism, urbanization, and parliamentarianism. From a National Socialist standpoint, the working class was but one social manifestation of modern civilization. The social and politico-ideological dynamics of National Socialism were multivarious and complex, and cannot be reduced, therefore, to simplistic, one-sided explanations.

There is a large body of literature dealing with the theoretical and empirical relationship between capitalism/big business and fascism.[18] This is a controversial area of debate among historians, and it is not our purpose here to attempt a balancing act between conflicting interpretations. Rather, in deliberately rejecting a deterministic approach to the problem, this chapter examines a number of empirical reasons for the tenuous relationship between the NSDAP and the German working class. There were important deficiencies in the party's appeal to organized workers, which largely account for its relative inability to attract their support.

In the first instance, the failure of the NSDAP to offer a coherent and convincing interpretation of its "socialism" was a grave handicap. The party produced a plethora of radical-sounding phrases and slogans—often imitations of the SPD or KPD originals—which were put across with considerable vehemence but little sincerity, particularly during election campaigns and in large cities and urban areas.[19] Taking a lead from the proworker orientation of the NSDAP's northern wing in 1925-26,[20] a social revolutionary approach dominated the party's propaganda until the Reichstag election in May 1928 as it sought to establish in competition with the Socialists and Communists, a secure foothold among industrial workers in major cities.[21] When the results of the 1928 election made clear the almost total ineffectiveness of this urban plan, the NSDAP's emphasis in ideology and propaganda was fundamentally altered in favor of a new middle-class, nationalist-conservative strategy.[22] Between 1929 and 1933, when the traditional bourgeois party system disintegrated amidst socioeconomic and psychological tensions induced by the depression,[23] the NSDAP was able to build up its following among the broad range of the Protestant middle classes on the basis of its new orientation, in which social revolutionary themes were drastically toned down compared with previous years. Even then, the party's socialism remained vague and eclectic; in essence, it was an expression of petty bourgeois reactionary anticapitalism which, saturated with ultrachauvinism and racist anti-Semitism, had nothing in common with the traditions of Marxist socialism. The NSDAP's anticapitalism was a counter-revolutionary, antimodernist ideology in the fullest sense.

Nazi socialism was rooted in late nineteenth century neoconservatism of the kind preached by Adolf Stoecker and Friedrich Naumann and revived in the early 1920s by Oswald Spengler and others. Spengler's concept of Prussian socialism, which articulated the German intelligentsia's disdain of materialism and monetary values, was most notably taken up within the NSDAP by Gregor Strasser, who repeatedly stressed the need to combat these "evil" influences of modern civilization: "It is the most distressing feature of this capitalistic economic system that all values are measured by money, by means, by property! The decline of the Volk is the inevitable result of the turn to this measure of value because selection by property is the mortal enemy of race, of blood, of life."[24] The early diary of Joseph Goebbels[25] and the speeches and writings of Gregor Strasser during the mid-1920s contain the most vivid examples of the party's radical rhetoric. In 1926, for example, Strasser thundered in a fashion that would not have disgraced a SPD or KPD spokesman: "We are socialists, we are enemies, deadly enemies of the present economic system, with its exploitation of the economically weak, with its unjust means of reward, with its immoral evaluation of people according to their possessions and money instead of according to their responsibilities and achievements, and we are resolved to destroy this system in all circumstances."[26]

This was social demagoguery at its very worst and at its most vacuous. Indeed, Strasser blithely remarked the same year that "rational thought corrodes the foundations of life itself."[27] This was not an encouraging view for those seeking an intelligible exposé of his "socialism." Strasser demanded of others the same emotional-mystical commitment to the cause which he had: "And we know with a certainty which proceeds from the blood . . . that our path is right."[28]

His message was revelatory rather than explanatory, and in this nonintellectual attitude Strasser was at one, of course, with other party leaders.[29] Just as the socialist parts of the party's official program of 1920 were left without adequate explanation throughout the pre-1933 period, so the radical pronouncements of leading NSDAP officials remained mere invective, a device of dishonest propaganda, and a futile stratagem to deceive German workers into following Hitler. Against the deep class-consciousness and socialist education of the proletariat, the NSDAP's social revolutionary animus was inevitably seen to be the pathetic fraud it was. Only members of right-wing paramilitary groups, nationalist-minded intellectuals and students, discontented white-collar workers, the self-employed, small and independent producers, and traders and craftsmen supported this peculiar "German socialism." All of them, fearing proletarianization in an increasingly complex and impersonal industrial world, clung hopefully and tenaciously to their social and economic status in the face of expanding capitalism and organized labor.

Hitler, unlike Goebbels and Strasser, never made any real attempt to hide his contempt for the masses, especially the workers whom, he stated in Mein Kampf, were to be won over to the NSDAP and the nationalist idea only because of the strength of their numbers. The Führer undoubtedly appreciated the importance of the November Revolution in relation to the working class. He explained the Revolution in terms of domestic political problems rather than military shortcomings, stressing in particular the pernicious influence of Marxists and Jews on the German proletariat in 1917–19. If Germany were once again to emerge as a world-class power, Hitler reasoned, the home front had to be made safe and stabile by integrating the industrial work force into the national community.[30] He was not interested in the social welfare or wider interests of the workers; they were to be seduced and cajoled into supporting the NSDAP by bread and circuses, as Hitler informed Otto Strasser.[31] By emotional inclination and political instinct, the Führer remained the archtypal petty bourgeois. He unswervingly upheld the principle of private property throughout his career, ruthlessly purged so-called socialists from the party at various stages after 1928, opposed for a long period the establishment of a National Socialist-sponsored trade union,[32] and ultimately came to power with the backing, among others, of reactionary elements of big business. For Hitler, and the NSDAP as a whole, socialism or anticapitalism simply amounted to an extension of their anti-Semitic chauvinism: "Unproductive," that is, Jewish, finance capitalism was the enemy, not "creative" German private capitalism.

The blatantly opportunistic and spurious nature of the NSDAP's socialism largely accounts for the failure of its trade union affiliate, the National Socialist Factory Cell Organization (NSBO), to make noteworthy inroads into the ranks of the factory proletariat before 1933.[33] The NSBO's appeal was a rather crude amalgam of nationalism and anticapitalism, as illustrated, for example, by its Hib-Aktion (Hinein in die Betriebe) in 1931. During 1932 the NSBO tried to sharpen its radical image by organizing and participating in strike action by factory employees and other groups of blue-collar workers, culminating in the Berlin transport workers' strike in autumn of that year.[34] This tactic was unsuccessful. When the NSBO began at last to expand its membership in 1932 from forty thousand to over three hundred thousand, this was achieved mainly on the basis of recruitment among artisans, craftsmen, and lower-grade white-collar salaried employees in industry and the public services. Only after 1933 did the NSBO begin to attract substantial numbers of ordinary workers and then in an atmosphere of violence and wholesale assaults on the working class and its organizations.[35]

The development of the NSBO epitomizes the wider ineffectiveness of the mistakenly labelled "Nazi Left" among the German working class before 1933. The term "Nazi Left" occurs frequently in the historiography of early National Socialism without ever being properly assessed. It is a loose and convenient description, designed to cover all putative socialist and anticapitalist circles in Hitler's movement, including the party, SA, Hitler Youth (HJ), NSBO, and the National Socialist Students' League (NSDStB). This Nazi Left is usually assumed to have existed from about 1924-25 until the so-called "Second Revolution" was crushed during the Röhm Purge in June 1934. Furthermore, Gregor Strasser, who was the NSDAP's chief of propaganda (1926-27) and organization (1928-32), is invariably referred to as the leader of this Nazi Left. The whole idea of there having been a Nazi Left in any concrete form, whether led by Strasser or anyone else, can be seen to be entirely erroneous if the evidence is examined.

We have already noted, and discounted as counterfeit, the socialism of the NSBO. A similar conclusion may also be reached about the alleged socialism of the SA. Despite drawing most of its rank-and-file followers from the working class,[36] the SA never sought to formulate a coherent ideological posture consistent with the nature of its sociological makeup. A programmatic statement of its socialism was never made.[37] Instead, the basis of the SA's socialism was merely a series of passionate, radical, and often pugilistic remarks by various leaders on the necessity of smashing Marxism, the Republic, and Jews, and of creating some sort of ill-defined egalitarian Volksgemeinschaft. The absence of evidence for a considered or genuine socialist ethos is hardly unexpected in view of the SA's combative and militaristic profile: It was a force designed to capture and dominate the streets.[38] Ideology mattered little in these circumstances, and the socialism it is supposed to have possessed amounted to little more than the ability to organize soup kitchens, shelter, and clothing for sections of the working-class unemployed in Germany's larger cities. The SA's radicalism is, in fact, a charitable description of its inordinate capacity for thuggery on a grand scale. When the Machtergreifung did not realize the career prospects, status, and power ambitions of some of its personnel, the SA, under the leadership of Röhm, sought a further extension of the Nazi Revolution. This was an exercise in power; it was not meant to further the cause of socialism, in whatever guise. The principal reasons for the events of the summer of 1934, which saw the political emasculation of the SA, are hardly connected with a fight for a second socialist revolution.[39]

The only party organizations to have possessed an authentic attachment to a social revolutionary radicalism were, ironically, of comparatively little political importance, the NSDStB and HJ. In the mid-1920s the NSDStB was led by an earnest group around Wilhelm Tempel who, in a vague fashion, tried to bridge the gap between National Socialism and the poorer university students. The attempt was as unsuccessful as it was short-lived, however, for when Baldur von Schirach replaced Tempel as Reichsführer, the NSDStB began to adopt a conservative-nationalist outlook in keeping with the NSDAP's post-1928 reorientation.[40] It was on this altered ideological and social basis that the NSDStB went on very rapidly to a position of strength in university politics.

The HJ's engagement with socialism was of slightly longer duration, from its creation in 1926 until the dismissal from office of its founder and leader, Kurt Gruber, in October 1931. During that five-year period, the HJ, while emphasizing its nationalism and anti-Semitism, gave juvenile expression to a certain socialistic anticapitalism. However intellectually shallow this commitment was among the under-eighteen-year-old members, it was at least sincere and motivated by an exuberant youthful idealism, which aimed at breaking up class-ridden Weimar society and replacing it with a true national community.[41] This ideological inclination attracted a predominately working-class membership. Only when von Schirach and Adrian von Renteln took over from Gruber was the HJ's socialism and proletarian composition diluted to some extent as the group's appeal was increasingly guided towards the nationalist concerns of bourgeois youth. Nonetheless, in 1933 the HJ retained enough of its early character and ethos to remain the only National Socialist organization still genuinely believing in some kind of socialism.[42] But, of course, in terms of political influence, the HJ hardly counted. That influence lay above all in the hands of the NSDAP, and it is with reference to the party that the socialist credentials of the National Socialist movement before 1933 need to be ultimately measured.

The ideological foundations of the "Nazi Left" are alleged to have been provided by the Draft Program formulated under the supervision of Gregor Strasser in late 1925.[43] In fact, it would be misleading to regard the Draft as evidence of a socialist wing in the NSDAP and equally wrong to see it as a program supported by all shades of opinion among the party's would-be radicals. The Draft merely amounted to a more precise and emphatic reaffirmation of the anticapitalist sections of the official NSDAP program of 1920. Strasser's Draft accentuated the radicals' commitment to a brand of extreme nationalism and Pan-German imperialism to which Hitler and the bourgeois Munich section of the party could hardly have objected; at the same time, the Draft's anti-Semitic content, while relatively moderate by the Führer's high standards in demanding the deportation of all Jews who had entered Germany since August 1, 1914, and the withdrawal of German citizenship from all remaining Jews, was nonetheless in the mainstream of the NSDAP's general attitude towards the Jewish question.[44] As for the Draft's proposals on nationalization, worker participation in industrial management, profits and ownership, and agrarian reform, these were uniformly tentative, nebulous, and indicative only of the radicals' emotional ties to a romantic version of anticapitalism. The Draft foresaw a sort of mixed economy in which all property belonged to the nation, but where individual citizens would continue to own property on a lease basis. This was the Draft's main proposal to effect a redistribution of wealth, but it clearly lacked either substance or sense. In reality, the interests of industrial workers and agricultural laborers were given paltry consideration. Ideologically, therefore, the Draft, in spurning Marxism and formal capitalism in favor of a fascist-corporative structure based on a national dictatorship, was disappointingly unoriginal. It was simply another lucid example of that petty bourgeois socialism so common in right-wing circles in Germany during the 1920s. Even so, the Draft did not have the unanimous backing of the party's radicals. While the Strasser brothers and Goebbels seem to have inclined towards a limited egalitarian, proworkers approach, others, such as ex-Freikorps commander Franz von Pfeffer and the North Germans, Ludolf Haase and Hermann Fobke, were more elitist in outlook and wanted a society attuned to the concept of achievement (Leistungsprinzip).[45] These differences were highlighted by the discussion of the Draft at a meeting of the Working Association of the North West German Gauleiter of the NSDAP (AG) in Hanover in January 1926[46] and were not significantly reduced during the remainder of the 1920s.

The Nazi Left was as disunited organizationally as it was ideologically in 1925-26. The AG, which was set up in September 1925, might have furnished the basis for a permanently organized faction within the NSDAP had not Gregor Strasser, under severe pressure from Hitler following the Bamberg Conference in February 1926, disbanded it. While in existence, the AG was a loosely constructed body for discussion of ideological matters involving those party leaders and officials who were anxious to give greater weight to socialist principles. It is true that Strasser was on friendly, personal terms with many of the AG's more prominent personalities, but such bonds were not necessarily translated into political alliances. In brief, the NSDAP's radicals in 1925-26 did not possess a degree of organizational or ideological unity that would justify the view that a Nazi Left existed as an identifiable entity within the Party. The term "Nazi Left" is simply a convenient way of referring to that small number of party members who displayed an indistinct form of anticapitalist radicalism, a viewpoint firmly located in an anti-Marxist, petty bourgeois scale of values in Weimar Germany. Developments among these members accompanying the collapse of the AG--the formal withdrawal of the Draft program by Gregor Strasser in March 1926,[47] the embarrassing failure to support the SPD-KPD sponsored campaign for the expropriation without compensation of the former royal houses (Fürstenenteignung),[48] and the acrimonious "defection" of Goebbels--add substance to the thesis that there was no Nazi Left.

Moreover, the establishment and development in northern Germany of the Kampfverlag under the direction of the Strassers did not produce a more meaningful concept of a Nazi Left. The journal, NS-Briefe, was conceived by Gregor Strasser in the summer of 1925 as a forum for discussing programmatic issues and generally as a means of strengthening the cause of anticapitalist radicalism in the party.[49] Strasser repeatedly emphasized that the journal was not questioning Hitler's authority, but only challenging some of his political ideas. This aspect was poignantly illustrated by the heated debate in 1927 between Strasser and Alfred Rosenberg over the definition and understanding of "National Socialism."[50] Rosenberg relegated socialism to a peripheral role in his interpretation, while Strasser made clear his fundamental disagreement with this view. However, even here, Strasser could not be precise about his socialism; his differences with Munich, it became apparent, were over emphasis rather than substance.[51] Otherwise, the tone and style of NS-Briefe and related publications of the Kampfverlag were anticapitalist and antibourgeois,[52] but they adduced nothing more substantive vis-a-vis socialism than this. Indeed, the main function of the Strasserite press in the mid-1920s was to support the Party's attempts to attract industrial workers to its ranks: A certain sympathy for the proletariat and the need to bring it into the struggle for "national freedom" was a frequent theme in its pages.[53]

When the appeal to industrial workers was seen to have been a complete failure at the Reichstag election in 1928, the Kampfverlag circle and its radical supporters in the NSDAP were put in an agonizing dilemma: Should they abandon socialism and fall in behind Hitler's new nationalist-conservative strategy towards the middle classes, or should they press on more vehemently with the old line? Gregor Strasser, for one, had sufficient political sagacity to draw the obvious conclusions, and he thereafter increasingly sought to distance himself from his brother and a few other diehards who persevered.[54] But the publication in 1929 by Otto Strasser of the "Fourteen Theses of the German Revolution" was another typically bombastic statement that once again failed to clear the fog which engulfed the radicals' socialism. If the 1928 Reichstag election dealt a mortal blow to the NSDAP's radicals, the withdrawal of Otto Strasser and his followers in 1930 has been rightly seen by Reinhard Kühnl as the final act of the putative Nazi Left.[55] Kühnl, however, has reached a correct conclusion for the wrong reasons.

In the first place, Kühnl is convinced of the existence of a recognizable Nazi left in the NSDAP from 1925 to 1930, whereas it has been indicated here that this probably is an erroneous supposition. Secondly, Otto Strasser's political importance has been exaggerated by Kühnl: He was always in the shadow of his older brother, Gregor, and only made a name for himself after he had left the NSDAP and established the Black Front organization. Subsequently, Otto's many (unreliable) writings on the early NSDAP served to distort his own modest contribution to the party.[56] More importantly, Kühnl may be unaware of the fundamental reason for the nonexistence of a Nazi Left by 1930; namely, the dramatic transformation in the political and ideological attitudes of the Nazi Left's alleged leader, Gregor Strasser.

Strasser's identification with an emotional socialism and anticapitalism had diminished since he became organizational chief of the NSDAP in January 1928 and particularly since the collapse of the urban-plan strategy in the elections of that year. He began, instead, to evolve a broader, less sectarian vision of Weimar politics.[57] This became evident in his article, "Der neue Ton," published in Die Faust[58] in February 1929, in which he called for moderation and more emphasis on discussion with opponents by the Party.[59] At the same time, there were whispers in certain circles within the NSDAP about Strasser's changing priorities. A Party member, Friedrich, for example, complained to Theo Habicht, leader of the NSDAP in Wiesbaden, that not only was the Party betraying socialism, but worse still, Strasser had given into the "fascist tactics" of Hitler: "Gregor Strasser was the brightest hope for a socialist NSDAP and now that has been most regretfully lost."[60] His refusal to join his brother, Otto, in opposition to Hitler in 1930, was the first concrete manifestation of Gregor's changing perceptions;[61] further evidence appeared in 1930-32.

During the early 1930s, Strasser developed a wide and diverse range of personal and political contacts outside the NSDAP, including important circles in the Rhenish-Westphalian Coal Syndicate and the chemical conglomerate, I. G. Farben, industrialists such as Paul Silverberg, various neoconservative groups, among them the Tat Circle, Chancellor Heinrich Brüning, General Kurt von Schleicher, and trade unionists.[62] Consequently, Strasser enjoyed a substantial and favorable reputation among a significant cross section of Weimar politics at a time when his achievements as organization leader and public speaker consolidated his standing within the NSDAP. He had emerged as a powerful political figure in his own right. By 1932, despite several well-publicized speeches with a radical flavor—like that in the Reichstag in May 1932 when he gave voice to the "anticapitalist yearnings" of the German people[63]—Strasser had come out as a firm advocate of a coalition course for the NSDAP as a means of establishing a broadly structured nationalist-conservative government.[64] In this process of evolution from abrasive party politician to conciliatory national figure, Strasser's earlier socialism was no longer conspicuous. Although he continued to enjoy a popular reputation as the NSDAP's leading socialist, in reality, that earlier notable component of his ideological armory had been superceded by other tendencies. A nationalist disposition now transcended his narrow Party allegiance, and the Nazi Left had lost its erstwhile principle spokesman.[65]

The total ideological and organizational vacuity of the idea of a coherent Nazi Left was unmistakably revealed by the NSDAP crisis in December 1932, which culminated in Strasser resigning his party offices because of his fundamental disagreement with Hitler over strategy and policy. In his moment of supreme personal and political crisis, Strasser discovered that though he may have had numerous friends and sympathizers in the National Socialist movement, including Gauleiters and Reichstag deputies,[66] he had few allies willing to follow him against the Führer. There was no Nazi Left to come to his aid because, contrary to the view of many contemporaries, including General von Schleicher, such a group did not exist. And it never had. Schleicher's plan to use the Nazi Left under Strasser's leadership as an essential element in a coalition government rested on a tragic illusion.[67]

The new chancellor did not perceive that socialism had long ceased to be a viable political influence in any part of the NSDAP, and in turn, he misunderstood the nature of Strasser's personal development during the last years. Furthermore, Schleicher was ignorant of the organizational character of the party, which effectively blocked the emergence of a Nazi Left or any other faction. The loyalty of the Gauleiters was ultimately to Hitler: They depended for their position on his support. Despite a rapidly expanding and complex bureaucracy, which was directed by Strasser, Hitler was determined to maintain his direct and personal relationship with the Gauleiters. However much Strasser formally controlled organizational affairs, the special link between the Gauleiters and Hitler continued to function independently on the basis of the Führer's charisma and authority.[68] In December 1932 that link held fast and virtually guaranteed the failure of the would-be usurper, Gregor Strasser.

The refusal of the overwhelming majority of the German working class to respond positively to National Socialism before 1933 can be explained in terms of the ideology, character, and strategy of the NSDAP, we well as by the traditional class and politico-ideological perceptions of the workers themselves. There was an absence of basic empathy between the two sides. Within this broader context, we have argued here that the whole notion of a "Nazi Left" is erroneous, since there never was a coherent ideological and organizational framework for such a group, particularly after 1923 when the socialist orientation had signally failed and Gregor Strasser began to trod a different path in Weimar politics. The nonexistence of a Nazi Left thus helps account for the NSDAP's inability to attract the working class before 1933. Once Hitler was in power, the National Socialists had to find alternative methods of reaching a modus vivendi with the workers. Persuasion and electoral propaganda, which had made little impact in the Weimar period, were replaced, therefore, by outright terror and violence during the course of 1933 and supplemented thereafter by a mixture of artful seduction (Schönheit der Arbeit—the "Beauty of work" slogan and program), tight supervision (German Labor Front), and callous repression (Gestapo, SS).

NOTES

[1] Hans-Erich Volkmann, "Politik, Wirtschaft und Aufrüstung unter dem Nationalsozialismus," in Manfred Funke, ed., *Deutschland, Hitler und die Mächte: Materialien zur Aussenpolitik des Dritten Reiches* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1976), pp. 236-88; Peter D. Stachura, "The Political Strategy of the Nazi Party, 1919-1933," *German Studies Review*, III, 1980, pp. 287-88.

[2] Paul Meier-Benneckenstein, ed., *Dokumente der deutschen Politik*, Bd. 2 (Berlin: Junker un Dunnhaupt, 1936), p. 185.

[3] See Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), pp. 140-52; Heinrich A. Winkler, *Mittelstand, Demokratie und Nationalsozialismus: Die politische Entwicklung von Handwerk und Kleinhandel in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne: Kiepenhauer und Witsch, 1972); Winkler, "Mittelstandsbewegung oder Volkspartei? Zur sozialen Basis der NSDAP," in Wolfgang Schieder, ed., *Faschismus als soziale Bewegung: Deutschland und Italien im Vergleich* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe), pp. 97-118; Winkler, "Extremismus der Mitte? Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 20, 1972, pp. 175-91; Winkler, "German Society, Hitler and the Illusion of Restoration 1930-33," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11, 1976, pp. 1-16; Michael H. Kater, "Zur Soziographie der frühen NSDAP," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 19, 1971, pp. 124-59; Kater, "Sozialer Wandel in der NSDAP im Zuge der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung," in Schieder, *Faschismus*, pp. 25-67; Thomas Childers, "The Social Bases of the National Socialist Vote," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11, 1976 pp. 17-42; Childers, "National Socialism and the New Middle Class," in Reinhard Mann, ed., *Die Nationalsozialisten. Anlysen faschistischer Bewegungen* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980),

pp. 19-33; Peter H. Merkl, *Political Violence under the Swastika* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Merkl, *The Making of a Stormtrooper* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Jurgen Kocka, *Angestellte zwischen Faschismus und Demokratie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977); Hans Speier, *Die Angestellten vor dem Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977); Lawrence D. Stokes, "The Social Composition of the Nazi Party in Eutin 1925-32," *International Review of Social History*, XXIII, 1978, pp. 1-32; Frank Domurad, "The Politics of Corporatism: Hamburg Handicraft in the Late Weimar Republic, 1927-1933," in Richard Bessell and E. J. Feuchtwanger, eds., *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany* (London: Sage Publications, 1981), pp. 174-206, esp. 196-99; Peter D. Stachura, "Who Were the Nazis? A Socio-Political Analysis of the National Socialist Machtübernahme," *European Studies Review*, 11, 1981. On women supporters, see Timothy W. Mason, "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare and Work," Parts I and II, *History Workshop*, 1 (Spring) and 2 (Autumn) 1976, pp. 74-113, 5-32; and Gabrielle Bremme, *Die politische Rolle der Frau in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956); and Jill Stephenson, *The Nazi Organisation of Women* (London: Croom Helm, 1980).

[4] Samuel A. Pratt, "The Social Basis of Nazism and Communism in Urban Germany" (Thesis, Michigan State College, 1948), p. 117; Michael H. Kater, "Zum gegenseitigen Verhältnis von SA und SS in der Sozialgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus von 1925 bis 1939," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial-und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 62, 1975, pp. 343, 358.

[5] Gerhard Schulz, *Der Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus: Krise und Revolution in Deutschland* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1975), p. 479 ff. Note the contemporary overreaction to the scale of working-class support for the National Socialists; for example, Georgi Dimitroff, Address to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, in Dimitroff, *Ausgewählte Werke*, Bd. 2 (East Berlin, 1958), p. 526.

[6] Kater, "Zur Soziographie," pp. 139, 149f, argues that in 1923 only 9.5 percent of NSDAP members were workers, though this figure has been rightly criticized for not including skilled workers (*Facharbeiter*). See Jürgen Kocka, "Zur Problematik der deutschen Angestellten 1914-1933," in Hans Mommsen, Dietmar Petzina, Bernd Weisbrod, eds., *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1974), p. 300, fn. 13. Even so, the worker component would remain small, at around 13 percent. In August 1921 it is estimated that 10.4 percent of members were workers (Donald M. Douglas, "The Parent Cell: Some Computer Notes on the Composition of the First Nazi Party Group in Munich 1919-21," *Central European History*, 10,

1977, pp. 62-63). Between 1925 and 1929 workers made up only 7 percent of party members (Michael H. Kater, "Ansätze zu einer Soziologie der SA bis zur Röhm-Krise," in Ulrich Engelhardt et al., eds., *Soziale Bewegung und politische Verfassung: Beiträge zur Geschichte dur modernen Welt* /Stuttgart: Klett, 1976/, p. 802), while a figure of 8 percent has been quoted for the period before 1930 (Albrecht Tyrell, *Führer befiehl . . . Selbstzeugnisse aus der "Kampfzeit" der NSDAP* /Düsseldorf: Droste, 1969/, p. 379). A total of 270,000 workers were reputedly party members before 1933. See Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1969), p. 52. NSDAP statistics, which indicate that 32.5 percent of members in January 1933 were workers, must be treated cautiously because of the very loose definition of "worker" employed by the party. It is certain that a considerable lower-middle-class element was included in the quoted percentage (cf. *Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP: Parteistatistik*, I, Munich 1935, pp. 69-71). In heavily industrialized areas, the percentage of proletarian NSDAP members was obviously higher than average. In this connection, see Detlef Mühlberger, "The Sociology of the NSDAP: The Question of Working-Class Membership," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 15, 1980, pp. 500, 504; Wilfried Böhnke, *Die NSDAP im Ruhrgebiet 1920-1933* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, 1974), Part C; and Jürgen W. Falter, "Wählerbewegungen zur NSDAP 1924-1933: Methodische Fragen, empirisch abgesicherte Erkenntnisse, offene Fragen," in Otto Büsch, ed., *Wählerbewegungen in der europäischen Geschichte* (Berlin: Colloquium-Verlag, 1980). In some nonindustrial regions, such as Middle Franconia, the percentage of workers holding Party membership was surprisingly high, 40.5 percent in 1932. (Rainer Hambrecht, *Der Aufstieg der NSDAP in Mittel-und Oberfranken (1925-1933)* /Nuremberg: Stadtarchiv, 1975/, pp. 304-8.) Possible explanations for the presence of workers in the NSDAP's ordinary membership are suggested in Stachura "Who Were the Nazis?" There is little scholarly dispute about the unimportant working-class component in the ranks of party leaders (*Gauleiter*, *Reichstag* faction, and so on). See Kater, "Sozialer Wandel," pp. 36-38, 51ff; Ronald Rogowski, "The Gauleiter and the Social Origins of Fascism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 19 (1977), pp. 399-430; Peter Hüttenberger *Die Gauleiter: Studie zum Wandel des Machtgefüges in der NSDAP* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1969), pp. 214, 219; and Albrecht Tyrell "Führergedanke und Gauleiterwechsel: Die Teilung des Gaues Rheinland der NSDAP 1931," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 23, 1975, esp. pp. 343-56, for an illuminating sketch of pre-1933 Gauleiters.

[7] Alexander Weber, "Soziale Merkmale der NSDAP Wähler" (Dissertation, University of Freiburg i. Br., 1969), pp. 101-3; Pratt, "The Social Basis," p. 164ff.

[8] Timothy W. Mason, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich: Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1977), pp. 63-64.

[9] Kater, "Sozialer Wandel," pp. 29-31.

[10] R. I. McKibbon, "The Myth of the Unemployed: Who Did Vote for the Nazis?" *Australian Journal of Political History*, 15, 1969, pp. 25-26; Bernt Hagtvet, "The Theory of Mass Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic: A Re-Examination," in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*, ed. B. Hagtvet et al. (Oslo: Uni-Verlag, 1980), pp. 81-85.

[11] Peter H. Merkl, in introduction to section on German fascism in *Who Were the Fascists*, p. 263.

[12] Werner Kaltefleiter, *Wirtschaft und Politik in Deutschland: Konjunktur als Bestimmungsfaktor des Parteiensystems* (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1966), pp. 48-49.

[13] The problems of defining the class and occupational status of NSDAP members are usefully discussed by Jürgen Genuneit, "Methodische Probleme der quantitativen Analyse früher NSDAP—Mitgliederlisten," in Mann, ed., *Die Nationalsozialisten*, pp. 35ff., 40ff., 44ff.

[14] Cf. Gerald Braunthal, *Socialist Labour and Politics in Weimar Germany* (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1978); Robert A. Gates, "German Socialism and the Crisis of 1929-33," *Central European History*, VII, 1974, pp. 332-59; Hannes Heer, *Burgfrieden oder Klassenkampf. Zur Politik der sozialdemokratischen Gewerkschaften 1930-1933* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1971); Michael Schneider, *Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm des ADGB: Zur gewerkschaftlichen Politik in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik* (Bad Godesberg: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, 1975); Manfred Schmidt, "Die Haltung der ADGB-Führung zur faschistischen Bewegung 1932/1933," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, 21, 1979, pp. 583-92.

[15] For interesting comment on Mason's style, see Klaus Hildebrand, "Nationalsozialismus ohne Hitler? Das Dritte Reich als Forschungsgegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 31, 1980, pp. 293-94.

[16] Mason, *Sozialpolitik*, p. 79.

[17] Quoted in Robert Black, *Fascism in Germany* (London: Steyne Publications, 1979), p. 1.

[18] It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list here. But a recent survey by Bernt Hagtvet and Reinhard Kühnl, "Contemporary Approaches to Fascism: A Survey of Paradigms,"

in Who Were the Fascists, pp. 26-51, contains excellent bibliographical references.

[19] Max H. Kele, Nazis and Workers: National Socialist Appeals to German Labor, 1919-1933 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972) provides a full exposition of this "socialism," albeit in an undifferentiated fashion. See also Barbara Miller Lane and Leila J. Rupp, eds., Nazi Ideology before 1933: A Documentation (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1978), pp. 32-93, 126-29, 134-46; and Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf, Linke Leute von Rechts (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960), pp. 98ff, 244ff.

[20] Ulrich Wörst, "Programmatik und Fuhrerprinzip: Das Problem des Strasser-Kreises in der NSDAP" (Dissertation, University of Erlangen, 1966), p. 80ff; George Franz-Willing, Putsch und Verbotszeit der Hitlerbewegung, November 1923-February 1925 (Preussisch Oldendorf: K. W. Schutz, 1977), pp. 191-207, 238-70; Udo Kissenkoetter, Gregor Strasser und die NSDAP (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1978), p. 22ff.

[21] Cf. Berlin Police Report of March 1927 which stresses the NSDAP's efforts in Elberfeld, Chemnitz, Plauen, Berlin, and so on, and further Police Report of October 15, 1927 in Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BA); Reichskanzlei R43I/2696. Also see report of January 1927 to the NSDAP Reichsleitung from Karl Kaufmann covering activities in the Ruhr, in BA; Sammlung Schumacher: 230.

[22] Peter D. Stachura, "Der kritische Wendepunkt? Die NSDAP und die Reichstagswahlen vom 20. Mai 1928," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 26, 1978, 33ff.

[23] Larry E. Jones, "'The Dying Middle': Weimar Germany and the Fragmentation of Bourgeois Politics," Central European History, 5, 1972, pp. 23-54; and Jones "The Dissolution of the Bourgeois Party System in the Weimar Republic," in Bessel and Feuchtwanger eds., Social Change and Political Development, pp. 268-88, esp. 278ff. 281ff.

[24] Gregor Strasser, Kampf um Deutschland: Reden und Aufsätze eines Nationalsozialisten (Munich: Eher-Verlag, 1932), p. 132.

[25] Helmut Heiber, ed., Das Tagebuch von Joseph Goebbels, 1925-26 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1961).

[26] Gregor Strasser, "Gedanken uber Aufgaben der Zukunft," NS Briefe, I, 1926, NR. 18.

[27] Strasser, Kampf um Deutschland, p. 133.

[28] Ibid., p. 113.

[29] James M. Rhodes, *The Hitler Movement: A Modern Millenarian Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), pp. 39-41.

[30] Timothy W. Mason, "The Legacy of 1918 for National Socialism," in Anthony Nicholls and Erich Matthias eds., *German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler* (London: Allend Unwin, 1971), pp. 215-39.

[31] Otto Strasser, *Aufbau des deutschen Sozialismus* (Leipzig: Under Verlag, 1932), p. 116f.

[32] Henry A. Turner, "Hitler's Einstellung zu Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft vor 1933," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 2, 1976, pp. 95-96, 98-100, 105-12. Note also Hitler's cold-shouldering of the socialist Gottfried Feder, as analyzed by Albrecht Tyrell, "Gottfried Feder and the NSDAP," in Peter D. Stachura, ed., *The Shaping of the Nazi State* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 48-87.

[33] Jeremy Noakes, *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony 1921-1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 174, 178; Mason, *Sozialpolitik*, p. 69ff. Hans-Gerd Schumann, *Nationalsozialismus und Gewerkschaftsbewegung* (Hanover: Norddeutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1958), pp. 34, 39.

[34] Reinhold Muchow, *Sind die Nationalsozialisten sozialreaktionär?* (Munich: Eher-Verlag, n.d.).

[35] Hermann Roth, "Die nationalsozialistische Betriebszellen-organisation (NSBO . . . (1928 bis 1934)," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 19, 1978, pp. 49-66, esp. pp. 55ff., 53ff.

[36] Conan Fischer, "The Occupational Background of the SA's Rank and File Membership during the Depression Years, 1929 to mid-1934," in Stachura, ed., *Shaping of the Nazi State*, pp. 131-59, esp. pp. 138, 152. See also Stachura "Who Were the Nazis?" and Richard Bessel, "The SA in the Eastern Regions of Germany, 1925-1934" (Dissertation, University of Oxford, 1980).

[37] See, for example, J. K. von Engelbrechten, *Eine braune Armee entsteht: Die Geschichte der Berlin-Brandenberger SA* (Munich: F. Eher Nachf, 1937); Wilfried Bade *Die SA erobert Berlin. Ein Tatsachenbericht* 8th ed. (Munich: Knorr und Hirth, 1943).

[38] Heinrich Bennecke, *Hitler und die SA* (Munich: Olzog, 1962), esp. pp. 142-212; Andreas Werner, "SA: 'Wehrverband,' 'Parteitruppe,' oder 'Revolutionsarmee'? Studien zur Geschichte der SA und dur NSDAP 1920-33" (Dissertation,

University of Erlangen, 1964); Eric G. Reiche, "The Development of the SA in Nuremberg 1922-1934" (Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1972); an analysis of the basic mechanics involved in SA-Communist street confrontations is provided by Eve Rosenhaft, "Working-class Life and Working-class Politics: Communists, Nazis and the State in the Battle for the Streets, Berlin 1928-1932," in Bessel and Feutchtwanger, eds., *Social Change and Political Development*, pp. 207-40.

[39] Mathilde Jamin, "Methodische Konzeption einer quantitativen Analyse zur sozialen Zusammensetzung der SA," in Mann, ed., *Die Nationalsozialisten*, pp. 84-97, stresses the "cleaning-up" nature of the 1934 purge (p. 87). In Jamin's more recent study, "Zur Rolle der SA im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem," in Gerhard Hirschfeld and Lothar Kettenacker, eds., *Der 'Führerstaat': Mythos und Realität: Studien zur Struktur und Politik des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), pp. 329-60, the whole notion of an "SA-socialism" is questioned. Hitler underlined the nihilism of the SA (see his speech in the Reichstag, July 13, 1934, in Normann H. Baynes, ed., *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, Vol. I /London: Oxford University Press, 1942/, pp. 290ff). See further Charles Bloch, *Die SA und die Krise des NS-Regimes 1934* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), pp. 96-116; and Joseph Nyomarkay, *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnestoa Press, 1967), pp. 123-36.

[40] Michael H. Kater, "Der NS-Studentenbund von 1926 bis 1928: Randgruppe Zwischen Hitler und Strasser," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 22, 1974, pp. 148-90; See also Anseln Faust, *Der Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund: Studenten und Nationalsozialismus in der Weimarer Republik*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf: Verlag Schwann, 1973).

[41] Peter D. Stachura, *Nazi Youth in the Weimar Republic* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Press, 1975), pp. 47-57.

[42] Ibid., pp. 57-62.

[43] Reinhard Kühnl, "Zur Programmatik der Nationalsozialistischen Linken: Das Strasser-Programm von 1925/26," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 14, 1966, pp. 317-33, esp. 324-33.

[44] Gregor Strasser's anti-Semitism may not have been as radical or as racially motivated as that of other Party leaders, including Hitler, but he did expressly denounce on many occasions "Jewish finance capitalism," which he alleged would "reduce all other peoples to bondage" (Strasser, *Kampf um Deutschland*, pp. 17, 19). He also criticized alleged Jewish control of the media, and in his radio broadcast in June 1932 he bluntly affirmed that his aim was

to drive Jews out of responsible positions in German public life, though he would stop short at persecuting them. Despite Strasser's comparative moderation, he was successfully prosecuted several times during his career by the Jewish *Central-Verein* for his anti-Semitic public utterances. Donald Niewyk *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930), p. 38.

[45] Details in BA:NS26/396. See further criticism of the Draft by a Dr. Harnisch, who stresses its unacceptable Marxist character, in BA:NS26/1304.

[46] Strasser's letter to AG members of March 5, 1926, requesting the return of Draft copies, in BA:NS26/900.

[47] Comprehensive coverage is given by Ulrich Schüren *Der Volksentscheid zur Fürstenenteignung 1926* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1978), passim.

[48] Strasser editorial in *NS-Briefe*, October 1, 1925; Strasser letter to Oswald Spengler of June 2, 1925, in *Oswald Spengler, Briefe, 1913-36*, ed. Anton A. Koktanek (Munich: Beck, 1963), p. 391ff. For further details on origin and development of the journal, see report of October 1936 by the *Hauptarchiv der NSDAP*, in BA:NS26/1175.

[49] Rosenberg's letter of February 24, 1927 to Strasser, in BA: NS8 (Kanzlei Rosenberg): 143--Persönlicher Schriftwechsel; Strasser article in *NS-Briefe*, February 15, 1927.

[50] Klaus F. Schmidt, "Die 'Nationalsozialistischen Briefe' (1925-30): Programm, Anschauungen, Tendenzen," in *Paul Kluke zum 60: Geburtstag* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1968), p. 125.

[51] This particular aspect is well documented by Gregor Strasser's article, "Bürgerliche Ängste," in *NS-Briefe*, February 1, 1926.

[52] Gregor Strasser, "Deutsch-völkische Freiheitspartei und wir," in *NS-Briefe*, August 15, 1926; also Strasser in *NS-Briefe*, July 15, 1927. There were statements by the Strasser press on a wide range of topics, from foreign policy to female emancipation. On the latter see Gregor Strasser, "Die Frau und der Nationalsozialismus," *Völkischer Beobachter*, April 6, 1932. Also, Michael H. Kater, "Krisis des Frauenstudiums in der Weimarer Republik," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial--und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 59 (1972), pp. 207-55.

[53] See memorandum by Gregor Strasser of June 22, 1928, in BA:NS22 (Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP): 348, and Stachura, "Der kritische Wendepunkt?" pp. 91-92.

[54] Reinhard Kühnl Die nationalsozialistische Linke 1925-1930 (Meisenheim: Hain, 1966), pp. 1, 89, 230, 260.

[55] For example, Hitler and I (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940); History in My Time (London: Jonathan Cape, 1941); Exil (Munich: Heinrich-Heine-Verlag, 1969).

[56] Stachura, "'Der Fall Strasser': Gregor Strasser, Hitler and National Socialism 1930-1932," in Shaping of the Nazi State, p. 91f.

[57] Die Faust was a substitute for the temporarily banned Berliner Arbeiterzeitung.

[58] BA, Zeitgeschichtlicher Sammlung: ZSg 103 (Zeitungsausschnittssammlung Lauterbach)/782 (NSDAP).

[59] Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv: Abteilung 483 (NSDAP Hessen-Nassau): 2657-Veranstaltungen und Propaganda, Friedrich to Habicht, January 15, 1929.

[60] See Gregor's letter of July 22, 1930 to Rudolf Jung, the Sudeten German leader, in BA: Sammlung Schumacher: 313.

[61] Stachura, "Der Fall Strasser," pp. 94ff., 98ff., 101ff.

[62] The full text of this "Arbeit und Brot" speech is in BA: Zeitgeschichtlicher Sammlung: NSD 12 (Reichspropagandaleiter der NSDAP)/16.

[63] See Strasser's revealing letters on this subject to Erich Koch on September 1, 1931 (BA:NS22/1065); to Dr. Schlange, Gauleiter of Brandenburg, on September 12, 1931 (BA:NS22/1046); and to Ernst Graf zu Reventlow on March 23, 1932 (Berlin Document Center: Personal File Reventlow). The theme of coalition was also central to Strasser's major speeches in late 1932: for example, to an NSBO rally in Berlin in October (text in BA: Nachlass Zarnow: Nr. 44), and in his "Die Gebote der Stunde" address on November 14 (text in BA: Zeitgeschichtlicher Sammlung: NSD 13 /Reichspressechef der NSDAP7: 11).

[64] Stachura, "Der Fall Strasser," p. 93.

[65] As shown by his voluminous correspondence: see BA:NS26/1068-76.

[66] Stachura "Der Fall Strasser," pp. 105ff., 112.

[67] Jeremy Noakes, "The Nazi Party and the Third Reich: the Myth and Reality of the One-Party State," in Jeremy Noakes, ed., Government, Party and People in Nazi Germany (University of Exeter typescript, 1980), pp. 12-14.

9

Revolution and Alienation: The Foundations of Weimar

ELIZABETH H. TOBIN

The paradox of the German Revolution of 1918-19 is that it promised so much but accomplished so little. Spontaneous popular demonstrations toppled national and local governments, creating revolutionary councils in nearly every city in Germany. Yet neither the provisional central government nor local councils produced meaningful changes in the economy or social structure. The Weimar Republic replaced the Wilhelmine Empire, but the imperial governmental structure--bureaucracy and military--remained largely intact. Furthermore, the process of the Revolution itself alienated many of its strongest supporters--the Independent Social Democratic party (USPD), the Communists, and a sizable portion of the working class--from the government created by their revolutionary actions. Thus the Republic began its history with significant enemies on the left.

This combination of revolution and alienation has led to considerable debate about the nature of the Revolution.[1] Most historians explain these events by studying the executives of political parties and national governments; much of the research on the Revolution concentrates on Berlin and Munich.[2] This chapter relies upon a series of local studies, which provide a fresh perspective on the Revolution--that of rank-and-file revolutionaries. By directing attention to revolutionary demands, the relations between revolutionaries and leaders, and the interaction of local councils with both the Wilhelmine bureaucracy and the new national government, an attempt will be made to provide new answers to questions about the nature of Germany's Revolution: Did the working class genuinely seek revolutionary change? Why were revolutionaries unable to wrest power from the Wilhelmine governmental structure? How did the Revolution's supporters turn into the Republic's enemies?

Historians have long argued about whether the events of 1918-19 warrant the name "revolution."[3] But the evidence from Germany's cities demonstrates that workers were indeed revolutionary. The Revolution was essentially a popular movement supporting extensive democratization of the government, limited socialization of industry, and the intervention of government in the society and economy on behalf of the working class. A striking similarity of workers' basic goals emerges from the diversity of the revolutionary process across Germany. Because socialist leaders, the provisional national and provincial governments, and local councils all faltered in implementing these goals, workers reaffirmed their demands loudly and clearly in the first four months of 1919.

Yet these goals were never achieved. Other historians have pointed to the failure of socialist leaders, in the SPD and USPD and at the national and local levels, to take advantage of their working-class support.[4] But the actions of socialist leaders provide only a part of the explanation for the lack of fundamental change. From the local perspective, the ability of Wilhelmine bureaucracies to retain power and to obstruct the activities of revolutionary councils was even more important, and the intervention of the new national and provincial governments in this conflict proved crucial. The explanation for the failure to implement working-class demands can be found in the interactions among new and old governing bodies.

Workers protested in vain against the reassertion of bureaucratic power and the eclipse of revolutionary goals. Disappointment turned to distrust and alienation as the new government ignored their demands and actively repressed their protests. Thus, the process of the Revolution, whereby workers came to blame the government they had helped to create for the frustration of their ambitions, was itself responsible for turning many of the Revolution's supporters into the Republic's enemies. One of the long-term problems of the Weimar Republic was the fact that the revolutionary dynamic had alienated much of its potential working-class basis.

REVOLUTION

Evidence from cities all over Germany shows the revolutionary intentions of the men and women who toppled their government in November 1918. Revolutionary activity was not isolated to any particular geographic area. Workers and soldiers in nearly every city spontaneously created workers' and soldiers' councils, without the prompting or even the knowledge of socialist leaders. The pronouncements of these councils in early November provide a good indication of workers' goals and expectations; despite considerable variety in the political orientation of revolutionaries in different cities, councils consistently demanded a far-reaching democratization of German government and society. Furthermore, workers repeatedly reaffirmed their support for these radical political goals in the following months.

By November 1918 the Wilhelmine Empire maintained control over its citizens through military might alone. Even where workers had demonstrated extreme dissatisfaction with the government during the war, such as in Braunschweig or Düsseldorf, they had been subdued without difficulty through military intervention.[5] Workers feared the harsh punishments meted out by military tribunals and the drafting of "troublemakers" into the army. Thus the Revolution appeared first in the military forces. But once the mutiny of the armed forces had begun, it stimulated revolutionary actions among workers and soldiers alike. The initiative often came from outside, but in nearly every city, the spontaneous actions of workers and soldiers overthrew their local governments.

Darmstadt provides an example of a city in which the military revolted without aid from workers. The soldiers acted alone in electing a council on the night of November 8; at approximately 2 A.M., between five thousand and seven thousand soldiers marched to the palace with the intention of taking the Grand Duke prisoner.[6] Even in small and conservative Jülich, soldiers stationed there rebelled on November 8 by electing a council.[7] In towns where working-class discontent remained just below the surface during the war, workers acted as soon as they were satisfied that the military was incapacitated. In Hamburg news of the sailors' revolt in Kiel sparked an unauthorized strike in the shipyards and a meeting at which workers called for democratic reforms and the abdication of the Hohenzollerns.[8] In Düsseldorf the arrival of sailors from Cologne on the evening of November 8 led to workers, soldiers, and sailors alike roaming the streets, disarming officers, and freeing prisoners.[9]

In all cases, soldiers' and workers' revolts soon combined. The day after mutinies in Göttingen and Nuremberg, workers and soldiers marched together through the cities.[10] In Hanau workers provided the leadership, but soldiers also participated in a demonstration on November 7; representatives of the SPD and USPD formed the Workers' Council and negotiated directly with the Soldiers' Council to form a joint revolutionary organ.[11] The workers in Jülich managed to create a Workers' Council one day after the military's actions, despite the fact that no working-class party had ever existed in the town.[12]

Rank-and-file revolutionaries had acted on their own initiative; socialist leaders were almost universally surprised at the outbreak of the Revolution. Even those organized political groups that had urged revolution were not responsible for its outbreak. Spartacists in Stuttgart, who helped to engineer a city-wide strike and the creation of a Workers' Council on November 4, failed to control the movement in their city because their actions anticipated the military revolt. Spartacist leaders were arrested in Stuttgart on November 6 and only released three days later, after a revolutionary government had been established without their participation or advice.[13] In Düsseldorf the USPD leaders did not even know about negotiations between the police chief and an improvised Workers' and Soldiers' Council until they were nearly completed.[14]

Although councils were formed as a result of demonstrations and demands by workers and soldiers, in most towns workers turned to their traditional Socialist leaders when they set up official revolutionary governments. In Düsseldorf, for example, the late-arriving independents were able to place themselves at the head of the Council.[15] Nevertheless, rank-and-file workers and soldiers did hold council posts in most cities. Socialist leaders who joined the Revolution did not immediately impose their own goals upon the councils; especially in the early days of the Revolution, council leaders simply appropriated the demands of the workers and soldiers who had brought them to power. Thus the early statements issued by councils or made by council leaders reflect the desires of Germany's rank-and-file revolutionaries.

All councils did not agree on goals for the Revolution. The degree of radicalism among both workers and leaders varied greatly from city to city. Few councils went as far as those of Dresden, Leipzig, and Chemnitz, which on November 8 jointly welcomed the collapse of capitalism and the seizure of power by the revolutionary proletariat.[16] But even less radical councils expressed a commitment to significant change in the governing system. In Darmstadt, the SPD-controlled Workers' and Soldiers' Council demanded "the Republic, equal rights for troops and officers, participation of soldiers in the power of command and discipline."[17] In the town of Diez, outside of Frankfurt, the Soldiers' and People's Council announced that it would work towards "complete democratization, abolition of militarism."[18] The Council in Nuremberg announced that it would "do its utmost in order that the complete transformation of our governmental and political situation take place quickly and peacefully."[19] In Dortmund, the program issued by the Council on November 10 proclaimed its long-term goals to be "political and social revolution (Umwälzung) in the sense of democracy and socialism." Dortmunders proposed a variety of revolutionary actions: a takeover of military power and creation of popular security forces, and control by the Council of all industrial firms, banks and transport institutions.[20]

The minimal program common to nearly every council was "democratization" of the government, economy, society, and military. Soldiers seemed to have the clearest idea of what they meant by democratization; their demands typically included part or all of the "Hamburg points" adopted by the first Congress of Councils, which encompassed the election of officers by soldiers, the exercise of command over garrisons by local workers' and soldiers' councils and the abolition of all insignia of rank.[21] Workers' vision of democratization was less concrete, but seemed always to mean the establishment of popular, democratic control over the institutions of the government and the economy, in order to make them responsive to the interests of the working majority.

The head of the Council in Göttingen, Simon Städtler, provided a particularly clear statement of the basic goals of most of Germany's revolutionaries. Städtler had left the SPD for the USPD in November 1918; a china painter by trade, he was a soldier when the Revolution began. The first order of business, according to Städtler, was to end the war and put a stop to militarism. The representatives of the monarchic "authoritarian state," especially the Kaiser, had to step down to make way for a people's state. For the time being, revolutionaries must cooperate with the "representatives of the overthrown order," because their expertise and experience were required for military and economic demobilization. Later, the structures of the authoritarian "military and administrative state" had to be "fundamentally altered" and replaced with democratic structures. He also favored elections to a constitutional assembly that would determine the form of Germany's parliamentary democracy.[22] Städtler had no specific idea of how to implement these goals; he certainly did not advocate the most radical path. But it is clear he meant his revolution to bring about fundamental change. Städtler wanted not only to end the war, but to end militarism. He wanted not only to set up a republic, but to change the structures of the military and the administration. He was willing to cooperate with the Wilhelmine bureaucrats, but only temporarily. Rank-and-file workers all over Germany shared Städtler's goals. Although some revolutionaries demanded more, this minimum program would have itself revolutionized Germany.

Once workers had established councils and made clear their expectations, most drastically curtailed their direct participation in revolutionary activities. In almost every city, leaders of the socialist parties took over the direction of the Workers' Councils; rank-and-file workers who remained active took subordinate positions. There is no evidence of dissatisfaction with this trend; it allowed workers to turn their attention to struggles in the workplace: increasing wages and decreasing hours. The months of November and December were characterized by strikes, demands and renewed demands for the eight-hour day, an increase in wages despite the decrease in hours, and better conditions on the shop floor.[23] Trade union leaders in Düsseldorf found it difficult even to keep up with the varied and rapidly changing demands in individual factories.[24] Workers in Dortmund also left trade unionists behind; with demands and work stoppages they forced concessions on wages and hours from their employers.[25]

The transfer of activities from the political arena to the workplace did not mean that workers ceased to care about attempts to democratize the state apparatus. They were willing to show their support for revolutionary changes whenever their leaders asked for it or when workers decided themselves that the gains of early November were threatened. Usually such actions took the form of a demonstration in favor of the local Workers' and Soldiers' Council. Where councils came under attack from more conservative parties or citizens, workers sometimes played a crucial role in preserving the power of the councils by demonstrating their support. In Jülich, many workers turned out for a public meeting called by the Center party, which was known to be highly critical of the Council. They interrupted the Social Democrat who defended the Council with frequent applause and hooted down the speaker who attacked the Council with riotous calls of "scoundrel!" and "counter-revolutionary!"[26] Although these expressions of class conflict in previously quiet Jülich must have astonished the town fathers, it was this popular support that enabled the Council to continue its existence until the town was occupied by Belgian troops on December 2. In Düsseldorf workers turned out for three important demonstrations; each defused serious opposition. Several thousand workers marched in support of the creation of the Council on November 10. Thousands responded to the Council's call to defend socialism and freedom against the counterrevolution on December 11. The local newspaper reported that many SPD members took part, despite the fact that the SPD had officially left the Council. On January 18, many workers put down their tools in order to participate in a series of mass meetings sponsored by the Council, which was now controlled by the Spartacists.[27] In Erfurt, where moderate independents worked comfortably together with the SPD in the Council, workers went beyond the requests of the Council in order to defend the Revolution. On January 14 workers learned of the planned departure of troops from Erfurt for Berlin. Fearing these troops would be used against revolutionaries by Ebert's government, they called a one-day general strike; twenty thousand marched in the streets and the Council agreed to prevent the departure of the troops.[28]

The evidence from worker demands and council pronouncements shows the revolutionary nature of workers' goals. Revolutionaries all across Germany consciously and consistently defended their radical policial demands, despite the fact that workers expended most of their energy in November and December on the improvement of their position in the workplace. But after the early days of the Revolution, they required either a specific request from their leaders or serious provocation before acting on political issues. Having made clear in the first days of the Revolution the framework in which they expected their leaders to operate, most workers trusted their political parties to formulate and resolve questions concerning the state. More importantly, both rank-and-file workers and their socialist leaders assumed that the Revolution was over in early November and that the transition to a democratized state and society could proceed without further battle. This assumption promoted the turn away from politics to the workplace and explains why a working class that genuinely desired revolution left the transformation of the state in the hands of its leaders.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The seizure of power had not actually been completed on November 8 or in the days following. The Wilhelmine governmental machinery was still intact, under the control of bureaucrats loyal to the old order. During the months of November and December, councils and local bureaucracies struggled over the extent to which working-class demands for democratization would be satisfied.

Councils had drastically different perceptions of their functions. Some, frequently those dominated by the SPD, perceived themselves as caretaker administrations, holding power only provisionally. Because the SPD's policy was to await national elections before undertaking democratization, its representatives in the councils tried to follow a caretaker approach, regardless of demands expressed by workers. Those councils that did not act as revolutionary agents concentrated instead on maintaining order and the well-being of the population. The Soldiers' Council in Jülich announced it was only empowered to maintain calm and security in the town, and the committees set up by the Workers' and Soldiers' Council there were directed exclusively towards the temporary concerns of the population: security, housing for returning troops, and distribution of food and clothing.[29] In Cassel, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council sought to work with the existing City Council rather than to replace it. Two Council members became aldermen of the City Council and were responsible for military and civilian affairs.[30] In Göttingen two Council members joined the town government, but only in an advisory capacity, despite the previous agreement that all decisions of the local government had to be countersigned by a Council member. The Council's actions all concerned temporary problems--control of the black market and closing down dance halls in order to conserve light and heat.[31] The mixed Council in Erfurt, composed of both USPD and SPD members, concentrated on a formal control of the bureaucracy, securing of order, and providing food. It allowed the continued temporary employment of prisoners of war, and used its own security force to guard the city's banks.[32] In Dortmund the Council acted only with the approval of the local government, completely disregarding its earlier radical resolutions.[33]

Those councils that adopted a caretaker approach failed to begin the task of democratization. But this did not mean that such councils were useless or helpless. Not only did they aid the bureaucracy in the process of demobilization, but they also demonstrated their ability to override the bureaucracy when they saw fit. Göttingen's Council authorized confiscation of food stuffs obtained illegally.[34] Although Frankfurt's mixed Council was careful not to interfere with the internal administration of the city, it established committees that sought to control the operations of the police and the post office. Local officials were initially unable to dispute the Council's control of the regional railroad agency, while the Council worked towards the complete transfer of the state railway into the hands of the workers.[35]

Activist councils considered themselves the rightful organs of governance and tried immediately to begin democratization at the local level. These councils were often strongly influenced by the USPD and were located in cities where a high concentration of armaments industries had restructured the local economy and attracted a large number of workers during the war. Activist councils pursued directly the goals expressed by workers in November. "Interference" (*Eingriffe*) in the government or the economy, as it came to be called by those who opposed it, was frequent and often successful in the early days of the Revolution. In the Thuringian towns of Gotha and Gera, the Workers' Councils dissolved the Wilhelmine City Councils. In Leipzig the Workers' Council disbanded the City Council and threatened the local bureaucracy with a takeover of the *Reichsbank* if it refused to pay Council salaries with public funds. The Council in Braunschweig officially ended the Duke's power by declaring the property and estates of the ducal family to be state property.[36] Some councils sought direct democratization in the economic and military spheres. The Council in Hanau took over the management of a powder mill on November 9, at the same time hiring shoemakers and tailors to supply clothing to the population. On November 14 the Council forbade the firing of anyone in the city.[37] In Düsseldorf, during the first few days of the Revolution, the Council deposed the police chief for his harsh behavior towards the Socialists during the war, announced its intention to establish its own system of justice, and dissolved the political section of the police force.[38]

Even activist councils, however, reduced their direct action after the first days of victory. Few revolutionaries, leaders or rank-and-file, seemed to fear the ability or the will of the bureaucracy to thwart the Revolution, and nearly all council members shared the view of Städtler in Göttingen that local bureaucrats possessed expertise essential to the period of demobilization. The Düsseldorf Council, relying on its ability to control its former enemy, invited the police chief to resume his position the next day.[39] In Nuremberg the Council made an agreement with the mayor that "municipal colleagues" would remain at their jobs "under the terms of the laws in force."[40]

Councils in general contented themselves with supervising the city and county governmental apparatus. The typical pattern was for one or two revolutionaries to be placed in the office of the mayor and county president and sometimes on the city council. Often council committees assigned to certain problems--such as housing or clothing--coordinated their activities with the Wilhelmine department also responsible for that area. In most towns, the councils or their delegates carried out the function of "overseer" in a remarkably casual fashion.

It is apparent that the failure of the councils to satisfy working-class demands was in part the fault of the councils themselves. Especially in the first days of the Revolution, councils could wrest power from local governments, although the political composition of a council frequently determined whether it sought such power. Activist councils that moved rapidly were able to establish considerable authority. Even councils that worked in cooperation with the local Wilhelmine government often succeeded in carving out their own sphere of control. Thus those council leaders who failed to take advantage of the revolutionary power given them by workers were to some extent responsible for the paucity of change. But this failure of leadership is not the whole story. Both caretaker and activist councils met significant resistance in their attempt to make changes. Local bureaucracies and the new national and provincial governments hindered the councils' ability to implement revolutionary demands.

In virtually no case did local civilian authorities resist the Revolution at its inception. Most mayors, city councils, and county presidents announced not only their willingness to cooperate with the revolutionaries, but also their acceptance of the councils as the highest local authority. They "stood on the ground of the Revolution," as the contemporary phrase had it. But this capitulation was a curious one. Many Wilhelmine officials couched their acceptance of the new order in language similar to that of District Commissioner (*Landrat*) Vüllers from Jülich:

> I explained to him /the head of the Jülich Council/ that under the current conditions I would have to give way to coercion, and that I was ready to support the Workers' and Soldiers' Council, insofar as it concerned the maintenance of calm and order, and the securing of food for the people. But otherwise I would be true to my oath of office, sworn to my king, and would carry out my duties to the best of my knowledge and conscience. . . .[41]

The district commissioner intended to limit his cooperation with the revolutionaries as much as possible; his support for the local Council, as he explicitly stated, had been obtained by force. For Vüllers and the many bureaucrats who shared his attitudes capitulation was a tactical maneuver that allowed them to retain control of governmental machinery. They used the freedom of action afforded them by the councils' policy of oversight to influence council policies in a moderate direction, to obstruct specific council plans, and to reassert their right to determine policy.

Bureaucrats were often successful in persuading revolutionaries to follow certain policies, as in Jülich where the Council members had few plans of their own.[42] In Wiesbaden the mayor convinced the Council to let him proof the list of potential members of the new security force in order to screen out a large number of Leftists.[43] Even in more radical cities, councils were subject to persuasion. The Hamburg Council chose to re-establish the city legislature after representatives of banks and commercial firms convinced the Council head that the action was necessary to facilitate credit for the city.[44] Where persuasion failed, local authorities sometimes tried to use their continued control over the governmental machinery to prevent council activities. In Erfurt and Leipzig, the city governments tried to prevent specific Council activities by withholding funds.[45] Vüllers in Jülich simply refused to sign regulations placed before him by Council members.[46] The most common means of obstruction, however, was to argue with the council over each new policy decision, questioning whether the policy was correct and whether the council had the authority to implement the policy. The Wilhelmine departments in charge of Düsseldorf's clothing and food distribution disputed at every step the Council's right to make decisions in these areas, and this considerably slowed the Council's actions.[47] In Nuremberg a member of the Council described the problem: "If the Workers' Council wanted to do something, the officials always restrained it."[48]

This gradual revival of the particular powers of the bureaucracy led to a reassertion of its primacy in the governing sphere. In Hanau the Council appointed one of its members, Dr. Wagner, as provisional district commissioner. Wagner constantly conflicted with the local county commissioner, Schmid, about the proper division of duties. When the Council asked Schmid to resign, he refused, and at the end of December, he moved his office to Frankfurt in order to be able to carry out his duties without Wagner's or the Council's interference.[49] Schmid ceased altogether to acknowledge the authority of the Council.

Councils reacted to the bureaucracy's reassertion of power in different ways. The Council in Jülich did not try to force the recalcitrant district commissioner to cooperate.[50] But other councils fought back. Although responding to repeated attempts at obstruction took up an increasing amount of energy, councils were sometimes successful. The Düsseldorfers took over the city's clothing and food supplies despite bureaucratic objections; the Council confiscated and redistributed black-market goods found in house-to-house searches and at factories, in the face of bureaucratic insistence that such actions should be reserved for the "legitimate" authorities.[51] In Gelnhausen, Schlüchtern, and Biebrich-Wiesbaden in Hesse-Nassau, district commissioners lost their jobs due to council actions.[52] In Nuremberg, the mayor agreed to the early retirement of a police official who had made himself particularly unpopular with the working population.[53]

Councils also sought to prevail over their local adversaries by appealing to the new national government in Berlin. The Council in Erfurt complained to the Council of People's Commissars on December 30 that the local government refused to pay the sum previously agreed upon for the creation of the Volkswehr.[54] The national government was particularly appropriate as an arbiter between councils and the Wilhelmine bureaucracies, because both parties recognized it as the highest national authority. Unfortunately for activist local councils, however, the new government, even when headed by a coalition of USPD and SPD members, was disinclined to countenance "interference" by councils in the affairs of local bureaucracies. When in December a Bürgerrat was founded in Elberfeld in explicit competition with the Workers' and Soldiers' Council, the latter forbade all activities of the former. Members of the Bürgerrat complained to the Central Council in Berlin, which supported the Bürgerrat on all points.[55] The Düsseldorfers' attempt to create a special court was forbidden by the Council of People's Commissars.[56]

The attitudes of the new provincial governments, usually although not always dominated by the SPD, served as well to stiffen the resistance of local bureaucracies. When District Commissioner Schmid from Hanau complained to Berlin in December about Council encroachments on his duties, the Prussian Ministry of the Interior responded that the Council was to "enable the District Commissioner Schmid to resume his duties again in their entirety." The needs of demobilization and food distribution required that the administration in Hanau remain in "trained hands."[57] Wilhelmine school authorities in Düsseldorf fought the Council's attempt to end religious instruction; the Prussian Ministry of Education decided the Council was "not empowered to interfere in the educational system."[58] The provisional governments of Saxony and Baden promulgated regulations on November 16 and 18, respectively, restricting the functions of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils to those of control and advice.[59] The new Prussian government issued a series of rules in November that officially protected local Wilhelmine governments from changes initiated by councils.[60] These regulations were welcomed by city governments, who wasted no time in bringing the weight of the provincial and national governments to bear in their struggle with local councils. On January 21, 1919, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council of Hannover, firmly controlled by the SPD, summed up the situation by complaining "that recent decrees of the Reich and Prussian governments in effect curtailed the activities of the councils and prevented their representatives from doing useful work."[61]

Under cover of their capitulation to the revolutionaries, city governments were extremely effective in retaining power and limiting council activities. The determination and strength local bureaucracies demonstrated in November and December explains to a large extent the inability of councils to begin democratization. In the long run, USPD-dominated councils, which actively sought to restructure the local governments, were hardly more successful than the SPD-controlled councils. Instead of making good on activist statements and plans articulated in early November, councils found it necessary to expend their energies on battles with the bureaucrats. In these battles, however, the bureaucrats had powerful allies. The national and provincial governments used their influence repeatedly to defend the position of the local Wilhelmine governments. By January 1919 the outcome of this struggle for power was apparent: The goals of democratization and limited socialization remained unfulfilled.

ALIENATION

In the winter and spring of 1919, increasing numbers of workers began to recognize that neither local councils nor the national government were implementing the goals expressed so strongly at the beginning of the Revolution. Workers began to return to the political arena to protest the lack of progress and to reassert their demands. Ultimately, the fact that their leaders, particularly the SPD, ignored or repressed these renewed demands for democratization led to working-class alienation from those leaders and from the Republic that they had established. But this process was a gradual one.

Most workers apparently still had faith in their traditional party on January 19, 1919, when they elected representatives to the Constitutional Assembly. Nationally, the SPD far outdistanced the USPD, although the latter party had been far more vocal and active in its support of democratization. As can be seen in Table 9.1, this was evident even in Hamburg, where the local chapter of the SPD had openly opposed direct democratization.

Table 9.1
Percentage of Vote Given to Socialist Parties, January 19, 1919
(Selected Cities)

City	SPD	USPD
Göttingen	37	1
Hamburg	51	7
Hanau	31	27
Erfurt	21	37
Düsseldorf	15	25
All Germany	37.9	7.6

Sources: Popplow, 234; Comfort, 55; Struck, 414; Gutsche, 195; Düsseldorfer Volkszeitung, January 21, 1919; Morgan, 448.

In the radical cities of Erfurt and Düsseldorf, the SPD's showing was more respectable than might have been expected. Despite widespread worker support for democratization and for the councils, most workers had voted in traditional patterns. Since workers had never abandoned their original goals, it seems likely that they expected their prewar leaders to recognize and implement their demands.[62]

Yet even as the SPD was celebrating its election victories, workers began to express their disappointment with the slow pace of change. Workers made their views known with widely varying methods: complaints, demonstrations, strikes, and putsches. In most cases, the goals behind these diverse actions were similar to those expressed in November. The more radical methods employed in the spring of 1919 were a response to the earlier failure of the Revolution to satisfy its supporters.

In many towns, disappointment with the lack of democratization of the state and military were mildly expressed. In Göttingen, workers demonstrated on March 5 about the inequitable distribution of food; at the same time they demanded that "the officials should declare themselves for democracy, or resign; social reforms should not only be promised, but also realized."[63] In February, the Nuremberg Soldiers' Council used the occasion of Kurt Eisner's assassination to issue a ten-point program which would "finally" secure the Revolution; the program included demands for the creation of socialist ministries, thorough scrutiny of officials, abolition of the privileges of the aristocracy and the wealthy, and immediate socialization of the largest factories.[64] In Baden a state conference of councils held in January announced that the councils would continue to exist until the success of the Revolution was guaranteed by the National Assembly; that is, until local elections could take place, the democratic republic and the eight-hour day were securely established, the people's army created on a democratic basis, and the process of socialization begun in appropriate industries.[65] These demands fairly sum up what Germany's working-class revolutionaries had expected all along.

Elsewhere workers' dissatisfaction with the results of the Revolution erupted in unorganized demonstrations and riots. In Hanau serious disturbances followed a meeting on February 17 in which the new national government was criticized. The next day the county court and police jail were stormed; ration cards were taken from the town hall, thrown in the street, and burned; food was stolen from the storage center. The following day the château belonging to the Landraf, the district President, was plundered.[66] In Hamburg unrest broke out on several occasions. Workers demonstrated against the occupation of Bremen by Gustav Noske's troops in February; in April a demonstration of the unemployed turned into a two-day riot; and in June workers rioted over the quality of food produced by local manufacturers. When the first detachments of Noske's troops arrived in June, they were disarmed by the workers.[67] Although these spontaneous actions by enraged workers did not always have direct political aims, even demonstrations about food were directed against the moderate policies of the new government and against the unwillingness of the bureaucracies to respond to the needs of the workers.

In a large number of cities, workers were alienated enough to progress to concerted action in the form of putsches and strikes. In Düsseldorf, the fifteen-hundred man security force incited the radicals in the Council, both Spartacist and independents, to reverse the slow decline of the Revolution by taking over the Council and the city government on January 7. Leaders of the putsch accused members of the bureaucracy of counterrevolutionary actions and the old Council of indecisiveness. "In order to secure the Revolution," the reconstituted Council took direct action: Hostages from the bourgeoisie were seized, the police disarmed, banks and the telegraph office occupied, and the police chief, mayor, and county president replaced by appointees of the Council. The new Council also took a more activist stance towards Düsseldorf's material problems, overruling the bureaucrats on issues of food distribution, relief work, and housing construction. Although the leaders of the putsch used more radical and violent methods than the revolutionaries in November, their goals were not substantially different: democratization of the government and subsequent intervention in the economy in the interests of the working class.[68]

These strikes and putsches, the better-known revolts in Berlin and Munich, plus the declarations of soldiers in Nuremberg and workers in Göttingen, show that rank-and-file revolutionary activity was not confined to November.[69] Attempts to impose revolutionary changes extended into the spring of 1919, when workers reiterated their former demands with more forceful methods.[70] The inability of socialist leaders of all parties to secure those initial goals caused these actions against the new government.

The SPD-dominated national government responded to these renewed demands for democratization and socialization by ignoring or repressing them. Neither the provisional government in Berlin nor the elected government in Weimar ever implemented the Congress of Councils' vote favoring democratization of the military; democratization of the bureaucracy never got off the ground. The recommendations of the Commission of Nine about socialization of coal mines in the Ruhr were ignored; in Halle concessions concerning factory councils made to coal miners in February 1919 were rescinded in May.[71] The sweep of Noske's troops from Bremen through the Ruhr and into central Germany and Munich left rage and resentment against the government in its wake. Government troops occupied Gotha on February 18 because of the strength of the radical workers' movement there; workers responded with a general strike that lasted until March 8.[72] In other places, such as the Ruhr and Munich, armed workers resisted the advance of government troops. The new national government directed soldiers to end strikes and to fire on stubborn workers if necessary. These actions proved conclusively to many workers that the SPD government did not represent their interests. The use of troops against workers was the last of many steps on the path from revolution to alienation.

Many workers demonstrated their changed attitudes at the next national election in June 1920. The SPD's share of the vote in Hamburg dropped to 38 percent, while the USPD's rose to 15 percent.[73] In Düsseldorf the SPD's votes declined to 7 percent, and the USPD's increased to 36 percent.[74] All across the nation, the increase in the independents' share of votes (from 7.6 to 18.8 percent) and membership (from approximately 100,000 in 1918 to 900,000 in September 1920) reflected working-class disillusion with the SPD's stewardship of the Revolution.[75] Indeed, it could be argued that the use of troops against the very supporters of the Revolution had the effect of repressing radicalism only in the short run. Many of the occupied cities later became centers of strong communist influence. Hanau, for example, became a "primary strong-point of the communist movement for a wide area in southwest Germany."[76] The extent of workers' bitterness also became apparent in the aftermath of the Kapp Putsch in March 1920; workers in the Ruhr struck to save the Republic from the right-wing coup, but then used the occasion to reestablish workers' councils and to reiterate demands for socialization and democratization, especially of the army. A portion of the Red Army formed to fight counter-revolution turned against government troops.[77] The Weimar government continued the provisional government's policy of repressing revolutionary protests; as a result, it had to bear the hostility of a significant part of the working class.

The fact that many members of the working class failed to value the Weimar Republic as crucial to the defense of their interests surely contributed to its instability. This alienation had its institutional reflection in the fact that approximately half of the members of the USPD, the party most supportive of the Revolution, joined the KPD, a party committed to the overthrow of the Republic.[78] Weak working-class support may well have been part of Weimar's inability to resist Nazism. As the strength of its right-wing enemies grew, the Republic could ill afford the alienation of November's revolutionaries.

NOTES

[1] The debate has centered primarily around two issues: whether there existed significant rank-and-file revolutionary sentiment and whether the SPD could have led the Revolution in a different direction. K. D. Erdmann, "Die Geschichte der Weimarer Republik als Problem der Wissenschaft," *Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte*, 3 (1955) provides an example of those who believe that the only choice for the SPD was a bolshevist dictatorship or a parliamentary republic in alliance with the old officer corps. Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik 1918-19* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1962); and Reinhard Rürup, *Probleme der Revolution in Deutschland 1918/19* (Weisbaden: F. Steiner, 1968) are two of the most prominent of those historians who argue that there was a "third way" for the SPD, a parliamentary democracy based upon genuine social reforms. Recent scholarship has criticized the theory of the "third way." In 1975 Wolfgang Mommsen suggested that the revolutionary councils were "little inclined to push the Revolution much further, and consequently the arguments of Rürup and others are partially based on myth rather than reality," in his comment on Gerald Feldman, "Economic and Social Problems of German Demobilization, 1918-19," *Journal of Modern History*, 14 (1975), 30. See also Heinrich August Winkler, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Revolution von 1918/19: Ein Rückblick nach sechzig Jahren* (Berlin/Bonn: Dietz, 1979).

[2] For example, Susanne Miller, *Die Bürde der Macht: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie 1918-20* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1978); and Hartfrid Krause, *USPD: Zur Geschichte der Unabhängigen Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1975). Although F. L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe, 1918-19* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972) is one of

the few sources in English that includes data from a variety of German cities, his concentration is still on Berlin and Munich.

[3] Arthur Rosenberg's *Birth of the German Republic* (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1962) contains a chapter on the Revolution entitled "The Collapse." Barrington Moore, Jr., *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1978) argues that the mass movement was animated by war-weariness and the deteriorating living standards.

[4] For example, David W. Morgan, *The Socialist Left and the German Revolution: A History of the German Independent Social Democratic Party 1917-1922* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) and Gerald Feldman, Eberhard Kolb, and Reinhard Rürup, "Die Massenbewegungen der Arbeiterschaft in Deutschland am Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges (1917-1920)," *Politisches Vierteljahresheft*, 13 (1972), 84-105.

[5] Friedhelm Boll, "Spontaneität der Basis und politische Funktion des Streiks 1914-1918: Das Beispiel Braunschweig," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 17 (1977), 362; Zeitungsbericht, November 15, 1917, Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, Präsidialbüro I. 29, p. 390, described the military repression of strike activity; Report by Düsseldorf police chief to Düsseldorf county president, February 11, 1918, Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf 14966 describes the effect on workers of military actions.

[6] Wolf-Heino Struck, "Die Revolution von 1918/19 im Erleben des Rhein-Main-Gebietes," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landgeschichte*, 19 (1969), 401.

[7] Gunther Bers, "Der Jülicher Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat in November 1918," *Beiträge zur Jülicher Geschichte*, Nr. 41 (1974), 2.

[8] Richard A. Comfort, *Revolutionary Hamburg, Labor Politics in the Early Weimar Republic* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 35-36.

[9] *Düsseldorfer Volkszeitung*, November 9, 1918; Dr. Paul Wentzche, "Persönliche Erinnerungen," Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf XXIII, 40; Report by Strafanstalts-Inspektor Engelhardt to Düsseldorf's mayor, January 31, 1919, Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf XXI, 333.

[10] Ulrich Popplow, "Göttingen in der Novemberrevolution 1918/19," *Göttinger Jahrbuch*, 24 (1976), 214; Klaus-Dieter Schwarz, *Weltkrieg und Revolution in Nürnberg. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1971), pp. 232-33.

[11] Struck, "Die Revolution," p. 403.

[12] Bers, "Der Jülicher Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat," p. 2.

[13] Eberhard Kolb and Klaus Schönhoven, *Regionale und Lokale Räteorganisationen in Württemberg*, 1918/19 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1976), chapter 3.

[14] Robert Lehr, police chief of Düsseldorf, "Betr. Bildung eines Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates," Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf XXI, 336.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Moore, *Injustice*, pp. 291-92.

[17] Struck, "Die Revolution," p. 401.

[18] Ibid., p. 394.

[19] Schwarz, "Weltkrieg und Revolution," p. 288.

[20] Inge MarBolek, "Sozialdemokratie und Revolution im östlichen Ruhrgebiet. Dortmund unter der Herrschaft des Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates," in *Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet*, ed. Reinhard Rürup, (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1975), p. 249.

[21] Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, pp. 72-73.

[22] Popplow, "Göttingen," p. 213.

[23] Feldman, Kolb, and Rürup, in "Die Massenbewegungen," p. 91, have emphasized the extent to which workers turned to economic demands.

[24] The *Düsseldorfer Volkszeitung* cites numerous instances of worker demands and strikes in November and December 1918, as well as the Free Unions' attempt both to moderate and support those demands.

[25] MarBolek, "Sozialdemokratie," p. 279.

[26] Bers, "Der Jülicher Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat," pp. 21-22.

[27] *Düsseldorfer Volkszeitung*, November 10-12, 1918; *Freie Presse*, December 12, 1918; Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, 15974, p. 69.

[28] Willibald Gutsche, *Die revolutionäre Bewegung in Erfurt während des 1. imperialistischen Weltkrieges und der Novemberrevolution* (Erfurt: 1963), pp. 185-87.

[29] Bers, "Der Jülicher Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat," pp. 10, 15.

[30] Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, p. 152.

[31] Popplow, "Göttingen," pp. 217, 220-22.

[32] Gutsche, *Die revolutionäre*, pp. 157-58.

[33] Marßolek, "Sozialdemokratie," pp. 296-26.

[34] Popplow, "Göttingen," pp. 220-22.

[35] Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, pp. 160-61.

[36] Ibid., pp. 149, 163-64.

[37] Struck, "Die Revolution," p. 417.

[38] Lehr, "Betr. Bildung eines Arbeiter-und Soldatenrates," Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf XXI, 336; *Düsseldorfer Volkszeitung*, November 11, 1918; Lehr to county president, March 6, 1919, Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf, Nachlaß Lehr 57, p. 36.

[39] Lehr, "Betr. Bildung eines Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates," Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf XXI, 336.

[40] Schwarz, "Weltkrieg und Revolution," p. 292.

[41] Bers, "Der Jülicher Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat," p. 30.

[42] Ibid., p. 3.

[43] Struck, "Die Revolution," p. 392.

[44] Comfort, *Revolutionary Hamburg*, pp. 35-47.

[45] Gutsche, *Die revolutionäre* pp. 143-44; Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, p. 163.

[46] Bers, "Der Jülicher Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat," p. 30.

[47] For example, see the police chief's attempt to impose rules on the Council about confiscations and the report of the director of the city's clothing department, Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf, XXI, 332.

[48] Schwarz, "Weltkrieg und Revolution," p. 303.

[49] Struck "Die Revolution," pp. 410-12.

[50] Bers "Der Jülicher Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat," p. 30.

[51] Police chief to Council November 14, 1918; correspondence between the Hauptversorgungsamt and Council, Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf, XXI, 332.

[52] Struck, "Die Revolution," pp. 397, 418-19.

[53] Schwarz, "Weltkrieg und Revolution," p. 292.

[54] Gutsche, *Die revolutionäre*, p. 162.

[55] Ulrich Klein, *Bürgerräte gegen die Arbeiterbewegung. Untersuchungen und Dokumente am Beispiel Elberfeld-Barmen, 1918-1922* (Wentorf: Einhorn Pr. Verl. Främke, 1976), pp. 17-18.

[56] *Düsseldorfer Volkszeitung*, November 26, 1918; Rat der Volksbeauftragten an sämtliche Bundesregierungen, December 5, 1918, Hauptstaatsarchiv 15974, p. 46.

[57] Struck, "Die Revolution," pp. 410-11.

[58] Correspondence between Prussian Ministry of Education and Düsseldorf's Geheimer Studienrat, Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf III, 1711, pp. 7, 18.

[59] Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, pp. 156, 162.

[60] Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte*, pp. 262-64.

[61] Cited and paraphrased by Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, p. 151.

[62] Other historians have argued that the election results prove most workers were satisfied with the course of the Revolution. See, for example, Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, p. 326.

[63] Popplow, "Göttingen," p. 235.

[64] Schwarz, "Weltkrieg und Revolution," p. 308.

[65] Despite lack of progress on these issues, a conference of councils in Baden in August 1919 voted that all councils be dissolved. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, pp. 157-58.

[66] Struck, "Die Revolution," p. 415.

[67] Comfort, *Revolution in Central Europe*, pp. 72-74.

[68] Letter to Workers' Council from Executive Committee, Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf 15974, pp. 61-62; Adalbert Oehler, *Meine Beziehungen zur Revolution in Düsseldorf*, February 1919, p. 16; Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, 15974, p. 69.

[69] Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, pp. 163, 165.

[70] Morgan, *The Socialist Left*, pp. 230-31.

[71] Carsten, Revolution in Central Europe, p. 165.

[72] Morgan, The Socialist Left, p. 237.

[73] Comfort, Revolutionary Hamburg, p. 180. Even if, as Comfort argues, many of the independents' supporters came from new voters and the SPD's losses are partly attributable to nonparticipation of their previous supporters (pp. 161-62), there is no doubt that the SPD's identification with the military occupation of Hamburg was a major cause of its decline in popularity.

[74] Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Düsseldorf, 1919-21, p. 5.

[75] Morgan, The Socialist Left, pp. 179, 350-51.

[76] Struck, "Die Revolution," p. 417. KPD membership and voting strength during the entire period of the Weimar Republic clearly had other and more complex causes than resentment of the occupations of 1919. But the alienation from the new national government that the troop actions caused surely aided the Communists.

[77] Moore, Injustice, pp. 345-49; Morgan, The Socialist Left, pp. 337-39.

[78] Morgan, The Socialist Left, p. 334.

10

The Failure of German Labor in the Weimar Republic

RICHARD GEARY

In talking of the "failure" of labor in the Weimar Republic, two points of clarification must first be made. This discussion does not address itself to the question of the failure of the revolutionary Left to bring about a socialist revolution in Germany in the aftermath of the First World War: for that is a question which is not peculiar to Germany but has relevance for the whole of Europe outside Russia and has been treated elsewhere.[1] However, there is one way in which the upheavals in Germany between 1918 and 1923 do relate to subsequent developments; namely, the failure of the revolutionary forces to purge the army, judiciary, and civil service of antidemocratic elements. It can be aruged that the German Social Democratic party (SPD) could have allied with popular democratic pressure from workers' and soldiers' councils to institute such a purge. This it chose not to do, but rather threw in its lot with the German General Staff against not only the threat of "bolshevism" but against popular protest more generally. In so doing, the leadership of the SPD not only betrayed its socialist goals, but helped to undermine the prospects of successful democracy and can itself be held responsible for the creation of a mass communist movement, alienated from the new Republic, in these early years.[2] For in Austria, where the Social Democrats relied on armed workers and did not employ Freikorps to smash the left, the political arm of the labor movement remained united.[3]

A second qualification must also be made: In many respects labor did not fail *in* the Weimar Republic. For despite the survival of antidemocratic elites and capitalist property relations, the new Republic conferred substantial benefits on the German working class or at least on its representatives. At the local level, many municipalities under Social Democratic control embarked upon housing schemes, the provision of adult education, and the building of parks, stadiums, and the like. At the national level, the law concerning factory councils recognized the role of the trade unions as official counselors and negotiators, freedom of assembly and coalition was constitutionally guaranteed, and a system of state arbitration in wage disputes leading to binding settlements upon both employer and union was established.[4] In fact it was precisely this last system that gave rise to opposition from industry and led to a head-on confrontation with the state in the great lockout in the Ruhr iron and steel industry in 1928, when the employers sought not just a particular wage settlement but the destruction of the whole apparatus of compulsory and binding arbitration.[5] The Weimar Republic further guaranteed the right to work, instituted unemployment benefits, and even provided social security payments for those workers (about 250,000 of them) locked out in the Ruhreisenstreit of 1928.[6] The enormous change that such legislation initiated, when compared to the harsher realities of industrial conflict in the Wilhelmine period, goes some way to explain the SPD's attachment to constitutional forms of struggle in the early 1930s.

The central concern here is the failure of German labor to prevent the demise of the new Republic, from which it derives certain benefits, and to halt the Nazi seizure of power. On one point things are relatively clear: The Weimar Republic did not collapse because the German industrial working class deserted it for the National Socialist party (NSDAP). The Nazi industrial worker was atypical both as a worker and as a Nazi. That this should have been so is at first sight perhaps surprising. The Party began as a workers' party in Munich, called itself the National Socialist Workers' party, and until the late 1920s addressed its propaganda largely to the working class of Germany's large industrial towns.[7] Its Left Wing, around the Strasser brothers (and in the early days, Joseph Goebbels), stressed the anticapitalist elements of Nazi ideology and criticized the SPD for its "betrayal" of the working masses both after the First World War and in the early 1930s, when the SPD tolerated the government of Chancellor Brüning and failed to offer any alternative to his deflationary economic policies.[8] As an alternative, the Nazis suggested a job-creation scheme of public works.[9] They also established their own factory cell organization (NSBO-National Socialist Factory Cell Organization), which claimed only three thousand members in January 1931 but had three hundred thousand by December 1932.[10] According to some commentators, this effort reaped rich dividends: Max Kele has claimed, for example, that by the beginning of 1933 the Nazi party was a party primarily of workers, be they blue- or white-collar.[11] It is certainly true that there were places in which the NSDAP won a significant percentage of working class votes: in parts of the Ruhr (especially in the area around Essen), in parts of

Berlin, parts of Thuringia (especially Chemnitz-Zwickau), Brunswick, Hanover, and Breslau.[12] Claims have also been made that the Nazi paramilitary organization, the SA, recruited primarily from workers (63 percent of its membership were workers according to Conan Fischer).[13]

All such calculations need to be treated with extreme caution. Even Kele admits that the Nazi party was not proletarian in its social composition for most of the 1920s and other commentators agree.[14] Secondly, the membership of the NSBO in the early 1930s lagged way behind that of the trades unions, which had traditionally represented labor and most of which were closely associated with either the SPD or the Catholic Centre party.[15] Furthermore, the NSBO enjoyed greater support among white-collar workers and public employees than among the industrial working class of areas such as the Ruhr.[16] Indeed, this points to a major problem of definition: Nazi membership lists do not differentiate between artisans and factory workers when they talk about workers; and there is evidence that it was to the former rather than the latter that Nazi propaganda was most appealing.[17] An independent nonparty source attempting to differentiate along these lines in 1930 significantly came to the conclusion that, in the Düsseldorf branch of the NSDAP, artisans constituted 34 percent of the membership and "industrial workers" only 14 percent.[18] Furthermore, if one compares the social composition of the Nazi party with the structure of the German population at large in this period it becomes clear that, whereas white-collar workers and the self-employed were overrepresented, the industrial working class was underrepresented in its membership.[19] Even the apparently proletarian nature of the SA is open to question: It has been claimed that Fischer's statistics do not stand up to close scrutiny for they are collated from very different data and depend partly upon the composition of SA men arrested, when, of course, the lower-class elements within the organization might generally be expected to predominate among the ranks of violent militants.[20] In any case, even if it were true that the SA was predominantly working-class in its social composition, we would still be left with the problem of identifying what "working-class" actually meant in this context. It should further be noticed that the ideology of the SA was markedly different to that of the more petty bourgeois party organization.[21]

Analysis of voting returns throughout the Reich also suggests that the Nazis did not find their major support from the working class of the great industrial centers. Indeed, it was precisely for this reason that from 1927-28 the party's propaganda was turned away from the factory worker towards the peasant, small businessman, and shopkeeper.[22] The NSDAP was most successful at the polls in rural areas and small provincial towns, not in the large cities;[23] and in areas that were Protestant, not Catholic.[24] Thus the combined vote of the SPD and the German

Communist party (KPD) remained more or less constant at around 37 percent of the poll, despite the electoral triumphs of National Socialism.[25] When industrial workers did desert social democracy, they gave their support to the KPD and not to the Nazis;[26] and the same seems to have applied to Catholic workers who had previously voted for the Center Party.[27] This further gives lie to the myth that it was the unemployed manual workers who flocked to the Nazi colors.[28] Unemployment was concentrated in large industrial towns of over 100,000 inhabitants; that is, in precisely the places where the NSDAP fared relatively badly at the polls.

That some industrial workers supported the Nazis cannot be doubted; but they constituted a decided minority of the factory proletariat. In fact, working-class nazism took root only in those places that lacked strong traditions of trade union organization; among workers who had not voted before, often in small towns, among public employees who may have had an elevated view of their own status, and perhaps among some who had tried other political medicines to cure the ills of Weimar--even communism and anarcho-syndicalism--which had failed.[29]

That this was so can itself be explained by the specifics of Nazi propaganda and the NSDAP's social composition. The fact that the movement was lower-middle class in composition and that it supported higher food prices, tax cuts, as well as wage and social service reductions,[30] can hardly have made it attractive to industrial workers. Against this background the ability of the combined left-wing vote (SPD plus KPD) to maintain itself is scarcely surprising. It should further be added that the manual working class employed in factories constituted a lower percentage of the total labor force than might be imagined. After the First World War, the industrial working class ceased to grow as a percentage of the active population,[31] while calculations of itz size vary from about 30 percent to about 40 percent of the total work force.[32] On the other hand, white-collar workers, who were more highly organized than their blue-collar colleagues by the early 1930s,[33] grew in number at a fairly rapid rate,[34] and the number of independent artisans and small shopkeepers still stood at 3 million in 1925. Together with their helpers they constitued something like 13.6 percent of the population at large.[35] Furthermore, one-third of the German population was still dependent upon agriculture for its living in one way or another in the 1920s.[36] When, in addition to the above, it is realized that women voters outnumbered their male counterparts in the Weimar Republic and that their voting behavior was markedly more conservative,[37] then the ability of the Communists and Socialists combined to poll more than the Nazis in the second Reichstag election of 1932 is quite extraordinary. It is even more so in light of the fact that manual industrial factory workers actually declined in number as a result of intensive rationalization in the period of so-called stabilization (1924-1928) and continued to decline because the depression hit industry disproportionately hard in the early 1930s.[38]

Thus, when Hitler assumed the chancellor's mantle in late January 1933, the Nazis confronted what was in the main a hostile working class in Germany's industrial centers. As we have seen, the combined electoral strength of the SPD and the KPD was greater than that of the National Socialist party in late 1932, while the Leftist paramilitary organization, the Reichsbanner, recruited far more men than did the Nazi SA.[39] There is also evidence of considerable rank-and-file pressure within the Reichsbanner to take up arms against the forces of reaction, especially at the time of Chancellor von Papen's dissolution of the Social Democratic government in Prussia in mid-1932.[40] We are therefore confronted with the question: Why did the apparently powerful labor movement fail to translate its numerical strength into potent anti-Nazi action in the early 1930s?

The classic answer to this question has been that the division of the labor movement into antagonistic socialist and communist wings destoyed its capacity for united action and that the prime responsibility for this sorry state of affairs must be laid at the feet of the KPD and its instructors in Moscow.[41] It is true that Russian influence within the German Communist party became increasingly strong after Thälmann assumed the leadership of the party in 1925;[42] and further that instructions to abandon cooperation with Social Democratic elements and pursue an ultra-Leftist line of open hostility to the SPD were crucial in the determination of communist policy in 1927-28[43] and again in 1932.[44] It could also be argued that the Stalinization of German Communism in the mid-1920s[45] removed internal party debate and thus made the party extraordinarily inflexible and insensitive, both to the needs of the moment and to the interests of the German working class, as distinct from the interests of Soviet Russia. In the wake of the disastrous destruction of the Chinese Communist party (1927) at the hands of the Kuomintang, with whom Stalin and the Comintern had advocated close cooperation previously, and with a swing to the left in Soviet domestic policy associated with the first Five Year Plan and the drive against the Kulaks, the Comintern declared a policy of "class against class," that cooperation with reformist and centrist elements was to cease and that an age of revolution was at hand. This swing to the left was then reinforced by the onset of the world economic depression, which Stalin and his cronies chose to see as the final crisis of capitalism.[46] In this third period, fascism and social democracy were identified as twin pillars of the captialist establishment, as tools of the bourgeoisie, and thus social democracy became social fascism.[47] According to the Comintern, capitalism was about to collapse.[48] Hence fascism itself could not survive and thus was not to be overestimated, as Thälmann was still saying in 1931.[49] Only if the SPD misled the working class away from the revolutionary goal, therefore, would the triumph of socialism be prevented; and thus the first task of the KPD was to unmask Social Democracy and only then to fight fascism.[50] The KPD, therefore, was to conquer the mass of the German working class against the SPD and, for that matter, the old trade union organizations.[51]

It is obvious that such short-sightedness was to prove fatal. Clearly the KPD underestimated both the ability of capitalism to survive and the strength of the Nazi threat. Its open hostility to the SPD and its creation of a separate trade union organization for Communists (RGO) further served to divide the labor movement and undermine the Weimar Republic. There were even occasions when Nazis and Communists cooperated, as in the referendum to remove the Social Democratic government in Prussia and in the strike of Berlin transport workers in the autumn of 1932.[52] Furthermore, the KPD developed a kind of Lagermentalität, an obsession with defending its existing constituency, which weakened its appeal to other groups.[53] Having said this, however, the blame for the tragic division of German labor and its failure to prevent the Nazi seizure of power cannot be laid exclusively on the shoulders of German Communism. In the first place it is simply untrue to say, as some have done,[54] that the Communists did not take up arms against the Nazis. In fact they bore the brunt of the street fighting of the early 1930s and continued to do so in the Ruhr, for example, way into the first half of 1933.[55] In 1932 the KPD became less committed to the social fascist line,[56] though it did not abandon the line completely.[57] In some parts of Germany Communist and Social Democratic organizations collaborated against the Nazis, while individual KPD members disapproved of the violent campaign of vituperation against the SPD.[58]

This apart, it is perhaps more important to realize that the size of support for the KPD grew enormously[59] at precisely the time that the party adopted its Leftist stand; which would suggest that the social fascism line was not simply a foreign importation but made sense to a significant section of the German working class in the early 1930s. In fact the hostility of the KPD to the SPD had domestic origins and considerable historical foundation. As we have already seen, between 1918 and 1923 the SPD was responsible for the bloody suppression of Leftist insurrections, often in collaboration with reactionary elements. Furthermore, the SPD, often in the shape of social democratic police chiefs and local authorities, continued its anticommunist campaign into the last days of Weimar. In Prussia, Communists were dismissed from public office by the Social Democratic government,[60] while members of the KPD in Hamburg, who tried to initiate a strike when Hitler became chancellor, were arrested on the instructions of the local SPD authorities.[61] Most famously of all, the Berlin Chief of Police, Karl Zörgiebel, a Social Democrat, banned the May Day demonstration of 1929. The

Communists ignored the ban but suffered a large number of fatalities and arrests at the hands of police.[62] In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the KPD was loathe to build bridges to the SPD. Furthermore, the Confederation of German Trade Unions (ADGB), which was closely affiliated to the SPD, also mounted an anticommunist campaign in the depression,[63] and, it has been suggested, even entered consultations with General Schleicher, chancellor in late 1932, and the Left wing of the Nazis concerning plans for a corporate state.[64] Thus the designation of social fascist seemed not wildly untrue to some workers, who actually greeted the overthrow of the social democratic government in Prussia in 1932 with applause.[65] Such feelings were further reinforced by the SPD's close association with a republic that seemed to offer no hope to the unemployed in the early 1930s, by its toleration of the government of Chancellor Brüning from 1930 to 1932 and of his deflationary policies, which entailed cuts in wages and unemployment benefits, and by the deepening of the depression. They were also strengthened by the ADGB's support for the economics of rationalization in the mid 1920s, which entailed permanent unemployment for some sections of the working class. Such support for rationalization even went to the extreme of enthusiasm for the wonders of American capitalism, as witnessed by Fritz Tarnow's visit to the United States to "see for himself."[66]

The above helps to explain why the split in the ranks of German labor was not easily healed in the Weimar Republic. It is also important to realize that the leadership of the SPD, although most firmly committed to democratic principles, was itself guilty of misreading the situation in the early 1930s and of a failure to take action against nazism. There is considerable evidence that both the ADGB and the Social Democratic party underestimated the Nazi threat.[67] So, for that matter, did the institutions of the Catholic working class.[68] Furthermore, the SPD inherited from its survival of Wilhelmine persecution an almost fatalistic belief in its own invincibility and ultimate victory.[69] This fatalism was reflected in a number of ways. Otto Wels claimed that "we were overtaken by the force of circumstances,"[70] while the SPD and especially its leading economists, Rudolf Hilferding, placed their faith in a revival of the capitalist economy and thus failed to offer an alternative to Brüning.[71] In this context, the ADGB was rather more adventurous and developed an ambitious scheme of work creation and public spending to counter the recession.[72] However, this the SPD refused to adopt;[73] and it was this refusal that was in part responsible for the Free Trade Unions' willingness to enter discussions with the Right of German politics.[74] A further reflection of the fatalism of the Social Democratic leadership can be seen in its response to Papen's coup against Severing's administration in Prussia: Rather than fight this outrage by extraparliamentary means, the SPD preferred to sit back and hope for victory in the forthcoming parliamentary elections.[75] This reflects two other aspects of SPD attitudes that constrained the party at this vital juncture: constitutionalism and organizational fetishism. The SPD was _the_ party of the Weimar Republic[76] and was committed to its constitution, which it sought to defend against both left and right. In a sense, it simply lost sight of the possibility of unconstitutional action or was horrified by the prospect of it. Equally, again partly as a result of developments under the Second Empire, German Social Democracy had become increasingly introverted, possessing the same kind of _Lagermentalität_ as the KPD, but perhaps in a more exaggerated form. Both the SPD and the ADGB were gripped by an obsession with the preservation of their organizations, an _Organisationsfetischismus_, as Rosa Luxemburg had dubbed it before the First World War. Thus as late as January 1933, Theodor Leipart, the chairman of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions, could say "organization, not demonstration, is the word of the hour"[77] while the SPD and the ADGB rejected the Communist party's proposal for a united front in the aftermath of the Reichstag fire (February 27, 1933) precisely because they were afraid of forfeiting their legal status.[78]

The ability of German Social Democracy to respond to the Nazi threat was further constained by its humanism, its fear of bloodshed, and its horror of the prospect of civil war.[79] Such hostility to violent action was not purely a matter of principle, however; it was also tactical. For some members of the SPD believed that the prospects of victory were remote, given the way the police and army were likely to respond.[80] Such fears were well-founded when one considers what transpired in Austria in the following year: In 1934 a united labor movement was destroyed in a bloody civil war by the combined forces of clerical conservatism, fascism, and the army. The SPD leadership was also loathe to act without the guaranteed support of the ADGB,[81] and this was simply not forthcoming.[82] It is true that the Free Trades Unions did develop a work-creation scheme as an alternative to the deflationary policies of Brüning. However, such economic initiatives were not matched on the political front. Obsessed by the need to preserve its organizations in the face of falling membership rolls and financial difficulties, the ADGB was even prepared to enter negotiations with General Schleicher and some members of the National Socialist party to discuss the possibility of establishing some kind of corporate state.[83]

This last point, however, leads to the major explanation of the paralysis of German labor in the early 1930s and its fragmentation-- the depression itself. It is remarkable how two recent articles on the Left at the end of the Weimar Republic devote a great deal of attention to the immobilism and paralysis of the SPD, for example, yet fail to mention the economic constraints under which left-wing politics had to be conducted in the last days of Weimar.[84] As others have realized, however, the depression had a profound effect upon the ability of the German Left to resist fascism.[85] As Stephen Salter remarks, "the reasons for this relative passivity on the part of the working class and its organizations are largely to be sought in the effects of the economic crisis of 1929-33 on the German labor movement."[86] Germany was hit disproportionately heavily by the world economic crisis;[87] and within Germany it was the industrial sector that suffered most.[88] In February 1932 unemployment reached a peak of 6,128,000, an official figure of the registered unemployed, which therefore probably constitutes an underestimate.[89] In the industrial sector, something like 40 percent of male workers were without jobs, while another 16 percent were employed part-time.[90] Such high levels of unemployment meant that large numbers of workers were robbed of industrial muscle: they were simply unable to strike; while for many of those still working, it became increasingly risky to engage in industrial action with such a large reserve army waiting to replace them. The paralyzing effect of such unemployment was magnified by the fact that unemployment was especially marked in sectors that had traditionally formed the backbone of labor militancy, for example, metalwork and the building industry,[91] and because the trade unions saw 50 percent of their membership jobless.[92] Unemployment further increased the rate of fluctuation of Communist party membership,[93] which increasingly recruited from the ranks of the dole queue. By 1924 the KPD had become the party of the unemployed, and by 1932 over 30 percent of its membership were without jobs.[94] Under such circumstances, the KPD was weak in the factories[95] and forced to develop a politics based upon the neighbourhood.[96] Thus the German labor movement had been robbed of its industrial muscle by 1932. Under such circumstances, there was no likelihood of a repetition of a general strike such as that of 1920, which had defeated the reactionary Kapp Putsch. Employers resorted more frequently to the lockout and with higher rates of success,[97] while the trade unions forsook strike action and resorted to arbitration.[98]

In addition to weakening labor, the depression had another profound consequence: It exacerbated divisions at the very base of the labor movement. To a certain extent, the gulf that separated the Communist party from the SPD increasingly corresponded to a hardening of their separate constituencies. The KPD had always possessed a higher percentage of unskilled workers in its ranks than had German Social Democracy,[99] and there is evidence from Frankfurt that it was becoming increasingly dependent upon the support of the unskilled by the late 1920s.[100] More importantly, however, the KPD, as we have seen, essentially became the party of the unemployed, whereas employed workers tended to cling to the SPD, only 30 percent of whose members were unemployed in 1932, compared to the 80 percent of the KPD.[101] Now this division between employed and unemployed might not have had such serious consequences had there been prospects for re-employing most workers in the foreseeable future. But in the early 1930s this simply was not the case. The factor that caused such a deep cleavage in the ranks of German labor was permanent unemployment. For those in jobs, the situation was not ideal, in so far as real wages declined by about 20 percent during the depression,[102] but their interests were manifestly different, at least in the immediate future, to those of the workers who were permanently unemployed and had nothing to thank Weimar for and nothing to lose by its destruction. In a sense the intensity of the anger directed by Communists against the SPD reflected this situation of despair. As the Austro-Marxist Max Adler remarked with great insight at this very time: "The working class itself has been burst asunder. By its loss of unity and striking power, its lack of direction and its weakness in its most powerful section, the German working class . . . has dug its own grave instead of being the gravedigger of capitalism. . . . /The source of this/ is the differentiation within the proletariat . . . which had existed for decades at the upper levels, but has also become especially marked at the lower levels since the world crisis and its long-term unemployment."[103]

To this might be added the consequences of the intensive rationalization of German industry in the period between 1924 and 1928, a process which made the economy less flexible in the face of the world economic crisis.[104] This rationalization entailed the closure of inefficient units, the amalgamation of giant companies, as in the case of I. G. Farben and the Vereinigte Stahlwerke, and the use of new techniques of mass production, especially the conveyor belt.[105] It also entailed a restructuring of the German work force, creating a clear division between the interests of those laid off in the process of rationalization and those who remained employed and benefited from the increased productivity that ensued.[106] Germany entered a period of high structural unemployment, especially in the metal industry;[107] and significantly, employed metalworkers disappeared from the ranks of the KPD in Frankfurt.[108]

The hardening of divisions within the working class also correlated to certain developments outside the factory. To a certain extent, the antagonism of Socialists and Communists reflected a conflict between the generations, for the membership of German Social Democracy was noticeably older than that of the Communist party.[109] This conflict extended even to different styles of leisure and different attitudes to criminality. Increasingly the SPD came to be associated with the respectable working class, housed now in different neighborhoods than their rougher brethren.[110] Thus, for example, whereas patterns of illegitimacy within the working class had been fairly uniform in the Wilhelmine period, a clear difference between the behavior of skilled and unskilled workers emerged between the wars; and this difference also correlated with different residences and even KPD membership.[111] Furthermore, youth's alienation from the Weimar Republic may relate not only to the fact that the unemployed were often the young but also to the extent to which the young unemployed were increasingly subject to harassment on the part of the state authorities, not only at the hands of the police but also of welfare officers, distributors of unemployment benefits, and so on.[112] Once again, therefore, hostility towards the Weimar Republic and the SPD, which was so closely associated with it--the authorities youth encountered in Prussia, for example, were social democratic forces--was not simply a consequence of admittedly misguided Communist instruction.

It may well be that there is no perfect match between the two left-wing parties because of these divisions at the root of the labor movement. The point, however, is that the depression robbed the German working class of its industrial weapon and fragmented it at its very base. In this, as much as in the political divisions between Social Democracy and communism, lay the real origins of impotence.

NOTES

I would like to thank Richard Bessel and James Wickham for their help and time in discussing several aspects of this chapter.

[1] Dick Geary, *European Labour Protest 1848-1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 155-64; Dick Geary, "The Ruhr: From Social Peace to Social Revolution" in *European Studies Review*, 10, 1980, pp. 497-511. For a treatment of the revolutionary events in Germany at the end of the First World War, see Werner T. Angress, *Stillborn Revolution: The Communist Bid for Power in Germany, 1921-3* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); Gilbert Badia, *Le Spartakisme* (Paris: L'Arche, 1967); Manfred Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus* (Meisenheim am Glan: A. Hain, 1969); Pierre Broué, *Révolution en Allemagne* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1971); F. L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1972); Richard Comfort, *Revolutionary Hamburg* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966); J. S. Drabkin, *Die Novemberrevolution 1918 in Deutschland* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1968); Georg Eliasberg, *Der Ruhrkrieg von 1920* (Bonn Bad-Godesberg: Neue Gesellschaft, 1974); Dick Geary, "Radicalism and the German Worker: Metalworkers and Revolution 1914-1923" in Richard J. Evans, ed., *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (London: Croom Helm, 1978); Sebastian Haffner, *Die verratene Revolution* (Bern: Scherr, 1971); Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1962); Erhard Lucas, *Arbeiterradikalismus* (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag Roster Stern, 1976); Erhard Lucas, *Märzrevolution*, 3 vols., (Frankfurt a.M.: Marz Verlag, 1970-79); Hans-Ulrich Ludewig, *Arbeiterbewegung und Aufstand* (Husum: Matthiesen, 1978); Alan Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Susanne Miller, *Die Bürde der Macht* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1978); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "The German Revolution 1918-1920) in Richard Bessel and E. J. Feuchtwanger, eds., *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany* (London: Sage Publications, 1981); David Morgan, *The Socialist*

Left and the German Revolution, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971); J. P. Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966); Peter von Oertzen, *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1963); Gerhard A. Rittert and Susanne Miller, *Die deutsche Revolution* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1968); Reinhard Rürup, *Probleme der Revolution in Deutschland 1918/19* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1968); A. J. Ryder, *The German Revolution of 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Jürgen Tampke, *The Ruhr and Revolution* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1979); Eric Waldman, *The Spartacist Rising of 1919* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1958); Robert Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale* (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag Ullstein, 1975); and H. A. Winkler, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Revolution 1918/19* (Berlin: Dietz, 1979).

[2] For the counterrevolutionary activity of the SPD not only in 1919 but also in the Ruhr subsequently see Eliasberg, *Ruhrkrieg*; Haffner, *Revolution*; Lucas, *Arbeiterradikalismus*; Mommsen, "The German Revolution": von Oertzen, *Novemberrevolution*; and Rürup, *Probleme der Revolution*.

[3] For Austria see Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, pp. 78-126. It is, of course, true that there were deeper ideological causes of the split--see, for example, Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955)--and that the split reflected certain social divisions within the German working class--see Geary, *European Labour Protest* ch. 4, and Robert Wheeler, "Zur sozialen struktur der Arbeiterbewegung am Anfang der Weimarer Republic" in Hans Mommsen, Dietmar Petzina, Bernd Weisbrod, eds., *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1974).

[4] Albin Gladen, "Probleme staatlicher Sozialpolitik in der Weimarer Republik" in Hans Mommsen et al., *Industrielles System*, pp. 248-59; Ursula Hüllbusch, "Der Ruhreisenstreit in gewerkschaflicher Sicht" in Ibid., pp. 272-75; Frank Deppe, Georg Fülberth, Jürgen Harrer, eds., *Geschichte der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977), p. 183f; W. L. Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party, 1875-1923* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 188f.

[5] Hüllbusch, "Der Ruhreisenstreit"; Bernd Weisbrod, *Schwerindustrie in der Weimarer Republik* (Wuppertal: P. Hammer, 1978), ch. V.

[6] Hüllbusch, "Der Ruhreisenstreit."

[7] Max H. Kele, *Nazis and Workers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 34f; Timothy W. Mason,

Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1975), p. 17.

[8] Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 17; Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, pp. 113, 189f; Reinhard Kühnl, *Die nationalsozialistische Linke* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1966).

[9] Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, p. 194f.

[10] Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 18; Willfried Böhnke, *Die NSDAP im Ruhrgebiet 1920-1933* (Bonn-Bad-Godesberg: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, 1974), p. 170.

[11] Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, p. 203.

[12] Ibid., p. 208; Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, p. 121f; Peter Stachura, "Who Were the Nazis?" in *European Studies Review*, July 1981.

[13] Conan J. Fischer, "The occupational background of the SA's rank and file membership during the depression years" in Peter D. Stachura, *The Shaping of the Nazi State* (London: Croom Helm, 1978). Kele also claims that unemployed factory workers flocked to the SA, though he admits that there is no data to support this claim (Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, p. 148). Others have also detected a transfer of membership from the SA to the KPD and vice versa (Böhnke, *Die NSDAP*, p. 157f).

[14] Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, pp. 61, 121; Stachura, "Who Were the Nazis?"

[15] Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 19f; Böhnke, *Die NSDAP*, pp. 170-75; Stephen Salter, "Class Harmony or Class Conflict? The Industrial Working Class and the National Socialist Regime" in Jeremy Noakes, ed., *Government, Party and People in Nazi Germany* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1980), p. 78.

[16] Böhnke, *Die NSDAP*, p. 170; Jeremy Noakes, *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony 1921-1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 175.

[17] Rainer Hambrecht, *Der Aufstieg der NSDAP in Mittle-und Oberfranken* (Dissertation, Würzburg, 1975), p. 305f.

[18] Böhnke, *Die NSDAP*, p. 199.

[19] Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 20; Hambrecht, *Der Aufstieg*, p. 305f.

[20] Richard Bessel and Mathilde Jamin, "Nazis, workers and the uses of quantitative evidence" in *Social History*, 4, 1, January 1979, pp. 111-16.

[21] Conan Fisher, "The SA's Rank and File Membership in the early 1930's" (unpublished paper delivered to the second meeting of the SSRC Research Seminar Group on German Social History, University of East Anglia, January 1979).

[22] Salter, "Class Harmony" p. 77.

[23] Ibid.; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (London: Heinemann, 1964), ch. v; R. Heberle, *From Democracy to Nazism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1945).

[24] Jürgen Aretz, *Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und Nationalsozialismus* (Mainz: Mattias-Grunewald-Verlag, 1978), p. 54; Stachura, "Who Were the Nazis?"; K. D. Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Ring-Verlag, 1960), pp. 643-656.

[25] Erich Matthias, "German Social Democracy in the Weimar Republic" in Anthony Nicholls and Erich Matthias, eds., *German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), p. 51.

[26] Böhnke, *Die NSDAP*, pp. 176-80; Aviva Aviv, "The SPD and the KPD at the End of the Weimar Republic" in *IWK*, 14, 1978, pp. 171-78.

[27] Jürgen Aretz, *Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und Nationalsozialismus*, p. 54.

[28] Salter, "Class Harmony" p. 78; Böhnke, *Die NSDAP*, p. 179f. It may even be a myth that those workers who did join the NSDAP were unemployed. In middle Franconia, for example, only 6.2 percent of the working-class recruits to the Nazi party were unemployed in the early 1930s (Hambrecht, *Der Aufstieg*, p. 306f.

[29] Stachura, "Who Were the Nazis?"; Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 20; Noakes, *The Nazi Party*, p. 175; Jürgen Kocka, "Zur Problematik der deutschen Angestellten 1914-1933" in Hans Mommsen et al., *Industrielles System*, p. 798; Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, p. 164; Böhnke, *Die NSDAP*, p. 198f.

[30] Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 78.

[31] Robert A. Gates, "Von der Sozialpolitik zur Wirtschaftspolitik?" in Hans Mommsen et al., *Industrielles System*, p. 221.

[32] Richard N. Hunt, *German Social Democracy 1918-1933* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), p. 133; Hambrecht, *Der Aufstieg*, p. 305; Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, p. 115f.

[33] Kocka, "Zur Problematik," p. 803.

[34] Between 1907 and 1925 in the manufacturing sector there was only a 29 percent increase in the number of *Arbeiter* (workers), but the number of *Angestellten* (employers) rose by 129 percent (Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, p. 71).

[35] Georges Castellan, "Zur sozialen Bilanz der Prosperität 1924-1928" in Hans Mommsen et al., *Industrielles System*, p. 110.

[36] Richard Bessel and E. J. Feutchtwanger, eds., *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany* (London, 1981), p. 12f.

[37] Helen L. Boak, "Women in Weimar Germany" in Bessel and Feuchtwanger, *Social Change*, p. 157f; Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, p. 114.

[38] For the impact of rationalization see Eva Cornelia Schöck, *Arbeitslosigkeit und Rationalisierung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus-Verlag, 1977), p. 78; in mining the number of semi-skilled workers in 1923 fell back to the figure for 1913 and by 1932 was no more than in 1895. For the depression, see Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 24f; Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80; Michael Schneider, *Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm des ADGB* (Bonn Bad-Godesberg: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, 1975), p. 28.

[39] Hunt, *German Social Democracy*, p. 51f.

[40] Erich Matthias, "Social Democracy and the Power in the State" in Theodor Eschenburg et al., *The Road to Dictatorship. Germany 1918 to 1933* (London: O. Wolff, 1964), pp. 67-71; Friedrich-Wilhelm Witt, *Die Hamburger Sozialdemokratie in der Weimarer Republik* (Hanover: Verlag f. Literatur u. Zeitgeschehen, 1971), pp. 151-56; Deppe et al., *Geschichte*, p. 204f.

[41] For example, Freya Eisner, *Das Verhältnis der KPD zu den Gewerkschaften in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1977), pp. 254-65; Siegfried Bahne, *Die KPD und das Ende von Weimar* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus-Verlag, 1976).

[42] Bahne, *Die KPD* , p. 11.

[43] Eisner, *Das Verhältnis*, p. 222, Schöck, *Arbeitslosigkeit*, p. 75.

[44] Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 25.

[45] Richard Lowenthal, *The Bolshevisation of the Spartacus League* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960); Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt a.M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969).

[46] Helga Grebing, *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Munich: Numphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1966), p. 175.

[47] Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 12 and p. 23.

[48] Ibid., pp. 13, 27.

[49] Ibid., p. 13f.

[50] Ibid., p. 13.

[51] Ibid., p. 12; Eisner, *Das Verhältnis*, p. 225.

[52] Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, p. 183; Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 19.

[53] Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 25f; Eve Rosenhaft, "Working Class Life and Working Class Politics" in Bessel and Feutchtwanger, *Social Change*, p. 208; James Wickham, "Working Class Movement and Working Class Life," forthcoming in Richard J. Evans, ed., *The German Working Class: the Politics of Everyday Life*.

[54] John R. P. Mackenzie, *Weimar Germany 1918-1933* (London: Blandford Press, 1971), p. 215.

[55] Rosenhaft, "Working Class Life," p. 207; Eve Rosenhaft, *The German Communists and Paramilitary Violence 1929-1933* (Dissertation, Cambridge, 1979); Böhnke, *Die NSDAP*, p. 143.

[56] Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 23ff.

[57] Silvia Kontos, *Die Partei kämpft wie ein Mann* (Basel: Stroemfeld-Verlag, 1979), p. 254.

[58] Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 24ff.

[59] In Reichstag elections the KPD won 3,690,000 votes in May 1924, slightly fewer in 1928, but 4,950,000 in 1930, 5,370,000 in July 1932, and 5,930,000 in November 1932.

[60] Witt, *Die Hamburger*, p. 73.

[61] Ibid., p. 167.

[62] Rosenhaft, "Working Class Life," pp. 224-29.

[63] Deppe et al., *Geschichte*, p. 197.

[64] See note 83 below.

[65] Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 26.

[66] Deppe et al., *Geschichte*, pp. 130-33.

[67] Schneider, *Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm*, p. 137; Grebing, *Geschichte*, p. 206.

[68] Aretz, *Katholische Arbeiterbewegung*, p. 67f.

[69] Witt, *Die Hamburger*, p. 121, 123; Grebing, *Geschichte*, p. 205.

[70] Quoted in Matthias, "Social Democracy," p. 60.

[71] Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, p. 319f; Gates, "Von der Sozialpolitik," pp. 206-25.

[72] Schneider, *Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm*.

[73] Ibid., pp. 105-40.

[74] Ibid., p. 103.

[75] Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, p. 322; Deppe et al., *Geschichte*, p. 204f.

[76] Matthias, "German Social Democracy," p. 54f.

[77] Deppe et al., *Geschichte*, p. 212.

[78] Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 39f. This "organizational fetishism" has received broad comment: Schneider, *Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm*, p. 159ff; Grebing, *Geschichte*, p. 205; Hagen Schulze, "Die SPD in der Stadt von Weimar," in Michael Stürmer, *Die Weimarer Republik* (Meisenheim: Droste, 1980), p. 281; Theodor Pirker, "Zum Verhalten der Organizationen der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik" in Karl Dietrich Erdmann and Hagen Schulze, eds., *Weimar: Selbstpreisgabe einer Demokratie* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1980), p. 329.

[79] Witt, *Die Hamburger*, p. 163; Grebing, *Geschichte*, p. 205; Gerhard Braunthal, *Socialist Labour and Politics in Weimar Germany* (New York: Anchor Books, 1978), p. 67.

[80] Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, p. 322.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Schneider, *Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm*, p. 161f.

[83] From a peak of 9,193,000 in 1920, trade-union membership fell to 5,740,000 in 1929, 5,177,000 in 1931 and thereafter continued to decline: Sidney Pollard, "The Trade Unions and

the Depression of 1929-1933," in Hans Mommsen et al., *Industrielle System*, p. 240. For ADGB negotiations with Schleicher and the Nazis see Braunthal, *Socialist Labour*, pp. 70-74; Deppe et al., *Geschichte*, p. 209f; Schneider, *Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm*, pp. 140-57.

[84] The articles of Pirker, "Zum Verhalten" and Schulze, "Die SPD."

[85] Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 24.

[86] Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80.

[87] Pollard, "The Trade Unions," p. 283ff.

[88] Mason, *Arbeiterklasse*, p. 24f; Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80.

[89] Schneider, *Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm*, p. 27.

[90] Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80.

[91] Ibid.; Rosenhaft, *The German Communists*, p. 319.

[92] Pollard, "The Trade Unions," p. 240.

[93] Rosenhaft, *The German Communists*, p. 72.

[94] Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, p. 120f.

[95] Rosenhaft, "Working Class Life," p. 213; Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 15f; Eisner, *Das Verhältnis*, p. 235f.

[96] Rosenhaft, *The German Communists* and "Working Class Life."

[97] Deppe et al., *Geschichte*, p. 189f; Schöck, *Arbeitslosigkeit*, p. 115.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, p. 120; Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 15.

[100] Wickham, "Working Class Movement."

[101] Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, pp. 120, 202.

[102] Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80.

[103] Quoted in Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode, eds. and translators, *Austro-Marxism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 221.

[104] Dietmar Petzina and Werner Abelhauser, "Zum Problem der relativen stagnation der deutschen Wirtschaft in den

zwanziger Jahren" in Hans Mommsen et al., *Industrielle System*, p. 62f.

105 Robert A. Brady, *The Rationalization Movement in German Industry* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1933); Schöck, *Arbeitslosigkeit*; Karl Heinz Roth, *Die 'andere' Arbeiterbewegung* (Munich: Trikont Verlag, 1977), pp. 84-90.

106 Pollard, "The Trade Unions," p. 244. This is also the central contention of Schöck's work.

107 Thus even during the economic recovery of the mid 1920s, Germany experienced levels of unemployment that were higher than those of the depression years before the First World War.

108 Personal communication from James Wickham.

109 Hunt, *German Social Democracy*, p. 89; Guttsmann, *The German Social Democratic Party*, pp. 120, 158.

110 See the articles by Wickham, Rosenhaft, Grüttner in the forthcoming Richard J. Evans, ed., *German Working Class*.

111 Stephan Bajohr, "Illegitimacy and the Working Class," forthcoming in Evans, *German Working Class*.

112 Rosenhaft, "Working Class Life," p. 212f.

11

Nazism in the Eyes of German Social Democracy

RICHARD BREITMAN

A campaign poster used by the Social Democratic party of Germany (SPD) in 1932 displays a muscular worker with a hammer raised over his head. In front of him, as if mounted on an anvil, is a three-dimensional swastika, one segment of which has already split off. The intent expression on the worker's face and the posed hammer make it plain that he intends to demolish the swastika beneath him.[1] This picture reflected the political self-image of the SPD in 1932, not its political behavior. For a variety of reasons, the SPD was unable to devise an effective strategy to combat nazism in 1932-1933.

Most scholars who have written on the SPD at the end of the Weimar Republic take the view that the SPD's long-term problems contributed substantially to its failure. The SPD and the socialist trade unions had accommodated themselves to the existing political, social, and economic order. Moreover, their leaders were suspicious of mass action. Left-wing critics argue that the Social Democrats had diluted their socialism too much; many non-Marxists believe that the SPD's revolutionary and class-conscious rhetoric frightened off nonsocialist parties and voters alike.[2] But both sides agree that the SPD elite, protected in many ways from internal and external challenges, became too passive long before 1932.

In one respect, at least, the analysis has been incomplete. Much of the literature is concerned with the strength of the worker in that poster or with the hammer in his clenched hand.[3] But did he know what to strike at? If not, why not? Would not his image of the swastika influence his choice of hammer and his angle of attack? Although there is some research on socialist and communist intellectuals' conceptions of fascism,[4] there is very little work on the views of the SPD and the socialist unions. The period before 1930 is usually overlooked, and there is room for further analysis of Social Democratic images of nazism even after that date. Such analysis may help to pinpoint which of the weaknesses of the Social Democratic movement were salient in 1932-1933, for errors in perception are sometimes the direct result of psychological defects. My hope is that this chapter will stimulate further research and discussion in this area.

Contrary to one recent claim that the SPD engaged in no real discussion, let alone analysis, of fascism during the 1920s and even into the 1930s,[5] some party authorities saw a parallel between Italian Fascism and the extreme right in Germany as early as November 1922. Virulent nationalism and attacks against the democratic system, use of paramilitary forces for political purposes, and attempts to draw the working classes away from socialism established a pattern that the SPD could hardly ignore after Mussolini's successful march on Rome. Yet the Nazis were not the only German group to be labeled fascist. The Bavarian Social Democrats, for example, tended not to distinguish among the many folkish groups, even when the latter were quarreling among themselves.[6] The most striking attribute of the Nazis seemed to be their description of themselves as a workers' party. Still, it is significant that on the occasion of the collapse of the Wirth government in November 1922, Rudolf Breitscheid warned the SPD Reichstag fraction that forcing new elections might lead to a fascist takeover of power.[7] Thus, at least one important SPD deputy regarded the new right as a serious threat.

Earlier that month Bavarian party and union representatives had held a conference to discuss the danger of a Nazi putsch and the need for countermeasures. The delegates concluded that such a putsch would threaten not only Bavaria, but the entire Reich. However, they recommended against the establishment of a working-class security force unless it had government support. After the experience of early 1919, when left-wing radicals terrified many middle-class Bavarians and provoked a repression, SPD and General Federation of German Trade Union (ADGB) officials wished to avoid measures that would drive the middle classes to the right. One suggestion was that the printers, railway workers, and postal workers might quietly prepare to seal off any area affected by a Nazi putsch. The conference urged the Reich government to take stronger action against the Nazis, and Peter Grassmann, a member of the ADGB executive, sent the results of the meeting to SPD Cochairman Hermann Müller.[8]

In early 1923 the ADGB executive asked local union organizations to supply information about the strength and composition of the Nazi movement, with particular attention to whether workers were joining the NSDAP. Most local respondents saw little evidence of workers deserting the socialist camp for the National Socialists. However, the returns indicated that the NSDAP was unusual in its ability to mobilize so many diverse groups:

former officers, students, young people, artisans, commercial employees, teachers, and civil servants. (One may conjecture that Social Democratic officials regarded this diverse constituency as a weakness, rather than as a source of strength.) The two cities where the Nazis were apparently attracting substantial numbers of workers (although not socialists) were Munich (2,000) and Königsberg. In Munich the union correspondent noted that some former left-wing radicals from 1919 were now caught up in the Nazi movement.[9] This comment was not the last Social Democratic observation that the Nazis and the Communists had overlapping support and a common cause. For both parties were opposed to the parliamentary-democratic system, to which the SPD had committed itself.

For the most part, however, SPD authorities linked the Nazis with other groups on the right. In April 1923 Hermann Müller-Brandenburg (SPD), Regierungsrat in the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior, assessed the battle strength of the various counterrevolutionary organizations, placing the NSDAP at the top of the list with 24,000 troops in Bavaria, Württemberg, and Thuringia. The total number of counterrevolutionary troops was estimated at 71,000, which outweighed the police forces of the reliably republican states. Müller-Brandenburg concluded that the position of the army would be decisive in any civil war, and he urged further efforts to republicanize the military.[10] Like the Bavarian Social Democrats previously, Müller did not recommend direct Social Democratic action against a right-wing coup. The state itself bore primary responsibility.

Despite the actions of the SPD-led Prussian government against the NSDAP, the Wilhelm Cuno government in the Reich refused to override the Bavarian government's resistance to curbs on Nazi Storm Troops. The Bavarian Social Democrats reluctantly responded by forming their own centralized force, the Social Democratic Order Service (SOD), recruiting some six to seven thousand men to defend political meetings and conduct demonstrations. Initially, the force was unarmed, but it later acquired some weapons. The SPD's reservations about this force are well illustrated by the offer to dissolve it if the Reich government would bring about the dissolution of Hitler's SA. In September 1923 the Gustav Kahr government in Bavaria banned the SOD without touching the SA.[11]

In the fall of 1923 a three-man Social Democratic delegation from Munich went to Berlin to warn the SPD ministers in the Stresemann government of the danger of a fascist coup in Bavaria. According to an account written much later by Wilhelm Hoegner, one of the delegates, Finance Minister Rudolf Hilferding, agreed with their assessment and favored Reich intervention to arrest Hitler. However, Interior Minister Wilhelm Sollmann disagreed, for he was more concerned about the possibility of a coup in and around Berlin.[12] In any case, the SPD ministers were unable to persuade the cabinet to intervene against the will of the Bavarian government.

One consequence of the Reich's apparent inability to protect itself during 1923 was the decline of SPD opposition to a republican volunteer defense force. Otto Hörsing's emergency force in Magdeburg was expanded to 25,000, and in October Hörsing (SPD) made plans to supplement the efforts of the Reichswehr and Prussian police against a right-wing putsch. By early 1924 the SPD executive committee was willing to sanction the establishment of a new national organization along these lines.[13] Its hope was that a republican organization, as opposed to a Social Democratic one, would not alienate the middle class. Eventually, the Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold attained a membership of three million, but it was more effective in political marches and demonstrations than useful as a defense force.

In one respect, the Nazi Beer-Hall Putsch in Munich in November 1923 should have impelled the SPD to refine its view of nazism. The "reactionary" Bavarian government and police prevented the Nazis from achieving even the first step in their plan to seize control of Germany. Yet Social Democratic spokesmen continued to denounce the Bavarian government's lenient treatment of the Nazis before and after November 1923. SPD experts on nazism such as Wilhelm Hoegner placed more emphasis on the ties between the Nazis and the Right than on the differences.[14] Rudolf Hilferding predicted at the SPD congress in 1924 that "the [restoration of the] monarchy would come first after the supression of Social Democracy, of the republicans, and [it would be] supported by the illegal bands and death organizations, dripping blood and filth like Italian Fascism."[15] Hilferding in effect turned nazism into an auxiliary force for the monarchists. Paul Kampffmeyer published a study in 1924 entitled "National Socialism and its Patrons."[16] Although he accurately described Nazi ideology as racist and antidemocratic, he too lumped many of the SPD's foes together and stressed the Nazis turn to the bourgeoisie and particularly to heavy industry for support. The NSDAP had apparently failed as a working-class party and was seeking a new identity.

The Beer-Hall Putsch, the NSDAP's poor showing in the Reichstag election of December 1924 (3 percent), and the economic stabilization caused many SPD officials to dismiss German Fascism during the mid-1920s. In a 1925 speech Otto Wels derided the Nazis as folkish clowns.[17] Rudolf Hilferding expressed some concern about fascism in his main address to the SPD congress in 1927, maintaining that the former struggle between the monarchy and the republic had been transformed into one between fascism and democracy. Yet Hilferding really argued that the traditional right (DNVP) had changed its direction; he had little to say about fascism itself as a separate movement. Hilferding merely used the Italian example to lecture left-wing critics about what would occur if the German working class pursued only its economic interests and failed to defend democracy. Since fascism was a continuing threat, the SPD could not revert to its pre-1913 position of opposition to the political system.[18]

Hilferding also lauded the achievements of the SPD-led Prussian government in protecting the Weimar Republic.[19] Prussia's record of dealing with the Nazis had been tougher than the Reich's. In late 1922 Prussian Interior Minister Carl Severing had banned the NSDAP under the terms of the Law for the Protection of the Republic, but Nazi reorganization maneuvers and subsequent court decisions blunted the effectiveness of this measure. On November 8-9, 1923, Severing mobilized the Prussian police in the event that a Nazi putsch succeeded in Munich.[20] Nor did Prussia overlook the NSDAP thereafter. When Hitler gave a speech in Munich in 1925 in which he foresaw passing over the corpses of his enemies after he gained power, the Bavarian government imposed a ban on his speaking in public. Prussia quickly followed suit.[21] An analysis of radical right-wing movements, written in early 1927 in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, emphasized the danger posed by the SA and urged further legal action against the NSDAP. Yet there were other voices within party ranks. SPD Reichstag deputy Kurt Rosenfeld recommended in 1927 that the speaking ban imposed on Hitler be lifted, and the SPD's central newspaper Vorwärts stated overconfidently: "It would please us if Hitler . . . were allowed to rave against the Jews, as he loves to do."[22]

SPD criticism of restrictions on civil liberties, along with the poor showing of the NSDAP in the 1928 Reichstag election (2.6 percent) may have induced Prussian Interior Minister Albert Grzesinski (SPD) to lift the speaking ban on Hitler in September 1928. The Interior Ministry actually issued a press release in which it stated that the Nazis no longer represented a serious danger to the Republic.[23] Whether or not this statement is taken as sincere, even those who continued to show concern about the NSDAP focused only on its capability to carry out a putsch.[24] Despite lifting the speaking ban on Hitler, Grzesinski urged Prussian Minister-President Otto Braun (SPD) and Reich Interior Minister Severing in December 1928 to ban both the Nazi and Communist paramilitary forces.[25]

Few inside the Social Democratic ranks perceived the significance of Nazi efforts during the mid-1920s to construct a strong political organization, develop new techniques of propaganda, and recruit new social groups. But as the Nazis gained strength in state, local, and student elections during 1929, and as the economy deteriorated, some SPD analysts took another look. However, Social Democratic disdain for nazism interfered with perception. One party brochure, for example, described the

Nazis as the successors of the anti-Semitic parties and the Pan-Germans. The Hitler movement was said to contain not a single new idea; it represented the hopes of social reactionaries and monarchists. Anti-Semitism was simply a reflection of Nazi economic stupidity.[26] Although noting the NSDAP's ability to mobilize the rural and urban Mittelstand, another SPD writer described the Nazis as the tool of heavy industry.[27] In early 1930 SPD Cochairman Otto Wels charged that capitalists and possibly foreign fascist nations were subsidizing the Nazis.[28] Such historical analogies and cui bono reasoning were counterproductive, because they led SPD officials to underestimate the novelty and independence of the Nazi movement.

Better information was available by 1930. A detailed analysis of the NSDAP's finances, apparently written in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, discounted the significance of large donations. After breaking down NSDAP income from dues, public assemblies, and the press, the author observed: "It may be correct that various big businessmen such as Kirdorff, Hutschmann-Plauen /sic/, and also some large landowners give substantial contributions. Even if these should reach the ten thousand level in individual cases, this would represent only a minor fraction of the total income of the party from its own sources."[29] A few SPD officials were also complaining that the party as well as the Reich and Prussian governments were not active enough against corrosive Nazi propaganda. However, their proposed remedy, more vigorous use of the Law for the Protection of the Republic,[30] was likely neither to be effective nor sufficient.

By mid-1930 some very perceptive commentators raised new concerns. In an article in the socialist journal Die Gesellschaft, Carl Mierendorff pointed out that, with a truly national organization, the Nazis were making substantial inroads among the middle class (bürgerliche Mittelschichten): employees, small farmers, students, and in places, young workers. Mierendorff emphasized that the NSDAP had greatest success with previous nonvoters, many of whom were either indifferent to politics before or disgusted with it now. The colorful, emotional activities and language of the Nazis reached these alienated citizens, whereas the SPD's agitation assumed too much knowledge and insight on the part of the voters. Mierendorff doubted that the Nazis would fade away like the anti-Semitic parties of the Second Reich or collapse as the result of internal dissension; the SPD needed to campaign actively against them.[31] Another report, again apparently from within the Prussian Interior Ministry, projected that an increase in Nazi parliamentary strength might lead to paralysis of the Reichstag and the various Landtage, which could only increase citizen disaffection for the political system. If the Nazis could gain access to the government, they might use their power to destroy the state and establish a dictatorship.[32]

Despite these strikingly accurate forecasts, most Social Democratic observers took less alarmist views. Nazism was still seen as a new form of conservatism supported by those social strata adversely affected by the process of economic concentration. Moreover, the parallel between Germany and Italy was not exact, because Germany was far more industrialized. That meant that the working class was stronger, the antimodern elements of the middle classes far weaker. Mussolini's Italy actually bore more resemblance to late-nineteenth-century Germany.[33] Whereas Social Democrats had once feared nazism because of its efforts to recruit workers, the belief that its constituency was substantially petty bourgeois was reassuring. Nazism seemed to represent no long-term threat in Germany; it was the initial product of peculiar Bavarian conditions and was now spread by the economic crisis.[34]

The Reichstag election results of September 14, 1930, thus came as a colassal shock to most Social Democratic officials.[35] The NSDAP's 6.4 million votes (18.7 percent) and 107 Reichstag seats not only established this party as the second largest behind the SPD; they also abruptly altered the SPD's conception of the danger. Julius Leber described in his memoirs the depression and helplessness of Social Democratic deputies faced with both the threatening flags of nazism and Communist victory cries as well. Even weeks after September 14, he said, the most inflexible pacifists in the SPD fraction walked through the halls of the Reichstag asking everyone whether the Reichswehr could be relied upon in case of a putsch.[36] Carl Severing, once again Prussian interior minister, soon added to the gloom by telling the SPD executive committee that he doubted whether the Prussian police could maintain control in the event of a Nazi putsch and Communist opposition to a united front against nazism.[37]

Yet the possibility of a Nazi coup was no longer the only serious SPD concern. The problem now was not to recognize the danger; it was to figure out a method to deal with all of the dangers, including that of Nazi entrance into a coalition government in the Reich. Once again the SPD leaders looked first to the government itself for assistance. Lacking influence over President Hindenburg, the SPD's best hope was working with Chancellor Heinrich Brüning, a leader of the Center party. In October 1930 party officials concluded that Brüning's government represented the lesser evil, and the SPD began its controversial policy of toleration of Brüning.[38]

This policy rested on a number of judgments, most of which were not within the SPD's power to validate. First, the SPD had to decide that the defense of democracy against fascism was its highest priority. Second, the alternative to Brüning had to be a government that included Hitler. (This may not have been the only alternative.) Third, the chancellor had to be induced to cooperate with the SPD on some key issues; otherwise the party might lose too much support. Finally, the Prussian government had to maintain sufficient leverage to protect the Republic against a Nazi putsch. Although the SPD took the first step in October 1930, the other requisites of toleration were lacking.

The deepening depression and Brüning's misguided social and economic policies alienated the trade unions, the left wing of the party, and some others as well.[39] The SPD's fear of losing mass support made it increasingly uncomfortable about tolerating Brüning. But to break with Brüning was to risk political isolation, not only in the Reich, but also in Prussia. The loss of its Prussian stronghold would have been a severe blow for the SPD. By the spring of 1931 the debate within the party over toleration became quite angry, and the death of Hermann Müller at the end of March deprived the SPD of its most skillful conciliator.

The party congress held in Leipzig at the end of May and in early June focused on fascism and the SPD's toleration policy. The party leadership tried to educate its critics about the nature and dangers of fascism, while defending the toleration policy. Left-wing spokesmen denounced the Brüning government and urged a more vigorous SPD policy inside and outside the Reichstag. The speeches and discussions at the congress indicated that a number of misconceptions about nazism prevailed on both sides.

After Otto Wels announced at the outset that the Nazis intended to restore the monarchy through terror and force,[40] Rudolf Breitscheid, cochairman of the Reichstag fraction and the best speaker in the party, analyzed nazism in his main address entitled "Overcoming Fascism."[41] He pointed out that loose usage of the term "fascism," for example, describing Brüning's emergency ordinances as "fascist," only made the struggle against real fascism more difficult. He could not resist the comment, however, that there were many similarities between fascism and the political system in the Soviet Union. Perhaps this was a rejoinder to Communist attacks on the Social Democrats as "social fascists." Breitscheid's definition of fascism included overthrow of democracy, establishment of a dictatorship or privileged elite, and rejection of the demands of a class-conscious working class. He said that consciously or not, fascism served the interests of capitalism.

Breitscheid compared the development of fascism in Germany and Italy. The slower pace in Germany after the war he attributed to better organization of the rival parties (especially the working class) and greater public expectations of the new democratic system. Only after voters became disillusioned with the Weimar system and after the economic crises brought widespread suffering and resentment did fascism turn into a powerful mass movement. Breitscheid related Nazi ideology to antirationalist and anti-positivist currents, but he claimed that the lack of real theory and program in National Socialism represented a major weakness. When one considered the high level of industrialization in Germany, it seemed unlikely that fascism would endure there. But the short-term threat at least was quite serious. Because of Nazi inroads on the nonsocialist parties, there was increasing danger of the Nazis gaining influence over the government and administration through legal political methods.

What is most striking about Breitscheid's presentation is what is missing: a detailed analysis of Nazi ideology, party structure, leadership, and methods. There were plenty of sources available, including Hitler's Mein Kampf. But Breitscheid did not use them, and his concept of fascism was extremely general. His omissions are all the more worthy of note in that he wished to convince the congress that the danger of fascism justified the SPD's toleration policy. Breitscheid's own uncertainties about the policy may account in part for his lack of forcefulness.[42] But judging from his other remarks, one may also conclude that he still underestimated the danger of nazism and felt that the SPD could outlast it. Even the title of his address, "Overcoming Fascism" (Die Überwindung des Faschismus) has a slightly passive sound. One wonders whether an impassioned warning that a Nazi government would mean another world war would have had greater impact.

Yet Breitscheid's approach was sophisticated compared to that of Max Seydewitz and Ernst Eckstein, two of the Left opposition spokesmen. They argued that monopoly capitalism, fearing that it would not be able to obtain its objectives through the democratic system, had created fascism to pursue them more effectively. The Brüning government was also an instrument of capitalist interests. So the only real difference between fascism and Brüning was one of method; Brüning's policies were already fascist.[43] Advocates of such views could not abide the SPD's toleration policy, and a number of the left-wing dissidents had already violated fraction discipline on votes in the Reichstag. They were soon expelled from the party, which led them to found the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany.[44] Although another schism certainly did the Social Democratic movement no good, the SAPD did not become a significant force.

Wilhelm Sollmann also defended the Reichstag fraction's stance against the left-wing critics. He tried to show that the SPD's policy resulted directly from its own democratic principles and from the danger of a legal takeover of power by the fascists. Yet Sollmann too had a tendency to deprecate the Nazis in such a way that his listeners might easily misperceive their intentions:

> Adolf Hitler may be a very modest political brain, but in the twelve years of his political activity his capitalist donors have at least taught him, through extra-help sessions (Nachhilfestunden) that storm troops . . . cannot overrun a modern state. . . . The National Socialism which has grasped this appears to me to be a much greater danger than the ridiculous putschism of 1923.[45]

Even though Sollmann argued that the SPD's only choice was between Brüning and a fascist dictatorship a thousand times worse,[46] his audience got little sense of precisely why nazism was so dangerous. To know that it was directed against the working class and parliamentary democracy was enough reason to oppose it.

Yet from within the Social Democratic camp Alexander Schifrin had already analyzed the autocratic, militaristic, demogogic, and neonationalist elements of nazism; he underestimated only anti-Semitism. Moreover, Schifrin had commented astutely on the authoritarianism of the movement and noted that its social composition did not determine its goals and policies. Nazism was neither simply a technique nor a congeries of social strata.[47] A number of socialist intellectuals to the left of the SPD also wrote perceptively about nazism in the early 1930s.[48] Little of this analysis seems to have reached the party elite.

Otto Landsberg's comments in early 1931 were not atypical of the SPD's upper ranks. Landsberg saw a difference between the Nazis and reactionaries. The Nazis were more violent and would certainly repress their opponents more thoroughly if they gained power. But the reactionaries were in some ways more dangerous, because it was unlikely that the Nazis could maintain power.[49]

The tendency to compare its present enemies with its past enemies was strong in a movement that regarded itself as having history on its side. But lack of understanding of nazism's unique features and its psychological impact upon the public hindered the SPD from adopting proper countermeasures earlier, including effective political agitation. Previous SPD concerns that nazism might become a rival working-class movement led to constant denunciations of the NSDAP as the tool of capitalism. Such attacks hardly sufficed to win middle-class voters away from nazism. By late 1932 Wilhelm Sollmann himself recognized one basic cause of the problem: "We would have been spared many a surprise, the sudden onset of the brown flood of nazism being not the last, if our eyes and ears had reached far enough outside the ranks of our organization and our loyal followers."[50] The Social Democratic movement's delayed reaction to nazism was linked directly to the former's insularity and the latter's willingness to exploit the resentments of diverse groups.

Even after the danger had been perceived, the SPD worked primarily to keep the proletariat away from Nazism. It was hard for the party to shift gears, particularly during the depression. Many Social Democrats felt that the nonsocialist parties would have to do their part with the rest of the electorate, at least until the economic crisis abated. Otto Wels proclaimed at the SPD congress in 1931: "Part of the German middle class may, like cowards, bow to fancy oratory; large landowners, heavy industrialists, bank and stock market kings and all such royalty may turn to this workers' party /the NSDAP/; the German workers' party is and will be German Social Democracy, and it will prevail."[51] Rather than demean those who were attracted to nazism, Wels might have tried to recruit some of them.

But the SPD's toleration policy placed it in a position where it could offer little in the way of alternatives. Even antifascist activity was less than vigorous. Only at the end of 1931 did the party leadership reluctantly sanction the establishment of the Iron Front, an antifascist umbrella organization of Social Democratic and Reichsbanner forces. Even then the Iron Front, like the Reichsbanner, failed to develop a significant military capability, partly because of the SPD leadership's opposition. Nor were there specific plans to coordinate the work of the volunteer forces with the Prussian police, although the idea had long been broached.[52] All extraparliamentary efforts, particularly those involving the use of force or the threat to use force, were rejected because they might drive Brüning and the nonsocialist parties into the arms of the Nazis. But with Brüning excluding the Reichstag from decision making, the SPD could hardly make use of its parliamentary strength. Franz von Papen's Staatsstreich against the Prussian government on July 20, 1932, left the SPD in a cul-de-sac. Deprived of its governmental stronghold, the SPD simply waited for an end to the depression and hoped for the best.

Social Democratic passivity during 1932-1933 was not the product of bureaucratization and inadequate leadership alone. It was also the result of a Weltanschauung that forecast eventual victory over the foes of socialism and made it hard to distinguish among those foes. The SPD accurately considered nazism as one expression of a broader European current called fascism. But the party's concept of fascism neither explained nazism sufficiently nor provided a clear sense of the differences between fascists and reactionaries. Something could be learned from a comparison of Hitler and Mussolini. But to compare Hitler with Wilhelm II[53] was ridiculous.

Given the difficult strategic situation of the Weimar Republic's last year,[54] the SPD could not deal with all the dangers facing itself and the parliamentary democratic system. It chose to protect its working-class base and to avoid risky experiments, not realizing that inaction itself carried major risks. Such thinking allowed the Social Democrats to disclaim responsibility for the rise of nazism, but it did not prevent the Nazi triumph.

NOTES

I am indebted to Margaret Anderson for her criticism of a draft of this essay.

[1] Wahlplakat 249, Stadtarchiv Mannheim.

[2] For a review of some recent literature on German Social Democracy, see Richard Breitman, "Negative Integration and Parliamentary Politics: Literature on German Social Democracy, 1890-1933," *Central European History* 13 (1980), pp. 175-97. Many of the contemporary criticisms of the SPD leaders in Weimar are discussed by Henryk Skrzypczak, "Führungsprobleme der sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik," in *Herkunft und Mandat: Beiträge zur Führungsproblematik in der Arbeiterbewegung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1976), pp. 128-47. For a left-wing assessment, see Hebel-Kunze, Bärbel, *SPD und Faschismus: Zur politischen und organisatorischen Entwicklung der SPD 1932-1935* (Frankfurt a.M.: Röderberg Verlag, 1977).

[3] This applies particularly to Richard N. Hunt, *German Social Democracy, 1918-1933* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), and to Hans Mommsen, "Die Sozialdemokratie in der Defensive: Der Immobilismus der SPD und der Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus," in *Sozialdemokratie zwischen Klassenbewegung und Volkspartei*, ed. Hans Mommsen, (Frankfurt: a.M.: Athenäum Fischer Verlag, 1974), pp. 106-33. On the other hand, the classic study by Erich Matthias, "Die Socialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands," in *Das Ende der Parteien 1933*, ed. Erich Matthias and Rudolf Morsey (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1960), deals also with the SPD's strategic difficulties.

[4] Ernst Nolte, "Vierzig Jahre Theorien über den Fascismus,"

in *Theorien über den Fascismus*, ed. Ernst Nolte (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch Verlag, 1967), pp. 15-75; John M. Cammett, "Communist Theories of Fascism, 1920-1935," *Science and Society* 31 (1967), pp. 149-63. One good treatment of the SPD's perceptions of nazism is Helga Grebing's introduction to a collection of SPD sources, "Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus," in *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung und Weimarer Republik: Materialien zur gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung 1927-1933*, ed. Wolfgang Luthardt (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978), vol. II, pp. 259-75.

[5] Wolfram Wette, "Mit dem Stimmzettell gegen den Faschismus? Das Dilemma des sozialdemokratischen Antifaschismus in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik," in *Frieden, Gewalt, Sozialismus: Studien zur Geschichte der sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung*, ed. Wolfgang Huber and Johannes Schwerdtfeger (Stuttgart: Klett Verlag, 1976), pp. 369-70.

[6] Harold J. Gordon, Jr., *Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 35.

[7] Notes of SPD Reichstag fraction, November 13, 1922, *Nachlass* Carl Giebel II/221.

[8] Aussprache über die politische Lage in Bayern, November 5, 1922, Restakten des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes, August-Bebel-Institut (hereafter ADGB-ABI), NB 64/0007a; Peter Grassmann to Herrmann Müller, November 9, 1922, ADGB-ABI, NB 64/0008; Adolf Braun memo, November 17, 1922, ADGB-ABI, NB 64/0010.

[9] ADGB-ABI, NB 64/0033-0048.

[10] Copy in *Nachlass* Carl Severing, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, M 70/13.

[11] Peter Kritzer, *Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie und die bayerische Politik in den Jahren 1918 bis 1923* (Munich: Stadtarchiv Verlag, 1969), pp. 200-3; "Aufzeichnung des Staatssekretärs Hamm über Besprechungen in München, 2. April 1923," in *Akten der Reichskanzlei Weimarer Republik: Das Kabinett Cuno, 22. November 1922 bis 12. August 1923*, ed. Karl-Hainz Harbeck (Boppard a.R.: Boldt Verlag, 1968), p. 360.

[12] Wilhelm Hoegner, *Der schwierige Aussenseiter: Erinnerungen eines Abgeordneten, Emigranten und Ministerpräsidenten* (Munich: Isar Verlag, 1959), p. 27.

[13] Karl Rohe, *Das Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Struktur der politischen Kampfverbände zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1966), especially pp. 40-43; James M. Diehl, *Paramilitary Politics in*

Weimar Germany (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), pp. 130-32. The popularity of the Communist-organized "proletarian hundreds" in Saxony and Thuringia also helped to bring about a change in the attitude of SPD leaders and the rank and file as well.

[14] See the discussion of Hoegner's views by Peter Kritzer, *Wilhelm Hoegner: Politische Biographie eines bayerischen Sozialdemokraten* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1979), pp. 52-58.

[15] *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1924 in Berlin: Protokoll . . .* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Dietz Nachfolger Verlag, 1974, orig. 1924), p. 176.

[16] Paul Kampffmeyer, *Der Nationalsozialismus und seine Gönner* (Berlin: Dietz Nachfolger Verlag, 1924).

[17] *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1925 in Heidelberg: Protokoll . . .* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Dietz Nachfolger Verlag, 1974, orig. 1925), p. 81.

[18] *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1927 in Kiel: Protokoll . . .* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Dietz Nachfolger Verlag, 1974, orig. 1927), p. 175.

[19] Ibid., p. 180.

[20] Gotthard Jasper, *Der Schutz der Republic: Studien zur staatlichen Sicherung der Demokratie in der Weimarer Republik* (Tübingen: Mohr Verlag, 1963), pp. 139-46, 301-4; Carl Severing, *Mein Lebensweg*, (Cologne: Greven Verlag, 1950), vol. I, pp. 446-47.

[21] Konrad Heiden, *Der Fuehrer: Hitler's Rise to Power* (Boston: 1969, orig. 1944), pp. 255, 261-62; Dietrich Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party 1919-1933* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969), p. 84.

[22] Exposé über den Stand der Rechtsbewegung, *Nachlass* Albert Grzesinski, International Institute of Social History (hereafter IISH), B/X/ 1478; Donald L. Niewyk, *Socialist, Anti-Semite and Jew: German Social Democracy Confronts the Problem of Anti-Semitism, 1918-1933* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 60; *Vorwärts*, January 14, 1927, quoted in Ibid.

[23] Severing, *Mein Lebensweg*, I, p. 429.

[24] Denkschrift über die NSDAP [1928], *Nachlass* Grzesinski, IISH, B/X/1557.

[25] Notes of December 12, 1928 meeting, *Nachlass* Grzesinski, IISH, B/IX/705; also Albert Grzesinski, *Inside Germany* (N.Y., 1939), p. 144.

[26] SPD Vorstand, *Die vom Hakenkreuz: Hitler und Konsorten* (Berlin: Vorwärts, n.d.), pp. 3-4.

[27] Erik Nölting, "Die Nationalsozialisten," *Volksstimme: Organ der Sozialdemokratie für Südwestdeutschland*, November 13, 1929, reprinted by Grebing, "Auseinandersetzung," p. 284.

[28] Hans J. L. Adolph, *Otto Wels und die Politik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1894-1939: Eine politische Biographie* (Berlin: de Gruyter Verlag, 1971), p. 229.

[29] Denkschrift über die Finanzierung der NSDAP, *Nachlass* Grzesinski, IISH, B/X/1558.

[30] Wilhelm Sollmann to Grzesinski, October 3, 1929, and Grzesinski to Sollmann, October 14, 1929, *Nachlass* Grzesinski, IISH B/X/1502 and B/X/1491.

[31] Carl Mierendorff, "Gesicht und Character der Nationalsozialistischen Bewegung," *Die Gesellschaft* 7 (1930), pp. 489-504.

[32] Referentendenkschrift über die NSDAP, May 1930, *Nachlass* Grzesinski, IISH B/X/1559. By this time Grzesinski had resigned as Prussian interior minister.

[33] SPD, *Köpfe in den Sand! Die wirklichen Novemberverbrecher* (Braunschweig: n.p., 1930?), p. 14; SPD, *Kampf dem Hakenkreuz: Rededisposition über faschistische Gefahr mit einem Anhang; Referentenmaterial über die Rolle der K.P.D.* (n.p.: n.p., 1930?), p. 22.

[34] SPD, *Kampf dem Hakenkreuz*, p. 8.

[35] Georg Decker, "Das unbekannte Volk," *Die Gesellschaft* 7 (1930), p. 298, reprinted by Grebing, "Auseinandersetzung," p. 289; also Rohe, *Das Reichsbanner*, p. 360, and the sources listed therein.

[36] *Ein Mann geht seinen Weg: Schriften, Reden und Briefen von Julius Leber* (Berlin: Mosiak Verlag, 1952), p. 234.

[37] "Alarmsitzungen des SPD Parteivorstandes," *Die Rote Fahne*, December 16, 1930.

[38] See Hagen Schulze, *Otto Braun oder Preussens demokratische Sendung: Eine Biographie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Propylaen-Ullstein Verlag, pp, 637-41; Richard Breitman, *German Socialism and*

Weimar Democracy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 166-67.

[39] Rudolf Hilferding to Karl Kautsky, April 15, 1931, *Nachlass* Kautsky, IISH D/XII/652.

[40] *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1931 in Leipzig: Protokoll . . .* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Dietz Nachfolger Verlag, 1974, orig. 1931), p. 13.

[41] Ibid., pp. 87-108. See also his concluding remarks, pp. 169-70.

[42] Breitman, *German Socialism*, pp. 145-46, 171.

[43] SPD *Parteitag* 1931, pp. 125, 151.

[44] On the SAPD, see Hanno Drechsler, *Die Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (SAPD): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung am Ende der Weimarer Republik* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain Verlag, 1965).

[45] SPD *Parteitag* 1931, p. 114.

[46] Ibid., p. 115.

[47] Alexander Schifrin, "Parteiprobleme nach den Wahlen," *Die Gesellschaft* 7 (1930):395-412, reprinted by Grebing, "Auseinandersetzung," pp. 294-309; see also Schifrin, "Gedankenschatz des Hakenkreuzes," *Die Gesellschaft* 8 (1931):166-78.

[48] See Helga Grebing, "Faschismus, Mittelschichten und Arbeiterklasse: Probleme der Faschismus-Interpretation in der sozialistischen Linken während der Weltwirtschaftskrise," *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 12 (1976):443-60.

[49] Otto Landsberg, *Die politische Krise der Gegenwart: Nach einem Vortrag gehalten in der Freien Sozialistischen Hochschule in Berlin am 17. Januar 1931* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1931), pp. 17-18.

[50] "Positive Parteikritik," *Rheinische Zeitung*, November 27, 1932.

[51] SPD *Parteitag* 1931, p. 14.

[52] Rohe, *Das Reichsbanner*, pp. 365-79, 403-17.

[53] Landsberg, *Die politische Krise*, p. 13.

[54] Matthias, "Die Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands;" Schulze, *Otto Braun*, pp. 725-86; Breitman, *German Socialism*, pp. 174-88; Breitman, "On German Social Democracy and General Schleicher, 1932-33," *Central European History* 9 (1976):352-78.

12

Between the Ghetto and the Nation: Catholics in the Weimar Republic

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"For the Catholics in the Empire it is like Germany in its foreign policy, only enviers and enemies, only scorn and ridicule," declared Matthias Erzberger, the young hotspur of political Catholicism, in 1914.[1] The dual perception of German isolation and Catholic isolation expressed the dilemma of German Catholics. To be a loyal German and a loyal Catholic--in whatever terms one defined these concepts--was in a world of enemies both a goal and a burden.

The post-Napoleonic reorganization of Germany in 1814-15 left the bulk of Catholics as minorities under Protestant rulers. Catholics experienced discriminatory treatment and frequent conflicts between canonical and state law, especially in cases of religiously mixed marriage. The Prussian solution to German unification excluded Austria and left the Catholics a permanent minority at around one-third of the population. The _Kulturkampf_ (struggle between Church and state) of the 1870s was an attempt to break the power of the Catholic hierarchy and to loosen the ties between Germany and Rome. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck branded the members of the Catholic Center party _Reichsfeinde_, "enemies of the Reich," lumping them with Poles and Socialists. The open _Kulturkampf_ backfired, actually solidifying Catholic unity, but Catholics continued to suffer the humiliations of the "little" or "silent Kulturkampf": legal restrictions on Catholic church services and processions; discriminatory state funding of schools, parishes, and ecclesiastical salaries; battles over custody and religious education in mixed marriages; the requirement in Saxony that school children attend Protestant religious instruction if Catholic instruction were not available with the proviso that, if they did so until age twelve, they were then Protestant![2]

Catholics used such expressions as _via dolorosa_, "exile," or "ghetto"--the term most often used in German Catholic historiography—to characterize their situation. Yet Catholic spiritual and political leaders accepted the Catholic situation as the fate of a minority of believers in a hostile world; redress of grievances would come about only through legality: through slow arduous labors in the courts, the legislatures, and the press. Monarchical loyalty was always a powerful force among the Catholics, and nationalist loyalty reenforced it as the older dreams of a Habsburg-led Grossdeutschland faded and more and more young Catholics grew to adulthood within the Empire. Stung by accusations of half or divided loyalty, they sought to demonstrate their patriotism by supporting the government on the national (military and colonial) issues and by opposition to socialism. The outbreak of the First World War seemed to sweep aside all barriers, to end Catholic isolation at the price of almost complete Germanic isolation in the world. Catholic theologians and writers identified the war with the will of God and the scholastic concept of a just war. But Catholics continued to bear the stigma of belonging to an international church or to suffer the insinuation that Pope Benedict XV favored Germany's enemies and the insulting identification of Martin Luther and the Reformation with German national destiny.[3] In practical political terms, the Protestant suspicion was unjustified, yet in another sense it was justified: as long as they remained in an international church and adhered to the rationalism inherent in canon law and scholasticism, German Catholics could not compete with Protestants in an ideological nationalist fanaticism.

Catholics did not expect nor want the end of the monarchy in the fall of 1918, but its collapse brought them relief. Under the Weimar Constitution, legal restrictions on religious activity fell away--the first Corpus Christi procession on Berlin's Unter den Linden created a sensation--but the church continued to enjoy state funding, now administered more equitably. The Center party, as the party of the middle, became the indispensable coalition partner in the government of the nation and the larger Länder. Party members held the chancellorship in six of the fifteen cabinets between 1918 and 1933, while non-Centrist Catholics, Wilhelm Cuno and Franz von Papen, headed two cabinets.[4]

Anti-Catholicism continued, however, and took an increasingly right-wing orientation in reaction against the Centrist role in the Republic. Enemies of the Republic branded its controversial flag as the banner of the three Internationals: the Red (Socialist), the Gold (Jewish), and the Black (Catholic). Anti-Catholicism had long since taken organizational form in various groups, particularly the Protestant League for the Protection of German-Protestant Interests, created in 1889. With its 300,000 members the League embraced a high percentage of Protestant clergy, teachers, and officials; it flooded Germany with cheap anti-Catholic and anti-Socialist tracts.[5]

Protestants frequently justified their anti-Catholicism intellectually through discussions of Catholic inferiority. The modern world of freedom, science, scholarship, technology, and industry was identified with the Protestant nations. One Protestant pastor noted that the Protestant Northern states had defeated the "Southern Catholic states" in the American Civil War, freeing the slaves![6] At around the turn of the century, Protestant writers had underscored the higher German Catholic rates of fertility, infant mortality, death, and criminality to show Catholic inferiority while Catholic writers countered with the higher German Protestant rates of divorce, suicide, and illegitimacy. By the 1920s the clash over "moral statistics" was somewhat passé, and the higher Catholic rates, for example, of fertility and infant mortality, were declining to close the differential.[7]

But the Catholic population continued to be disproportionately concentrated in rural areas and underrepresented, especially in the larger cities. Catholics worked in disproportionate numbers in farming and traditional handicrafts. They were underrepresented in banking, commerce, technical industry, and professional pursuits. Among bankers, brokers, army officers, university professors, and certain categories of engineers, Catholics had as much as 50 percent underrepresentation. On the other hand, several marginal and vulnerable pursuits such as vintners, agricultural laborers, seamstresses, and unskilled construction workers had as much as 50 percent overrepresentation. In the crucial coal-mining and steel industries, Catholics dominated all levels of both white-collar and manual employment because these industries were located in Catholic areas (Silesia, Saarland, the Rhine-Ruhr basin). Yet ownership and management rested predominately in Protestant hands. Further evidence indicates that Catholics paid less taxes than Protestants because they earned a lower average income, that within particular industries and crafts Catholics had a lesser degree of technical education and occupied less responsible positions, and that Catholic craftsmen and retailers were economically marginal, employing little help and relying disproportionately on family members.[8]

The origins of the Catholic deficits are beyond the scope of this chapter; their political effects, however, are of consequence here. The marginality and vulnerability of the Catholic occupational structure suggests a potential susceptibility to radical movements. Fascist, radical-Right, and anti-Semitic movements are widely supposed to have their social bases among the peasants and in the lower middle class (Kleinbürgertum) of retailers, craftsmen, and petty officials. Standing in opposition both to big labor and big business, these social classes are assumed to become radicalized out of a perception of relative or absolute deprivation.[9] This analysis was based on the historical fact that German Protestant peasants and

Kleinbürger deserted the liberal and conservative parties en masse, giving their votes by 1932 overwhelmingly to the Nazi party. Catholics, by contrast, continued to cast their ballots for the Catholic political parties to the number of 5.5 million, although perhaps 6.5 million gave their votes to all other parties combined. A populist anti-Semitism, based on resentment of Jewish wealth, was to be found in Catholic ranks especially among the southern agrarian wing. The anti-Semitism might link up with anti-socialism or a general repudiation of modern culture, but it was by no means identical with antirepublicanism or sympathy with nazism.[10]

Occupational and class analysis from Aristotle on has appeared to provide the most pertinent explanations of political behavior. But we must continually place political behavior in its full social context and explore the ways in which family, school, church, ideology, age, deference, association, and region may mediate, modify, or focus the demands of social class or economic interest. Why did German Catholics demonstrate a relative immunity to the appeals of fascism? On the other hand, why was this relative immunity not sufficient to allow them to develop an effective resistance?

If we reinterpret economic marginality as attachment to traditional occupations and limited mobility, marginality may have screened Catholics from certain types of antirepublicanism. Proportionately few Catholics were the colleagues of conservative antirepublicans in the officer corps, the university professoriate, the higher bureaucracy, or the management of heavy industry; those that were, did not act very differently from their colleagues. Conversely, Catholic miners and steelworkers adhered to their labor unions, had job and class interests in common with their Socialist or Communist colleagues, and suspected the reactionary nature of Hitler's movement. Catholic peasants appear to have specialized less than Protestant peasants, practicing a more traditional mixed agriculture. Thus despite relative poverty, their economic vulnerability may have been less.[11] Priests and a few substantial farmers still provided the social leadership of the villages. Even after 1933 in many Catholic villages, Nazi members were scarce, and Nazi organization weak.[12]

If Catholics were less susceptible than Protestants to the influence of new, radical movements, one major reason was that Catholics, like Socialists, had created their own social and cultural environment, which filtered the impact of general public opinion. Driven into the ghetto of political and social isolation by the Kulturkampf, choosing an intellectual ghetto to maintain the purity of the faith from the challenge of liberalism and the cult of science, Catholic notables had created Verbandskatholizismus, "associational Catholicism." In the 1840s associations were formed to support Catholic journeymen, lending libraries, and missions, and to hold annual national Catholic Rallies (Katholikentage). In the 1360s Catholic student fraternities were created. During the *Kulturkampf*, fearing permanent exclusion from the university professoriate, Catholic scholars founded the Görres Society for the Cultivation of Scholarship in Catholic Germany. From the 1380s on, Catholic newspaper publishers, peasants, workers, schoolteachers, artists, and art dealers (the "German Society for Christian Art"), white-collar employees, booksellers, and feminists organized. *Verbandskatholizismus* was a creative response to the new opportunities provided by the liberal freedoms of speech and assembly. It ensured that German Catholicism would remain a *Volkskirche*[13]—a "church of the people." Yet *Verbandskatholizismus* also linked together the Catholic notables (the clergymen, nobles, lawyers, and publishers) through mutual association in the fraternities, Görres Society, and Center party, an association further cemented by close kinship connections especially along the Rhine-Main axis of German Catholicism. Rallying and organizing the braod masses of the laity, *Verbandskatholizismus* represented a use of liberal freedoms to create an antiliberal movement on a basis that was simultaneously populist and hierarchical--the masses of the excluded minority led by their "natural leaders." Anti-Semitism might theoretically have been an ideological element of such a movement, but, after some initial wavering during the *Kulturkampf*, Catholic leaders had the political wisdom to support the rights of all religious minorities.[14]

As the Weimar Constitution gave new opportunities to the church, it also allowed the final rich unfolding of *Verbandskatholizismus*: organizations for Catholic youth, high school students, housewives and mothers, university graduates (*Akademiker* as opposed to scholars [*Wissenschaftler*], officials, and even industrialists. Yet a subtle shift was occurring: whereas the older associations worked for the economic and social interests of their members, the newer ones generally cultivated liturgy, sociability, and the Catholic Weltanschauung. They may be regarded as a final massive attempt to organize and to isolate the Catholic population.

For the leaders of German Catholicism were alarmed. For decades more German Catholics had converted to Protestantism than vice versa. The net Catholic loss through the "conversion balance" jumped from 4,000 a year in around 1900 to 7,000 a year in the years 1925-30.[15] More alarming still, of every 100 Catholics marrying in 1901, 12 had selected a non-Catholic partner, while by 1925 the figure rose to 18. In the diaspora of the north German cities, as many as 70 out of 100 marrying Catholics took vows with a non-Catholic.[16] The negative conversion balance, the pattern of mixed marriages (more Catholic men marrying Protestant women than the reverse), and the consistent Protestant majority (about 55 percent) of the baptized children in mixed marriages showed that Catholicism lacked respectability.

Upward mobility could be fostered, especially in the diaspora, through conversion or more commonly through marriage into a Protestant family. More generally, growing numbers of Catholics were making their individual union with the nation, ignoring the religious split in disregard of the teachings of church and school.

For a large minority of Catholics, the Church now served essentially to mark the rites of passage: baptism, marriage, and burial. Of those counted in the census as Catholic (a measure based on birth and baptism), around 60 percent partook of the obligatory Easter communion--a figure that remained constant from 1915 through 1938 and was greater than double the corresponding Protestant percentage.[17] The percentage of communicants remained at higher levels in solid Catholic areas but declined to much lower figures in the diaspora.

If three out of five baptized Catholics remained faithful to the church, only three-quarters of these faithful Catholics remained loyal to political Catholicism. During the height of the Kulturkampf, over 80 percent of Catholic voters supported the Center party, a figure that declined to around 68 percent by the turn of the century. For the elections of 1919 through 1924 an average of 54 percent of Catholic men and women voted for the Center and the Bavarian People's parties; in the elections of 1930-33, around 45 percent.[18] The extent of the decline was masked by the introduction of proportional representation, which brought out the Catholic vote in the diaspora and the religiously mixed regions, and especially by the introduction of women's suffrage--a measure which the prewar Center had opposed. While the faithful Catholic women voted overwhelmingly Centrist or Bavarian, their husbands, if religiously indifferent, voted Socialist or, especially, Communist, and if religious, increasingly supported the German Nationalist party or the regional peasant parties.[19]

Thus, the Weimar Republic provided new opportunities for German Catholics, but intensified the old temptations of assimilation to the Protestant majority. Common to the opportunities and temptations was the possibility of escape from the ghetto and union with the nation. Conversion, intermarriage, or opposition to the Center party formed individual paths of union. But the Catholic notables had long been urging a collective path of union, a collective uplifting of the Catholic population based upon cooperation with the national government and demonstrations of national loyalty.[20] The generation of Center leaders who came to the fore in the 1890s had continued to fight to overcome the liabilities of the Kulturkampf. But they had also taken a hard look at the deficiencies of German Catholics in education, income, and occupational status. They proclaimed to young Catholics that it was their "duty" (Pflicht) to study harder, to work harder, and to be more ambitious, while the nexus of

Verbandskatholizismus was to provide moral support, scholarship funds, and an old-boy network to advance the bright young Catholics. Center leaders documented discrimination in the civil service and the universities. They then lobbied with the Prussian and imperial governments to increase the numbers of Catholics appointed, emphasizing Catholic national and monarchical loyalty, and at least tacitly trading Center political support in return for appointments.[21]

Whether such efforts bore fruit or whether Catholics profited from a general upsurge of educational and economic opportunities, progress could be charted between 1900 and 1930 in the growing numbers of Catholic secondary pupils, secondary schoolteachers, and university students, the Catholic "deficit" dwindling or even disappearing among these groups. During the Weimar Republic, the Socialist and Centrist coalition partners in the state of Prussia collaborated in political patronage, and the Catholic deficit among politically appointed officials disappeared.[22] But fiscal restraints upon hiring as well as the seniority of Protestant officials perpetuated the Catholic deficit among tenured civil servants.

The Catholic gains were also bought at a price. As limited as they were, they provoked a hostile reaction, which centered around the Protestant League, Protestant civil servant associations, and the Nationalist and German People's parties.[23] Protestant officials found in the Catholic gains yet another reason or pretext to drift away from the Republic.

And the Catholic nouveaux arrivés assimilated themselves to the views of the conservative Protestant circles they entered. For example, the Catholic historians Heinrich Finke, Aloys Schulte, and Martin Spahn drifted further and further away from the Center party with which they had been associated early in their careers. Finke supported the right-wing proannexationist Vaterlandspartei during World War I, while Spahn became a Nationalist Reichstag deputy and eventually joined the Nazi caucus.[24] To these men, Matthias Erzberger, who had never attended a university, who had engineered the Peace Resolution of 1917, signed the armistice, and led the Center into alliance with the Left, represented all that had gone wrong with political Catholicism. Max Wallraf also hated the "disastrous" (Unheilvoll) Erzberger. A high official in the empire whose career owed much to the lobbying of Centrist politicians, Wallraf became a Nationalist Reichstag deputy. He regarded the antirepublican Nationalist party as "Christian, social, and national," embracing all classes and both Christian denominations--but not Jews.[25]

By the 1920s several Catholic families were among the greatest industrialists in Germany: the Thyssens and Klöckners in steel, and the ten Hompels in cement. Whereas the older Thyssens, August and Joseph, had belonged to Catholic social and cultural organizations, August's son Fritz would provide Hitler with money and contacts. The Klöckners and ten Hompels remained loyal Centrists, but their presence in the Reichstag caucus created friction with the Catholic labor unions. The Reichstag deputy Rudolf ten Hompel disliked the "Super democrat" Erzberger, even proposing, after Erzberger's law suit against Karl Heinrich Helfferich, to exclude him from the caucus. A vigorous critic of the Christian unions, ten Hompel favored a right-wing coalition, even a dictatorship, to lead Germany out of the depression.[26]

If the Spahns, Wallrafs, or Thyssens represented individual cases of defection from political and associational Catholicism, signs of large-scale dissolution were present. Membership in the worker-oriented People's Association for Catholic Germany (Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland) declined by perhaps 50 percent between 1922 and 1933.[27] The Christian unions likewise dwindled in numbers in the later Weimar years. The voting base for political Catholicism slowly shrank, while the Bavarian Catholics in 1920 created their own Bavarian People's party in opposition to the policies of fiscal centralization and alliance with the Left of the national Centrist leadership. The Bavarian Populists allowed their state to become a haven in the early Weimar years for all varieties of antirepublican movements from the terrorist Organization Consul to the Nazi party. In 1925 they endorsed the Protestant Prussian General Paul von Hindenburg for president against the Catholic Rhinelander Wilhelm Marx. After having created such havoc, the Bavarians drifted back toward the political middle in the later Weimar years.

Few bishops were as outspokenly antirepublican as was Michael Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich, at the 1922 Catholic Rally. Condemning the November Revolution as "perjury and high treason," he blamed Germany's distress on the Weimar Constitution. The episcopacy in general, however, opposed the most extreme right-wing organizations. The Fulda Bishops' Conference, embracing the Prussian bishops, warned Catholics in 1924 against membership in the paramilitary organizations and forbade participation by the clergy. While the warning applied in theory to the republican Reichsbanner as well as the right-wing groups, the Centrist press tended to ignore this, and public controversy centered around the unsuccessful attempt by Catholic nobles to have the ban on the Stahlhelm lifted.[28] The hierarchy likewise stood firm against another attempt of right-wing Catholics to assimilate themselves into the culture of German nationalism, refusing to lift the ban on duelling among university students. In 1930-31 all German bishops, including Faulhaber, issued warnings against National Socialism "as long and insofar as it adheres to a religious and cultural program which is irreconcilable with Catholic teaching," or with other qualifying provisos.[29] But the connection between episcopacy and Center party, always problematic, became more distant. The bishops, generally conservative monarchists in sentiment, were mostly elderly men from rural or small-town backgrounds who had studied and frequently taught theology or canon law (rather than secular subjects), sought to avoid offending the growing number of devout Catholics who had switched from the Center to the parties of the Right.

Thus, in the Weimar Republic, Verbandskatholizismus was already beginning to decline at the moment of its fullest unfolding, at the very moment when it had perfected the ghetto. All Catholic spokesmen and social strata were breaking out of the ghetto, seeking union with the nation by many paths. The gains made along these paths by Catholics did not suffice to convince Catholics that they were no longer stepchildren in the fatherland, yet they also provoked politically dangerous Protestant hostility.

In several newspaper articles in 1924, the Catholic writer Peter Wust had proclaimed "The Return of German Catholicism out of Exile." He condemned the "anxious and nervously cramped defensiveness," the "cramped and ashamed" Catholicism of the Kulturkampf generation and its successor of the 1890s. He declared that at around 1900 Catholic youth such as himself had thirsted after a "strengthening, refreshening spiritual drink" because they all were "heirs" of Friedrich Nietzsche. German Catholicism for him had gone over to a spiritual offensive based on its achievements in philosophy, literature, and politics.[30] Wust's enthusiastic vagueness and his invocation of Nietzsche as well as the vociferous and confused controversy that he provoked suggest the turn to "vitalism," the vague, enthusiastic Lebensphilosophie among many younger Catholics, a broad, but foggy path toward union with the nation. Catholics increasingly spoke of adhering to the Catholic Weltanschauung rather than Catholic Lehre (teaching or doctrine), even their terminology reflecting their assimilation to the national norms.

Yet the Catholic spiritual and political leadership remained in a limbo between ghetto and nation. In the death throes of the Republic, the Catholic leadership reverted to extreme parochialism. The perennial Centrist role in the governing coalitions had not sufficed to overcome the Catholic deficits. In April 1931 the Centrist caucus in the Prussian Landtag introduced a bill in support of—to use the current American term—"affirmative action": a favoring of Catholic candidates until the deficit in the civil service was overcome.[31] The bill found no support from any other party, yet provoked severe Protestant hostility. In Baden in 1932 the hierarchy and the Centrist leadership pushed through a concordat at the price of destroying the last democratic majority in the Landtag. The Reich Concordat of 1933 was a desperate attempt to salvage Catholic rights at the expense of abandoning political Catholicism and giving Hitler his first foreign-policy triumph. Severe social, geographic, and religious cleavages made Germany a congeries of unequal minorities, and most of them in 1932-33 pursued a policy of sauve qui peut; Catholics were no different.

But the leadership also desired union with the nation. The Centrist caucus in the Reichstag, after sharp internal debate, voted unanimously for the Enabling Act in March 1933. The bishops only days later had withdrawn the warnings against National Socialism, while admonishing against illegal and subversive activity (that is, resistance). The trauma of having been branded Reichsfeinde continued to work its pernicious effects.

Both strengths (Verbandskatholizismus, group cohesion, the continuity and conscientiousness of leadership) and weaknesses (marginality, siege mentality) kept political Catholicism a major force to the end of the Republic--but a force crippled by minority consciousness and by a longing for acceptability, respectability, and union with the nation. In normal times--before 1914 or during the mid-Weimar years--Catholics could work hard at overcoming their own deficits and at tasks for the common good, but in the years of crisis--1918 and 1933--they passively submitted to the force of events and to the initiatives of others.

NOTES

[1] Richard von Dülmen, "Der deutsche Katholizismus und der Erste Weltkrieg," *Francia: Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte* 2 (1974), p. 350.

[2] Hans Rost, *Die Parität und die deutschen Katholiken* (Cologne: F. B. Bachem, 1974), pp. 32-33.

[3] In addition to Dülmen, "Der deutsche Katholizismus," pp. 347-76, see Karl Hammer, "Der deutsche Protestantismus und der Erste Weltkrieg" in the same issue of *Francia* 2 (1974), pp. 398-414.

[4] Or, if we take a longer sweep from Georg Count von Herling to Konrad Adenauer (1917-1963), Catholics or ex-Catholics (Adolf Hitler) headed ten out of nineteen cabinets for a total of thirty-five years.

[5] Werner Methfessel, "Evangelischer Bund," in *Die bürgenlichen Parteien in Deutschland*, ed. Dieter Fricke et al. (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1968-70), I, pp. 787-91; Fritz von der Heydt, *Gute Wehr: Werden, Wirken und Wellen des Evangelischen Bundes: Zu seinem 50 jährigen Bestehen* (Berlin: Verlag des Evangelischen Bundes, 1936).

[6] Johannes Forberger, *Der Einfluss des Katholizismus und Protestantismus auf die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Völker* (Leipzig, 1906), p. 4. When I told this in November 1979 to a doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of Bonn, a Protestant, she replied that she had always thought that the southern states were Catholic.

[7] See, for example, John E. Knedel, *The Decline of Fertility in Germany, 1871-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 130-41, 171-73, 237-40.

[8] *Statistik des Deutschen Reiches*, Neue Folge, vol. 203, pp. 54-75 (census returns from 1907). Hans Rest, *Die wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Lage der deutschen Katholiken* (Cologne: J. P. Bachem, 1911). Traute Nellessen-Schumacher, *Sozialstruktur und Ausbildung der deutschen Katholiken* (Weinheim: Beltz, 1969); and T. Nellessen-Schumacher, *Sozialprofil der deutschen Katholiken: Eine konfessionsstatstische Analyse* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1973). The only certain statistical evidence for these generalizations come from imperial Germany and the present Federal Republic, but despite the changing boundaries, one can assume that these generalizations apply to the Weimar Republic because of the continuity between the endpoints (1907 and 1960-70) and because of literary evidence from the Weimar Republic.

[9] The locus classicus for the thesis is Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), chap. 5. Among recent scholarship, see, for example, Richard S. Levy, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); and Timothy Alan Tilton, *Nazism, Neo-Nazism and the Peasantry* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1975).

[10] Hans Rost of Augsburg, for example, was one of the most vehement and persistent Anti-Semites in Centrist ranks. He identified Jewishness with socialism and the corrupting influences of modern society, but he was a staunch opponent of the Nazis. Rost, *Gedanken und Wahrheiten zur Judenfrage* (Trier: Verlag der Paulinus-Druckerei, 1907); Rost, *Katholische Familienkultur* (Augsburg: Haas & Grabherr, 1926); and Rost, *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben eines beinahe glücklichen Menschen* (Westheim bei Augsburg: 1962). Anton Otto Neher, a Catholic economist, attacked Jewish businessmen for allegedly unscrupulous practices, but extolled the Weimar *Volksstaat* for ending the political oppression of Catholics and making possible the social improvement of the Catholic proletariate. A. Neher, *Die writschaftliche und soziale Lage der Katholiken im westlichen Deutschland* (Rottweil: Druck und Verlag des Emmanuel, 1927), pp. 22, 31, 101f, 103f, 111-13.

[11] Günter Golde, *Catholics and Protestants: Agricultural Modernization in Two German Villages* (New York: Academic Press, 1975); Helmut Hahn, *Der Einfluss der Confessionen auf die Bevölkerungs-und Sozialgeographie des Hunsrück* (Bonn: Universitat at Bonn, 1950).

[12] Edward N. Peterson, *The Limits of Hitler's Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), chap. 8.

[13] Konrad Repgen, "Entwicklungslinien von Kirche und Katholizismus in historischer Sicht," in *Entwicklungslinien des deutschen Katholizismus*, ed. Anthon Rauscher (Munich: F. Schöningh, 1973), pp. 26-27.

[14] See, in particular, Hermann Greive, "Die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung der christlich-jüdischen Differenz: Zur Situation im deutschen Katholizismus," in *Juden im wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890-1914*, ed. Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker (Tübingen: Mohr, 1976), pp. 349-88.

[15] Hermann Anton Krose, *Konfessionsstatistik Deutschlands* (Freiburg: Herder, 1904), pp. 128f; Herbert Reich, "Die Aus-und Übertrittsbewegung, 1884-1949," *Kirchliches Jahrbuch* 78 (1951), pp. 363-85.

[16] H. A. Krose, "Mischehen," *Staatslexikon* (5th ed.), III, pp. 1330-33.

[17] Annemarie Burger, *Religionszugehörigkeit und soziales Verhalten: Untersuchungen und Statistiken der neueren Zeit in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), p. 358f.

[18] Johannes Schauff, *Die deutschen Katholiken und die Zentrumspartei: Eine politisch-statistische Untersuchung* (Cologne: J. P. Bachem, 1928), pp. 74, 101f; Walter Tormin, *Geschichte der deutschen Parteien seit 1848* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967), pp. 286f. The figures for 1930-33 represent my extrapolation of Schauff's analysis, based upon election data given by Termin.

[19] Schauff, *Die deutschen Katholiken*, pp. 64-68, 109-30.

[20] Cf., David Blackbourn, "The Problem of Democratisation: German Catholics and the Role of the Centre Party," in *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany*, ed. Richard J. Evans (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 160-85.

[21] On the lobbying efforts, see James C. Hunt, "'Die Parität in Preussen' (1899): Hintergrund, Verlauf und Ergebnisse eines Aktionsprogramms der Zentrumspartei," *Historisches Jahrbuch*, forthcoming. More generally on the Catholic efforts, see Wilhelm Spael, *Das katholische Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert: Seine Pionier-und Krisenzeiten (1890-1945)* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1964); and Ronald J. Ross, *Beleaguered Tower: The Dilemma of Political Catholicism in Wilhelmine Germany* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976).

[22] Karl Bachem, *Vorgeschichte, Geschichte und Politik der deutschen Zentrumspartei* (Cologne: J. P. Bachem, 1927-32), 9 vol., pp. 230ff, 393ff. Stadtarchiv Köln, *Nachlass* Wilhelm Marx, Nr. 244 and 776.

[23] Dr. Goerbig, *Die Parität an den öffentlichen höheren Schulen der Rheinprovinz im Schuljahr 1928* (Birkenfeld/Nahe: 1928); Fritz von der Heydt, *Die Parität bei der Anstellung der Beamten* (Berlin: Verlag des Evangelischen Bundes, 1931).

Heydt was the *Bundesdirekter* of the Protestant League and the chairman of the League of German Protestant Civil Servant Associations (*Verband deutscher evangelischer Beamtenvereine*).

[24] Max Braubach, "Zwei deutsche Hostoriker aus Westfalen: Briefe Heinrich Finkes an Aloys Schulte," *Westfälische Zeitschrift 118* (1968) pp. 9-113, 120 (1970), pp. 239-45; Walter Ferber, "Der Weg Martin Spahns: Zur Ideengeschichte des politischen Rechtskatholizismus," *Hochland* 62 (1970), pp. 218-29.

[25] Max Wallraf, *Aus einen rheinischen Leben* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1926), pp. 126f, 150-53, 166-68.

[26] Bundesarchiv Koblenz, *Nachlass* Rudolf von Hompel, typescript memoirs.

[27] Fricke, *Die Bürgerlichen Parteien*, II, p. 810.

[28] See the forthcoming doctoral dissertation by Herr Vogel, "Katholische Bischöfe, Weimar und nationale Opposition," written under the direction of Professor Konrad Repgen at the University of Bonn.

[29] Guenter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 3-15.

[30] Karl Hoeber, ed., *Die Rückkehr aus dem Exil: Dokumente der Beurteilung des deutschen Katholizismus der Gegenwart* (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1926), pp. 16-35, 137f.

[31] Heydt, *Die Parität*, p. 3.

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The Double Exile: Weimar Culture and the East European Jews, 1918-1923

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Weimar society continues to fascinate us partly because of the ironic connection between cultural creativity and political brutalization.[1] As unwelcome "insiders" of an unwanted Republic, German Jews were located at the very center of this dialectic, the concrete link tying these polarities. Their real and symbolic role in the disposition of Weimar Germany has been amply documented.[2] Much less attention has been given to the role of the East European Jews (Ostjuden) in Germany during this period. This constitutes a serious gap. Ostjuden were the first and most vulnerable targets of the newly radicalized anti-Semitism. As a highly visible foreign minority, they were obvious victims of the growing climate of political violence. At the same time they greatly complicated German Jewry's own exposed situation and, in many ways, conditioned its responses. Because the Ostjudenfrage (Question of the Eastern European Jews) was portrayed as a German Schicksalfrage, it was transformed into a problem of vital popular and national concern. No treatment of the relationship between Weimar culture, the Jews, and anti-Semitism would be complete without it.

To be sure, the problem of East European Jews was not new to Germany. The geographical proximity of Poland to Germany was a special circumstance attending the course of German Jewish emancipation. German Jews were never able to forget that they shared a common border with the unemancipated Eastern ghetto masses. Throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, German Jewish history was conditioned by this presence, both as myth and reality. Indeed, the articulation of a distinctive German Jewish identity was inseparable from the juxtaposition with the ghetto Jew of Eastern Europe. If most nineteenth-century Western Jews looked askance at their primitive ghetto cousins, German Jews articulated the negative conception of the Ostjude with special intensity because they felt the rift most acutely.[3] This was true too for many non-Jews. Elsewhere in Western Europe the Ostjude was regarded as an irritant--in Germany he became a major preoccupation, at times even an obsession.[4]

This concern reached its height in the immediate post-World War I period. The shock of defeat, the fear of revolution, and unparalleled economic hardship provided new credence to the old slogan "the Jews are our misfortune!" For the first time in twentieth-century Germany, anti-Semitism achieved political respectability and gained mass support.[5] While the anti-Jewish onslaught was generalized and clearly included native Jewry, the alien and defenseless nature of the Ostjuden made them particularly salient victims of the attack. Nothing, after all, concretized the Jewish danger more effectively than this strange, repellent ghetto creature. Hitler's purported "discovery" of the Jewish problem, let us not forget, occurred when he encountered the dirty, smelly East European Jew, "an apparition in a black caftan and black hair locks."[6] Ostjudentum, as it filtered into German space and consciousness, kept alive the historical memory of the mysterious and brooding ghetto presence. This was a resonant tradition that became especially effective in a time of mass confusion, political chaos, and economic collapse. No wonder that in the rhetoric and actions directed against the Ostjuden the post-War brutalization of the Jews was most acute and achieved its first real success.

All myths, if they are to function, must have some basis, however tenuous, in social reality. Right-wing accusations of an invasion by ghetto Jews were made plausible by the fact that during the war, 70,000 Eastern Jews—workers, prisoners, internees—were added to the prewar population of 90,000.[7] In addition, thousands more sought refuge from the brutal pograms that rocked Eastern Europe after the war. Although by 1922 the majority of war-arrivals had left the country, their presence was still noticeable. Against the background of defeat and economic disintegration, it was easy to present this as a mass flood posing a fundamental threat to German morality, economy, sexuality, politics, and culture.[8] Old accusations took on new significance. The Shylock myth was revitalized by constant accusations of ruthless Eastern Jewish enrichment at the expense of poor and honest patriotic folk. Radical right publications regularly employed parasitological language in their descriptions of Ostjuden. Thus in 1920 Theodor Fritsch's Die Hammer wrote:

> A horrible sight, these faces of animals of prey: in them there is nary a sign of human feeling . . . they stand before us as the embodiment of Jehova's promise: Thou shalt devour all other Nations! Yes, devour greedily, pitilessly. The myth that Jews were forced to become usurers and liars by their environment is exposed the minute these Ostjuden take their first step into our

> land . . . they are the conscious products of Talmudic criminal schools.[9]

These themes meshed effectively with the fear of radical political change. After the success of the Russian Revolution, bolshevism, that alien export, seemed palpably close to Germany. The prominent role of Jews in the Russian Revolution and Bela Kun's radical regime in Hungary[10] lent plausibility to the equation of bolshevism with Judaism. After all, since the beginning of the century _Ostjuden_ such as Rosa Luxembourg, Israel Helphand-Parvus, Leo Jogiches, and Karl Radek had been in the forefront of radical activity in Germany. Moreover, in the postwar Berlin and Munich revolutions, the figures of Luxembourg and Eugen Levine were notoriously prominent. Even radical figures who were clearly not _Ostjuden_ were branded as such. Thus Kurt Eisner, the Berlin-born leader of the Bavarian Socialist Republic, became widely known as a "Galician Jew," symbol of the Jewish revolutionary, "a Shylock . . . with a dirty yarmulke covering his head."[11]

Hard-line anti-Semites were not bothered by the great distance that divided traditional Talmudic Jews from professional revolutionaries who were radically disaffected from their origins. Modern revolution, wrote Alfred Roth of the _Deutsche Schutz und Trutz Bund_, was merely the conspiratorial Jewish means to sew discontent among the nations, thereby guaranteeing the ultimate triumph of Talmudic world rule.[12]

In the new polarized climate, even conservatives began increasingly to ignore the distinction between modern, assimilated German Jews and the Eastern ghetto masses. There were, however, exceptions to this rule. Thus Friedrich von Oppeln-Bronikowski attempted to deal with the Jewish problem by making a principled distinction between Eastern European and German Jewry. The former were "legitimate" targets of animosity, the latter were not. Notions of "international Jewry," he wrote, were palpably absurd. This distinction between cultured, assimilated German Jews and backward _Ostjuden_ was obvious. Nothing established the point better than German Jewry's own pronounced antipathy. Did they not support moves to keep the _Ostjuden_ out of Germany (Grenzschluss)?[13] Here was an explicit attempt to deflect anti-Semitism onto the _Ostjuden_ and away from the German Jews. Indeed, on the eve of Nazi accession to power, Bronikowski sharpened his attack on the Eastern Jews (and Zionists).[14] But the distinction had never been clear in the minds of the different anti-Semitic groups, and the conservative _Deutsch National Volkspartei_ was split on the question. The majority probably linked the two Jewries and regarded _Ostjudentum_ as a massive reservoir for the constant revitalization of Western Jewry.[15]

For all that, the success of anti-Semitic propaganda against the _Ostjuden_ was not a function of their alleged identity with

Western Jews. Rather its effectiveness derived from the ongoing resonance which the traditional stereotype of "the ghetto Jew" still evoked. The ghetto Jew symbolized an age-old cultural tension. Moreover, Eastern Jews--alien, visible, vulnerable--could be attacked with greater impunity than native, enfranchised German Jewry. Election posters in Germany and Austria constantly exploited these figures in caricature. Thus in 1920, the Austrian Christian Socials portrayed a snake with the head of a repulsive, side-locked Ostjude strangling his victim to death. Similarly in 1919 a German National Democratic party drawing tapped ancient fears of the dark ghetto. It pictured a priest, candle in hand, walking in front of a simple German worker who is pulling a coffin through the streets. Behind the coffin walks a gloating Ostjude. The only escape from this danger was to vote National Democratic.[16]

Of course the anti-Semitic camp attacked the Eastern Jew with particular vehemence. But what of other sectors of Weimar society? In a time of mass upheaval and a noticeable Eastern Jewish presence, how deeply had the stereotype of the ghetto Jew penetrated? With conservatives like Bronikowski, the answer is clear. Among völkisch activists like Hermann Popert,[17] founder of the Vortrupp youth movement and obsessed with reinvigorating a degenerating Germany through alcohol abstinence, there was a similar response. Popert--himself a half Jew--was deeply concerned with German racial hygiene. But his notion of race was territorial, not genetic. All Germans could be legitimate members of the Volk if they fulfilled national demands. His movement explicitly disavowed racial anti-Semitism and insisted that anti-Jewish activity not touch any German citizens. But this was not applicable to Ostjuden, whom he portrayed in gross stereotypical forms. Ghetto Jews--with their filth and unclean sexual habits--were fundamentally undesirable elements. They were the cause of German anti-Semitism.[18] Journals such as the Jesuit Hochland, also actively opposed to racial anti-Semitism, made clear distinctions between negative ghetto Jews and German Jews.[19]

The strength of the anti-Jewish onslaught during this period enabled it to decisively influence the nature of political discourse and to exert pressure on, and successfully penetrate, previously unaffected sectors. Even the bastions of opposition to anti-Semitism, the liberal and Social Democratic parties, were affected. The German Democratic party maintained its public stance against all manifestations of anti-Semitism. Their decision to nominate fewer Jewish candiates was, however, a concession not only to the mood of the times but to the opinions of individual party members as well. Many conveniently attributed anti-Semitism to the presence and behavior of the Ostjuden.[20] Otto Fishbeck, the party's Prussian minister of trade and commerce, publicly opposed the unsavory presence of Eastern Jews but insisted that this did not make anti-Semites out of the Democrats, who deeply respected the law-abiding German Jews.[21] In this manner some of the more democratically inclined political forces sought to concentrate the animus on Ostjuden and away from German Jews. This had always been a more respectable position and, under the new circumstances, obviated the need for an examination of the deeper sources animating the widespread racist agitation.

The response of the Social Democratic party to the Ostjudenfrage illustrates the nature of the competing forces at work. Both during the war and after, there were certain elements in the party who expressed general anti-Semitic convictions but these never became a dominant factor. Indeed, to the end, the Social Democratic party was the German Jews' "most important source of organized support in German society."[22] With regard to the Ostjudenfrage, however, the picture is slightly murkier, the ambivalence more evident. To a large extent this was related to the fact that in war-torn Germany the presence of Ostjuden constituted a real social problem--yet another burden on an already overloaded economy. In the pre-war period, the party had defended the rights of Jewish aliens in Germany and urged Eastern European Jews to actively participate in the class struggles that would bring about an age of universal socialist emancipation. There can be no doubt about this humanist orientation. But, like other groups in Germany, it is equally true that the Left accepted the negative concept of the ghetto and its products.[23] Thus Karl Kautsky, although utterly opposed to all racist conceptions and a proponent of East European Jewish emancipation, regarded Judaism as a reactionary factor. Its natural home was the ghetto, which Kautsky, fitting into a long tradition, saw as the symbol for the distinction between progress and reaction, enlightenment and obscurantism.[24]

The postwar response of the Social Democrats to the Ostjudenfrage in Germany must be seen in its overall historical context. The democratic parties were caught between the necessity to come to terms with popular opinion while at the same time maintaining a reasonable, compassionate policy. Certain individual members did indeed succumb to exploiting the stereotype as a justification for excluding Ostjuden from Weimar Germany.[25] But the dominant argument held that Germany's problem had objective socioeconomic roots and that, apart from a few profiteers and black-market operators, the small minority of Ostjuden could not possibly be blamed for the country's woes. Anti-Semitic assertions that they were Germany's foremost danger were dismissed as absurd.

The November 1919 edict concerning the Ostjuden, signed by Wolfgang Heine the Prussian minister of the interior, exemplified this approach. After extended consultations with Jewish organizations, the Prussian government undertook to resolve Eastern Jewish problems in an orderly and compassionate fashion.[26] Working through the Jewish Workers Welfare Organization, employment for the Ostjuden would be procured--even where this could affect employment of local workers. Of course, this was predicated upon the assumption that the Eastern Jews would move on as soon as possible. Those Ostjuden who had committed a crime or were deemed a threat to law and order were to be forthrightly expelled--although this too was to be done together with Jewish organizations who would protect the rights of the affected persons. Moreover, the Jewish Workers Welfare Organization had priority in finding work for unemployed aliens. This would then avert the legally required expulsion of unemployed aliens.

Anti-Jewish forces quickly interpreted the edict as evidence of a plot to favor foreign Jewish workers over German workers. The pressures on the Social Democrats in this regard were obvious. The edict was remarkably free of anti-Jewish sentiments, despite Heine's past, which was not.[27] Yet, in other contexts, Heine referred to the Ostjuden as "half-barbarian"[28] and only one month after the publication of the edict made his ambivalence a matter of public record. While attempting to temper the political agitation against the Ostjuden, he conceded, in a speech to the Prussian Parliament,[29] that the problem was getting worse and asserted that unsympathetic Jewish types could no longer be tolerated in German cities.

These remarks epitomized an unresolved split in Social Democratic attitudes. The traditional compassion and humanity of the Left was pitted against the equally ingrained distaste for the "anachronistic" ghetto Jews. Kautsky's formulation remained normative. It was only with Eduard Bernstein's postwar publications[30] that there was any inclination at all to give the ghetto Jew a measure of intrinsic value. Indeed, the November 1919 edict was itself partly the product of German Jewish protests against previous anti-Eastern Jewish actions undertaken by the Social Democratic government. In a memorandum to the Foreign Office in April 1919, the Zionist Julius Berger--himself a Social Democrat--objected to widespread expulsions of Ostjuden from all areas of Germany and especially Prussia. These expulsions, he wrote, were carried out with unprecedented brutality.[31] The grounds for these expulsions (unemployment, black-marketeering) were flimsy excuses for what Berger considered to be a basically anti-Jewish policy that dominated all levels of Prussian bureaucracy.

Expulsions were not the only actions perpetrated against the Ostjuden by SD officials. In early 1920, security forces, under the command of Social Democratic Police President Eugen Ernst, engaged in a full-scale raid on the Berlin ghetto. Under the pretext that it was necessary to ferret out black-marketeers and Bolshevist agents, the Berlin Eastern Jewish quarter was cordoned off, and between seven hundred and one thousand people were arrested. Of these, three hundred were placed in a concentration camp at Wuensdorf. Ernst had informed Heine that the Ostjuden were a cancerous sore on the national body, a real danger to Germany and, he warned, unless they were moved to intern camps, he would not be able to control the growing tide of anti-Semitism. Although all those arrested were eventually released and the SD journal Vorwärts condemned the incident (while simultaneously putting the blame on the army), this incident was firmly imprinted on Jewish--especially Eastern Jewish--consciousness.[32]

There were, to be sure, lawbreakers among the Ostjuden. Not only anti-Semites praised the action. The liberal Berliner Tageblatt welcomed the initiative to rid the city of its "pests."[33] But, as one sympathetic Jewish observer noted, the overall situation was conducive to economic lawlessness. German Jews, non-Jews and other foreigners were all implicated. To make the Ostjuden singularly responsible was shameful.[34]

This critique (of scape-goating powerless outsiders) also occupied nonparty social critics and dramatists on the far Left. Typically, these were German-Jewish intellectuals who had little sympathy for the inner world of the Eastern ghetto Jew. The famous novelist Alfred Doeblin was one of the very few disaffected Left Jewish intellectuals to discover the world of Eastern Jewry on its own terms and to record his appreciation of its intrinsic merits. His Reise in Polen (1925) was, however, quite atypical. The Ostjude was most often used as a foil to uncover some of the major hypocrisies of post-War German bourgeois morality and society. Thus Kurt Tucholsky--certainly no lover of the ghetto--bitterly caricatured Weimar's system of judicial and social double-standards by which Eastern ghetto Jews and native aristocrats were treated for the same offences in his caustic Avrumele Schabbesdeckel Und Prinz Eitel-Friedrich Von Hohenzollern (1921).[35] At the same time he mocked the pathetic efforts of middle-class German Jews--as exemplified by the philistine Herr Wendriner--to justify anti-Semitism when it was aimed at Ostjuden.[36]

The most controversial statement of this type was the expressionist Walter Mehring's play "The Merchant of Berlin" (1929), produced at the prestigious avant-garde Piscator theatre in Berlin.[37] This tragicomic reconstruction of early Weimar inflation propelled Eastern Jewish reality onto the stage with uncompromising force. Simon Chaim Kaftan (!) comes to Berlin in the midst of the 1923 inflation. He is a typical creature of the ghetto who, throughout the play, talks in his native Yiddish. In partnership with a German Gentile, Kaftan exploits the inflation and soon becomes a millionaire. Yet the stereotype is softened, humanized by the fact that in the end Kaftan is brought down--like everyone else, a victim rather than creator of circumstance--while the German remains victorious and maintains his sway at the expense of others. This conclusion, of course, scandalized the nationalist and anti-Semitic press.[38]

Poised between these Eastern Jewish outsiders and the broader society were Germany's Jews. Organized German Jewry had always been ambivalent in their collective expressions and actions concerning Ostjuden. Protective and dissociative modes operated side by side in uneasy alliance. On the one hand they had always provided charity and aid to their distressed East European brethren (a fact which served usually to emphasize rather than diminish the distance between them), while on the other they sought the most efficacious ways in which to rid Germany of their unseemly presence. For liberal, middle-class German Jews the Ostjuden were suffused with symbolic significance. They constantly reminded German Jews of their own Jewishness. They also reinforced the reality of anti-Semitic stereotypes and were regarded as impeding the successful disposition of German Jewish assimilation.[39] This dialectical tension--between responsibility and denial--was built into the normative German Jewish liberal approach to the Ostjuden.

By and large, the same was true for the Weimar period. The war, however, had disillusioned many German Jews, who were now less able to attribute anti-Semitism merely to the East European presence.[40] Efforts on behalf of the Ostjuden were made with renewed vigor. To be sure, this was not a disinterested effort but was also an attempt to contain and defuse the animus aimed against German Jews themselves. Still, for the first time, liberals and Zionists were able to work together on a common platform. A concerted effort was made by representatives of the major Jewish institutions to protect the rights of Eastern Jews and provide them with employment and housing.[41]

The general perception of Jewish interdependence weighed heavily on German Jewish leaders. Because the radical right had succeeded in making the Ostjudenfrage into a burning national issue, German Jews had to define the balance between Jewish responsibility and German loyalty with added caution. Paul Nathan's formulation was typical of the leadership's approach. It was clear, he wrote, that given Germany's desperate situation, the presence of foreign groups was undesirable. The agitation for expulsion, however, would be neither effective nor morally appropriate. Deportation would be an un-Germanic act and harm the country's international reputation.[42] A speaker for the Centralverein, the liberal representative organization of German Jewry, scoffed at absurd anti-Semitic claims about Eastern Jews yet, almost as a matter of course, added: "That the German Jews do not encourage this immigration must be obvious to all reasonable people." Ostjuden would move on as soon as circumstances permitted.[43] Berlin's Reform community also accepted responsibility for Ostjuden already in Germany but, as one typical article put it, no one could deny the abundance of "dubious" elements in their ranks. The majority of Germans clearly did not desire their presence. Reform Jews had more in common with Christian Germans than the Ostjuden, whose spirit and character was so alien.[44]

These positions reflected the continuing unresolved ambivalence of most liberal German Jews toward the Ostjuden. There were, to be sure, other positions on the continuum. Certain individuals—unhampered by the constraints of official communal responsibility—voiced the historic distaste in a much less ambivalent manner. Among the most prominent were the novelist Jacob Wassermann[45] and the philosopher Constantin Brunner.[46] For them, *Ostjuden* were wholly alien, generative of anti-Semitism and, because they constantly brought the ghetto and forgotten modes of Jewish exclusivism back to Germany, the prime inhibitor of successful German-Jewish integration.

Max Naumann's small but vocal *Deutschnationale Juden* made such sentiments its official policy. Founded in 1921, this group clearly reflected the postwar collapse of liberal certainties. It attempted to placate the fury of the right by appropriating some of its key values and advocating support of the conservative *Deutschnational* party. For Naumann, as he constantly repeated, there was only one political criterion: the welfare of the German Fatherland. *Ostjuden* were clearly antithetical to that welfare. It was not, wrote Naumann, that he disregarded the responsibilities of Jewish solidarity: "But it would mean the abandonment of *Deutschtum* if, out of sympathy for foreign Jews, we allowed the German Fatherland to come to grief."[47]

If many Weimar Jews believed that the Ostjuden were the real cause of the prevailing anti-Semitism, they voiced this conviction privately. Naumann's group, however, made the East-West Jewish distinction the critical pivot of its arguments and attempted to siphon anti-Jewish hostility onto the Eastern Jews. At times almost nothing distinguished their pronouncements on the issue from the anti-Semitic press. *Ostjuden*, they wrote, were totally unassimilable. They were swarming into Germany, cheating and demoralizing everyone in their way. They were ruthless, noisy, and uncultured. Their rapid departure from Germany was to be encouraged.

Naumann's group focused on yet another Jewish enemy: Zionism. For *Nationaldeutsch* Jews, Zionists and Eastern Jews were practically synonymous. Both embodied the Jewish national sensibility and contradicted the premises of *Deutschtum*. They represented alien, disloyal elements. As the German Zionists had always been the main supporters of Eastern Jewish rights in Germany, this was a plausible association. Indeed, to the chagrin of liberal Jews generally, many young German Zionists had initiated a veritable cult of the *Ostjuden*. Martin Buber's prewar Hasidic writings ligitimized this growing trend. In a radical inversion of images, *Ostjuden* were held to symbolize Jewish authenticity, community, and lost spiritual values, while Western Jews were pictured as philistine, undignified and deracinated.[49]

In between all these competing forces were the *Ostjuden* themselves. Between 1918 and 1923 it was they who felt the full force of the Weimar crisis. Expulsions, violence, internment in special concentration camps,[50] police raids: All these were a part of Eastern Jewish reality during these years. The attack on the Ostjuden reached its climax in 1923, when economic suffering also reached its height. Between November 5 and 8, Germany's first twentieth century pogrom began. With over 10,000 people roaming the streets of the Eastern Jewish quarter, the Scheunenviertel, an orgy of looting and violence proceeded. Only with the insertion of massive police reinforcements was order restored.[51] The November pogrom merely culminated a whole series of anti-Jewish outbreaks which had occurred that year in Munich, Beuthen, Koenigsberg, Nuremberg, Saxony, and elsewhere. Almost always the Eastern Jews, visible and vulnerable, were the prime targets of attack.

As one transplanted Eastern Jewish intellectual, Zalman Rubaschoff--later Shazar, president of the State of Israel--noted at the time, Ostjuden in Germany found themselves in a state of double exile. Far removed from the cultural world of the German workers, the Eastern Jewish proletariat had precious little in common with bourgeois German Jews (this even applied to their relations with German Zionists). The very presence of a Jewish proletariat in Germany was anomalous.[52] Minority life was rendered doubly difficult.

This was reflected in the disunity, apathy, and fragmentation that hounded the only organization of Eastern Jews in Germany, the Verband der Ostjuden. Its leaders constantly complained that despite the concerted attacks upon them, Ostjuden refused to make a serious, unified response. How, they asked, could German Jews be expected to defend them when they did not even bother to defend themselves?[53] In the midst of the anti-Semitic agitation, their journal lamented: "We are a Galut (Exile) within Galut, pathetically dependent upon the goodwill of others."[54] The position was further weakened by the defection of leaders who, as soon as they could, escaped the stigma of the Berlin ghetto.[55] Those who remained, exhorted their brethren "to learn the basic principles of political and social life. We have to start at the beginning and learn the elementary ABCs. We hold ourselves to be very intelligent, children of the Book, yet we are illiterate. We do not know how to deal with the most important, critical and dangerous aspects of our existence."[56]

The constellation of forces at work between 1913 and 1923, however, was well beyond the control of a transient, powerless community. It was only with the post-1923 economic recovery that life for these East European Jews became more tolerable. When, however, the final storm arrived ten years later, it became obvious to all that, for the radical right, the attack on the Ostjude had been only the beginning of a massive onslaught against all Jews.

NOTES

[1] See Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); Walter Laqueur, *Weimar: A Cultural History* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1976); and John Willett, *Art and Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety 1917-1933* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[2] Werner E. Mosse, ed., *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923* (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1971); Werner E. Mosse, ed., *Entscheidungsjahr 1932: Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimar Republik* (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1966); and Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980).

[3] The entire history of this problem is treated in Steven E. Aschheim, *Strange Encounter: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness 1800-1923* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

[4] See Steven E. Aschheim,"Caftan and Cravat: The Ostjude as a Symbol in the Development of German Anti-Semitism" in A. Sharlin and S. Drescher, eds., *Political Symbolism in Modern Europe* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, forthcoming).

[5] For a detailed overview of these developments, see Werner Jochmann, "Die Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus," in *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*.

[6] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), pp. 56-57.

[7] S. Adler-Rudel, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1880-1940* (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1959), pp. 60-63.

[8] See, for instance, Hitler's speech of April 12, 1922, "Die 'Hetzer' der Wahrheit!" in Ernst Boepple, ed., *Adolf Hitlers Reden* (Munich: Deutscher Volko Verlag, 1933), p. 12.

[9] Quoted from "Die Hetze gegen die Ostjuden" in *Mitteilungen aus dem Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus* 30, no. 1 (January 10, 1920), p. 3.

[10] For a review of the whole topic, see J. L. Talmon, "Jews Between Revolution and Counter-Revolution," in *Israel Among the Nations* (New York: Macmillan, 1970). For Germany, see Werner T. Angress, "Juden im politischen Leben der Revolutionszeit," in *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*.

[11] See Saul Friedlaender, "Die Politischen Veraenderungen der Kriegszeit und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Judenfrage," in *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*, p. 51.

[12] Alfred Roth, *Judentum und Bolschewismus: Enthuellungen aus juedischen Geheimakten: Ein Mahn und Warnruf in Letzter Stunde* (Hamburg: A. Götting, 1920). For similar views, see Rudolf von Sebottendorf, *Bevor Hitler Kam: Urkundisches aus der Frühzeit der Nationalsozialistischen Bewegung* (Munich: Grassinger, 1933).

[13] *Antisemitismus? Eine unparteiische Pruefung des Problems* (Charlottenburg: 1920). See especially pp. 8, 18, 47-49, 53-54, 64.

[14] See *Gerechtigkeit! Zur Loesung der Judenfrage* (Berlin-Wilmersdorf: 1932).

[15] See Adolf Bartels, *Die Berechtigung des Antisemitismus: Eine Widerlegung der Schrift von Herrn v. Oppeln-Bronikowski, "Antisemitismus"* (Leipzig: T. Weicher, 1921). See too Alfred Pieck, "Slawentum und Judentum," *Deutschlands Erneurung* 3, no. 2 (1919), p. 102.

[16] Both these caricatures are reproduced in Eduard Fuchs, *Die Juden in der Karikatur: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte* (Munich: A. Langen, 1921). See opposite face of p. 196 and p. 300.

[17] For details on Popert, see George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), pp. 104-6.

[18] Hermann Popert, "Ostjuden," *Der Vortrupp* 3, no. 22 (November 2, 1919).

[19] See Paul Wohfarth, "Die Tragik des deutschen Juden," and Arnold Zweig's reply, "Nochmals zur 'Tragik des Deutschen Juden,'" and the comments by the editor Karl Mueth in *Hochland* (April-September 1921).

[20] See Werner Jochmann, "Die Ausbreitung," pp. 491-97.

[21] See his remarks quoted in "Ostjudendebatte im Preussischen Landtag," *Juedische Rundschau* no. 96 (May 12, 1922), p. 632.

[22] Donald L. Niewyk, *Socialist, Anti-Semite, and Jew: German Social Democracy Confronts the Problem of Anti-Semitism 1918-1933* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 221. Niewyk's point is well taken but he seems to underplay the dualities and ambivalences of the SD concerning the *Ostjuden*, especially when it had official responsibility for the problem.

[23] See George L. Mosse, "German Socialists and the Jewish Question in the Weimar Republic," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 16 (1971).

[24] Kautsky's *Rasse und Judentum* appeared in 1914, and an expanded edition was published in 1921. See the English translation: *Are the Jews a Race?* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972), especially Chapter XII, "The Last Stages of Judaism."

[25] See Theodore Müller, "Die Einwanderung der Ostjuden," *Neue Zeit* 39 (June 24, and July 1, 1921).

[26] For a history of this and Jewish social welfare efforts, see Adler-Rudel, *Ostjuden*, especially pp. 63-66.

[27] Ibid., p. 66.

[28] See R. W., "Halb-Barbaren," *Juedische Rundschau* 25, no. 9 (February 3, 1920), p. 56.

[29] Speech of December 16, 1919 reported in "Konzentrationslager," *Juedische Rundschau* 25, no. 1 (January 6, 1920).

[30] See his "Die Mizrach-Yidn in Daitschland" in the American Yiddish journal *Die Zukunft* 28, no. 11 (Novmeber 1923). See too George Mosse, "German Socialists and the Jewish Question in the Weimar Republic" for an account of the stereotype and Bernstein's role.

[31] Julius Berger's private memorandum to Prof. M. Sobernheim of the Jewish Affairs Section of the Foreign Office, April 2, 1919. Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem Z3/718.

[32] The following sources are useful: "Die Ostjudenverhaftungen," *Juedische Rundschau* 25, no. 22 (March 31, 1920), p. 154;

C. Z. Klötzel, "Razzia," *Neue Juedische Monatschefte* 4, no. 11-12 (March 10-25, 1920); "Jagd auf Juden," *Juedische Rundschau* 25, no. 15 (February 24, 1920), p. 99; Niewyk in *Socialist, Anti-Semite and Jew*, p. 100, minimizes the significance of this action.

[33] *Berliner Tageblatt*, February 10, 1920.

[34] See C. Z. Klötzel, "Razzia."

[35] Reprinted in Kurt Tucholsky, *Gesammelte Werke* Volume 1 (1907-1924), (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1960), pp. 305-8.

[36] See Tucholsky's "Herr Wendriner steht unter der Diktatur," (1930) in *Ausgewaehlte Werke* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1965), p. 483.

[37] Reproduced in Gunther Ruehle, *Zeit und Theater: Von der Republik zur Diktatur 1925-1933*, volume 2 (Berlin: Propyläen, 1972). See also the commentary, pp. 803-9.

[38] For samples of reviews and the controversy the play aroused, see Gunther Ruehle, *Theater fuer die Republik 1917-1933: Im Spiegel der Kritik* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1967), pp. 961-68.

[39] I deal with the genesis and development of these issues in *Strange Encounter*.

[40] See Reinhold Lewin, "Der Krieg als juedisches Erlebnis," *Monatsschrift fuer Geschichte des Judentums* 63, no. 1/3 (January-March 1919); and Franz Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus," *Neue Juedische Monatshefte* 2, no. 23 (September 10, 1918). See too Eva Reichmann, "Der Bewusstseinswandel der Deutschen Juden," in *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923*.

[41] For details see Adler-Rudel, *Ostjuden*, Part 3.

[42] Paul Nathan, "Nachschrift," *Im Deutschen Reich* 27, no. 1 (January 1921); *Die Ostjuden in Deutschland und die Antisemitische Reaktion* (Berlin: Philo-Verlag, 1922).

[43] Kurt Alexander, "Zeitschau," *Im Deutschen Reich* 26, no. 7/8 (July-August 1920), especially p. 237. See also "Wandersturm," *Im Deutschen Reich* 26, no. 12 (December 1920).

[44] Dr. F. Coblenz, "Ueber die Ostjudenfrage in Deutschland," *Mitteilungen der juedischen Reformgemeinde zu Berlin*, no. 2 (July 1, 1921), pp. 22-23.

[45] See his 1921 work, translated by S. N. Brainin, *My Life as German and Jew* (New York: Conrad-McCann Inc., 1933), especially pp. 196-98.

[46] See his *Der Judenhass und die Juden* (Berlin: Oesterheld, 1919); and *Von den Pflichten der Juden und von den Pflichten des Staates* (Berlin: G. Kiepenheuer, 1930). See too the semi-autobiographical *Vom Einsiedler* (Potsdam: G. Kiepenheuer, 1924).

[47] Max Naumann, "Von nationaldeutschen Juden: Eine Erwiderung," *Im Deutschen Reich* 27, no. 1 (January 1921).

[48] See "Von nationaldeutschen Juden, Ostjuden und Dissidenten," *Mitteilungen der juedischen Reformgemeinde zu Berlin*, no. 3 (September 15, 1921), especially p. 8; "Angstpsychose," *Juedische Rundschau*, no. 101/102 (December 22, 1922); "Liegt Berlin in Deutschland?" quoted in *Juedische Rundschau* 27, no. 26 (March 31, 1922), pp. 167-68; and "Auslaendergefahr und Ostjudengefahr," *Mitteilungsblatt des Verbandes Nationaldeutscher Juden*, no. 1 (January/February 1923).

[49] *Strange Encounter*, Chapters 5, 6 and 8.

[50] See Jochmann, "Die Ausbreitung," pp. 505-6.

[51] For an account of the riots, see Ulrich Dunker, *Der Reichsbund juedischer Frontsoldaten 1919-1939: Geschichte eines juedischen Abwehrvereins* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1977), pp. 49-56.

[52] See "In Der Neue Achsanya," in the Yiddish journal *Oif Der Schwell* (On The Threshold), no. 1 (1918).

[53] See "The Conference of Ostjuden in Germany," in the Yiddish *Der Ostjude* 2, no. 26 (July 7, 1921).

[54] "The Torture of Ostjuden in Stagard," *Der Ostjude* 2 (April 3, 1921).

[55] See Jakob Reich, "Deutschland (Rundschau," *Neue juedische Monatshefte* 4, no. 11/12 (March 10-25, 1920), p. 266.

[56] Dr. Israel Uerbach, "Die Ostjuedische Aleph-Bet," *Der Ostjude* 2, no. 23 (June 10, 1921).

14

Class Struggle around the Hearth: Women and Domestic Service in the Weimar Republic

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One aspect of fascism that has continued to puzzle historians is its relationship to women. Though fewer women than men voted for Hitler, the question remains of what drew some women into protofascist and fascist political groups, when these appeared to be so overtly misogynist. One possible answer may be the deterioration of women's material condition during the Weimar Republic despite some constitutional gains. This contradiction sponsored reactionary impulses, particularly among the middle class.[1] This chapter pursues that hypothesis through a study of the actions and ideology of a particular group, chosen because it represents a significant portion of the middle class: the organization of urban housewives. More importantly, their fight against organized domestic servants will be traced as a particular aspect of the class struggle of this period: the conflict over which women, that is, the women of which class, would do the work of social reproduction of the bourgeoisie. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to consider the various schemes for the socialized reproduction of all classes. Rather, I argue that the actual historical conflict over service was part of the overall class struggle and of the crisis of capitalism that debilitated the petit bourgeoisie and may have led to National Socialism.

The Housewives Union was one of the largest groups inside the Federation of German Women's Associations and, just by being there, pushed the umbrella group rightward in the political spectrum.[2] Since the ideology of the Housewives Union was traditional, holding that woman's place was primarily in the home, its claim to the label "feminist" is doubtful. However, a summary overview of the history of the German women's movement indicates that, in context, the claim is not entirely misplaced.[3]

From its beginnings in the revolutions of 1848 to the start of

World War I, German feminism was weakened by division and diluted by conservatism. It was divided mainly between bourgeois and socialist feminists, despite occasional attempts at alliance.[4] The bourgeois wing was conservative, partly because of legal intimidation[5] and partly because the German idea of feminism, like "the German idea of freedom,"[6] suffered from the dependence of and constraints on the middle class that believed in it. The socialist wing, operating from within an originally revolutionary movement, also differed from and opposed the bourgeois individualism of Anglo-American feminism, though for different reasons.[7] Thus, German feminism as a whole rarely surmounted the notion of women's duties on behalf of women's rights. At best, it argued for women's rights in order to better pursue those duties. Only a small proportion of the women's movement mobilized around suffrage.[8]

After the quasi-revolution of 1918 and during the ensuing smoldering civil war endemic to the Weimar Republic, the bourgeois and socialist women's movements became increasingly and overtly antagonistic. The socialist women's movement split into two major groups: those following the majority Social Democratic party and those following its former women's leader, Clara Zetkin, into the newly formed Communist party. The bourgeois women's movement continued its prewar trend toward increasing conservatism and the Federation of German Women's Associations became almost paralyzed as a unified political pressure group.[9] Considerable activity thus devolved upon its component interest groups, of whom the Housewives Union was the largest. Hardly feminist at the start, it came to employ the rhetoric of women's rights to defend its particular interest, broadly construed as "housewifery," and used the German idea of feminism to put gender politics into the service of class politics. Its practical methods, borrowed from active feminists, and the dissemination of its ideology became an important ingredient of the Nazi solution to "the woman question."

The Housewives Union defined itself as a professional organization, originating in several local housewives' associations of the Wilhelmine Empire.[10] These had formed around several issues, not the least of which was the collective mobilization against newly forming unions of domestic servants, most of them under socialist auspices.[11] World War I enlarged the housewives' goals and led to centralization. On May 22, 1915, in a kind of feminist Burgfrieden, a disparate assortment of women gathered in the Lyceum Club in Berlin to create the Housewives Union.[12] Hedwig Heyl, daughter of the founder of North German Lloyd[13] and herself a founder of the oldest Berlin home economics courses dating back to 1885, became honorary head of the new group,[14] but its first president was Martha Voss-Zietz, a suffragist and representative of the Federation of German Women's Associations, which seems to have taken the initiative for the centralization.[15] Also present were Dr. Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, one of the first historians of the German women's movement and last president of the Federation,[16] as well as Anna Blos, future Reichstag delegate for the Social Democratic party.[17] In the next two years, the Housewives Union also attracted leaders of the separately organized Rural Housewives Associations, including aristocrats such as Countess Schwerin-Löwitz and Countess Margarete von Keyserlingk, representing agricultural producer interests whose presence brought an attack from the press and forced the Housewives Union to leave the War Commission for Consumer Interests.[18] Fourteen associations entered the Housewives Union at its founding and fifty-one more joined in the first year, for a total of about forty-five thousand members.[19]

What brought them all together at this time was, of course, the national emergency. They saw their tasks to be advising housewives on wartime consumer problems, improving the transportation and distribution of foods, influencing the price structure, and "solving" the servant problem.[20] The latter broke open with the end of the general Burgfrieden in 1917, when the Central Union of Domestic Employees petitioned the Reichstag to lift the semi-feudal regulations, the Gesindeordnungen, which determined their work conditions, and demanded to be included instead in the Industrial Code applying to other workers.[21] That action marked the resumption of an old struggle, around which domestic servants had first organized in Nürnberg in 1906, led by the socialist Helene Grünberg,[22] and which was to persist throughout the Weimar Republic. At issue was the legal status of household employment relations, a protracted conflict conducted mainly by women, in which the Housewives Union represented the bourgeois household, an imperfectly commoditized sphere of class reproduction, characterized by patriarchal relations, and defended it and themselves from encroaching capitalist relations.[23]

Before 1918, fifty-nine regulations that varied from region to region determined the rights and obligations of household help, called Gesinde. Since the thirteenth century, Gesinde law had developed as a service contract between free persons, in which one party promised service and the other promised provision for a limited period. Socially, however, servants were subordinate for that amount of time to the head of a household, who was also their legal guardian. With the development of central state institutions, the legal conditions of Gesinde worsened, especially in eastern Germany, where they were commonly employed as agricultural laborers on large estates. Stein's 1810 edicts, eliminating serfdom in Prussia, led to recodification of other dependency relations there, and other German states followed the model. Exception laws were drafted, however, extending work obligation indefinitely and allowing the withholding of wages, as well as physical punishment and police coercion of recalcitrant servants. Virtual serfdom re-entered through the kitchen door.[24]

The Civil Code of 1896 did little to alleviate the conditions of

Gesinde, leaving their specific regulation to individual states, historically the worst offenders. The Civil Code did make some aspects of its general codification of service contracts applicable to Gesinde, such as prohibition of physical punishment; mandatory wage payment (though it might be in kind rather than in cash); the right to prime creditor status in case of the employer's bankruptcy; the right to room and board and to reasonable, but unspecified, rest periods; protection against the garnishee of wages for property damage; care in case of illness for up to six weeks, to be paid by the now obligatory sickness insurance. However, these mitigations, impressive on paper, were virtually nullified by the still effective Prussian Gesinde law of 1310, which drastically, and with police enforcement, limited servants' rights to terminate their contracts.[25] Thus, when the Council of People's Representatives decreed an end to all Gesinde laws on November 12, 1918, and on January 24, 1919, issued a temporary decree putting agricultural labor under the Industrial Code, private household service alone remained unregulated. Here organized housewives, acting as legal deputies of the male heads of households, fought organized domestics in a specifically female arena of class struggle.

WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE: THE PROBLEM OF REGULATING DOMESTIC SERVICE

From the start, the opponents were unevenly matched. In 1919, the Central Union of Domestic Employees claimed about thirty-one thousand members, a figure it never reached again, while the Housewives Union peaked at two hundred and fifty thousand members in 1922.[26] In addition to numbers, the Housewives Union had far more resources at its command: money for travel to conferences, publicity, and social connections to facilitate their political work. Not originally feminist, the Housewives Union nevertheless soon was manipulating newly accessible levers of power, such as the right to elect and be elected to public office, to serve as judges on labor courts, to lobby, and so on. They used access to the media to project their definition of woman's contribution to national life as one of unending service and sacrifice, regardless of class, pointing out that today's servants were tomorrow's working-class wives. Paradoxically, while the Central Union of Domestic Employees rarely used the language of gender, their attempts to limit household work to certain hours, rather than have it absorb all available time, was potentially much more feminist. The confessional unions of domestics tended to parrot their mistresses in this regard.

Long stretches of "work-readiness" (Arbeitsbereitschaft) versus a shorter and well-defined actual working period was the major item of contention between the housewives and the domestics and was also the key to distinguishing precapitalist notions of service, in which the servant rented out (literally for Mietgeld) his or her person, from capitalist relations of labor, in which the worker contracted to give a specified amount of labor power. The old regional Gesinde laws and even the more enlightened national Civil Code did not specify any number of hours of work or rest due domestic workers. Naturally, that became the first item on the agenda when the revolutionary Council's decree made it negotiable. For domestics, change was crucial. A 1917 survey showed that about half of them served sixteen hours a day.[27]

At first, in the absence of formal legislation, "model" contracts were drawn up between local organizations of domestics and housewives, analogous to the parity agreements between workers and employers in the industrial sector. The parameters of negotiation were immediately apparent. On February 12, 1919, the Magdeburg local of the Central Union of Domestic Employees negotiated a contract with the local Housewives Union for a ten-hour workday for urban domestics and, for rural domestics, nine to eleven hours, depending on the season.[28] "Red Bavaria" even promulgated a state law fixing domestic service at ten hours.[29] By contrast, the Berlin city employment agency issued a model contract for thirteen hours of "work-readiness," inclusive of two interruptable hours for meals and rest.[30] A similar one from Cassel, reflecting a local agreement, petitioned the Labor Ministry for legal status.[31] Between these two poles, the ultimately unresolved debate continued throughout the Weimar period.

Twice, in 1921 and 1927, the government drafted legislation to regulate household service. Hopes for its passage were highest the first time around, and considerable energy went into the discussion of details. It got the most exhaustive consideration in the Temporary National Economic Council, the politically tamed successor to the revolutionary councils and supposedly a forerunner to a permanent economic parliament, never actually established, to parallel the political parliament. Modelled on the parity councils of employers and workers that emerged from the original revolutionary councils, the economic parliament added a third group of "consumers," who tended to split their votes between the two major contenders. This temporary institution lacked even effective advisory power, but its records bear witness to the heat of many battles and offer invaluable details of them. Here, in the Social Policy Committee, Luise Kähler, representing the Central Union of Domestic Employees, fought steadfastly for a ten-hour day, while Charlotte Mühsam-Werther, an "expert witness" to the Committee, though not a formal member, represented the Housewives Union and was equally adamant about thirteen hours of "work-readiness."[32] Elisabeth Vurthmann, representing the National Union of Female Domestic Employees of Germany, the Christian organization, kept a low profile and rarely engaged in debate.

The argument for ten hours, rather than eight as established by the new Industrial Code, included one concession, namely that domestic service differed from industrial work in not being continuous labor and that two hours might therefore be added as buffer. The argument for thirteen hours, potentially expandable to even more, came from the interpretation of household work as limitless by definition because it was geared to family needs. Domestic service, it was said, was fine training for a working-class marriage.[33]

But even before the debate over hours took place, the opponents engaged over the very definition of a domestic employee. The first paragraph of the government draft distinguished between two categories, "household assistant" (*Hausgehilfin*) who was in residence, and "household worker" (*Haushaltsarbeiter*) who was not, dropping altogether the derogatory term "servant" (*Dienstmädchen* and *Dienstbote*).[34] The distinction mattered for the domestics, who, if they were not residents, might share in the somewhat better conditions already achieved by nonresidents, free of the *Gesinde* law in the first place.[35] But the distinction also mattered to the housewives, who wanted nonresidents included in the legislation, since residential service was declining sharply.[36] There were several reasons for this trend. In the main, domestic service shrank as the industrial production of consumer goods narrowed household chores primarily to maintenance. The same process of industrialization and urbanization also gradually dried up the rural source of domestic labor, though household service still retained some of its historical function as a bridge for young country women coming into the city.[37] A historically more specific reason for the decline in residential service in Germany was the impoverishment of parts of the middle class, who sometimes preferred to rent out the maid's room and save on the expense of caring for her as the Civil Code required. Another was the increasing unwillingness of potential servants to live under onerous and degrading conditions with little personal freedom, when other options were open to them.[38] In periods of high unemployment, with fewer choices, women might enter, but also soon leave domestic service, creating the paradoxical impression of both a servant shortage and a large pool of potential domestics whose very existence hampered effective collective bargaining. So embattled was the question of definition, that the Committee deferred voting on it, pending discussion of other parts of the draft legislation.[39]

The prolonged debate was over hours of work. Here the government draft proposed thirteen hours of "work-readiness," with designated Sundays off and other leisure time. Kähler moved to amend to ten hours for adults and eight for minors under eighteen. Mühsam supported the government draft, arguing that many housewives now also worked and needed more help in the house. A spokesman for the workers' side pointed out broader ramifications: In commerce and transport, the term "work-readiness" was being used to prevent fixing hours; it was an assault on labor in general. The Labor Ministry's representative defended the government draft on the grounds that fixing hours for domestic labor would destroy the middle-class family, mainstay of German spiritual life. But feisty Luise Kähler retorted earthily that many housewives were already fixing hours for their servants to use the toilet. So much for spirituality. Still, she lost her amendment by eleven to ten votes.[40]

The issue of hours remained embedded, however, in the definition of who was to be covered by this law, the vote on which had been deferred. So when it was raised again at the end of the first reading of the entire law, Kähler pleaded fervently to have nonresidents excluded, on the ground that no one should expect thirteen hours of work from a person who also had to travel to and from the workplace. Again she lost, fourteen to nine.[41] Still, she would not give up. On second reading of the bill, she argued that household workers, like laundresses and cleaning women, did exhausting work and should not be expected to do it longer than the eight hours, to which their current legal status entitled them. Again, her motion was first deferred and then defeated.[42] On the major issues, then, of who was to be covered and how long they were to work, the housewives and their allies on the Committee won.

But the other issues of contention in this bill give an even clearer indication of the level of struggle and its bitterness. In seven months of debate, long hours and many speeches went into justifying or denying demands for space and furniture specifications for resident domestics and their access to a heated room during rest periods; whether the meals to which they were entitled need only be healthy and sufficient or also of comparable quality to the employer's; the extent of sick care to be expected, including at childbirth; the inviolability of night rest and vacation time; the proportion of wages that might be garnished for property damage; conditions for and notice of termination; and finally, special identification of employees with photographs, a reminder of the prerevolutionary work record (*Dienstbuch*) that had singled out servants from all other workers and was considered a humiliation by them. The score on all these other points, when the Committee had finished its deliberations, favored the domestics. But when the bill came to a final vote on May 4, 1922, the dissatisfaction of all parties was registered in its defeat: Employers opposed it, the Catholic Union of Domestics supported it, and the Central Union of Domestic Employees abstained, Kähler saying that ultimately she couldn't support a bill for thirteen hours.[43]

Still, the bill was forwarded to plenary session of the Temporary National Economic Council, where it had three more readings, in which Kähler and her allies tried again to restore the original government draft defining the category to be covered. Here, too, they failed. Worse still, at the very last reading of October 13, 1922, the employers' group won back some earlier concessions and gained even more in hours. Night rest was reduced from eleven to nine hours, leaving fifteen hours of "work-readiness," sick care was curtailed, vacations shortened, reasons for dismissal without notice extended, and the hated photo identification, symbol of servitude, was restored. Now the employers' group was ready to support the bill; it passed by 103 to 97 votes. Disgusted, Kähler walked out.[44]

Organized domestics now put their hopes in the political legislature, where the bill was next headed, hoping worker interests would be better represented there than in the economic quasi-parliament with its parity structures in which worker interests could command only one-third of the votes. But it never got there. On December 22, 1922, the Reichsrat tabled it and it never reached the Reichstag. The reason given was the pressing economic crisis.[45]

Five years later, a second attempt to legislate for household service met the same fate. A modified version of the first bill was sent to the Reichstag at the end of 1927, but remained in committee until June 1930, when the Reichstag itself was dissolved. Debate around the second bill was even more vituperous and politicized than around the first. The Hamburg local of the Housewives Union, headed by Martha Voss-Zietz, one of the founders and now a member of the Fatherland Party, protested the bill at a plenary of the Temporary National Economic Council on September 19, 1928. She argued that state regulation would interfere unduly in the private household and would materially damage both the middle class and the servants it would consequently disemploy. Cosigners of the protest were the *Stahlhelm Frauenbund* of Greater Berlin, the National League of Large Families (*Reichsbund der Kinderreichen*), the *Deutscher Frauenkampfbund*, and the National Association of Employed Housewives (*Reichsvereinigung gewerbetreibender Hausfrauen*).[46]

Concretely, the Housewives Union was disappointed that the modified bill had dropped the photo identification, limited garnishee of wages for damages to only half a month's pay, and had assured some Sundays and vacations for domestics--especially troublesome to large families. In a strange distortion of a feminist argument, they opposed the protection of young domestics from employment by persons previously convicted on a morals charge, asserting that housewives, not husbands, should be considered the actual employers. However, after more revisions, they were relatively satisfied that there would be no household inspections of work conditions, that employee references were mandatory (though not detailed enough), and, most importantly, that only nine hours of rest for adults and ten for minors were mandated, leaving fourteen to fifteen hours of "work-readiness," inclusive of meals and rest periods. Overall, they voiced appreciation for the attempt to restore family-servent relations of old, and they regretted the bill's ultimate demise.[47]

By contrast, the Central Union of Domestic Employees, having repeatedly pressed for the first bill's revival with the support of the Social Democratic party in the Reichstag, applauded the appearance of a new bill, still hoping for improved conditions.[48] A questionnaire polling over four thousand domestics showed that nearly half had only ten hours of night rest, nearly a third had only nine hours, and most had very few days off, including Sundays.[49] The union soon observed that the new bill would give little, if any, relief. While it was being discussed, a sympathetic analyst compared its provisions to the status quo pertaining under prescriptions of the Civil Code. On the positive side, he noted gains such as some legal determination of work hours, some guarantee of rights usable in law, protection against dismissal without notice, and some vacation allowance. On the negative side, he counted losses such as the infamous photo identification (ultimately dropped), fines for damages, sick care chargeable against the employee's earnings, and unclarity about reasons for dismissal.[50] The worst--increase in work hours to fifteen--was yet to come. Small wonder the bill's demise was unmourned by the domestics. While they had wished for regulation and the housewives had not, in the end the latter would have felt better served than the former, had the bill passed.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES: HOUSEHOLD APPRENTICESHIP

The struggle sharpened further after the first bill had failed. Runaway inflation in 1923 severely damaged working-class organizations and eroded the thin line separating already precarious parts of the middle class from the working class. Not only did middle-class daughters find themselves rubbing elbows with working-class daughters in the new women's professions, sales and clerical work,[51] but the unwelcome leveling also occurred in the home. For middle-class households, the thin line of social respectability was represented by now barely affordable servants, a situation which worsened in the Great Depression.[52] For middle-class housewives, ever more was at stake: the work itself. Modern technology offered some help--the pages of Die Deutsche Hausfrau, organ of the Housewives Union, were liberally sprinkled with advertisements for modern appliances--but it also foretold an unwelcome future: Housewives were about to replace their servants with themselves. In Marxist terms, the work of social reproduction of the middle class, hitherto assisted by members of the working class and peasantry, was falling more directly onto the women of this middle class, at least of its lower strata, threatening to "proletarianize" them.

Desperate, the Housewives Union became creative. It developed the idea of a household year for all girls, with the quasi-feminist rationale that housewifery was a profession like other professions, requiring skill, training and an apprenticeship. The latter, not coincidentally, would enormously widen the pool from which household help could be drawn. The idea was not altogether new. In Stuart England, young paupers were frequently hired as "apprentices to housewifery" for only room and board.[53] In Germany, it appears to have originated in the 1890s with Ida von Kortzfleisch, a rural pioneer for home economics. In 1912, organized Catholic women called for universal compulsory preparation for women's domestic calling.[54] But it was the war that finally swung the balance of the German women's movement into supporting a National Service Year for women, complementing the male draft, though it was neither compulsory nor confined to domestic labor. Rather, under the leadership of the Federation of German Women's Associations, working closely with government, the National Service Year became a major home front auxiliary, providing social services for soldiers' families and coordinating women's employment with war needs.[55]

But there was a revolution simmering inside the German household. When the demobilization office advised the Labor Ministry in January 1918 that it had "a lively interest" in the demobilization of women from defense industry to domestic labor and wished to be consulted in any determinations of work conditions, the Labor Ministry forwarded the letter in May to three major housewives' organizations, but not to the domestics' unions. It asked them for materials on the urban and rural servant situation, employers' needs, servants' potential demands, and how far housewives would be willing to meet those demands.[56] Before the response was in, a revolution had occurred--or so it seemed. The "servant question" was suddenly altered by the abolition of the Gesinde laws and requests for guidelines started pouring in to the Labor Ministry.[57] A long-range solution was proposed by Anna Blos, a founder of the Housewives Union and a future Social Democratic Reichstag deputy. She advocated half a year's additional compulsory schooling in home economics for all female elementary school graduates, costs to be covered by the state and communities.[58] This was in keeping with the viewpoint of the Central Union of Domestic Employees, who saw schooling as a way of upgrading their profession. Meanwhile, women unionists pointed out that qualifications alone would not guarantee good jobs and reminded domestics to organize also.[59]

By June 1919, the political tide was turning. The Association for the Development of Home Economics, a predecessor of the Housewives Union and one of the groups queried by the Labor Ministry over a year earlier, had its solution ready. It, too, advocated schooling, but supplemented that with a practicum to be carried out in an actual household. It appended a model apprentice contract.[60] Domestics immediately recognized the "practicum" as a form of cheap labor, exploiting youth and endangering adult employment. When the Central Union of Domestic Employees held its tenth anniversary meeting on September 21-25, 1919, in Berlin, still hopeful about negotiating a better future, it warned against the signing of apprentice contracts.[61]

Meanwhile, the Housewives Union thought of a still cheaper and more controllable labor source: an exchange of daughters (Haustöchter) among themselves. This notion, harking back to medieval apprenticeships, gave rise to some perplexing questions, of which the most interesting regarded payment. In 1925, Die Deutsche Hausfrau asked its readers to suggest answers as to whether a girl's parents should pay for her training, or whether the household apprenticing her should pay her an allowance like a daughter, or whether she should simply get room and board in exchange for her "education." The answers were cool-headed: She might get a little pocket money if she were over seventeen and had some special skill; she should simply get room and board if freshly out of school but willing to commit herself for at least one year; and she might pay up to one hundred marks a month for specialized education including "social improvement."[62] The exchange of daughters seems to have offered hope for upward mobility and possibly marriage through apprenticeship to "higher circles"--for a price. But this feudally inspired idea did not take hold in the crisis-ridden 1920s, as Luise Kähler, wise in the ways of domestic service, predicted.[63] Not only did the young ladies complain, but they also failed to meet the work expectations of their mistresses.[64] The experiment was soon dropped.

However, apprenticeship of girls from the working class not only took hold, but became predominent. By 1921, it had spread alarmingly, helped by the fact that welfare relief legally could supplement apprentice wages.[65] The terms were often brutal. A "model" apprentice contract proposed from Königsberg in Prussia for fourteen-year-old girls just out of school included thirteen-and-a-half hours of work, with half-hour breaks for meals, every other Sunday off, and ten marks a month in wages for the first year. Deference was expected: A girl could be dismissed for repeated disobedience, for tending to immorality, which included lying or nibbling between meals (naschen), or for speaking ill of the household. She could terminate the contract, but in that case her family had to pay compensation. It was all dangerously close to the old Gesinde laws, despite some improvements, such as vacation and social insurance.[66]

By 1922, the economic crisis had developed to such a degree that regular domestics' wages were cut in half, making the stalled legislation moot, in any case, and making the apprentice year "popular." It became a revolving door for household help drawn from a generationally inexhaustible supply.[67] The Central Union bowed to the inevitable and began trying to improve rather than fight apprenticeship. On December 17, 1924, the Prussian Trade Ministry gave legal recognition to an apprentice contract between the Housewives Union and various domestics' unions that allowed twelve-and-a-half hours of work for those over seventeen and only eight for younger girls. But in the later recession of 1927, the Housewives Union negotiated to have the latter group also work twelve hours.[68] Actual conditions were even harsher. A 1930 questionnaire distributed among approximately three hundred students between the ages of fourteen and seventeen in a three-year vocational school for domestics showed that over half worked between thirteen and sixteen hours a day with nonresidents better off at closer to eleven hours. Nearly half the resident domestics slept in attics, one-third of which were unheated. Small wonder that nearly half the students responding admitted to having changed jobs more than once.[69]

Meanwhile, the Housewives Union stepped up its campaign to elevate housewifery by elaborating on home economics training, complete with theoretical and practical preparation and degrees-all the criteria for professionalization, including tracking by social class. The goal was not merely to raise the status of housewifery, though that provided the major rationale; the goal was also to control the "profession," lest the unions control it. But economic crisis weakened the latter in any case, without particularly improving the servant shortage, since needy women often chose public assistance over the notoriously onerous and humiliating domestic service. The housewives' main purpose, then, was still to enlarge the pool of domestic help by enforcing home economics training and apprenticeship for the majority of women.

At the tenth anniversary of the Housewives Union in 1925, its second president, Anna Gerhardt, spoke in the auditorium of Breslau University on the organization's present and future work. Beginning with a historical overview, she noted that housewives had learned the value of collective work through their war effort and that their movement owed a debt to the women's movement for bringing them together. The first professional women who had banded together had allowed housewives, whom they helped to organize, to see themsleves as professionals also. Gerhardt adapted the notion of Beruf to women's role in the home, drawing on cultural-religious meanings of the word "calling:" an inner voice for a holy mission, demanding renunciation, self-sacrifice, discipline, education, and, above all, service. Without these, the indispensable energies of maternalism, Germany could not recover. While stressing the spiritual, Gerhardt nevertheless acknowledged the material value of household labor. The labor of housewives, she said, while often coerced and exploited, is not to be translated into "vile payment" (schnöde Bezahlung), but should be recognized as a contribution to the national well being. She then outlined the plan: first, a full year of home economics in the now compulsory vocational schools (Berufsschulen) (but not the Gymnasia, attended by the daughters of the well-to-do); then, apprenticeship in a household, followed by an examination qualifying poor girls "from all social groups and educational backgrounds" for a newly elevated legally recognized profession of "household caretaker" (Haushaltspflegerin). This profession could be exercised not only in private homes, but also in institutions, an area of jurisdiction that had been hotly contested by unionized public service workers in 1919.[70]

The plan was elaborated further in later years. Professional women organized in confessional associations feared that home economics training, which they did not oppose in principle, would cut into time needed for other vocational training. Hence, they requested the Reichstag in 1926 to rule that attendance in vocational schools be lengthened from three to four years, that household apprenticeship immediately follow elementary school and not be counted toward secondary school, and that secondary-school home economics classes not mix regular students with those planning to become domestics.[71] Meanwhile, the Housewives Union tried to get state grants-in-aid for apprentices, a bald request for public monies to support private services, with the justification that the training of future working-class wives and mothers was for the national good.[72] Class conscious and more feminist, Die Gewerkschaftliche Frauenzeitung, organ of the women unionists in the general German labor federation, asserted that not every woman aimed to become a housewife and that the state should not be expected to train servants for big estates, whose owners didn't even pay their full share of taxes.[73]

Still, the Housewives Union generated further plans. It developed a hierarchy of training for two socially distinct groups of new professionals. "Simple, but excellently prepared personnel" for private households could move from domestic assistant (Hausgehilfin) to household caretaker (Haushaltspflegerin) and beyond that to licensed housekeeper (Wirtschafterin), the last also being open to experienced housewives. The other group moved toward degrees of Master (Meister) and Home Manager (Wirtschaftsmeisterin), which led to higher managerial status. These required some secondary education, an additional year and a half of school, and a minimum age of twenty-four on taking the examination, all of which effectively took these degrees out of the reach of most proletarian families. By 1930, the Housewives Union could report 296 graduates with Masters in 26 cities.[74] The Central Union of Domestic Employees, defeated in its legislative hopes and having had to capitulate to the apprenticing system, was reduced to aiming for representation on the examination committees and to securing promotion to the higher titles.[75] And the worst was yet to come.

The Great Depression made household help cheap again. In Breslau, the local Housewives Union organized "training workshops" for girls who, on pain of losing their unemployment or welfare checks, had to sew six hours a day for thirty-six days, mending their own clothes one-third of the time and second-hand clothes for welfare recipients two-thirds of the time. Munich had a similar system.[76] "Workfare" had arrived. Furthermore, disappointed that Brüning's emergency decree lowering wages did not include the category of domestics, the Housewives Union began urging reduction of social taxes on domestics' paychecks, which, though nominally shared by employer and employee, were actually sent in by employers after negotiating a "net" wage with employees.[77] This was done in 1933. Jubilantly, *Die Deutsche Hausfrau* proclaimed: "Nothing is impossible in the new Germany!"[78] The labor market continued shifting in their favor. With unemployment soaring and relief measures cut, women again became willing to serve, even as resident domestics, for room and board and no wages at all.[79] *Haustöchteren* were again exchanged, drawn from the ailing sections of the middle class, but were now expected to offer more: languages, musical skills, even a driver's license, for the privilege of residing with a "better" family.[80]

While the women unionists' newspaper ran increasingly alarming headlines about the National Socialist party, the housewives' journal remained steadfastly "unpolitical," even letting Hitler's accession to the chancellorship in January 1933 go unremarked. But the May issue celebrated Labor Day with a paean of praise to German reconstruction and published the notorious blueprint by Magda Goebbels for the sexual division of labor in the new German state. It had three parts:

1. Work which women *must* undertake, such as welfare, teaching, and other nurturant activities, specified by women's nature.

2. Work which women *may* undertake, such as factory and office work and certain kinds of professions such as pediatrics, laboratory assistance, and other careers not alien to women's temperament.

3. Work which men alone should do, such as defense, law, and politics, which required a cold, clear objectivity alien to women's warm and sensitive nature.[81]

In June, Maria Jecker, third and last president of the Housewives Union under the Weimar Republic, brought her organization into the German Women's Front. Expressing gratitude for Hitler's interest in a domestic service year--"No earlier regimes listened to us," she said--Jecker presented a modified plan, dropping formal schooling, now acknowledged to be too costly to the state, and substituting the parental home as a place of training.[82] By August, the Housewives Union stood corrected in its "narrow" definition of women's service to the National Socialist state.[83] The domestic service year was to become a general service year (*Dienstjahr*), within which household service was merely one option of several. *Gleichschaltung* had arrived for the Housewives Union.

Still, it had won important material and ideological gains. By

1938, there were 160,000 more domestics working in private homes than there had been in 1933.[34] And the Nazi regime sponsored as its own the Union's view of women's place, for which they had well prepared the German public.[35] In most ways, they stood confirmed.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the official Nazi program for "the woman question"--though pragmatically manipulated later to suit war needs--was not drawn out of an ideological hat alone, nor was it built solely on national nostalgia for lost "havens in a heartless world," but rested firmly on a long-standing public effort by an organized interest group in the conservative wing of the women's movement. The Housewives Union was dedicated not only to enhancing the status of housewifery, in an adaptation of German feminism, but to securing a steady supply of cheap household service. Their goal was not merely ideological; it had a material base.

Due to the historical feminization of household service, it was women who fought out this particular battle in one of the last strongholds of patriarchy against capitalist social relations. The reactionary Housewives Union, by using gender rhetoric for its class interests, helped to prepare for fascism in Germany and felt itself confirmed by Nazi ideology.

Some women, by virtue of their class interests, contributed to the rise and temporary success of fascism in Germany by using the bourgeois feminism of their day as an ideological tool. The notion of woman's unique mission and nature was easily co-opted and ultimately absorbed by the Nazi state, which muted class struggle, around the hearth as elsewhere, with force.

NOTES

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[1] Renate Bridenthal, "Beyond *Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women at Work*," *Central European History* 6, no. 2 (June 1973), pp. 148-66.

[2] Amy Hackett, "The Politics of Feminism in Wilhelmine Germany, 1890-1918," unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1976; and Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894-1933* (London and Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1976).

[3] In addition to Hackett and Evans, see also Jean Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy 1885-1917* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979); Marion A. Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); Werner Thönnessen, *The Emancipation of Women: The Rise and Decline of the Women's Movement in German Social Democracy 1863-1933*, trans. Joris de Bres (London: Pluto, 1973); and Karen Honeycutt, "Clara Zetkin: A Left-Wing Socialist and Feminist in Wilhelmian Germany," (unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1975).

[4] Richard J. Evans, "Bourgeois Feminists and Women Socialists in

Germany 1894-1914: Lost Opportunity or Inevitable Conflict?" *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 1980, vol. 3, pp. 355-76.

[5] A Prussian law prevented women's political association from 1850 to 1908, and a nationwide law made political activities of the Social Democratic party illegal from 1878 to 1890.

[6] Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom* (Boston: Beacon, 1757).

[7] Richard J. Evans, *The Feminists* (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

[8] Amy Hackett, "The German Women's Movement and Suffrage, 1890-1914: A Study of National Feminism," *Modern European Social History*, edited by Robert J. Bezucha, (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1972), pp. 354-79.

[9] Hackett, "The Politics of Feminism," chapter 8; and Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany*, pp. 235-53.

[10] The *Deutsche Verband der Hausfrauen*, founded in 1915, became the *Reichsverband Deutscher Hausfrauenvereine* (RDH) in 1924. The main archive of the national organization is in the Central State Archive at Potsdam, but is still uncatalogued and therefore inaccessible to researchers. This chapter relies on pertinent material in other parts of the Central State Archive and on a close reading of *Die Deutsche Hausfrau*, organ of the RDH from 1925 to 1933 (hereafter referred to as DH).

[11] Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists*, pp. 176-82. Also, *Gewerkschaftliche Frauenzeitung*, March 15, 1916 (herafter referred to as GFZ). The GFZ was a special publication for women unionists and wives of male unionists published by the German labor federation, *Allgemeiner Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund*, from 1916 to 1933. Its reportage on the *Zentralverband der Hausangestellten*, an affiliate of the federation, is a major source for the organized domestic servants in this article.

[12] DH, special tenth anniversary issue, May 6, 1925, p. 2.

[13] Hackett, "The Politics of Feminism," p. 601.

[14] DH, May 6, 1925, p. 3.

[15] Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany*, p. 212.

[16] Agnes von Zahn-Harnack and Hans Sveistrup, *Die Frauenfrage in Deutschland. Strömungen und Gegenströmungen 1790-1930* (Burg b. M.: A. Hopfer, 1934).

[17] Anna Blos embodies the ambiguous relationship of German feminism with other German politics. At the founding of the Housewives Union, she headed the work committee for Württemberg. DH, May 6, 1925, p. 4. Yet, years later, she published *Die Frauenfrage im Lichte des Sozialismus* (Dresden: Kaden, 1930), with A. Schreiber, Louise Schroeder, and Anne Geyer.

[18] DH, May 6, 1925, p. 4. The *Landwirtschaftliche Hausfrauenvereine* were rural housewives associations first organized in East Prussia in 1889 and, with other regionals formed later, federated into a national organization after World War I. Much of the leadership came from the class of large estate owners, though the base was broader, reaching into the peasantry. The *Reichsverband landwirtschaftlicher Hausfrauenvereine* was affiliated with the *Reichslandbund*, formerly *Bund der Landwirte*, under Junker leadership.

[19] DH, May 6, 1925, p. 4.

[20] Ibid., p. 3.

[21] GFZ, June 20, 1917.

[22] Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists*, pp. 177-78.

[23] Rolf Engelsing, "Das häusliche Personal in der Epoche der Industrialisierung," *Zur Sozialgeschichte deutscher Mittel- und Unterschichten, Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft*, no. 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1973), p. 261 says the *Gesinde* laws marked the city bourgeoisie, like the rural feudality, as a superior social class. Even under modern employment law, servants were regarded as a badge of status. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire, The Pelican Economics History of Britain*, vol. 3, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 278, remarks on the psycho-political effects of their disappearance between the two world wars.

[24] Wilhelm Schulz, *Die Fragen des Gesinderechts nach Aufhebung der Ausnahmegesetze, Rechtswissenschaftliche Studien*, Heft 5 (Berlin, Verlag Emil Ebering: 1920), pp. 4-7.

[25] Ibid., pp. 8, 40.

[26] GFZ, Oct. 8, 1920. Central State Archive, Potsdam, *Reichsarbeitsministerium* (hereafter RAM), Akte 10401, p. 109. The Christian-social *Reichsverband weiblicher Hausangestellte Deutschlands*, founded in 1919 to draw domestics away from the socialist union, combined Catholic and Evangelical domestics from the older, confessionally organized associations, often mistress-sponsored. Stressing nationalism, idealism, and class harmony, they did not at first emphasize "crass" issues of hours and wages, appealing instead to Christian charity

and mutuality. However, they were increasingly drawn into the struggle between domestics and employers. Small and unmilitant, they peaked at less than half the size of the secular Central Union in 1919; 11,900 is the figure given by Adolf Weber, *Der Kampf zwischen Kapital und Arbeit*, 5th ed. rev. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930), p. 104.

[27] GFZ, October 10, 1917.

[28] GFZ, April 9, 1919.

[29] GFZ, March 6, 1919.

[30] GFZ, April 23, 1919.

[31] RAM, Akte 10402, p. 26.

[32] Central State Archive, Potsdam, *Vorläufiger Reichs-Wirtschaftsrat* (hereafter VRWR), Akten 520-21, covering sessions of the Social Policy Committee considering the domestic employees' legislation from October 10, 1921 to May 4, 1922.

[33] Leonore Davidoff, "Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian Edwardian England," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 7 (Summer 1974), pp. 406-28, says this for British servants.

[34] GFZ, October 8, 1919.

[35] Luise Kähler pointed this out, VRWR, Akte 520, p. 481.

[36]

	1907	1925	1933
Female resident domestics	1,144,385	1,016,022	843,530
Female nonresident domestics	254,669	294,417	366,792
Total female domestics	1,399,054	1,310,439	1,210,322

The ratio of nonresident to resident domestics doubled from 22 percent in 1907 to 44 percent in 1933. Germany, *Statistisches Amt, Wirtschaft und Statistik*, vol. 7 (1927), pp. 450, 454, for 1907 and 1925 figures. *W&S*, vol. 15 (1935), *Sonderbeilage* 14, p. 19, for 1933 figures, which also indicate that only 1,043,156 were actually employed. Germany, *Statistisches Amt, Statistik des Deutschen Reiches*, vol. 453, Part 2, p. 7. states that the percentage of employed women in domestic service dropped from 16.5 percent in 1907 to 11.4 percent in 1925 and to 10.5 percent in 1933.

[37] This is a major theme of Theresa M. McBride, *The Domestic Revolution: The Modernization of Household Service in England*

and France 1820-1920 (London: Croom Helm, 1976) and is touched on by Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), pp. 35-36, 108-10. For the American case, see David M. Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) and Susan M. Strasser, "Mistress and Maid, Employer and Employee: Domestic Service Reform in the United States, 1897-1920," *Marxist Perspectives* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1978), pp. 52-67. For the German trend, see Engelsing, "Das häusliche Personal," p. 239.

[38] The Housewives Union claimed that the majority of their members employed nonresident domestics in a February 28, 1923 letter to the Labor Ministry; RAM, Akte 6450, pp. 19-20.

[39] VRWR, Akte 520 p. 503.

[40] VRWR, Akte 521, pp. 11-26.

[41] VRWR, Akte 521, pp. 367, 378.

[42] VRWR, Akte 521, pp. 573-88.

[43] VRWR, Akte 521, p. 624.

[44] VRWR, Akte 1391, p. 13.

[45] RAM, Akte 10402, p. 7.

[46] VRWR, Akte 1391, pp. 52-53.

[47] DH, August 1929, pp. 113-14; September 1929, pp. 130-31; September 1930, pp. 132-34.

[48] GFZ, July 15, 1928.

[49] GFZ, December 15, 1928.

[50] GFZ, November 15 and December 15, 1929.

[51] Ute Frevert, "Vom Klavier zur Schreibmaschine--weiblicher Arbeitsmarkt und Rollenzuweisungen am Beispiel der weiblichen Angestellten in der Weimarer Republik," *Frauen in der Geschichte*, edited by Annette Kuhn and Gerhard Schneider (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1979), pp. 82-112.

[52] Some households deprived themselves and their help of necessaries in order to keep their ranking by the show of domestic employment. GFZ, March 15, 1932.

[53] Pamela Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (New

York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), p. 6.

[54] Hackett, "The Politics of Feminism," pp. 912-27.

[55] Ibid., and Evans, The Feminist Movement in Germany, pp. 208-9. Also Ursula von Gersdorff, Frauen im Kriegsdienst von 1914 bis 1945 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1969).

[56] RAM, Akte 10402, pp. 37-38.

[57] RAM, Akte 10402, p. 35.

[58] Anna Blos in GFZ, November 6, 1918 and in Die Frauenfrage, p. 25.

[59] GFZ, January 1, 1919 and repeatedly up to its dissolution in 1933.

[60] RAM, Akte 10402, pp. 40-45.

[61] GFZ, September 24 and October 8, 1919.

[62] DH, July 1925, p. 190 and September 1925, p. 268.

[63] GFZ, February 23, 1921.

[64] DH, July 1925, p. 190 and September 1925, p. 8.

[65] Decree of January 26, 1920 as reported in GFZ, May 4, 1921.

[66] VRWR, Akte 1390, pp. 13-16.

[67] GFZ, May 31, 1922.

[68] GFZ, January 15, 1928.

[69] GFZ, February 15, 1930.

[70] In 1919, the organization representing hospitals and institutional homes also tried to come under the pending domestic service legislation, claiming that their maintenance workers previously had come under the Gesinde laws. Organized public service workers, who had won the eight-hour day, objected that they had jurisdiction for such employees in public institutions. The Labor Ministry agreed with the latter. VRWR, Akte 1390, pp. 210-19, 228-30, 234-37, 244-49.

[71] DH, May 1926, p. 14.

[72] Ibid., p. 16.

[73] GFZ, October 5, 1922, p. 147.

[74] DH., August 1930, p. 115 and January 1931, p. 4.

[75] GFZ, June 15, 1931.

[76] DH, January 1931, p. 36.

[77] DH, March 1932, pp. 35-36.

[78] DH, August 1933, pp. 113-15.

[79] DH, October 1932, p. 147.

[80] GFZ, May 15, 1932.

[81] DH, May 1933, p. 70.

[82] DH, June 1933, p. 90.

[83] DH, August 1933, pp. 115-16.

[84] Tim Mason, "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare and Work, Part II," History Workshop, October 1976, p. 15.

[85] Claudia Koonz, "Mothers in the Fatherland: Women in Nazi Germany," Becoming Visible: Women in European History, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977), p. 460, shows the degree to which the Housewives Union's program was implemented in the Third Reich. To what extent the same personnel remained at various national and regional levels of leadership is a matter for further research.

15

"Satisfaction Is Domestic Happiness": Mass Working-Class Sex Reform Organizations in the Weimar Republic

ATINA GROSSMANN

> Girls! Is your fiance's income adequate for marriage? - No? So protect both of you so that you don't have any children before you can afford to feed them.
>
> Women! Are you willing to once again serve as voluntary birth machines providing the state with cannonfodder for a new war and industry with new unemployed who can lower wages even further? - No? So let yourself be counseled and avoid abortions that can destroy your bodies....
>
> Proletarians! The more you love your children, the more you should think about their welfare and your responsibility!
>
> Come to us! We will help you prevent unhappiness!
>
> (leaflet distributed by Reichsleague for Birth Control and Sexual Hygiene, c. 1930.)

Working-class lay sex reform organizations in the Weimar Republic began as a capitalist scheme in the early 1920s--an advertising gimmick by clever birth control manufacturers seeking a guaranteed market for their mysterious, highly profitable, and often unreliable products. By 1932, shortly before their wholesale destruction by the National Socialists, the organizations had developed into a genuine mass movement for social change, claiming over 150,000 members[1] and espousing simultaneously neo-Malthusian and socialist politics. They fulfilled a manifest need for a proletariat reeling under the pressures of mass unemployment and drastic cutbacks in social welfare services--a proletariat already relying on quack birth control remedies, coitus interruptus, and illegal abortions in its desperate attempts at family limitation.

The practical success of these lay organizations in providing their membership with safe, inexpensive contraceptives and sexual and family counseling contrasted sharply with their political failure. They were unable to unite into a nationwide organization strong enough to overturn the Weimar Republic's repressive sex crimes code, which criminalized abortion and the publicizing of contraception. Nor were they able to withstand the Nazis's onslaught on sexual self-determination and family planning.

The tortured twists and turns of their development reflect the history of Weimar working-class politics and culture as a whole. Their success reflects the strength of working-class social organization in Germany; their failure the fate of a working-class movement that was fragmented into political impotence.

Lay sex reform groups, with their illustrated journals filled with advice on sexual technique, contraception, eugenic hygiene, health, and the protection of mothers; their centers for the distribution of contraceptives; and their many therapeutic question-and-answer lectures, were an integral and crucial part of the working-class subculture of the Weimar Republic. Relying on the traditions of self-help and folk medicine, the various leagues for birth control and sexual hygiene (or similar sounding names) provided material aid and psychological guidance for a society in transition--a society dissolving the customary ties to church and extended families and slowly adjusting to professional medicalization and economic rationalization.

Working-class groups attempted to apply the insights of "enlightened, nonjudgemental, modern" medical science and psychoanalysis to "modern" problems such as overly large families and sexual dysfunction. Ironically, this was often done against the anxious protest of the very groups--doctors and populationists--whose knowledge and techniques they were appropriating and popularizing. In the absence of a national health-care network that included family planning and mental health, working-class men and women began to demand such services at the same time as they generated lay self-help organizations to meet their immediate needs in an era of economic, political, social and population crisis.

Proletarian sex reform must be considered in the context of the changed economic and political circumstances of the Republic. "Population crisis," the "new woman" and the "new family" were central and explosive themes in Weimar political discourse and activity. Although the birth rate in Germany had been declining since the middle of the nineteenth century, the trend towards smaller families did not appear as a mass phenomenon among the proletariat until after the First World War. Only then did it begin to arouse public and governmental concern about the survival of the *Volk* and the labor and military potential of the coming generations.[2] The traditional birth rate differential between rich and poor had become ominously narrow.[3] Although women were continuing to get married--indeed in greater proportion than ever before[4]--and to bear children, families became distinctly and intentionally smaller. According to the 1925 census, working-class families averaged only 3.9 persons per household.[5]

The "new woman" was not only the intellectual with Maennerschnitt or the young white-collar worker in flapper outfit so familiar to us from the eroticized products of the Weimar mass media, but also the young married factory worker who now cut her hair short into a practical Bubikopf, no longer baked and canned, only cooked one warm meal a day,[6] and tried by all available means to keep her family small. This represented a rationalized reproductive strategy in a modernizing society faced with an acute housing shortage and a significant proportion of married women engaged in wage labor.[3] By 1930, with all of these trends intensified by the depression, it was estimated that there were 1 million abortions with 10,000 to 12,000 fatalities annually. Abortions exceeded the number of live births and averaged out to at least two abortions over a lifetime for every woman in Germany.[9]

In analyzing this situation, population experts differed according to their political orientations. Leftists were able to present definite proposals for practical solutions, while government experts found themselves in a paralyzing double bind. The latter bemoaned the lack of three-children families considered necessary for maintaining adequate population levels, but simultaneously recognized that large families, given the reality of female wage labor and decreasing social services, would probably only be poverty-stricken and "degenerate." Such families could not therefore provide the sturdy base required for an efficient technologized economy and a secure national defense.[10]

On the other hand, Communist "sex doctors" like Max Hodann and Wilhelm Reich called for mass response to the "sexual misery of the proletariat." Working-class sex reformers, both doctors and lay people, insisted that proletarian sexuality was severely inhibited by social conditions such as the lack of privacy, sanitary facilities, and leisure time. They painted a dismal picture of couples forced to make love half-clothed in constant fear of being disturbed, the need to share rooms and sometimes beds with relatives and boarders, the early exposure of children to quick and brutal sex, lack of access to medical care or sex education, the double burden of wage labor and housework for many women, and the constant tensions of worrying about material survival. In short, they asserted that psychic-sexual conflict and the living conditions endured by the proletariat were inextricably connected. The supposedly "natural" working class was actually sexually more deprived than a bourgeoisie with its access to medical contraception and safe abortions.[11]

Lay sex reform leagues therefore mobilized class hatred and working-class resentment of its assigned role of carrying the burden of reproducing the next generation without the resources for a decent standard of living. The leagues aimed to help families manage the pressures of economic need by providing affordable, easily available birth-control remedies that neither involved resorting to hazardous and/or costly abortions nor necessitated techniques such as withdrawal or douching immediately after intercourse, with hindered sexual gratification. The subversive premise of working-class sex reform was that sexual enjoyment without the punitive consequences of continual pregnancies, should no longer be a privilege of the bourgeoisie.

The sex reform movement intervened on two levels to facilitate, channel, and control social developments that were occurring in any case. On a practical level, lay groups, often connected to business interests in the burgeoning birth control industry, offered the working class--and particularly the "new woman"--quick solutions to its need for fertility control. And on a political level, organizations like the communist party and parts of the Social Democratic party attempted to discipline and unite the mass lay movement. In association with medical sex reformers, they tried to add a social class analysis to the single-issue, Neo-Malthusian focus of local groups and to introduce medical controls and expertise. The working-class parties provided one of the few arenas where socially committed physicians gathered. In a sense, therefore, the sex reform/political organizations affiliated with the KPD and SPD acted as mediators between medical and lay sex reform activists.

The pre-World War I sex reform movement had been initiated by liberal and socialist intellectuals advocating reform of the sex crimes code and a new ethic of sexual morality.[12] The first postwar birth-control leagues were established on an entirely different basis in 1922 by the *Bund der Taetigen* in Bavaria, Silesia, and Saxony. They were basically covers for business interests, but were already adorned with anticapitalist, neo-Malthusian rhetoric that attracted working-class people in areas where access to medical birth control was very difficult. By 1923-24, commercial groups began to lose power, as the first independent working-class organizations were established.

Two groups based in Saxony (Chemnitz and Dresden) united to form an Association for Sexual Hygiene and Life-Style Reform (*Vereine für Sexual-Hygiene und Lebensreform*, VSL). They quickly gained a combined membership of thirteen thousand. The Saxon union set the tone for future proletarian leagues by clearly distancing itself from the tactics of commercial groups. In order to eliminate profiteering, each local purchased birth control products that were distributed at the membership at cost. Activity was no longer limited to distribution and sale of contraceptives but also encompassed political and sex education, sexual counseling for members, and the struggle for legal reform.

Manufacturers continued to try to exploit the growth of the movement by expropriating its names and styles. For example, a manufacturer named Hofbauer also established a VSL. The pharmacist Heisser formed the Workers Leagues for Birth Control (*Arbeiter-Vereine für Geburtenregelung*, AfG) in 1924-25 to sell his own special brand of contraceptive paste.[13]

By 1925, working-class groups, all at least vaguely committed to socialism, solidly controlled sex reform. The Silesian groups in the Saxony based VSL split off in 1925 to form their own People's Association for the Protection of Mothers, (*Volksbund für Mutterschutz*), centered near Goerlitz and Leignitz.[14] They quickly produced their own journal, *Weckruf* which served nineteen thousand subscribers. In 1927, Hofbauer's association revolted against his profiteering and joined the original autonomous VSL, bringing in ten thousand members.[15]

The lay working-class organizations were now numerically the strongest segment of a broad Weimar sex reform movement, which also included an elite scientific and medical wing with international connections, gathered together in organizations such as the World League for Sex Reform (WLSR).[16] In addition, there were certain municipal health insurance systems and health departments in large cities, frequently staffed by Socialist and Communist doctors, including many women[17] and the social welfare associations of the SPD and KPD.[13] Competing and overlapping as the groups were, they shared a commitment to reform of a bourgeois legal code that institutionalized the subordination of women within marriage and criminalized abortion and sex education. The common slogan was "better to prevent than to abort," and they all asserted women's right to sexual enjoyment and the importance of the responsible conception of healthy offspring.

The various groups continually fought among themselves about general political allegiances as well as about which devices were safest and cheapest. Medically directed groups, aspiring to the latest in scientific correctness, tended to provide women with the approved mechanical/chemical combination of diaphragm plus spermicide. More militant lay groups simply distributed suppositories or creams on the theory that couples would be more likely to use the least complicated method requiring no medical intervention. Doctors and other experts associated with the WLSR wanted to ensure that the entire complex of birth control, eugenics, and sexology remained in the hands of the trained and competent, safe from both unscrupulous businessmen and excessive politicization. KPD- and SPD-affiliated groups demanded both medical control and politicization--a difficult goal in a society with an extremely conservative medical establishment.

The various wings of the movement, both lay and professional, joined, influenced, and pressured each other. Again and again, the experts were shocked and inspired to fight for reform by their experiences in the health centers located in working-class neighborhoods. The existence of such centers themselves was a response to the pressures of the lay movement. Doctors and social workers were daily witnesses to the fierce determination of proletarian women to prevent pregnancies. Dr. Alice Vollnhals-Goldmann, director of the Maternal Care Program of the Berlin Municipal Health Insurance System, reported in 1927:

> On the basis of our experience, we must say, if a woman regards her pregnancy as unwanted and wants to be freed from it, she will know how to free herself of the pregnancy by all means, even at the cost of her life. All legal threats of punishment are illusory against the terrible state of need and prevent no one from having an abortion.[19]

For their part, the mass lay organizations slowly abandoned their mistrust of science and academic medicine. Working-class parties began to preach the dangers of quack abortions and overpriced patent medicines. The idea of lay self-help became less a matter of principle than an unfortunate necessity blamed on the lack of social responsibility demonstrated by the vast majority of German physicians. The lay leagues were painfully aware of the damage to their reputations due to association with commercial outfits and the disadvantage of not having access to the latest developments in contraceptive research. And some doctors were willing to establish closer links, partly in the hope of gaining influence over a grassroots movement that seemed to have grown dangerously large and out of control.

The establishment of the Reichsleague for Birth Control and Sexual Hygiene (*Reichsverband für Geburtenregelung und Sexualhygiene*, RV) in 1928, the first truly nationwide umbrella sex reform organization was an example of this potentially fruitful symbiosis. The RV was founded by several smaller lay organizations trying to liberate themselves completely from ties to birth-control manufacturers, in cooperation with the Society for Sexual Reform (*Gesellschaft für Sexualreform*, GESEX). The GESEX, with its predominantly medical membership, provided the RV with scientific information and credibility, also affording some protection from police harassment.[20] The RV grew rapidly. From 136 locals in 1928, it expanded to 192 by 1930, with 15,526 subscribers to the new central journal *Sexualhygiene* (SH).[21] Edited by a former GESEX board member, it carried simply written and attractively laid out educational articles and was nationally distributed for free or for 20 pfennigs.

The journal also featured a regular advice column by the well-known Communist sex reformer, Dr. Max Hodann. It is indicative of the degree of cooperation between sex reform groups that a committed Communist doctor could write and agitate for an organization loosely identified with the SPD. Indeed, one is struck again and again by the many connections between sex-reform physicians of differing political persuasions, particularly at a time when Communists and Social Democrats were otherwise actively fighting each other. The circle of doctors willing to fight for birth control and abortion reform was so small that mutual respect and commitment to the cause overrode political differences. This tolerance most definitely did not apply to the lay functionaries, which raises interesting questions about the relationship between a doctor's professional and political identification.[22]

The RV/GESEX Counseling Center in a proletarian district in Berlin was run on a volunteer basis by two GESEX doctors. A storefront, it was jointly financed by contributions from trade unions, leftist Social Democrats and anarcho-syndicalists. Donated samples of diaphragms and cervical caps were fitted and distributed. Both married and unmarried women were treated, in accordance with what were perceived as socialist principles.[23]

Meanwhile, the Hamburg RV local reported in 1931 that it had organized fifteen hundred members in less than two years. They met every fourth Tuesday of the month for lectures on such themes as "Introduction to Population Politics"; "Anatomy and Physiology of the Sex Organs"; "Theory and Technique of Contraception"; "Race Theory, Eugenics and Sterilization"; and "The Extermination of Unfit Life."[24] The stress on eugenics and racial hygiene was typical of sex-reform groups and suggests the complex ambivalent relationship between right-wing nationalist population policy and leftist sex reform. This relationship cannot be fully developed here, but it is certainly true that a belief in the necessity of establishing "scientific" norms for the healthy and the unfit, the wholesome and the degenerate, was common to both groups.

The Hamburg branch in a traditionally liberal and international port city, had good and close connections with the local SPD. Two SPD members of the City Council sat on the RV's board, assuring police cooperation, and the medical director, Dr. Edward Elkan, was also a SPD member and committed Socialist. Dr. Elkan recalled that his insurance and welfare gynecological practice in a working-class housing settlement on the outskirts of Hamburg quickly developed into an official RV counseling center when the word spread that he was willing to provide condoms, diaphragms, and cervical caps.

Unlike Berlin, the Hamburg RV had no clinic of its own. Dr. Elkan's office served as the medical center, and contraceptive distribution took place in a private apartment. The RV's major activity encompassed lectures with blackboards, slides, and exhibitions of contraceptive devices. The use of birth control was explained in great detail by doctors at mass meetings; women were given the address of the distribution center and invited to examine the exhibition samples. Thus, it was possible to reach many more people at one time than would have been feasible in a doctor's office.

This mass approach was necessary because on the whole, the medical profession remained "opposed and apathetic." As Dr. Elkan recalled, "German doctors were no socialists; sex reform really did not come from the medical profession, it was a popular movement."[25] Indeed, physicians like Edward Elkan and Max Hodann were very rare. Most established German doctors, while familiar with surgical abortion techniques, were blissfully ignorant of birth control.[26]

Even the RV, which attracted the most support from physicians, was forced to set up "flying counseling centers" (fliegende Beratungsstellen), where a single doctor accompanied by a traveling league functionary, visited outlying areas in Saxony and Thuringia at regular intervals. Franz Gampe, the former Nuremberg carpenter who was the head of the RV, complained in 1931:

> It is a regrettable disadvantage for the proletarian class struggle that those leagues for birth control which have an undeniable class struggle character and are under scientific medical control in all questions relating to contraception, are still thrown into one pot with shady profiteering organizations by the broad masses.[27]

That a worker such as Gampe was chief of the RV indicates that even medically influenced lay organizations retained their "lay" character insofar as medical personnel served as resources and performed a service, usually on a volunteer basis, but did not determine political or organizational policy. But many lay organizations were eager to establish their medical reliability by insisting that only medical doctors be allowed to examine women and fit contraceptive devices. With the exception of in large cities, however, the "your doctor knows best" policy was difficult to enforce, because of the shortage of trained doctors willing to engage in activities so poorly remunerated and so suspect to their colleagues. Medical services were still often provided by nonmedically trained folk healers and homeopaths.

Although the lay and scientific factions were moving closer to each other, there were still strong separatist currents. In response to the continuing opposition of the medical establishment and as a direct competitor to the socialist medical RV, the lay League for the Protection of Mothers and Social Family Hygiene (Liga für Mutterschutz und soziale Familienhygiene, Liga) was established in 1929, only one year after the successful unification of the RV. The Liga, which became the largest lay group in

Germany, was determinedly apolitical and insisted that all of its radical elements had been purged.

The Liga captured the attention of rightist population groups and government experts in a way that the SPD-connected RV had not. Police monitored the Liga as being strongest in very poor industrialized regions like the Mansfeld area of Thuringia, but also in Catholic areas such as Bavaria, Wuertemberg, and Rhineland-Westphalia. A report to the Ministry of Health (Reichsgesundheitsamt, RGA) in 1928 from a member of the League for Large Families (Bund der Kinderreichen, BKR), which encouraged the official state policy of increasing the birth rate, described the popular response to a Liga/Bund meeting in Elberfeld:

> Hundreds signed up to join the organization just to acquire the contraceptive offered, for the mass of oppressed women are clamoring for birth control remedies and one can only get them through the Bund. You should have seen the faces of these working-class women, who hung on every word of the lecture as if hypnotized . . . What will we come to if these products are distributed in such a mass way?[28]

The BKR complained that the Liga contraceptives were harmful to health, manufactured in uncontrolled fashion according to secret formulas, and overpriced. The Ministry of the Interior, sharing the concern about sex reform's resonance among working-class women, noted that birth-control leagues could not be prosecuted under Paragraph 184.3 a law prohibiting the public advertizing of contraceptives because the products were only offered to members, and admitted to frustration because it was so easy to gain membership by paying a minimal fee.[29] The RGA worried helplessly:

> These groups which hide behind many different names have because of their extremely disturbing efforts against population policies and health regulations frequently come to the attention of police and also given cause for court investigations. However, the latter have only in very exceptional cases led to convictions because those involved are highly skilled in getting around legal regulations.[30]

The Liga continued to function and finally set up its own medical clinic in Berlin in 1931. It retained its unsavory reputation, and the clinic's medical director, Siegfried Levy-Lenz, is remembered unfavorably by his colleagues as an abortionist.[31] In contrast, however, to the avowedly socialist RV/GESEX clinics, where all women were provided with birth control without personal questioning, the Liga required indications for contraception. The questions, interestingly, were phrased in such a way as to be addressed to the husband and not the woman herself:

> Can I without decidedly lowering my standard of living, bring up my children so that they will have a certain chance of getting on in life? Will the health of my wife suffer from pregnancy and confinement? Will the future child be healthy?[32]

The Elbersfeld meeting was probably more typical of the work of lay working-class, sex reform organizations than either the RV or Liga clinics.

That the lines between public service, business, and politics were not always tightly drawn is illustrated by the following trial transcript. A 1930 court case in Bochum, in the heavily industrialized and Catholic Ruhr region, offers us an unusual insight into the labyrinthine and ambivalent workings of a lay sex reform league caught between commercial considerations, the need to supply political education and contraceptive services to its membership, and the pressures inflicted by state legal authorities. The three defendants were members of an organization functioning under the name of Verband für Sexualhygiene und Mutterschutz and numerous similar sounding titles, presumably designed to complicate police surveillance. The organization was contractually obligated to distribute the products of the firm Dr. Willing and Theves, which carried the peculiar name of Drei Mönchs (Three Monks) Antispermin and had formerly been marketed as "Zufriedenheit ist häusliches Glück" (Satisfaction is domestic happiness)!

According to the terms of the contract, the company sold the tubes to the league at the wholesale price of 1.25 mark to be resold to the organization middlemen for 1.50 mark who in turn sold to the members for 2 marks. This system offered particularly active members an opportunity to earn some extra income on commission and was undoubtedly also an attraction for proletarian and/or unemployed men. The regular sales price was supposedly 4 marks, so that members received the tubes at half the drugstore price.

The defendant, Mr. F. was accused of holding a series of birth-control meetings in the region for which he received travel expenses plus an honorarium of 3 to 5 marks for each lecture. The mechanics of birth control were explained and demonstrated with the aid of a slide show, and the speaker insisted that the blessings of many children should be reserved for the ruling class. He also remembered to add that Three Monks offered excellent protection against venereal disease. The audience comprised about 30 to 100 people with free admission for members and a 20 to 40 pfennigs charge for guests. Two women members, including Mr. F's wife, also spoke. One slide demonstrated the insertion of the tube into the vagina, and in another, a pregnant woman was shown on her knees before a nurse (begging for an abortion?) while the nurse held a tube of Antispermin in her hand, with a caption that read, "And why don't you use Three Monks?"

The defendants all admitted that the facts as presented by the prosecution were correct but insisted that they were not in violation of Paragraph 184.3 because the visitors at the closed meeting had already become members of a private society by signing up and paying their dues, thereby obviating any claim of "public" advertizing. They furthermore claimed that their actions were legal under the provisions of the Law to Combat Venereal Disease, which allowed publicizing of products serving to prevent VD, a loophole commonly used by birth-control advocates. The court was not impressed, deciding that the defense arguments were invalid because Three Monks was not primarily intended to serve as an anti-VD product. Having disposed of the VD-law defense, the court also ruled that the defendants had violated Paragraph 184.3 because the meeting had been publicly advertized and because admittedly, guests were allowed to withdraw from their "membership" after the lecture.

The references to the unjustness of Paragraph 218 and the organization's orientation toward married couples (who presumably would have no cause to fear VD?) further indicated that the product was intended as a contraceptive. If the speaker had alluded to anti-VD properties, he had assuredly only done so to mislead the inevitable police spy. And finally, disregarding the previous argument about the appeal to married couples, the court judged the product as "useful for indecent purposes" because it could be used and acquired by unmarried as well as married people. In conclusion, it was noted that the manufacturer had furnished the league office space in his company headquarters, supplied leaflets, and that a firm employee handled the league's business matters--all the privilege of contracting to exclusively distribute Three Monks Antispermin. Mr. F was judged guilty of violating Paragraph 184.3, and the two women were convicted of aiding and abetting the violation.[33] Quite ignored in the legal judgment was the interesting and for the residents of the Ruhr region particularly crucial revelation that the league's products had been certified safe and effective as birth control by a medical expert!

By 1930, with the economic crisis starting to have a debilitating effect on the sex reform movement, the need for unity and consolidation became even more apparent. Membership and dues were suffering as people withdrew from organizational burdens in the financial crunch, while at the same time, the need for delayed marriages and family limitation become more urgent.[34] A preparatory unity conference was convened in Berlin in January 1930.[35] Representatives from the RV, the Liga, and several smaller groups from all over the country, as well as from medical committees for birth control[36] and the WLSR established a Working Group of Sex Reform Leagues (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Verbände für Sexualreform*). They pledged to coordinate events, exchange speakers and information, jointly pressure manufacturers to lower their prices and improve safety, fight against commercial competition, establish a common press office and journal, and provide aid to victims of sex laws. Wisely sensing the multiple problems attending such a centralization project, they also suggested setting up an arbitration court to regulate conflicts among the various squabbling groups. The RV clearly took the lead in demanding a supra-party-politics (Überparteilich) organization based on "socialist principles."

The actual unity congress originally scheduled for April was postponed numerous times until it was finally held in Berlin on June 20 and 21, 1931. Fifty-five delegates representing over 55,000 members from the Liga, RV, and six other smaller groups were present. After one and a half days of continual haggling and frustration, it finally collapsed into what one of its most dedicated and disappointed participants termed a "fiasco." Althouth the central questions related to the complexities of joining the two big rivals, RV and Liga, the congress was dominated by the unexpected and disruptive appearance of an entirely new group—the Communist Unity League for Proletarian Protection of Mothers and Sex Reform (Einheits-Verband für proletarischer Mutterschutz und Sexualreform, EpS). The EpS had been formally established only one week before the conference precisely for the purpose of unifying all proletarian sex-reform organizations under disciplined class-conscious leadership.

The EpS claimed to represent ten thousand members in the lower Rhine and Ruhr regions and was outraged that only three of their delegates were recognized. The other groups were furious that a brand-new upstart organization, which according to them had no more than three thousand members, could march into their conference and demand the dissolution of groups with over fifty thousand members into a new organization dominated by Communists. The conference response offers a good example of the kind of anger and resentment KPD politicization tactics often provoked.[37]

The EpS in turn asserted that only Communist leadership could guarantee a class-struggle perspective, firmly rejecting any connections with capitalist interests and petty bourgeois neo-Malthusianism. EpS delegates complained that the participants were too concerned with petty organizational rivalries and not enough with the needs of the proletarian masses. They charged that the congress failed because of "horsetrading" among the groups and that unity was impossible to achieve among the "petty-bourgeois, reformist and anarcho-syndicalist leadership cliques." They denounced the other groups for being willing to "sacrifice sex reform demands on the altar of coalition politics with Brüning's Catholic Center government."[38] From the point of view of the other groups, the EpS was sabotaging years of hard, practical work, with which it had not been involved, for the sake of abstract political rhetoric.[39]

The Congress finally fell apart on the trivial issue of whether the local groups should pay dues of 10, 13, or 15 pfennigs monthly to the central organization—in reality of course, not merely a financial, but a local control issue. When the congress decided on the higher levy, the RV walked out, leaving behind an impotent rump and an accusatory EpS. The GESEX continued to press for unity at least among the remaining smaller groups. It finally split from the RV in protest and joined with the smaller AfG, an outgrowth of the league established by Heiser in 1925. The conference thus resulted not only in the failure to unify, but in the breakup of the RV/GESEX, which had been the most organized and sophisticated of the national groups.

The Communist party, rather than continuing the struggle for unity, cried "SPD betrayal" and charged the other groups with being nothing more than fronts for birth-control manufacturers and indiscriminate dispensers of contraceptives in a situation where "pills alone could not cure."[40] In accordance with its general strategy, the KPD withdrew from the mass base of the movement and created its own separate opposition organization, just as it was withdrawing from the SPD-dominated trade unions and establishing its own RGO.

The KPD proceeded to attempt to build the small local EpS organization into a national grouping that would attract workers away from the other reformist groups and towards the party according to the "United Front from below" tactic. In fact however, the immediate EpS demands, based on the Soviet model, were not so different from the RV program:

1. decriminalization of abortion.
2. procedure to be performed during the first trimester by a doctor, funded by health insurance.
3. medical prescriptions for contraceptives to be paid for by health insurance and municipal welfare.
4. establishment of sex-counseling clinics by insurance systems and local authorities.
5. doctors to be trained in the techniques of birth control and safe abortions.
6. state control and production of contraceptives in the interests of working people's health and to eliminate commercial competition.[41]

But the long-range program was indeed different and more far-reaching. Explicitly class-struggle oriented, it posited sexuality as one of the few pleasures the working class could claim for itself and therefore supported the right to sexual expression. As stated in the EpS pamphlet Liebe Verboten, the demands furthermore included:

> fight pimps and sexual abuse, not prostitutes; abolish all bourgeois marriage and divorce laws; aid for

> collective childrearing; abolish all punishment for sexual deviations . . . commissions of specialists to develop perspectives on how to avoid sexual neuroses and dysfunction; free treatment for sexual disturbances caused by capitalism and the bourgeois family(!)[42]

This was indeed a radical vision for a transformed society--very much the vision of Wilhelm Reich's Sex-Pol theories which attempted to make psychoanalysis palatable to orthodox Marxism.

Nevertheless, by raising the demand for state control of the contraception industry, the Communist party had moved a long way from its position against state intervention into the lives of the proletariat, a position sharply articulated as recently as the 1927 Reichstag debates on the passage of the VD Law. Then the KPD had argued that limiting the right to treatment of the sex organs to licensed medical doctors would paralyze the proletariat's possibilities for self-help and only extend the police powers of the state into workers' personal lives. By demanding state financing and supervision of sex reform, by attacking the other lay organizations as being not only insufficiently political but also dangerously unscientific, by positing the medical model of sexual deviance, and by insisting on medical control of their own EpS sponsored clinics, the Communist party was indicating a major step toward approving the medicalization of the human body, as well as condoning an abstract principle of state intervention.[43]

It is impossible to determine the impact the ideological analysis had on the women who came to the clinics for immediate aid.[44] Possibly there was a distinction made between the appeal to women who could be reached for further political education, and other clinic clients who might just be subjected to some waiting-room propaganda.[45] There are, however, indications that most of the EpS clients were women who were already members or closely connected to the party mass organizations.[46]

The EpS was unquestionably organizationally successful in the heavily industrialized and Catholic Ruhr. In January 1932, the police counted 32 local groups with 3,850 members. By April 15, there were already 6,010 members.[47] The authorities concluded resignedly that "considering the bad economic situation of the working population, we must expect an increase in membership."[48]

The Berlin EpS functioned as part of Wilhelm Reich's Sex-Pol activity, the only moment in the history of German working-class sex reform where Reich appears to have had much of an impact. Reich lectured on the politics of sexuality at the Marxist Evening School (MASCH), spoke at numerous meetings on "The Sexual Question in Bourgeois Society,"[49] and ran the Berlin clinic. In general, Sex-Pol was more of a theoretical idea than an organization; the EpS was its organizational expression. Unlike his other sex reform colleagues, Reich applied psychoanalytic principles and peer-counseling techniques oriented towards working-class youth in his clinic. Young workers, while expressly instructed to refer all questions about abortion and VD to the doctor himself, were free to advise clients about birth control and masturbation, handing out "mountains" of free prophylactics and vaginal jellies.[50] They reassured clients that everyone, even Wilhelm Reich himself, had masturbated and that it was nothing to worry about, provided it did not make you lazy or become a substitute for "normal" sexual relations.[51]

The Communist party and its mass organizations like the ARSO and the IAH constantly debated the political contradictions of providing alternative service networks for the working class while simultaneously demanding that a state beset by economic and political crisis take responsibility for publicly run and funded centers. They recognized the limitations of their practical work and the relatively small number of people who could be served in their storefronts. The best they could hope for was that women patients would assimilate a little political education about the inhumanity of capitalism, along with learning how to use a diaphragm.[52]

The EpS had been established at a very late date in Weimar history, and the very necessity of its creation was an indication of the KPD's isolation from much of the mass base of the sex reform movement. The EpS was an attempt to capitalize on the general mass strength of the lay organizations and to maintain the momentum of a coalition established in the dramatic winter 1931 campaign against Paragraph 218 and for the release of two doctors arrested for having performed illegal abortions.[53] By May of 1932, however, after the fall of the Brüning regime, the police were breaking up and closing down EpS meetings at the very moment that other lay groups were attempting a unified comeback.[54]

Both the RV and the Liga joined medical sex reformers in a central working committee for birth control on January 23, 1932.[55] A last-ditch effort finally reunited the GESEX, RV, and AfG into an enlarged RV, based in Berlin-Brandenburg, in March of 1932.[56] At the very last minute, in the shadow of mounting National Socialist strength, 1932 and the early months of 1933 were filled with urgent frenzied activity, including joint meetings of the Liga, IAH, and EpS.[57] Dr. Hans Lehfeldt estimated the 1932 circulation of the three most important lay organization journals at Liebe und Leben (Liga), sixty thousand; Weckruf (Volksbund für Mutterschutz und Sexualhygiene), thirty thousand; and Sexualhygiene (RV), twenty-one thousand. He added that, "these figures prove that the lay organizations had a membership of way over one hundred thousand, especially when one considers that generally every household only received one copy."[58]

A unified sex reform movement that brought together doctors, intellectuals, and working-class lay members was just beginning to succeed at the height of the Depression and at the end of the Weimar Republic. We cannot know how it might have developed. It was a painfully brief period of momentum and experimentation, abruptly and brutally cut off by the National Socialist seizure of power. The irony of the situation of course was that the various groups had much more in common than they were willing to admit. Doctors like Lehfeldt noted that the actual practice in an EpS or an RV center was hardly very different--they all distributed and fitted contraceptives, and offered sexual counseling.[59] As someone asked Wilhelm Reich at an EpS meeting in February 1932, "can you tell me the difference between a Social Democratic and a Communist uterus?"[60] Certainly the Nazis made no such fine distinctions when they systematically dissolved all sex reform groups and arrested whatever leadership they could find in May of 1933.

In conclusion, it seems that the members of the working-class sex-reform leagues were decidedly less interested in ideological or organizational struggle than they were attracted by being able to obtain inexpensive and convenient access to contraceptive information and products, with a minimal membership fee and journal subscription. It appears that regional variations may have been at least as important as political lines in determining the strength of the various groups. The EpS was very successful in the industrial, well-organized Ruhr; the RV in the eastern provinces of Saxony and Thuringia as well as in Hamburg and Bremen in the north; other smaller groups in Kassel and Hannover.

The lay leagues were often most successful in small towns and rural areas, where direct medical aid was not easily available and women were forced to abort themselves or to rely on the often exploitative practices of local quack abortionists or on those few local medical practitioners who were willing to perform abortions. Indeed, doctors often preferred to continually subject women to D and Cs rather than offer them the possibility of controlling their own bodies by educating them in the use of contraceptives.[61] Furthermore, the provisions of Paragraph 184.3 outlawing advertising tended to be more rigidly enforced in smaller towns than in larger cities. While the penal code did not expressly forbid the sale or use of contraceptives, it did create a situation in which anyone wanting to buy the expensive, commercially sold item had to go to the pharmacy, overcome all embarrassment, and demand by brand name precisely the specific product wanted--an even more demanding endeavor particularly, of course, for women in a small town or village where neighbors tended to know each other very well.

It is also no accident that membership rose, and the sex reform movement flourished most dramatically during the depression years just before the Nazis came to power. The lay movement represented another side of trade unionism for many working-class families. It offered them the possibility of deploying reproductive strategies to insure family survival at a time when collective struggle for employment and a decent living wage was becoming increasingly fragmented and difficult. With the Communists and the Social Democratic movements battling each other, unemployment causing a shift in the political arena of struggle from the workplace to the home and within the community, and women fulfilling an even more critical role in assuring economic survival and family stability, the individual "reformist" solution to birth control became an important weapon in the class struggle.

Dr. Elkan noted in Volksgesundheit, a proletarian people's health journal, that the "individual contemporary head of the family understands the limitation of his family as an act of self-defense against his environment."[62] This notion of birth control as an act of self-defense in the context of a class struggle for economic survival may help to explain why men were so much in the forefront and leadership of these sex reform organizations, whose major reason for existence after all was to distribute contraceptive devices for women and to educate men in sexual techniques that were supposed to satisfy women. As the ostensible breadwinners for their families, men felt responsible to limit these families and therefore saw contraception in the first instance not as a sexual but as an economic problem. However, their main interest was to discover methods of achieving that goal without resorting to abstinence or other birth-control methods, such as withdrawal, which were considered particularly uncomfortable for the male.

The lay organizations offered the possibility of alleviating economic distress by limiting the number of mouths to feed, but they also helped to stabilize and harmonize male/female relations within the working-class family. If sex reform aimed to reduce an economic burden, it also intended to increase the pleasure quotient in proletarian daily existence—in a responsible, rational fashion. Just as trade unionism and party organization imposed a certain political discipline on the working class, so the sex reform leagues also facilitated the internalization of "bourgeois" sexual self-discipline. In that sense, it is significant that much of the leadership of the leagues was composed of skilled, though often unemployed, workers. At least in terms of their consciousness, they were concerned not only with economic survival, but with the possibilities for upward mobility, education, and training for the limited number of children they would have. They themselves did not want to fit into the mold of the "degenerate kinderreiche" (rich in children) family; they wanted to share in the bourgeois privilege of small, healthy, and well-cared-for families. Perhaps that vision of respectability, domestic happiness, and stability is what prompted the Communist groups to criticize other lay organizations as being "petty-bourgeois." Certainly such consciousness would be the analogue to Lenin's definition of "trade-union reformism" as opposed to revolutionary consciousness among the working class.

The lay sex reform leagues primarily fulfilled a necessary service function in a society that despite the myth of the socially well-provided-for German working class, could not meet the needs of its people. The lay organizations also had an important education and therapeutic function. Lectures and meetings offered access to general health information and care for poorer families who did not have much contact with the medical profession. The lay movement not only provided birth-control information and remedies, but also supplied information on natural healing, common health problems such as whether or not an operation was advisable, sports, gymnastics, nutrition, and body care, as well as potential connections to sympathetic and inexpensive, even free, doctors. Communist physicians, for example, were well known for their willingness to perform illegal abortions safely and at a reasonable fee.[63]

The sex reform leagues offered possibilities for serious experimentation with alternative life-styles. The term "Lebensreform" in some of the league titles implied a commitment to a people's health movement that included nudism, natural healing, organic diet, vegetarianism, and abstinence from tobacco and alcohol--simultaneously a radicalized life-style vision and a means of enforcing discipline and respectability. Some observers spoke of the lay movement as a kind of "ersatz religion," but it could also be termed "ersatz therapy."[64] Some of the meetings rather resembled modern encounter groups or group therapy--a place to share problems in a nonjudgmental atmosphere while receiving concrete help. Indeed, the movement did serve to popularize the tenets of psychoanalysis; that repression is unhealthy and that better sex has the potential of creating better people, better families, and better children.

The fact that birth control and sex-education were so clearly class and not "merely" women's issues represented the simultaneous strength and weakness of the sex reform movement. The great advantage was that the class emphasis offered the possibility of unity with men within a mass and highly organized working-class movement, with access to party apparatus, journals, propaganda, funds--an entire infrastructure. It was possible to locate sex reform with a general social analysis pointing towards the necessity of revolutionary change. The glaring disadvantage, of course, was the lack of an authentic powerful feminist perspective.

It is extremely difficult, indeed impossible, to determine women's quantitative and qualitative participation in the sex reform movement. Lehfeldt's comprehensive 1932 survey of lay sex reform organizations spoke of a total membership of 113,000 but noted:

> The actual number is considerably higher, first of

> all because several splinter organizations have been overlooked but most importantly because in various leagues, the wives of the members who are often especially active in the movement have been overlooked.[65]

The difficulties of uncovering women's quantitative role in the movement reflect the hierarchy of men's and women's participation. Men were visible in the movement; their names appeared as by-lines in the journals, they were speakers at lectures and conferences; they were listed as directors and business managers of the various organizations. Women's work was once again more in the nature of "invisible housework." They may very well have attended the lectures, urged their men to join, avidly read the journals that were subscribed to under their husband's or father's name, but the documents rarely recorded that activity.

It is clear that the discourse and activity around sexual reform, about sexuality, and eugenics, about chosen motherhood and population policy, about orgasm and its multiple functions as a stabilizing measure for family and state, were centered around a male-defined and male-oriented heterosexuality. Ironically, given the preoccupation with female sexual function and enjoyment, it was directed more towards men than women. Women were assigned the major responsibility for contraception because it was still believed that men's commitment to birth control could not be trusted. The traditional belief prevailed that female sexual passivity assured that women would "maintain their head" during lovemaking, whereas the man might be carried away by passion and raging hormones. But on the other hand, the very fact that so many men were active, suggests how very central the questions of sex reform and contraception were to the daily lives of the working class; how much they were not merely a secondary social-welfare or women's issue, but absolutely critical to the economic survival of the proletarian family. Indeed, one might say that family limitation was such an important issue that men were not only involved, but dominant.

The medicalization and politicization characterizing the sex reform movement had contradictory effects for women. It surely represented an advance in health terms, but was in a certain sense a setback for women's autonomy in controlling fertility and sexual behavior. Working-class women may well have feared the spread of contraception because it would deny them their one good reason for refusing sexual advances from brutal, drunken, or simply insensitive mates.[66] The attempt to reduce quack or self-induced abortions by the introduction of more sophisticated contraception as the diaphragm, cervical cap, and in some cases even the IUD, meant that men were involved in the persons of doctors, lay functionaries, or salesmen.

Female sexuality was recognized and encouraged by the sex reform leagues, but on male heterosexual terms--in defense of the family. The contradictions are not simple. It does seem to be true that women did benefit from this new recognition of the need for female as well as male sexual satisfaction; that heterosexual couples' lives did improve with the availability of sex advice and contraceptives. But women were never really given the chance to try and begin to define, envision, and experience their own sexuality. Furthermore, the rationalization of sexuality by the sex reform movement, lay as well as medical, meant that the right to birth control, abortion, and sexual pleasure was not defined in terms of woman's individual right to control her own body and life, but rather in terms of general class, state, and social welfare. As noted earlier, eugenics questions were central to the entire movement. There was indeed a certain motherhood/Eugenics consensus that transcended customary left/right, progressive/conservative distinctions. It posited that motherhood was a natural desire for all women, simply repressed by economic necessity; and conversely also identified certain people, categorized by pseudoscientific norms of hereditary disease--including TB, VD, alcoholism, epilepsy, schizophrenia--who should under no circumstances reproduce, and who were hence targets for sterilization.

Therefore, the way was left open, ideologically if not organizationally, for an overlap and confusion between reproductive rights--never defined as such--and population control. While the National Socialists proclaimed the virtues of health, eugenics, and racial hygiene, birth control in Germany was forced to go underground and illegal abortions continued to be performed at even greater risk than before. The GESEX/RV was dissolved by police order in May 1933 as the works of sexologists and psychoanalysts were being burned on public pyres.[67] As a Gestapo report from August 1933 noted:

> It is especially important to demonstrate the connections between the Jewish-Marxist spirit and the signs of decay so present under the previous system in the areas of sexual science (sex reform such as campaigns against Paragraph 218, pornography, communist workers sexual journals plus modern art and pedagogy).[68]

And yet, even as the National Socialist terror brutally repressed sex reform groups, confiscating all sexual literature, arresting the leadership or forcing it to flee, persecuting with particular vengeance the many Jewish doctors involved in the socialist and sex reform movement,[69] birth control counseling centers were retooled into racial hygiene clinics carrying out forced sterilizations and fulfilling in grotesquely distorted and horrific form, some of the sex reform movement's eugenic goals.[70]

NOTES

I am greatful to Renate Bridenthal, Erika Busse Grossmann, Marion Kaplan, and Harold Poor for much discussion, criticism, and logistical support.

[1] Generally accepted figure, cited in Proletarische Sozialpolitik (hereafter PS) 5, no. 8, p. 254.

[2] For example, "the urban proletariat has relinquished its function as the strata of population increase." Hans Harmsen, Praktische Bevölkerungspolitik (Berlin: Junker & Dunnhaupt, 1931), p. 22. The Prussian minister of the interior, Severing, complained in the first session of the Reichsausschuss für Bevölkerungsfragen on January 20, 1930, that "The rejection of childbearing has virtually become a public movement . . . a national problem that is closely connected to the future organization of the labor market and Germany's position as an industrial state." Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA), Reichsgesundheitsamt (hereafter R86) 2369(2), p. 34.

[3] In 1909, the affluent Tiergarten area of Berlin registered a birth rate of 15.2 per 1,000 population compared to 31.8 in the working-class Wedding. By 1928, the figures were 9.5 for the Wedding and 6.7 in the Tiergarten. Annemarie Niemeyer, Zur Struktur der Familie, Statistische Materialien (Deutsche Akademie fuer soziale und pädagogische Frauenarbeit, Forschungen über Bestand und Erschütterung der Familie in der Gegenwart, Berlin, 1931), p. 88. Metropolitan Berlin boasted a birth rate of 43.1 in the years 1871 to 1880; by 1923 the figures had drastically decreased to 9.4, making "sterile Berlin" the city with the lowest birth rate in Europe. Harmsen, Praktische, p. 22.

[4] In 1907, 34.7 percent of the female population was married,

in 1925, 39.4 percent and in 1933, 42.7 percent. Helen L. Boak, "Women in Weimar Germany: The 'Frauenfrage and the Female Vote'," Richard J. Bessel and Edgar J. Feuchtwanger, eds., *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany* (London and New York: Croom Helm, 1981).

[5] *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, Vol. 406/1, Volks-, Berufs- und Betriebszählung vom 16. Juni 1925, p. 28.

[6] Dora Hansen-Blancke, *Die hauswirtschaftlichen- und Mutterschaftsleistung der Fabrikarbeiterin* (Berlin: R. Muller, 1933), pp. 19-30. See also the studies in Marie Baum and Alix Westerkampf, *Rhythmus des Familienlebens, Das von einer Familie taeglich zu leistende Arbeitspensum*, Vol. 5, Deutsche Akademie für soziale und pädagogische Frauenarbeit, (Berlin, 1931) and the first-person reports in Deutscher Textilarbeiterverband, *Mein Arbeitstag—mein Wochenende, 150 Berichte von Textilarbeiterinnen* (Berlin: Textilpraxis, 1930).

[7] The term "rationalization," meaning the application of birth control and sexual technique, was applied not only to industry and housework, but also to fertility behavior and sexuality. This is exemplified by the statement, "There can be no doubt that the limitation of birth is willed. Sexual relations are rationalized at least for the majority of the population," in "Denkschrift: Der Geburtenrueckgang, seine Folgen und seine Bekämpfung," Preussisches Ministerium für Volkswohlfahrt, September 14, 1928. BA Reichskanzlei (hereafter R43) Vol. I/1978, p. 12. See my forthcoming article in Snitow, Stansell, Thompson, eds., *The Politics of Sexuality* (New York, 1982) for further discussion of the discourse around rationalization of sexuality and population.

[8] Of all women industrial workers, 43.3 percent were married. *Statistik des Deutschen Reiches*, Vol. 408, Volks-, Berufs- und Betriebszählung vom 16. Juni 1925, p. 189. In 1907, 25.8 percent of all working women were married, 31.9 percent single, and 40.8 percent widowed and divorced. By 1925 28.7 percent were married, 41.2 percent single and only 34.5 percent widowed and divorced. Niemeyer, *Zur Struktur*, p. 109.

[9] Statistics on illegal abortions were hotly disputed, but these figures represent a general consensus, both among those for and against Paragraph 218. *Frauenwelt*, no. 9 (May 3, 1930) p. 201, and Niemeyer, *Zur Struktur*, p. 95. For further discussion of the debate around abortion, see Atina Grossmann, "Abortion and Economic Crisis: the 1931 Campaign Against Paragraph 218 in Germany," *New German Critique*, (Spring 1978), pp. 119-37. See also BA R86/ 2379 on Schwangerschafts-Unterbrechung and 2380 on Fehlgeburtenstatistik. Also

Sigismund Peller, *Fehlgeburt und Bevölkerungsfrage*, (Stuttgart: Hippokrates-Verlag, 1930).

[10] See BA R86/ 2369-2374, files on Bevölkerungspolitik, Vererbungsforschung Rassenhygiene, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene, Eugenik; Gesundheitszeugnisse fuer Ehebewerber; Bevölkerungspolitik, Eheberatung; Unfruchtbarmachung geistig Minderwertiger.

[11] Wilhelm Reich, "Sexual Misery of the Working Class," in Herbert Steiner, ed., *Sexualnot und Sexualreform, Verhandlungen der Weltliga für Sexualreform, IV. Kongress, Wien 1930* (Vienna: Elbemühl, 1931), p. 86. See also Max Hodann, *Geschlecht und Liebe* (Rudolstadt: Griefenverlag, 1927).

[12] Magnus Hirschfeld's Scientific Humanitarian Committee (Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Institut) had been battling for reform of Paragraph 175 outlawing homosexuality and other sex crimes sections of the penal code since 1897. See James P. Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno Press, 1975). The Bund für Mutterschutz was established in 1905 to fight for women's right to sexuality and unwed motherhood. See Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933* (London: Sage Publications, 1976) and the Bund's journal *Die Neue Generation*, edited by Helene Stoecker. The Society for Sexual Reform (Gesellschaft für Sexualreform--GESEX) was established in 1913 to fight against Paragraphs 175 and 218. See H(ans) Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen für Geburtenregelung," *Archiv für Bevölkerungspolitik, Sexualethik und Familienkunde*, Berlin A & B 2, (1932), pp. 63-87. The SPD had heatedly discussed birth control and Neo-Malthusianism in the Birth Strike Debate of 1913. See Kurt Nemitz, "Julius Moses und die Gebärstreik-Debatte, 1913," *Jahrbuch des Instituts für deutsche Geschichte* 2 (1973), pp. 321-35; and Karl-Heinz Roth, "Kontroversen um Geburtenkontrolle am Vorabend des ersten Weltkrieges: Eine "Dokumentation zur Berliner 'Gebärstreik Debatte' von 1913," *Autonomie* 12 (1978), pp. 78-103.

[13] In his May 1927 trial, Heisser admitted to having successfully performed eleven thousand abortions in four years by use of a secret technique apparently comparable to the modern vacuum method and superior in safety to the usual medical D and C. A Berlin jury found him technically guilty but delivered a very mild verdict on the grounds of his "fanatical idealism" and the fact that he was not operating out of perverse or profiteering motives. BA R86/2373(2).

[14] The precise reasons for this transition are not clear. Perhaps it was aided by the economic stabilization and the Bolshevization of the KPD. The new KPD slogan "Heran an die Massen" (Go

to the Masses) articulated by Ernst Thälmann at the 1925 Party Congress in Frankfurt, while it stressed workplace organizing, did free many members to work in community groups. Or alternatively, the Bolshevization of the party may have prompted disillusioned members to seek other organizing outlets, such as in the lay sex reform movement. Police reports indicate that many Communists were members of the early lay groups. BA Reichssicherheitshauptamt (hereafter R58 / 323, police report Berlin, August 3, 1936.

[15] Data on the historical development of the lay leagues in Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen," pp. 5-7, 63-69. Also, *Mitteilungen der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Volksgesundung*, no. 17 (August 20, 1932) in BA R86/2369 (2).

[16] See Hertha Riese and J. H. Leunbach, *World League for Sex Reform, LL Congress, Copenhagen, July 1-5, 1928* (Leipzig, 1929); Norman Haire, *WLSR III, London, September 8-14, 1929* (London, 1930); Steiner, *WLSR IV* (Vienna, 1931); Max Marcuse, *Verhandlungen des Internationalen Kongresses für Sexualforschung, Berlin, 10-16 Oktober 1926* (Berlin and Cologne, Vol. 1, 1927, Vol. 2-5, 1928); A. W. Greenwood, *Proceedings of the Second International Congress for Sex Research* (London, 1930); Hans Lehfeldt, "VII Internationaler Kongress für Geburtenregelung, Zürich, 1-5 September, 1930," *Zentralblatt für Gynaekologie*, no. 2, (1931) pp. 110-19; Margaret Sanger, *An Autobiography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1938); Dora Russell, *The Tamarisk Tree, The Quest for Liberty and Love* (London: Virago, 1977).

[17] For the Berlin health insurance system, see Jahrbücher: *Ambulatorien des Verbandes der Krankenkassen Berlins*, (1925-1930); Charlotte Wolff, "Die Fürsorge für die Familie im Rahmen der Schwangerenberatung der Ambulatorien des Verbandes der Berliner Krankenkassen," (dissertation, University of Berlin, 1928). On Municipal health departments, see F(riedrich) K(arl) Scheumann, *Eheberatung als Aufgabe der Kommunen* (Leipzig: L. Voss, 1932). On women doctor's special role in insurance and municipal health care, see Kaethe Frankenthal, *Der dreifache Fluch: Jüdin, Intellektuelle und Sozialistin, Lebenserinnerungen einer Aerztin in Deutschland und im Exil* (Frankfurt, 1981); Wolff, *Hindsight, An Autobiography* (London, 1980), pp. 95-111; and *Die Ärztin, Monatsschrift des Bundes deutscher Ärztinnen*, (1928-1933).

[18] The SPD social welfare organization was the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (ARWO). See report on the Bevölkerungspolitische Tagung der ARWO, Jena, September 25-26, 1926, BA R86/2369(1). See Lotte Neisser-Schroetter, *Enquête ueber die Ehe und Sexualberatungsstellen in Deutschland mit Berücksichtigung der Geburtenregelung* (Berlin: Neue Generation, 1928) reports on ARWO Counseling Centers, pp. 32-33. The KPD mass welfare

organizations were the Arbeitsgemeinschaft sozialpolitischer Organisationen (ARSO), Internationale Arbeiter-Hilfe (IAH) and Interessengemeinschaft für Arbeiterkultur (IFA). See Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (AIZ), 1925/25-1932, Proletarische Sozialpolitik (ARSO organ), 1928-1932; and Der Weg der Frau, 1931-1933.

[19] Alice Vollnhals, "Die Schwangerenfürsorge in den Ambulatorien in den Jahren 1926 und 1927," Jahrbuch (1926-27), p. 83.

[20] Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen," p. 65.

[21] Sexualhygiene (hereafter SH), no. 13 (1930), p. 103.

[22] Personal Interviews: Dr. Edward Elkan, London, January 27, 1981; Dr. Hans Harmsen, Bendesdorf near Hamburg, April 17-18, 1979; Dr. Hans Lehfeldt, New York City, September 14, 1977 and October 1, 1980; Dr. Hertha Nathorff, New York City, June 16, 1980 and September 25, 1980; and Elfriede Nemitz (about her companion, Dr. Julius Moses), West Berlin, March 23, 1979. They all stressed the large degree of social and professional contact among sex reform physicians along a broad spectrum of political affiliation. Hans Harmsen, for example, was nationalistically inclined, worked for the Innere Mission of the Protestant Church, opposed abortions but was nevertheless an advocate of rationalized birth control and considered part of the general sex reform movement. The notable exception to this mutual admiration society was Wilhelm Reich, who was universally disliked and considered weird by his colleagues. When told that Reich had supposedly gone insane towards the end of his life, Elkan retorted, "Well, he always was." Elkan interview.

[23] Lehfeldt interviews.

[24] Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen," p. 66. Interestingly, when Dr. Elkan was questioned about the topic "Die Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens," he said, "That meant sterilization and of course abortion. But the Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens was also carried on by the Nazis. I can't very well imagine that we would have a meeting under that flag because of the way it was interpreted . . . well . . . under the Weimar Republic, these things were in the air." Elkan interview.

[25] Elkan interview.

[26] Provincial health authorities reported to the Ministry of Health in 1926-27 that the declining rate of abortion fatalities despite the continuing rise in abortions was due to improved instruments and techniques used by women and quack practitioners, rather than to any increased willingness by physicians to perform the procedure. BA R86/931(12). The

situation for well-connected women in larger cities was of course different. Lehfeldt remembered that it was not so difficult to get doctors to provide the necessary medical certificate. Interview. Dr. Hertha Nathorff remembered, "I worked at the gynecological clinics in Heidelberg and Freiburg and I never, never heard the word birth control. I knew nothing about the diaphragm." Interview.

[27] *SH*, Vol. 3, no. 6 (June 1931), p. 42.

[28] Bund der Kinderreichen (BKR) to Reichsgesundheitsamt (RGA), October 24, 1928. BA R36/2379(5).

[29] Reichsministerium des Innern (RMI) to RGA and Preussisches Ministerium für Volkswohlfahrt. June 1929. BA R36/2379(5).

[30] RGA to RMI, June 1929. BA R36/2379(5).

[31] Lehfeldt interview.

[32] Ludwig L. Lenz, *The Memoirs of a Sexologist, Discretion and Indiscretion* (New York: Cadillac Pub. Co., 1951), p. 262.

[33] Abbreviated transcript of the verdict, Grosse Strafkammer des Landgerichts Bochum, December 2, 1930. BA R58/548, pp. 49-51.

[34] The RV estimated in 1931 that 70 percent of its members were unemployed. *SH*, Vol. 3, no. 8 (August 1931), p. 57.

[35] The most dramatic example was the arrest in 1931 of two Stuttgart doctors on charges of having performed illegal abortions for "commercial gain." See Grossmann, "Abortion and Economic Crisis," and Hans Jürgen Arendt, "Eine demokratische Massenbewegung unter Führung der KPD im Frühjahr 1931: Die Volksaktion gegen den Paragraphen 218 und gegen die päpstliche Enzyklika 'casti Connubi,'" *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, Vol. XIX, no. 1 (1971), pp. 213-23.

[36] The German Committee for Birth Control, (Komitee für Geburtenregelung) supported by Margaret Sanger and led by Helene Stöcker had sponsored doctors courses in birth control in 1928 and 1930. Medical birth control experts were also organized in the Deutsche Arbeitszentrale für Geburtenregelung (research and not activist oriented).

[37] Lehfeldt interview, September 14, 1977.

[38] Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen," p. 80. Data on unification process from Lehfeldt, pp. 73-83, reports in *SH* and *PS*.

[39] IFA report 1930 in BA Reichskommission für die Ueberwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung und Nachrichtensammelstelle im RMI, (hereafter R 132/70, p. 293.

[40] Dr. Martha Ruben-Wolf in PS, Vol. 2, no. 12, p. 380.

[41] PS, Vol. 2, no. 12, p. 330.

[42] Liebe Verboten, (Berlin, 1930), p. 18, in BA Zeitgeschichtliche Sammlung (hereafter ZSg 1/65/77(4).

[43] Rundschreiben der EpS an alle proletarischen Organisationen," July 7, 1931. BA R58/548(6), p. 5-7.

[44] Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz Dahlem (hereafter GStA) Rep. 219/57 pp. 61-64.

[45] "In the Ruhr and Upper Silesia, the KPD faced a strong, continuous religious tradition among Catholic women, which divided the families along lines at once of sex, religion and politics. These Catholic women were the exception to the rule that wives usually voted for the same parties as their husbands," Brian Peterson, "The Politics of Working-Class Women in the Weimar Republic," Central European History, vol. X, no. 2 (June 1977), pp. 87-111, p. 103.

[46] GStA Rep. 219/57, p. 77.

[47] GStA Rep. 219/57, pp. 35-39.

[48] BA R58/757/4, p. 126.

[49] Wilhelm Reich debated Manes Sperber on "The Sexual Question in Bourgeois Society" at EpS meetings on December 8, 1932, January 11, and 18, and February 3, 1933. BA R58/336 Beiheft 10 (AMSO Arbeitsgemeinschaft Marxistischer Sozialarbeiter). See also Manes Sperber, Die Vergebliche Warnung, (Vienna: Europaverl., 1975), p. 210.

[50] Ernest Bornemann, Die Ur-Szene, (Frankfurt/M: S. Fischer, 1977), pp. 23-24.

[51] BA R58/684. Frauen in Front, no. 4, April 1932, p. 6. (IAH): BA R58/649/ Beiheft 44, Aerzte.

[52] The IAH journal Vormarsch, Vol. 2, no. 2 (January 1933) wrote, "The IAH must make clear that with its own distribution of contraception, it can only show the possibility of birth control, but that it does not think of taking over any state responsibilities." BA R58/649/ Beiheft 44.

[53] See Grossmann, "Abortion and Economic Crisis," for detailed discussion of 1931 Paragraph 213 campaign.

[54] GStA Rep. 219/57, p. 77 BA R58/548/6.

[55] BA R862269(2), p. 226.

[56] Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen," p. 81.

[57] BA R58/548/6, BA R58/757, R58/336, have extensive reports on EpS and Liga meetings with lectures by physicians. It must of course be taken into consideration that the police in these months may have been particularly conscientious in monitoring meetings, thus offering somewhat of an exaggerated picture.

[58] Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen," p. 85.

[59] Lehfeldt interview, September 14, 1977.

[60] Report on EpS meeting, February 12, 1932, Berlin. BA R58/548(6), pp. 69-70, police report February 13, 1932.

[61] See Alfred Grotjahn, Eine Kartothek zu Par. 218, Ärztliche Berichte aus einer Kleinstadtpraxis über 426 künstliche Aborte in einem Jahr, (Berlin: A. Metzner, 1932) for the shattering report of a small-town doctor who claimed to perform as many as seven abortions a day for "humanitarian reasons" because he claimed that abortion (die Auskratzung) offered women sexual pleasure and because he had no faith in women's ability to manage any sort of contraception on their own. Margaret Sanger quoted German physicians as saying, "We will never give over the control of our numbers to the women themselves. What, let them control the future of the human race? With abortions it is in our hands; we make the decisions and they must come to us." Sanger, An Autobiography, p. 284.

[62] Volksgesundheit Vol. 42, no. 12, p. 82.

[63] Nathorff interview.

[64] Harmsen interview.

[65] Die Warte, Kampforgan für proletarische Sexualreform und Mutterschutz (January 1932), p. 60.

[66] Lehfeldt, "Die Laienorganisationen," p. 85.

[67] See Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right, A Social History of Birth Control in America (New York: Penguin Books, 1976) for a feminist interpretation of women's resistance to birth control in the nineteenth century American context.

[68] BA R58/328, Police rept. August 1933.

[69] Dr. Elkan of the RV in Hamburg was almost beaten to death in his consultation room at the beginning of 1933 by a gang of Nazi thugs who attacked him as a Jew, Socialist, and birth-control advocate. He was dragged from prison to prison and finally, his arm still in a sling, allowed to emigrate to London. Elkan interview. Dr. Lehfeldt of the Berlin GESEX clinic fled to the United States, smuggling out his precious clinic records, lest they be used to denounce patients and colleagues. Lehfeldt interview. Many of the emigré physicians continued to be active in sex reform and scattered as refugees throughout the globe became leaders of the postwar International Planned Parenthood Movement. Elkan, Harmsen, Lehfeldt interviews.

[70] Gisela Bock, "Frauen und ihre Arbeit im Nationalsozialismus," im Annette Kuhn and Gerhard Schneider, eds., Frauen in der Geschichte (Düsseldorf, 1979), pp. 113-52.

16

Prefigurations of Nazi Culture in the Weimar Republic

ROB BURNS

Long before Hitler seized power in 1933, the National Socialists had declared their movement to be the spearhead of a revolution and in general historians have not been notably reluctant to accept that designation.[1] It is as well to be clear, however, in what sense the term is to be used, for--pace David Schoenbaum[2]--to speak of the Nazi "social revolution" is to imply a thoroughness of transformation that is belied by the social structure of the Third Reich. The configuration of economic interests underpinning Weimar Germany was barely challenged, let alone transformed by the Nazi regime, and to argue, as Sebastian Haffner has recently done,[3] that the NSDAP was in essence a "socialist" party is merely to blunt the conceptual tools of political analysis. The real National Socialist revolution was carried through on two fronts but in pursuit of a single goal, namely the total control of the individual. On the one hand, this entailed an administrative revolution that created a state within a state. National Socialism did not smash the existing state apparatus as the Leninist orthodoxy of revolution would demand; rather it created another one, parallel to and ultimately superseding the administrative machinery bequeathed to the regime by the now defunct Weimar Republic. The SS state's "revolution of nihilism," to use Hermann Rauschning's celebrated phrase, was complemented by a cultural revolution, the goal of which was the total control of the individual through the systematic organization and mass dissemination of ideology.

The essence of the Nazi cultural revolution lay in its manipulation of consciousness, a process whereby the status of various groups in society (such as male workers, married women, German youth, and the peasantry) was not actually changed but the attempt was made to transform their perception of that status. To this end the Nazis generated a broad set of innovative cultural organizations and practices, the aim of which was the restructuring of leisure time and its transformation into a state-controlled instrument of National Socialist ideology. The pervasiveness of such practices was epitomized by the "Strength through Joy" movement, which within two years of its inception had expanded in scope to such an extent that virtually no form of organized recreational activity lay outside its purview. The role of the various Nazi cultural organizations was complemented by what Walter Benjamin designated as fascism's "aestheticisation of politics,"[4] that is, the attempt to legitimize political rule through the ritualization of public life and the integration of aesthetics and politics. In particular this was exemplified by the political liturgy of fascism that encompassed not only the mass rallies and party conferences of the NSDAP but also the creation of National Socialism's own calendar of specifically devised customs, ceremonies, and celebrations. The totalitarian character of the Nazi cultural revolution was thus revealed in its ultimate goal, that of abolishing the distinction between society and the state. That is to say, the massive reorganization of public life brought about by the Nazis in the Third Reich had but one aim: to politicize the everyday by eliminating the private life of the individual and substituting for it state controlled patterns of communal activity. As Robert Ley, the leader of the Labor Front, put it: "There are no private citizens any more . . . . Only sleep is a private affair."[5]

It is, then, a central premise of this chapter that an appreciation of the role of culture is essential for a full understanding of fascism.[6] National Socialism must be seen as in part a cultural movement, that is to say, a movement that brought culture directly into the political sphere, where it was made to serve the formation of mass consciousness. As the following analysis of certain aspects of Weimar culture seeks to demonstrate, however, the roots of that cultural movement extend back well beyond the seizure of power in 1933. For it was fuelled in part by a particular cultural tradition in Germany which, it could be argued, had helped prepare the ideological ground for fascism in the first instance.

Indeed, in one sense the term "Nazi cultural revolution" might seem somewhat inappropriate if by that is meant an absolute break with the immediate past. Certainly, the innovative drive of National Socialism was directed not towards the structure of ideology but towards the mode of its mediation, and Kurt Sontheimer hardly exaggerates in his claim that the Nazis did not make any original contribution to the antidemocratic thought of the time.[7] This is attested not only by the paucity of National Socialism's ideological writings but also by the wholly derivative and eclectic nature of those works such as _Mein Kampf_ and Rosenberg's _Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts_, which comprised the ideological canon of the movement. As Hitler himself confirmed in his acknowledgment that Nazism "takes over the essential fundamental traits of a general _völkisch_ world view,"[3] the ideological foundations of National Socialism had been laid long before the NSDAP was officially formed. The status of völkisch thought--by which is meant the writings of nineteenth-century cultural critics such as Wilhelm Riehl, Paul de Lagarde, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Julius Langbehn--as the ideological precursor of National Socialism has been corroborated by much recent research and needs no further elaboration here.[9] In essence völkisch ideology constructed a catalogue of enemies and scapegoats that was virtually indistinguishable from those identified by National Socialism. It was implacably opposed to liberalism and democracy, which were seen as corroding the very life-force of the Germanic Volk. It asserted the primacy of race among the determinants of history and national character, and as a consequence singled out the Jews as Germany's ultimate racial antagonist. This anti-Semitism also encompassed a romantic anticapitalism, which saw the modernizing tendency of bourgeois materialism and industrialization as inimical to the main repository of völkisch values, the natural organic community. As an antidote to these destructive forces, both the Germanic and National Socialist ideology prescribed a völkisch Reich, united and ruled by a charismatic leader and pursuing a vigorous policy of expansionist aggression.

It was the achievement of National Socialism to wed this ideology to political organization and thus to make it the basis of a mass movement. The task of developing these ideas into a form appropriate to the circumstances of the Weimar Republic, however, was fulfilled not so much by the Nazis themselves as by a group of writers residing under the collective rubric of "the conservative revolution." Their significance was, as Fritz Stern states, that "they served as cultural middlemen, transmitting old ideas in new combinations to later generations."[10] The most influential of these writers was Arthur Moeller van den Bruck who, in his work Das Dritte Reich (1923), did much more than simply equip the Nazis with the name for their "Thousand Year Reich." Rather the book presented in modernized form many of the principal themes of völkisch ideology.

Central to Moeller's thought is the notion of race. While it is true that Moeller conceived of race primarily in spiritual rather than biological terms, he nevertheless exhibited the typically völkisch tendency to psychologize the concept of the nation, presenting it as a living entity and imbuing it with specific characteristics. Accordingly, he differentiated between two types of peoples, the old and the young, arguing that the future of European civilization was dependent on the victory of vital emergent nations such as Germany over the culturally effete representatives of the old order, England and France. Although anti-Semitism played a minor role in Moeller's philosophy,[11] this was more than offset by his assault on the other main object of völkish animosity--liberalism. Confronted in the Weimar Republic with the embodiment of everything these thinkers rejected, Moeller railed in populistic vein against the democratic system and the repercussions of Versailles. Above all, he gave currency to what was undoubtedly the most corrosive antidemocratic slogan of the Weimar Republic, the "stab-in-the-back-legend." To liberalism's belief in man's inherent humanity, Moeller counterposed a crude Social Darwinism that conceived of historical development as a fight for survival "in which the victor is necessarily in the right."[12] This view of struggle as an ennobling process not surprisingly led Moeller to see war as "the national expression of the struggle for survival,"[13] and in the introduction to Das Dritte Reich he appended a somewhat prophetic footnote when speculating on the possible outcome of that struggle. The Third Reich, he conceded, could prove to be an illusion and, indeed, one which might well bring about the nation's destruction. Nevertheless, he insisted, it was far better to strive for an illusionary goal and to be destroyed in the process than to remain in the present state of national sterility and cultural decline. What better example of Fritz Stern's "politics of cultural despair," namely the leap from cultural pessimism to aggression, from idealism to nihilism.

It was, though, in his advocacy of imperialism that Moeller formulated his most resonant contribution to the völkisch conceptual framework. Germany's social problems, he declared, derived in the main from its excess population, and a policy of expansionism, therefore, would satisfy the need for Lebensraum and at the same time unite a nation spirutually divided by the inherent discord of the party political system. For Moeller this strategy amounted to nothing less than a "National Socialism." Adopting Spengler's slogan, "every nation has its own socialism," he predicted that the new Germany would take the form of an hierarchical society in which class antagonisms would be harmonized within a Germanic "socialism of entrepreneurship." The significance for Nazism of Moeller's reinterpretation of socialism as the subordination of the individual's interests to those of the community--a view already adumbrated in an earlier work, Der Preussische Stil (1916), and echoed four years later in Oswald Spengler's Preussentum und Sozialismus (1920)--scarcely needs any laboring.

Despite the title of his book, Moeller was more concerned with a critique of the present than with providing a blueprint for some future society. Whatever the metaphysical tenor of his writing, the same cannot be said of Ernst Jünger's celebration of totalitarianism, Der Arbeiter (1932). In it Jünger rejected the belief that man is the architect of his own society, positing instead the primacy of irrational, elemental forces. He decried democracy and the institutions of liberalism as the pusillanimous efforts of an enfeebled bourgeoisie to contain these primordial powers and disguise them as rational intercourse. This attempt was a futile one, however, for it was the elemental forces unleashed by the First World War that, according to Jünger, were now in control. The precarious structures of bourgeois society, he predicted, would soon be swept away and replaced by a "work-state," founded on the twin physical manifestations of these elemental forces, the worker and technology. Although in his terminology Jünger took over the Marxist idea of an unbridgeable schism between two classes, the workers and the bourgeoisie, he did so only in order to defuse the terms of any concrete sociopolitical connotations. In Jünger's scheme, as was soon to be the case in the Third Reich, the status of the worker was defined not by property relations but by a state of mind. The future work-state would be a dictatorship but not one in the conventional sense, for "the worker knows no dictatorship because for him freedom and obedience are identical."[14] The actual organization of labor would follow the model of the Russian Five Year Plan, which Jünger praised for its imposition of a "strict and sober discipline" and for its denial to the workers of even the most basic rights.[15] Unlike the Soviet model, however, it would be neither necessary nor desirable to abolish private property, for as long as industry subordinated itself to the state, and in particular to the work-state's ultimate aim, the "total mobilization" for war, private capital would be left intact.

Apologists for Jünger have tended to see in Der Arbeiter a purely predictive as opposed to prescriptive piece of writing. The book's closing lines, however, reveal it to be not simply the diagnosis of an age but an explicit program of action. Written on the very eve of the Third Reich, it was Jünger's metaphysical justification for the strategy of war preparation outlined two years earlier in the essay "Die totale Mobilmachung" (1930). In his vision of an authoritarian society in which class contradictions are reconciled not on the basis of material equality but through the ideologically induced experience of uniformity and whose ethos and social goals are governed by the "total mobilization" for war, Jünger prefigured all too clearly the militaristic and pseudo-egalitarian corporate state of the Third Reich. Whatever his subsequent reservations about Hitler's regime, it is nevertheless difficult to resist the conclusion that objectively a work such as Der Arbeiter was performing the ideological groundwork for National Socialism. What both Jünger and Moeller van den Bruck had in common, along with certain other conservative writers in the Weimar Republic, was their particular conception of revolution: for them this was a passive process, a "Revolution sans phrase,"[16] that would be effected by spiritual not political means and that would have as its final goal the inculcation of a specific state of mind. In short, what they advocated was essentially a cultural revolution.

Both in theory and historical practice, such a revolution has been confronted by two related tasks: the selective appropriation of the nation's cultural heritage and the development of new forms of cultural expression as appropriate vehicles for an ideology aspiring to ascendancy. The Nazi revolution, however, was unusual in seeing these two tasks as representing distinct areas of cultural practice: while boundless innovative energies were channelled into the sphere of mass culture, in the realm of high culture the Nazis were content by and large merely to extend certain artistic traditions already prominent in the Weimar Republic.[17] In fact the lines of continuity between the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich are apparent in virtually all sectors of artistic activity.

In no other branch of the arts except the cinema was that strand of continuity more apparent than in literature. Naturally 1933 marked a rupture in the German literary tradition in one sense--as it did in all the arts--for the thoroughgoing purge of the cultural institutions that followed the Nazi seizure of power had as its most immediate consequence the exodus from Germany of some two thousand writers, while numerous others sought political asylum either in literary silence or in the ideological opacity of "inner emigration." And yet there was one vibrant voice among the myriad literary utterances of the Weimar Republic that was anything but muzzled by the advent of National Socialism, for the fictional form too proved an effective vehicle for völkisch ideas and the twenties yielded a rich harvest of such literature. Indeed, it is one indication of the literary continuity between the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich that of the twelve best-selling authors in 1932 seven (Werner Beumelburg, Hans Grimm, Hermann Stehr, Hans Carossa, Edwin Erich Dwinger, Steguweit, and Ina Seidl, all of whom can be legitimately assigned to the völkisch tradition) were subsequently sponsored by the Nazis.[18]

The Nazi canon of literature praised three types of writing, which were basically grouped around the themes of militarism, race, and the movement.[19] Only the last of these, which in the main consisted of functional literature dedicated to particular Nazi celebrities or special occasions in the National Socialist calendar, was unique to the Third Reich; the other two had their roots in the tradition of völkisch thought. The most important was the theme of nationalistic militarism. The First World War spawned a considerable body of literature in the Weimar Republic that testified to the centrality of the war experience for writers of radically differing persuasions. Alongside the pacifist portrayals of war as a dehumanizing exercise in destruction (exemplified most notably by Remarque's Im Westen nichts Neues), there developed another strain of literature that celebrated war as a force of spiritual and national regeneration. In the early 1920s this mystical idea of conflict was expressed in the works of writers such as Hans Carossa, while the last four years of the Weimar Republic witnessed the emergence of a whole series of novels and dramas that derived their inspiration from the Great War (among them Edwin Erich Dwinger's trilogy Die deutsche Passion /1929-32/, Werner Beumelburg's Die

Gruppe Bösemüller [1930], Ernst von Salomon's *Die Geächteten* [1930], and Hans Zöberlein's *Der Glaube an Deutschland* [1931]). However, the author whose work epitomizes the glorification of war is Ernst Jünger. Both his fiction and quasi-philosophical writings of the period are suffused with images of war that attribute to combat a dynamic, life-giving force and acclaim physical struggle as "the masculine form of procreation."[20] Since, as Jünger repeatedly avers, it is only in the exhilaration of battle that life can be experienced to the full, war must always remain outside the parameters of mere moral adjudication, for it "is as much a feature of human life as the sexual urge. It is a law of nature. . . . To live is to kill."[21] The antidemocratic war novels of the Weimar Republic thus articulated many of the ideals propounded by National Socialist ideology: the idealization of physical struggle, the depiction of the enemy as an agent of national unity and a catalyst of aggression, and the veneration of the male collective at the battlefront which, by virtue of its authoritarian leadership structures, its socialist character (in the Nazi sense of uniting men from different social classes) and the selfless idealism of its individual members, prefigured the *Volksgemeinschaft* of the National Socialist community. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that after 1933 such novels were extolled as paradigms of Nazi literature.

The other pillar of the Nazi literary edifice, so-called *volkhafte Dichtung*, was in effect a residual category in that it was broad enough to accommodate virtually any text that attracted the imprimatur of the custodians of Nazi culture. And yet, as with the war novels, the exemplars of this genre (such as the mystical, pseudo-metaphysical writing of the prolific Hermann Stehr, the romanticized outpourings of Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer, or the historical and mythological novels of Hans Blunck) were mainly written prior to the founding of the Third Reich. Within this somewhat diffuse grouping, one particular area merits attention, namely what has become known in general as the literature of *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil). Its romantically stylized image of the rural community, exalting the simple, natural values of the peasantry, and its mystical relationship to the fertile native soil, accorded perfectly with the antimodernist elements of Nazi ideology. The antecedents of such literature go back to the provincial *Heimatdichtung* at the turn of the century, which yielded many popular novels similar to *Der Büttnerbauer* (1895) by Wilhelm von Polenz and *Wiltfeber der Deutsche* (1912), whose author, Hermann Burte, was upheld by Nazi literary criticism as one of the very first National Socialist writers. Polenz's book--which Hitler claimed had profoundly influenced his political thinking--tells the story of a peasant whose mystical bonds with nature are severed by the encroachment of industrialization (represented here by a Jewish finance capitalist). Socially and spiritually uprooted, the peasant hangs himself, his eyes staring at the soil, "the soil to which he had dedicated his life, to which he had sold his body and soul."[22] The 1920s produced a plethora of pastoral idylls from the pen of such writers as Friedrich Griese, Richard Billinger, and Karl Heinrich Waggerl. But by far the single most influential example of the entire genre was Hans Grimm's Volk ohne Raum (1926) which, despite its twelve hundred pages, had sold over half a million copies by the mid-1930s. The almost biblical status bestowed on this most turgid of tomes is largely attributable to the fact that its title furnished the Nazis with a legitimate slogan for their expansionist foreign policy, even though, paradoxically, Grimm's proposed solution to the problem of Lebensraum, namely colonization, was not in fact the policy Hitler pursued when in power.[23]

The culture of the Weimar Republic thus encompassed a rich vein of völkisch literature that the National Socialists were only too grateful to exploit. Indeed, by comparison the literary output of the Third Reich itself seems positively jejune. Two reasons suggest themselves for this imbalance: firstly, those authors who dominated the literary stage under National Socialism (Stehr, Blunck, Dwinger, Griese, Beumelburg, Grimm, and so on) had by 1933 apparently reached the end of their creative powers, a literary silence, one hastens to add, that in no way betokened disapproval of the Nazi regime. Typically Hanns Johst, who as president of both the Reichsschrifttumskammer and the Akademie der Dichtung occupied the two most prestigious positions that National Socialism conferred on any single author, eschewed writing almost completely after 1933, preferring to assume the full-time role of state functionary. More importantly, perhaps, the meagerness of literary production after 1933 to a certain extent reflects the priorities of the overall cultural policy, which seemed altogether more concerned to appropriate a past cultural tradition than to create a new one.

This was certainly true of the theater, for although the typology of fiction outlined above had its equivalent in the sphere of drama, by and large it was the classics that occupied pride of place in the theatrical repertoire of the Third Reich. The cultural heritage was plundered in order to construct a pantheon of drama compatible with National Socialist values. Where these cultural excavations uncovered unassimilable works by otherwise estimable authors, then such plays were either ignored or dismissed as aberrations. Schiller and Kleist were particularly revered, for the heroism and sense of national pride evoked in such plays as Wilhelm Tell and Die Hermannsschlacht could be readily accommodated within the ethos of the Third Reich. Nor were these efforts at stage management without success, for state intervention in the theater was not only of an ideological nature. The regime provided an abundance of subsidies, commissions and, literary prizes and the lavish productions that these facilitated attracted both large audiences and critical acclaim.

There was, however, one area in which it was claimed the Nazis had made an original contribution to the dramatic art form and that was in their evolvement of the Thingspiel. This was theater in the broadest sense of the term, a grandiose fusion of agitprop, pageant, choral chant, communal song, dance, gymnastics, circus, and military tattoo. Its overall character was essentially that of a cult, a modernized celebration of Germanic rites, the aim of which was the creation of a mass spectacle. One of the first such performances took place in Berlin in October 1933 before an audience of sixty thousand and with a cast of around seventeen thousand, including entire battalions of the SA and Hitler Youth. The cult effect was further enhanced by the setting for these occasions: special Thingstätten were constructed, open-air ampitheatres often sited on ground associated with ancient Germanic shrines.

Despite its popular appeal, the Thingspiel was relatively short-lived, having virtually disappeared from the cultural calendar by 1937. The reason commonly advanced for this evanescence is that since it came more and more to resemble a purely political event, the Thingspiel gradually lost its distinct function and in effect merely duplicated the Nazi parades, mass meetings, and party rallies.[24] Since the prime mover behind the development of the Thingspiel had been no less an authority than Goebbels, who was convinced that it represented something uniquely National Socialist in character, it seems unlikely that the supposed functional redundancy of the Thingspiel was the sole cause of its demise. In fact, the Thingspiel was by no means as original as it was claimed, and consideration of one of its antecedents suggests another reason why it eventually fell into disfavor.

Although it was the spectacle element that the Nazis particularly cultivated, the ideological backbone of the Thingspiel still remained the text, which more often than not was a chorus delivered in quasi-liturgical fashion by a speech choir. The development of the speech choir had been one of the signal achievements of the working-class cultural movement in the Weimar Republic. There too it had often been incorporated, along with other art forms such as dance and song, into the spectacular enterprise of the Massenspiel, where it served as a simple but effective medium of proletarian solidarity, a collective articulation of shared class experience and political aspirations. While the Nazis took over the outer form of the proletarian speech choir, they clearly intended it to fulfil a quite different function. It now became the vehicle of manipulation, an instrument for the inculcation of authoritarian consciousness as the following quote from the introduction to a collection of völkisch speech choirs shows:

> The speech choir group has always to deliver itself up completely, as it were, to the speech choir leader. Subjective feelings and views are to be dispensed with here. . . . In speech choir training there lies an

> excellent way of cultivating in men the spirit of loyal obedience and devotion to authority.[25]

In short, the relationship of the speech choir to its leader was conceived of as replicating at a cultural level that between the masses and their Führer. Clearly, however, the speech choir was so inextricably bound up with the working-class cultural tradition of the Weimar Republic that this particular attempt at Gleichschaltung did not wholly succeed, a fact acknowledged by the Nazis themselves in 1936 when the speech choir was officially banned as a form of cultural expression.[26] It is also significant that the subterranean anticapitalism of Nazi ideology was still resonant in many of the texts written for both the völkisch speech choir and the early Thingspiel.[27] Moreover, the SA, the main repository of anticapitalist sentiments within National Socialism as a whole, was one of the principal actors in the Thingspiel movement. By the end of 1934, with the "revolution" officially declared by Hitler to be at an end and the SA politically emasculated as a consequence of the Röhm purge, it was perhaps forseeable that the Nazis would temper their enthusiasm for a cultural form which, however residually, still bore the imprint of left-wing National Socialism and revived notions of an anticapitalism that even from an ideological point of view was now redundant.

Unlike literature, the visual arts would appear to represent an area of German culture in whose historical trajectory the Third Reich can only be seen as marking a massive disruption. After all, the many and various forms of modernist art that emerged and blossomed in the supportive climate of the Weimar Republic--expressionism, dadaism, surrealism, the Bauhaus group, Neue Sachlichkeit, and even futurism which, paradoxically, in Fascist Italy enjoyed semiofficial standing--were all summarily cropped by a Nazi regime that branded anything remotely smacking of the avant-garde as "degenerate" and a manifestation of "cultural Bolshevism." And yet antagonism to modern art existed long before the cultural watchdogs of the Third Reich elevated it to the status of an official aesthetic. Even in the Weimar Republic, influential organizations such as the Munich Artists' Association and the Munich Guild of Visual Artists made little attempt to disguise their lack of sympathy for modernism, while elsewhere combat leagues of German culture were formed with the aim of countering modern art's allegedly pernicious influence. Chief among these was the Führer's Council of United German Art and Cultural Associations which, founded in 1930, boasted a quarter of a million members and served as a coordinating body for the multifarious cultural organizations of the völkisch movement.

Painting had occupied a special place in the hierarchy of völkisch ideals ever since the appearance of Langbehn's Rembrandt als Erzieher (1890). Although barely discussed in detail, Rembrandt is championed by the prophet of the Germanic faith as the embodiment of Volkstümlichkeit, the simple organic artist who gives spontaneous and intuitive expression to the unique character of his people and its traditions. It was the purported timeless quality of such painting that Hitler exhorted the artists of the Third Reich to emulate, for they would thereby be laying "the foundations for a new and genuine German art."[28] Concretely this meant a revival of nineteenth-century genre painting. In place of modernism's preoccupation with style and technique, National Socialist art was to return to themes as its creative principle. These were drawn not from the potentially hazardous terrain of National Socialist reality but from the secluded domain of völkisch idylls: romanticized landscapes and still-lifes, pastoral and domestic scenes of healthy rural simplicity, portraits effusing racial purity. In short, a form of painting was advocated which, although insistently representational, was, by virtue of its tendency to mythologize and dehistoricize, the very obverse of realism.

It is important to stress, however, that despite the impact of modernism in the 1920s, this was nevertheless a tradition to which many artists in the Weimar Republic still subscribed. For example, the prestigious German Art Exhibition of Munich held in 1930 listed nearly 950 painters and sculptors, only a dozen or so of which could legitimately be categorized as modern. Moreover, roughly 250 of these artists subsequently appeared in the catalogues of the Nazi-sponsored Great German Art Exhibitions of 1937, 1938, and 1939.[29] Such statistics invite the conclusion that the supposedly "new" German art merely fed on existing traditions and continued certain trends established long before the founding of the Third Reich. As Berthold Hinz argues, "all it did was reactivate those artists who had been left behind by the development of modern art but who were still active after 1933 and who seized the opportunity to move into the vacuum once modern art had been liquidated."[30] That is to say, National Socialism did not create its own art, rather it created pictorial continuity.

In the case of film, those lines of continuity would probably have been equally apparent even had the National Socialists chosen not to intervene in so direct a fashion in the workings of the German cinema. In view of the Weimar Republic's reputation as a period of great cinematic distinction, this judgment might seem somewhat surprising. The screen classics of this period, however, derive almost wholly from the years 1919 to 1926. Thereafter, as Lotte Eisner points out,[31] the number of quality films, let alone those of a stature comparable with The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1919) or Metropolis (1926), was probably limited to four or five per year at the most. Certainly, as far as the structure of the film industry was concerned, 1933 in no sense constituted a break, for despite the National Socialists' rhetorical commitment to small business, the Third Reich witnessed merely a continuation of the trend, already well established by the latter stages of the Weimar Republic, whereby Ufa (Universum Film AG) cemented its monopoly position and small film companies went bankrupt.[32] Even the censorship law of 1934, which decreed that the screenplay for a film had to be submitted to Goebbels for approval before production could begin, was only a modification of the censorship apparatus that had operated in the Weimar Republic since 1920.[33] As for the films themselves, we need only consider Siegfried Kracauer's persuasive argument that the German film industry played a not insubstantial part in helping prepare the ground for National Socialism.[34]

From 1925 onwards, and in particular during the last three years of the Weimar Republic, the German cinema was in part characterized by a group of films which, broadly speaking, can be seen as supportive of nationalistic and authoritarian values. These films encompassed a wide range of ideological motifs exploited by the Nazis, but two themes gained particular prominence: those of charismatic leadership and nationalist rebellion. In the first category belong a number of films, which in their portrayal of the past, reduce the idea of historical process purely to the intuitive actions of exceptional individuals. By far the most popular subject of these hagiographical narratives was Frederick the Great, for between 1922 and 1933 there appeared no fewer than seven films devoted to his exploits, a series which was directly continued by the cinema of the Third Reich. The image of the Prussian monarch that emerges from these films is summed up by Kracauer in his analysis of Arsen von Cserepy's _Fridericus Rex_ (1922):

> This screen Frederick is given two major virtues. He appears as the father of his people--a patriarchal ruler using his absolute power to mitigate legal hardships, further general welfare and protect the poor from exploitation by the rich. Simultaneously, he appears as the national hero who through several successful wars elevates little Prussia to the rank of a great power. The whole construction overtly aims at convincing the audience that another Frederick might not only prove an effective antidote against the virus of socialism but also realize Germany's national aspirations.[35]

In the Fridericus films of the Third Reich, such as Johannes Meyer's _Fridericus_ (1936) or Veit Harlan's _Der Grosse König_ (1942), the parallel is quite explicitly drawn between Frederick the Great and Adolf Hitler, the implication being that Germany's need of a charismatic leader has now been fulfilled.[36]

A second ideologically coherent group of films centered on the theme of rebellion. Most of them drew on the Napoleonic wars in order to present Prussia as the agent of a national uprising and the protagonist of a united German nation. This portrayal of nationalism as a revolutionary force is illustrated perfectly by Luis Trenker's Der Rebell (1932), a film which was to attract particular praise from Goebbels. Trenker himself plays the part of a Tyrolean nationalist who returns to his homeland to lead a peasant uprising against Napoleon's army of occupation. As Kracauer points out, the film constructs an obvious analogy between the Tyrol's revolt and the National Socialist movement, for Trenker "only reflects what the Nazis themselves called a national uprising."[37] Gustav Ucicky's York (1931) draws an even more revealing parallel between the Napoleonic era and the Weimar Republic. General von York commands an army corps assigned to Napoleon by Wilhelm III of Prussia. Under pressure from the young officers to renege on the terms of the treaty and to attack the French, York at first remains loyal to his monarch's wishes, only finally to rebel when he learns of Napoleon's defeat in Russia, an act which thus initiates the War of Liberation. As Kracauer shows, the film differentiates between two types of military rebel: York's impetuous officers closely resemble the kind of soldier who after World War I provided the nucleus of the Freikorps and the Nazi movement, while York himself anticipates the response of the Reichswehr High Command, rebelling only "when it become apparent that Napoleon is on the decline and that therefore any further loyalty to him might prove disastrous to Prussia."[38] The topicality of this film would scarcely have escaped a German audience by now fully accustomed to regarding the Weimar Republic as being in a state of perpetual crisis, and in 1932 there followed an additional five films on this same subject of national uprising.

Another genre favored by the filmmakers of the Third Reich, the so-called Blood and Soil films, also had its forerunners in the Weimar Republic. In their celebration of the elemental power of nature, their romanticized view of a mountain world intrinsically superior to urban civilization, and their positing of a mystical bond between the peasant community and its natural surroundings, films such as Arnold Fanck's Stürme über dem Montblanc (1930), Trenker's Berge im Flammen (1931), and above all, Leni Riefenstahl's Das Blaue Licht (1932) gave lyrical expression to ideas that formed a central plank of National Socialist ideology. The idealized portrayal of the First World War experience that has already been identified in literature also had its counterpart in the cinema of the Weimar Republic. In addition we must note with Fritz Marburg[39] the undercurrent of anti-Semitism in certain films of the late-1920s and early 1930s, as exemplified by Peter Lorre's caricature of a Jewish reporter in Karl Hankl's FP1 antwortet nicht (1932).

In no other art form, then, did 1933 constitute so little of a break as it did in the cinema. And yet, that continuity does not derive solely from the fact that the Weimar Republic produced a substantial body of films within which were inscribed some of the central tenets of National Socialist ideology. It is also a reflection on the cinema of the Third Reich itself, which Goebbels adamantly refused to let become merely a form of "dramatized party program." Rather the cinema was to fulfill its ideological function in clandestine fashion and for the simple reason that, as he put it, "the moment propaganda is recognized as such it becomes ineffective."[40] The best propaganda in Goebbels's view was that "which as it were works invisibly, penetrates the whole of life without the public having any knowledge at all of the propagandist initiative."[41] This notion of covert propaganda seems, incidentally, to have been altogether too sophisticated even for Hitler himself since on more than one occasion he criticized Goebbels's film policy for its failure to produce "National Socialist films."[42] In fact, Goebbels's attitude to the cinema was wholly consistent with his overall cultural policy: his concern was not primarily in the creation of a new and conspicuously National Socialist art but rather in the mode of its dissemination. He wrote:

> We are loaded down altogether too much with tradition and piety. We hesitate to clothe our cultural heritage in a modern dress. It therefore remains purely historical or museum-like and is at best understood by groups within the party, the Hitler Youth or the Labor Service. The cultural heritage of our past can be rendered fruitful for the present on a large scale only if we present it with modern means.[43]

His aim, then, was "to bring art to the people," to transform the cultural terrain so that "art no longer stands aside from the people and the people aside from art."[44] In this objective the Nazis attained no small measure of success. By 1942 cinema audiences had grown from the 1932 figure of 250 million to over a billion. Even allowing for the fact of a worldwide growth in film audiences at this time, such a boom, which by the early 1940s made the cinema the fourth largest industry in the Third Reich, was, to say the very least, spectacular. Similarly, the National Socialists provided much greater public access to the visual arts generally, while in the theater audiences were mobilized on an unprecedented scale. In short, high culture, formerly experienced as the preserve of the bourgeoisie, was now presented as the property of the masses.

The National Socialists, however, were not the first in Germany to recognize the political potential of cultural activity, for in the Weimar Republic the organized working class had likewise developed its own cultural movement, and this had generated modes of cultural practice which, in form at least, were not dissimilar to those evolved in the Third Reich.[45] The difference in impact between the two movements lies partly in the fact that since the working class never achieved state power in the Weimar Republic, their cultural activities always remained at the level of a counterculture. The National Socialists, on the other hand, although they did little in the way of developing prefigurative models, were able after the seizure of power to throw the full weight of the state and party apparatuses behind their activities and were thus in a position to determine directly the shape of the dominant culture in the Third Reich. It almost goes without saying, however, that the high degree of popular support that the Nazi regime secured in the Third Reich cannot be attributed wholly--or even primarily--to its cultural policies. For to isolate the role of culture under National Socialism from economic and political factors (such as the elimination of male unemployment and the spectacular successes of Hitler's foreign policy) would be to lapse into idealism of the most crass kind. Equally, an analysis that ignored or underplayed the totalitarian character of culture in the Third Reich would be untenable. This returns us to our opening remarks on the dual nature of the National Socialist revolution, for the assimilation of all spheres of life, both public and private, within an all-inclusive culture, was predicated on the system of fear bred by the SS state. The two apparently distinct aspects of the revolution, the cultural and the administrative, were thus inextricably bound together. It was the function of terror to atomize German society by dissolving all existing social relations and the function of culture to weld the masses back into a collective form, that of the pseudo-egalitarian _Volksgemeinschaft_. Goebbels himself provided one of the clearest statements on this relationship between culture and politics under fascism when he boasted:

> Politics too is an art, perhaps the highest and most far reaching one of all, and we who shape modern German politics feel ourselves to be artistic people, entrusted with the great responsibility of forming out of the raw material of the masses the solid, well-wrought structure of the Volk.[46]

NOTES

[1] Cf. Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (London: Hutchinson Publishers Ltd. 1974), p. 343.

[2] David Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967).

[3] Sebastian Haffner, Anmerkungen zu Hitler (Munich: Kindler, 1978), p. 52ff.

[4] Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," in, Illuminationen (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969), pp. 148-34, quote from p. 175.

[5] Robert Lay, "Soldaten der Arbeit" (Munich, 1938), p. 71.

[6] Cf. George L. Mosse, "Introduction: Towards a General Theory of Fascism," in Mosse, ed., International Fascism (London: Sage Publications, 1979), pp. 1-41.

[7] Kurt Sontheimer, Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1962), p. 171.

[8] Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 343.

[9] See in particular Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair (Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1974); George L. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964).

[10] Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair, p. 276.

[11] It was only when attempting to discredit Marxism that Moeller resorted to anti-Semitism, arguing that since Marx was a Jew,

he could never comprehend the spiritual essence of man (cf. Moeller van der Bruck, Das Dritte Reich, 3 ed. (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1931), pp. 34, 100.

[12] Ibid., p. 58.

[13] Moeller, Entscheidende Deutsche, Vol. IV of Die Deutschen. Unsere Menschengeschichte, 8 vols. (Minden: Bruns, 1904-10), p. 261.

[14] Ernst Jünger, Der Arbeiter, Vol. 6 of Gesammelte Werke (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1963), p. 160.

[15] Ibid., pp. 283, 298, 311.

[16] Ibid., p. 162.

[17] Gottfried Benn, Kunst und Macht (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1934), p. 17.

[18] Cf. Richard Grunberger, A Social History of the Third Reich (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 343.

[19] Cf. Hellmuth Langenbucher, Volkhafte Dichtung der Zeit (Berlin, 1933); Herbert Böhme, ed., Rufe in das Reich. Die heldische Dichtung von Langemarck bis zur Gegenwart (Berlin, 1934); Erich Trunz, "Tatsachendichtung und Weihedichtung," in Zeitschrift für deutsche Bildung 11, (1935), pp. 545-51.

[20] Ernst Jünger, Essays, Vol. 1, Gesammelte Werke, p. 53f.

[21] Ernst Jünger, Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1922), p. 37f.

[22] Wilhelm von Polenz, Der Büttnerbauer (Berlin: F. Fontane, n.d.), p. 352.

[23] See Peter Zimmermann, "Kampf um den Lebensraum: Ein Mythos der Kolonial- und der Blut- und Boden-Literatur," in Horst Denkler and Karl Prümm, eds., Die deutsche Literatur im Dritten Reich (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1976), pp. 165-82.

[24] See Hildegard Brenner, Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus (Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1963), p. 105.

[25] "Vorwort" to Wilhelm Peuler, ed., Jugend spricht im Chor—Sprüche, Chöre und Chorspiele (Freiburg: 1932), p. xi.

[26] Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, quoted in Günther Rühle, Zeit und Theater: Diktatur und Exil 1933-44 (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1974), p. 737. See Egon Menz, "Sprechchor und Aufmarsch. Zur Entstehung des Thingspiels," in Denkler/Prümm,

Die Deutsche Literatur, pp. 330-46, and Henning Eichberg, "The Nazi Thingspiel," *New German Critique* 11 (1977), pp. 133-50.

[27] For example, Julius Maria Becker, *Deutsche Notwende*; Kurt Heynicke, *Neurode*: Heinrich Lersch, *Volk im Werden*: Heinrich Zerkaulen, *Die Arbeit der Ehr*; and Richard Euringer, *Deutsche Passion*.

[28] Hitler in his opening speech at the Great German Art Exhibition of 1937, quoted in Berthold Hinz, *Die Malerei im deutschen Faschismus-Kunst und Konterrevolution* (Munich: Hanser, 1974), p. 15.

[29] See Berthold Hinz, *Art in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 14.

[30] Ibid., p. 15.

[31] Lotte H. Eisner, *The Haunted Screen* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), p. 310.

[32] See Julian Petley, *Capital and Culture: German Cinema 1933-45* (London: British Film Institute, 1979), pp. 29-94.

[33] See Gerd Albrecht, ed., *Film im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Karlsruhe: Doku-Verlag, 1979), p. 16.

[34] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), pp. 11, 251-72.

[35] Ibid., p. 255f.

[36] See the introductory caption to *Fridericus* (quote in Erwin Leiser, *"Deutschland, erwach!" Propaganda im Film des dritten Reiches*, (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1963), p. 95f. "Encircled by the hereditary great powers of Europe, rising Prussia has aspired for decades to her right to live. The whole world is amazed at the King of Prussia who, first ridiculed, then feared, has maintained himself against forces many times superior to his own. Now they seek to crush him. Prussia's fateful hours has come."

[37] Kracauer, *From Caligeri to Hitler*, p. 261.

[38] Ibid., p. 265.

[39] Fritz Marburg, *Der Antisemitismus in der Deutschen Republik* (Vienna: Kommissions-Verlag Josef Brenner, 1931).

[40] Joseph Goebbels, "Rede bei der ersten Jahrestagung der Reichsfilmkammer am 5.3.1937 in der Krolloper, Berlin," in

Gerd Albrecht, ed., *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik* (Stuttgart: F. Enke, 1969), pp. 447-63, quote from p. 456.

[41] Goebbels, addressing the Reichsfilmkammer in 1941, quoted in Leiser, "*Deutschland, erwache!*" p. 106.

[42] Hitler, December 11, 1939, recorded by Rosenberg in his political diary and quoted in Leiser, "*Deutschland, erwache!*" p. 11.

[43] Quoted in Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, *The German Cinema* (London: Dent, 1971), p. 75.

[44] Goebbels, "Rede in den Tennishallen, Berlin, am 19.5.1933," in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, pp. 442-47, quote from p. 444.

[45] For a full analysis of the proletarian cultural movement in the Weimar Republic, see Wilfried van der Will and Rob Burns, *Arbeiterkulturbewegung in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Ullstein Materialien, 1982).

[46] Goebbels, Letter to Wilhelm Furtwängler, April 1, 1933, quoted in Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik*, p. 178; cf. Goebbels's radio address "Der Nationalcharakter als Grundlage der Nationalkultur," delivered on July 18, 1932 and reprinted in *Goebbels Reden 1932-1939*, Helmut Heiber, ed. (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, n.d.), p. 52.

17

Music on the Eve of the Third Reich

MICHAEL MEYER

> Das Musikleben ist kein Leben für die Musik.
> Theodor W. Adorno[1]

> Ohne eine tragende Gemeinschaft, die dahintersteht, ist das musikalische Kunstwerk--im eigentlichen Sinne ein Gemeinschaftswerk--nicht lebensfähig.
> Wilhelm Furtwängler[2]

In view of its problems, tenuousness, and brevity, and its proximity and special relationship to the Third Reich, the Weimar Republic has commonly been called a crisis state. Numerous contemporary commentators and later historians have examined the economics, politics, and culture of Germany between 1919 and 1933 in terms of liberal, democratic, socialist, and conservative principles that were instituted to varying degrees in the period, only to then be abolished or channeled into the totalitarian dictatorship of National Socialism in 1933. The ideals reemerged and were reinstituted in the post-World War II era, again in various combinations in both German successor states, and became the ideological framework for the historical analyses of conditions in the Weimar Republic. In sympathy with select Weimar ideals and horrified over the Third Reich, postwar and Holocaust historians have not been able to deal with the Weimar Republic discretely. Cultural achievement, though acknowledged, consistently has been seen through the shadow of Auschwitz. Yet, the sense of doom, crisis, and failure is not the exclusive product of retrospection; it is contained in self-conscious Weimar commentary and introspection.

A creature of momentous historical forces and circumstance, the Weimar Republic had its Vernunftrepublikaner who entertained reservations about the new order but accepted it. Progressive intellectuals shared with them a historical perspective, one of comparison and contradiction; a view of existence that stressed change, to some, even considered to be its essential feature. Some progressives responded affirmatively to the new order, others focused on its promise of a genuine republic. The well-known opposition from the Right, known to students of German history as the formulators of "the politics of cultural despair," the representatives of "the roots of the Nazi mind," or the *völkisch*-fascist or conservative revolution, rejected the new order of outsiders altogether and entertained visions of permanence and a hidden true order, which it was their duty to bring out into the open and thus to realize.[3]

Those who cried "crisis" the loudest actually also rejected the historical view of the world; they joined those who studied change and felt it was for the worse. Against modern developments they undialectically upheld eternal values and primal states: a world of unchanging phenomena and characteristics. Musicians and music commentators shared in the response to an assumed cultural crisis at large and in music specifically; they supported ideological rhetoric through their expert analysis of an alleged musical crisis, the result of the latter's alienation from both the community and itself. What follows will not be a survey of music on the eve of the Third Reich but rather a focus on the perception of crisis in music, which reflected and reinforced the ideological formulation of crisis in Germany.

Stripped of ideological jargon, the crisis in music is an expression of the inevitable tension between institutional and dynamic art and between different generations of artists. Having matured to Germany's outstanding and internationally recognized cultural institution, music suffered from its own success. From its lofty and seemingly autonomous position, official music reacted pompously to threats from within and naively to external threats. To knowledgeable composers, the happy reconciliation of music's objective materials and the musician's subjective imagination, as manifested in the celebrated musical creations of the tradition, as well as the fortunate harmony between the institutions and their sustaining creative activities, appeared to be fundamentally disturbed by profound changes in society and music's attendant social function and in response to radical developments in the art itself. Even the harmonious relationship between the different musical elements, a precondition for the reconciliation of objective materials and subjective impulses, and between inherited structural forms and their transformation seemed to lead toward imminent destruction of the tradition. Although previous revolutions in music were known to have been assimilated into the mainstream and thus to have enriched the musical heritage, at this moment of acute social crisis the apparently disrespectful and disintegrating impulses of the avant-garde pointed in a little understood direction, and against established patterns of expression and standards of taste. Traditionalists feared for the existence of music and civilization.

At issue was the fundamental attitude toward reality alluded to above: Is change, indeed, the dialectic understanding of contradiction and development, the characteristic and necessary trait of Western music, or had music evolved toward an ideal state of aesthetic experience, as manifested in the reconciliation of the demands of the material and subjective imagination and between the elements themselves, and in the ultimate creative achievement of the tonal order and rules of harmony which offer the comforts of structure as well as the flexibility to constantly challenge and satisfy innovative spirits? In numerous essays and letters to younger composers, Germany's celebrated conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler urged them to write the music they felt they must, always stressing the human factor in relationship to the musical material.[4] Musical progressives responded with reference to a develoment in style and technique, as well as an inner dynamic of music that compels generational adjustment. Musicologists today still argue the same issue of free will and determinism. Peter Yates speaks of music as an unbroken series of events that determine another: during the seventeenth century, all roads led to Bach; during the nineteenth to Schönberg. William Austin, on the other hand, challenges notions of a compelling dialectic of the material by noting that major composers like Strauss, Ravel, and Ralph Vaughn Williams do not fit into the stylistic and technical evolution from Wagner to Schönberg. Reminiscent of Furtwängler, he suggests that composers choose to write the kind of music they wish to write, regardless of a place assigned them by determinists. Acknowledging major and representative milestones in the evolution of modern music, he nonetheless recognizes wide divergence from predetermined patterns.[5]

The response to an alleged crisis of modern music in the Weimar period involved progressive and conservative formulations that overlapped and became confused with ideological categories and positions. Musicians themselves have contributed to this confusion. At least by the time of Carl Maria von Weber they had become accustomed to explaining their artistic and technical principles in music criticism, music theory, and teaching, which readily expanded into general cultural criticism with ideological overtones. It has been argued that the need for explanation, as opposed to simply composing and musicmaking, might itself be regarded as a symptom of crisis. This is in large part due to the fact that

> in a period of artistic upheaval, creative artists find themselves first of all sharply aware of their own relationship to their traditional inheritance and to the directions in which they feel impelled to extend or even to reject it. Secondly, they find themselves in a period in which the formulated notions regarding musical aesthetics, musical theory, and musical syntax have long lost the vitality they once possessed,

> impelled or even obliged to arrive at what are at last working formulations of their own. If they are not to remain in relative solitude, they are also likely to communicate these formulations.[6]

The assessment of music in the Weimar period was tied to general Weltanschauung and politics, as both the Republic and the autonomy of music were at stake. A book published by Erich Valentin in 1939 on Hans Pfitzner, Werk und Gestalt eines Deutschen expressly tied music to politics and traced the origin of the cultural-political parties of the Weimar period to Wagner's time, when music began to disintegrate into its components and lost its communal links, and the individual was deprived of the security of community and tradition.[7] Wagner's völkisch notions of a revitalized national community, the communal function of art, and the reintegration of the discrete arts into the ritualistic Gesamtkunstwerk provided the inspiration for the Nazi author who thus introduced the traditionalist-völkisch Pfitzner as Wagner's heir in the 1920s. Yet, spokesmen of modern music also acclaimed the Wagnerian tradition for its contributions to the expansion of traditional harmony and other modernist innovations.

The Weimar parties agreed on the significance of Wagner, particularly his Tristan-Vorspiel (1859), as the first clear expression of an alleged disintegration of harmony--of our Western system of tonality. What to musical progressives initiated progress, liberation, and the expansion of new tonal possibilities, to alarmed pessimists constituted the beginning of a process of increasing decay at the end of which appeared the formalized twelve-tone music to which man no longer related. A Schönberg's student, Winfried Zillig, has analyzed this evolution of music in sympathetic terms in a 1966 publication, as an organic process of the dialectically evolving and constantly reintegrating musical materials. A system-immanent theory informs this history, which traces musical progress through focus on major composers since Wagner. Zillig identifies with those progressives who have interpreted Wagner as a revolutionary and antibourgeois, who was kidnapped by reaction, the bourgeois, soldier organizations, and finally National Socialism. To him, Wagner's "honor your great German masters" has been distorted into serving the purpose of denouncing good German musicians and condemning the development which had become possible and necessary through the revolutionary innovations in music since the disintegration of tonality. Like nuclear physics, which since Einstein's theories has upset a traditional and honored view of science, Wagner's musical development has fundamentally questioned the sanctified order of tonality to such an extent that Tristan can be called an atonal work.[8] Through the analysis of radical works of Wagner, Debussy, Reger, Strauss, and others, Zillig is able to present German nationalists and racialists with a dilemma: Their national heroes, predominantly acceptable on national and racial grounds, have contributed to the modern tradition, which for aesthetic-political reasons had become unacceptable in the Third Reich.

RADICALISM

Our understanding of the progressive interpretation of music in system-immanent,philosophical, and social terms is much enriched by the radical music sociology of Theodor W. Adorno, formulated in large part in post-Weimar times.[9] It is he who has examined the paradox of Wagner's reactionary, anti-Semitic, authoritarian personal behavior, writing, and political agitation relative to his revolutionary musical oeuvre, noting, with respect to his strictly musical achievement, contradictory ideological impulses of ambiguous consequence.[10] Sharing Nietzsche's and Thomas Mann's ambivalent attitude towards Wagner, he has clearly identified the musical wizzard as a Nazi forebear, who at the same time negated fascist cultural policies through aspects of his life-style and the revolutionary consequences of his work. Adorno's extended examination of Wagner is crucial for the study of pre-Third Reich fascism and anti-Semitism, in view of the methodology and insights of the author and the significance of Wagner as perhaps the outstanding cultural hero of the Nazis, certainly of Hitler. Yet, in some earlier Weimar-period essays, "On the Social Significance of Music"[11] and "Reaction and Progress,"[12] Adorno already had captured the spirit of our topic and emerged a most perceptive apologist of the avant-garde, especially of the Schönberg variety, and a critic of Weimar's music culture at large in both system-immanent, that is strictly musical, as well as social terms. His critical analysis of music serves both as object and conceptual framework of this study. Even though suffused with classical reductionist analysis of art as a reflection of social trends and anathema to traditional Ideengeschichte, that is, the study of ideas in a social vacuum, his thought rejects the "fetishization" of either material or cultural structure. The essence of his dialectically conceived reality rather lies in "force fields" between objective conditions and subjective imagination. In order to free the arts, especially music, for a liberating and critical role--central to his concern--he insisted on the integrity of music, its necessary autonomy, and the need for the composer to grasp its substance at the most recent and progressive level of historical development; thus he was able to illustrate through music the meaning of "Critical Theory," that negative and critical system of analysis that would be impossible without the positing of genuine dialectic tension. Music had to transform itself, as well as "portray through its own structure the social antinomies responsible for its isolation."[13] Stressing autonomy with reference to the objective condition of the art, "negative dialectics,"[14] and the application of this anti-affirmative philosophical premise to music, Adorno differed from both "vulgar" Marxian reductionists, the promoters of socialist realism, as well as traditionalists and reactionaries, who variously stressed the affirmative function, rationalization, and administration of music, and thus ill-advisedly treated what to him was an abstract and critical expression as "reified"--alienated, an object for consumption and manipulation.

Central to Adorno's exposition of traditional bourgeois understanding of music and the symbolic worth of music to the bourgeois ideology of individualism--regressive and status-quo-oriented in current social context as revealed by him and other critical theorists elsewhere--was the questioning of inherited notions of individual creativity. For one, he found the artistic subject to be not only individual but social as well, thus unintentionally expressing objective social tendencies. Moreover, he insisted that not single works, but the development on the level of music's materials constitutes the level of progress in art as developed by generations of composers. Even though he warned composers against simply wishing "to meet the demands of the time," he insisted that the freedom of the composer is curtailed by historically evolved elements and that the meeting place of a material dialectic and freedom of the composer is the concrete work itself, the result of a process that sets each artistic creation apart from another.[15] It was this focus on the historically evolved material, the insistence on autonomy, and the disregard for the affirmative function of music within a concurrently formulated notion of a *Volksgemeinschaft*, that, for a variety of reasons, offended large segments of the bourgeois concert-going public, traditionalist nationalists, as well as "vulgar" Marxists.[16] Adorno had moved from reductionist Marxian aesthetics, which characterized the earlier work of the Institute of Social Research, to the defense of music's autonomy, its utopian and even transcendental powers, because of his conception of music's crisis in this overly rationalized and administered world, no less represented in Zhdanov's socialist realism of the 1930s than in the market-oriented music of the Weimar Republic or the artificial and manipulated folk music of the Third Reich's *Blut und Boden* cult.

Adorno's relentless dialectic raised questions about all expressions of Weimar's celebrated music culture, including the modernist section, thus contributing to the sense of crisis that would otherwise perhaps be hidden by the richness of its achievement, its affirmative function, and the positive commentary that it attracted. Furtwängler, for one, called German music "the clearest, most joyful and profoundly characteristic manifestation of the German spirit, the most original and artistic accomplishment of all modern peoples."[17] And Artur Schnable noted in an American lecture that "the German audiences in the medium-size towns . . . knew most of the music they went to hear at concerts . . . (and) there was probably not one in these audiences who was not involved, actively or passively, in home-made music."[13]

Having inherited from nineteenth-century political entities a cultural network of excellent stages, orchestras, operas, and choruses, the Weimar state fulfilled its responsibility to music, which was sheltered, organized, and well attended. Although underneath this prosperity existed the conflict between music's institutional and practical needs and the claims of the autonomous artist, the resulting tension did not have only negative consequences, since it contributed to the radical music of the period which, in part, reacted against the commercial exploitation of the traditional idiom. Central to all musical controversy was Berlin, which had originally strengthened its position with the abolution of the courts, while Munich, Stuttgart, Dresden, and other cities had declined. Boasting three opera houses which offered new works of Strauss, Korngold, D'Albert, Berg, and others, Berlin attracted great singers, chamber groups, performers, and conductors. Here the public witnessed experimentation in literature, art, film, theater, and music. An international elite flourished around musical institutions and in the salons, especially the salons of Peter Landecker, owner of Berlin's Philharmonic Hall, and that of Louise Wolff of the Wolff & Sachs concert agency, attended by businessmen, politicians, and artists. The various musical factions were represented by great numbers of critics and journals, all contributing to the general excitement of the age.[19]

The general trends of twentieth-century music concentrated in Weimar Germany. Its many concert halls presented the offerings from the past--itself reassuring to traditionalist concert-goers but alarming to others, who deplored the increasing performance of compositions of dead composers over those of live ones. Moreover, traditionalist impulses governed much of the contemporary offerings from neoromantic to neoclassic and new versions of nationalism--in toto, the kind of composition which, when integrated with the *völkisch* cult of the German folk song, was to find favor in the Third Reich under direct sponsorship of the *Reichsmusikkammer*.[20] In addition to this openly regressive music culture, Adorno added that of an avowedly progressive nature to his critical analysis, a more demanding task, which required more careful decoding. Expressionism, for instance, the avant-garde rage in all the arts already in Imperial days, aroused the dialectician for its elevation of subjectivity to authoritative ideology--a reference to system-immanent contradiction which, one might add, is an inevitable development of art. Yet, institutionally, too, the radical and oppositional impulse had been tamed. By Adorno's time expressionism could look back on a venerable tradition and had become celebrated and institutionalized; its leading spirits had entered the academy and assumed positions of power. Strauss, the future president of the *Reichsmusikkammer*, had introduced expressionism to opera with his shocking *Salome* and *Elektra*, thus initiating a musical trend of subjectivism, which culminated in the dramatic works of Schönberg and Berg. Throughout his life, even when as an artist he was hardly composing in the expressionist mode any longer, Schönberg continued to articulate the credo of the movement: "To express himself," he declared to be the artist's greatest goal.[21] Rooted in the chromaticism of Tristan, expressionist musicians utilized ultra-expressive harmonic language, wide leaps in melody, and the higher registers of instruments. Distortion of language as of abstract musical forms of communication characterized an idiom that represented the critical features that Adorno demanded of art. The neurotic atmosphere of Schönberg's Pierrot Lunaire, for instance, was evoked through the eerie vocal line and lack of formal bearing of the entire work. Its medium and message were critical, yet Adorno, after expressions of appreciation, concluded that "absolute subjectivity is also subjectless . . . ; the more of the I of expressionism is thrown upon itself, the more like the excluded world of things it becomes."[22] Recalling his views about artistic freedom and the general error of subjectivism, he found the aesthetic rationale of expressionism to be contradictory; the subjective impulse had become contained in Schönberg's neoclassical, abstract twelve-tonal scheme, which the well-tempered and triad-conditioned public would continue to reject as "atonal." Yet, when the objectified system became a rigid imperative of composition, devoid of its negative function, Adorno, in the 1950s, warned against the "hypostization" of the twelve-tone row and the establishment of twelve-tone schools.[23] In the 1930s, however, Adorno identified Schönberg with all that was progressive in modern music.[24] Other radical impulses that drew their shock effect from nonmusical or musical elements of traditions outside the concrete dialectic of Western art music were rejected more readily. The uses of folk or popular traditions, for instance, and especially jazz, which were external to the Western musical experience, were simply dismissed for reasons of inauthenticity. Commercially exploited "exotic" music offers potential entertainment, relief, or introductions to other cultures, but not genuine criticism. The radical dialectician knows that "contradictions refer to those oppositions that are both necessary for, and yet destructive of, particular processes or entities."[25] However, when he identified Stravinsky's primitivism and neoclassical objectivism with the völkisch-fascist ideology of the times, knowledgeable musicologists have felt and continue to maintain that Adorno's critical analysis had also assumed a life of its own and had grown distant and too abstract. Adorno seriously and consistently had correlated the habit of adapting old forms and primitive rhythms that are external to the current level of the musical material to new realities with fascism, thereby associating celebrated subjects of fascist defamation--Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Hanns Eisler--with their later persecutors.[26]

During the Weimar Republic, the progressive music establishment boasted of its avant-garde music festivals, of its celebrated composers of diverse persuasions who held positions at prestigious academies and other institutions, of its connections and interactions with radicals in the other arts, supportive critics, musicologists, and a paying public—all in a culture that was accustomed to musical controversy. Reaction concentrated its attention on these "outsiders" as momentary "insiders," the symptom of cultural crisis. The radicals, on the other hand, realized that the avant-garde constituted but a small section of musical life and that its existence was precarious. Aware of economic, political, and social problems that foreshadowed the repression of the Third Reich, music's avant-garde was caught in the classical dilemma of radicalism--of either becoming further estranged from the unsympathetic public and institutional powers and creating and performing for only their own shrinking circle, or of striking compromises in various guises, which would gain greater audiences and lead to assimilation and the taming of the critical impulse.

Adorno found musical radicalism sharing in all art's tendency to reification, compromise, and idolization, but expressionism represented negativity in as pure a form as possible; it lived up to Schönberg's strict command that "music shall not adorn, but speak truth,"[27] lest it atrophy. Schönberg's expressionism fulfilled the tenets of Adorno's negative dialectics in that it was firmly and consciously rooted in the historically evolved musical material, while refusing to compromise with the unresolved dissonances of contemporary society. Atonality challenged tradition, social order, and popular taste, while it opened up the infinite world of compositional possibilities, which was perpetuated in the objectified new musical order of the twelve-tone row. A product of the radical dissonances of expressionism, Schönberg's twelve-tone row consistently expressed musical development and autonomy and thus was worth protecting. The threat to music from tendencies within as from fascist dictatorship without, so understood, constituted the core of the radical's concern on the eve of the Third Reich.

CONSERVATISM

The historian studies phenomena, but we know, from the German idealist philosophers and critical theorists, of an active element in cognition. The objects of historical analysis are shaped by the historian, himself both a critical and historical subject. Moreover, just as the object of this analysis, music, is affected by the critical and historical mind and is at the same time assumed to exist and develop through system-immanent processes, so critical theory as applied to the analysis of modern music is known to follow the norms intrinsic to itself. Indeed, it is one of the most refined objects of conservative concern over the state of modern music. In order to properly assess the thought of musical conservatives and nationalists about their art and its alleged crisis, we can therefore not rely exclusively on Theodor Adorno. We must instead turn to the sources, that is, the conservative and nationalist thought as articulated during the Weimar Republic.

The great conductor, music director, and pre-eminent interpreter of German music, Wilhelm Furtwängler, expressed the traditional humanist concern for the integrity of music both as an art form and institution, for its autonomy, as well as its relationship to the public.[28] Like the avant-garde, his representative conservative response to modern developments of music also focused on the "exhaustion of the inherited material" but then entertained prospects of revitalization through the human spirit (Adorno's subject). His focus recalls Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus, a book written in consultation with Adorno. The writer and the conductor agreed that music was linked to culture and politics, that it symbolized this particular historical situation of Germany, which was believed to be heading toward disintegration and chaos. Germany's and music's untimely materialism in the Weimar period was understood to be at the core of the problem; it had to be reversed, since it was leading society and art towards self-destruction. Yet in the eyes of the traditional humanist, the human spirit will not concede an end to music. While the material may be exhausted, there is no end to the spirit.[29] This "faith in the spirit" recalls Adorno's ironic "nature will take care of itself."[30]

Furtwängler was director and conductor of major orchestras, was recognized already in the early Weimar period as one of two or three outstanding interpreters of German music, and was to emerge as the major authority of music on the eve of the Nazi assumption of power. He was wooed by the Nazis, was vice-president of the Reichsmusikkammer held other offices in 1933, and gradually identified his calling during the Third Reich as that of a priest who stayed behind to care for the needy with his music and to assert his representative authority in defense of music against totalitarian control.[31] Unlike the critic Adorno, a radical outsider, Furtwängler spoke and wrote with the authority of power and institutional representation. He was widely regarded as music's official custodian and representative, and as such, reflected generally held views on music, its tradition, and the problems of contemporary music. Already in 1915 he had written of crisis. His "Contemporary Observations of a Musician" registered a plea for the human factor in composition, the active, integrated, and rooted musical experience against what he called a contemporary one-sided intellectualism and a frantic commitment to change at any price. These latter aberrations he identified with articulate spokesmen who, in his eyes, unfortunately controlled contemporary music.[32] Yet, this great interpreter of romantic music also rejected romantic programs as well as political slogans of nationalism and later Nazism in music as inappropriate in the current context. Recognizing the impossibility of a return to romantic conditions due to an enormous development of music and social consciousness since then, he found contemporary reactionary efforts in this direction to be another symptom of music's crisis. Using dated materials and lacking musical compulsion, the contemporary programmatic composer shares an estrangement from the recent level of music with naturalism, another expression of crisis. Furtwängler believed the principles of naturalism to be realistic only in the case of rhythm because that element can copy a natural process, although both romanticism and naturalism may be realized when music is expressed in union with other arts (as in songs, opera, and so on) that carry extramusical program. In the case of absolute music, however, it speaks its own, exclusive language. Harmony, for one, defies naturalistic principles. "One chord alone transfers us into a world of art" to which the other senses have no access.[33] The precious art can exist only on its own terms, the conservative agreed with the critical theorist, but he held the avant-garde responsible for modern music's alienation from the public due to its disregard for human needs, the denial of "natural materials" within the tradition--ridiculed by Adorno as mere convention--and its exclusive concentration on the most recent level of the musical material, which in the consciousness of itself tends to become objectified and thus alienated from the community. Though a prerequisite for the creative process, alienated and exaggerated consciousness produces denatured and visionless music; the balance between the objective material and subjective imagination is destroyed.

In his attempts to assume a posture of moderation and compromise between the extreme forms of the regressive program of romanticism and progressive materialism, he leaned to the former by demonstrating an affinity with Wagner which was not shown, for instance, in his relationship with Schönberg. Although he acknowledged the revolutionary role of Wagner in the development of music, he rejected the material consequences of that revolution while accepting its underlying ideological assumptions. Wagner was acceptable for his revolutionary role in his historical setting, not for the role he might play as inspiration for future revolutionaries. The conservative thus treats his heroes in historical isolation. Recalling Wagner's intentions, Furtwängler wrote:

> The step from Wagner to Schönberg, which is traditionally explained and justified exclusively on the grounds of historical development, is the first real nonhistoric step, the first real break with history.[34]

In 1915, Furtwängler the musician had commented on the breakup of the traditional relationship between vision, the concept of the whole, and the material, in conjunction with an emphasis upon the materialistic threat to music and the creative process in the arts. He had expanded his conception of crisis throughout the 1920s to include the grave danger inherent in the progressive isolation of modern music from the community. He charged that serious music in its contemporary form had become the domain of an elite, not of the community. He deplored the wide gulf between traditional music, which continued to play a socially functional role, and music as modern creative art form. In view of this social crisis of music, Wagner was attractive as one who had appeared not as a destructive innovator, but as a constructive revolutionary, eager to involve the community in his new art form, the music drama, by means of which he had tried to recapture those archaic communal impulses that had given rise to music originally and which bind rather than separate.[35] Although his innovations have contributed to the isolation and autonomy of the elements, Wagner seduced conservatives with his intention to create an art that was to recall primeval unity to a community frightfully conscious of disintegration, uprootedness, and alienation. The material was to serve music, and music was to further the poetic and political vision. The Wagnerian Volksgemeinschaft was projected in response to the self-isolating tendencies in music. Moreover, conservative acceptance of the Wagnerian regression in the twentieth century demonstrates the pervasiveness and depth of Wagner's impact on music because Wagner personified another conservative ideal in that he combined in his person both theory and practice. He lent himself to conservative reaction to the alleged preponderance of intellectualism and materialism in Weimar Germany. Championing traditional music for its social utility, conservatives denounced complicated theory and abstraction, which could no longer be grasped by the community. The preeminence of theory in addition to the practice of an uprooted and abstract, intellectualized, and esoteric music was no longer justified socially.

The dichotomy between music at its most recent level of material development and the community's understanding of its needs epitomized the crisis as observed by traditionalists. Indeed, art is destined to die if no longer relevant to the community. The central concern of völkisch romantics and Richard Wagner especially was therewith restated by twentieth-century conservatives: It involved the existence of specialists who had become estranged from the community. Conservative criticism reflected the pervasive cultural criticism of other alienated intellectuals after World War I who held onto visions of cultural unity and themes of continuity, in spite of the changes affected by the world war. Alarmed over the gulf that separated the musician from the audience, the musician ignored the social and political realities of his time. Furtwängler, for one, was ignorant of the Nazis until they had the authority to command him.[36] Critical of the esoteric nature of modernistic music, the conservative was unaware of his own profound isolation and ahistorical existence.

Wagner figures so prominently in these pages because he had helped establish a German pattern of cultural criticism, and his articulation of cultural crisis was original. Twentieth-century conservatism in music in its specific German setting was derivative, although it merits representation in its own right, being coeval with developments that reflected and reinforced the ideological formulation of National Socialism. Conservative musicians represented an esteemed music tradition, powerful institutions and competency in the eyes of a grateful public, yet, their much-praised activist music principles were frozen by respect for the past. Dead composers' works were performed in the formal ritual of official music life--nowhere illustrated as clearly and commented on as frequently as at Bayreuth[37]--where the conservative custodian of the tradition clung to traditional values, which could be upheld only in the exclusive realm of the arts while society was in turmoil. The alienated artist nostalgically recalled the traditional relationship between himself and his patrons, mistaken now by him for the people. The theme of alleged security was thus distorted ideologically by means of a rugged pose of individualism and expertise; in Furtwängler's case, rooted in the study of Beethoven with whose struggle and sense of independence he identified. Beethoven had been able to simplify complexities while the modernists appeared to be uncomfortable with simple expression and consciously strove for complexity.[38] Within the framework of Beethovian individualism, the musician was said to have composed for his public, fought against its resistance, but then helped shape its taste; while in the current context the emancipated, autonomous, and intellectually arrogant avant-garde imposed impossible demands on the public, isolated itself, and thus undermined public appreciation and support for all.[39]

The progressive's atonality had begun as exciting experiment and stood for freedom from tonality. Furtwängler recalled the rich offerings of Strauss, Pfitzner, Reger, Mahler, Schönberg, Debussy, Ravel, Honegger, Stravinsky, Bartok, the young Hindemith, and others at the beginning of the century. He praised the liberating impulses of the generation of Schönberg's theory, the creativity of Bartok, the progressive works of Stravinsky, Hindemith, and so on. Spellbound by the great tradition and accustomed to its revitalization through new directions, he looked for a new synthesis of the creative principle and the material dialectic. Yet, he found that experimentation and liberation had culminated in Schönberg's twelve-tone music: systematized, stylized, theorized, and increasingly ideologized. The addiction to composing within the parameters of the new wave had resulted in the alienation of music from its tradition and especially its public, since the composers no longer had to face the public for confirmation, but simply like-minded peers who, as a group, concentrated on the development of the material: harmony, rhythm, and the methods and constructs of the musical elements.

The conservative musician's indictment of the modern situation of music moved him close to the official position of Third Reich cultural policy, which was derived from völkisch formulation. The proximity of an independent and sincere conservatism to the Musikpolitik of National Socialism caused much soul-searching on the part of conservatives and allowed skillful manipulation by the Nazi regime in the Third Reich. The ironic feature of Nazi control of culture in Germany is demonstrated in this confusion, since this essentially anticonservative movement could pose as savior of traditional culture from the deplorable situation of which it was born.

Already before 1933 the public had taken sides in matters of art by not supporting progressive music. Then and later the public favored the conservative and much more prestigious position that, in aesthetic formulation, sought to vindicate its inability to grasp modern developments. In the same way that it could not make sense of Einstein's insights, it failed to understand Schönberg. While the progressive insists on the same exclusive rights for music that are granted nuclear physics, the conservative rejects this comparison as self-defeating. In 1949 Furtwängler deplored the liberation of the elements in all human endeavors.

> As the Germans have given rise to concentration camps, and the atom bomb was developed, both, to be sure, not in the interest of the human spirit, atonality, too, followed dictates of the material, without consideration of man . . . if this condition might possibly be excused in matters of material objects . . . its consequences in the realm of man, i.e., in the arts and in ethics are terrible. This condition amounts to the surrender of man . . . to the anonymous powers of a merciless world spirit.[40]

These words of conservative humanism were composed after Furtwängler had a chance to assess his relationship to völkisch sentiments in the reality of the Third Reich, when the Nazis had rendered all purely musical debate meaningless. His legacy documents the plight of humanism and its political naiveté in our time.[41]

Völkisch and Racialist Thought

Before Furtwängler was forced to compromise himself in the reality of the Third Reich, he already sympathized with various features of the völkisch tradition during the Weimar period. Not yet subjected to political pressures and manipulation, he praised no other contemporary composer more highly than Hans Pfitzner, whose polemical conservatism differed from his own in its radicalism, fervent advocacy of German cultural values, and national resentment.[42] To the artistic avant-garde and the political left as well as the center, Pfitzner could not be accepted on those terms. His distinguished compositional record aside, his cultural-political polemics brought him very close to the political and cultural fascism of the Weimar period, which posed the severest threat to the autonomy of music on the eve of the Third Reich. If the intellectual finesse of an Adorno was required to decode the traditional musical idiom and musical commentary and even outstanding components of the avant-garde and exponents of socialist realism for fascist features and potential, no such dialectic probing was necessary for an analysis of the völkisch or fascist literature of the Weimar period. The völkisch-fascist approach to defining and resolving the crisis of modern music epitomized the threat to music's autonomy as understood by Adorno. Pfitzner and the musicologist and SS Untersturmführer Richard Eichenauer formulated the völkisch and racist responses respectively to an assumed pre-1933 crisis in music and German society in the terminology of later Nazi Musikpolitik.[43]

The völkisch-racist ideology was to become official policy in Germany as a result of the Nazi assumption of power in January 1933, and the subsequent Gleichschaltung of all culture. In the Third Reich, categories of race were applied to the understanding and classification of music and musicians. Musicological writing, guidelines for musical composition and performance, and personnel decisions at musical institutions were governed by principles associated with a German romantic-völkisch tradition, which had secured scientific status in the eyes of its believers and practitioners through identification with the alleged determinism of immutable racial laws. Music and musicians were known and classified as arteigen (native) or artfremd (alien), and these categories were no longer exclusively understood in the romantic-völkisch sense of the arts and artists being rooted in a distinct Volksgemeinschaft of common culture but in terms of a racial community of common blood. Third Reich formulators and executors of Musikpolitik looked to racial theory to identify and promote the German and purge the alien--above all the Jewish component of music.[44]

This situation of music in the Third Reich accords with a familiar picture of Nazi totalitarianism and that of culture in general as well as other realms of the arts and the mind in the Third Reich.[45] Moreover, the intellectual framework and assumptions of National Socialism are well known.[46] If hindsight seemed to guide many engaged analysts of the background to Auschwitz, there is no doubt that National Socialism had roots and synthesized much in German history: It was not an inevitable product of German history, but the fulfillment of a set among countless other sets of potentiality.[47] What the empiricist thus is forced to document and has indeed traced through careful recording of thought and action in time--always being vulnerable to the charge of drawing on selective data in support of retrospective knowledge--theorists have explained, ordered in intelligible structures, and rendered as a negative program in opposition to and thus in confirmation of their own positive view of the world. A most compelling review and at the same time encompassing explanation of the evolving ideology is offered in George Lukács's *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, a work of theoretical constructs and certainties and, at the same time, of familiarity with all the nuances and detail of empirical research. This enormous volume traces the evolution of the fascist doctrine, with its reactionary racialist potential, from an ideational and ideal conception of race--as in Gobineau's pessimistic assessment of history--to one of post-Darwinian scientific certainty, until its ultimate fascist synthesis in *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* of H. S. Chamberlain--the blueprint of Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century*. This learned Marxist synthesis and explanation, too, is familiar. What has been relatively little explored by historians is the relationship between the antitranscendental *völkisch*-fascist ideology[48] and music, even though musicians have significantly contributed to its pre-Third Reich formulation, while holding a decidedly honored place in the writings of nonmusicians.[49] Wagner, as stated above, was central in every respect, but so were lesser known musicians. Having begun to analyze their music and its place in society, the romantics introduced music to social and political issues.[50] Schumann in 1834 had founded the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* for musical, social, and political commentary. The journal had developed a "national" perspective on art, so that by the time of Alfred Heuss's editorship from 1921 to 1934, the official *Gleichschaltung* with National Socialism in 1933 required no particular coercion. Known then as the *Zeitschrift für Musik*, this journal propagated Nazi Musikpolitik and is an outstanding source for the students of the politics of music in the Third Reich.[51]

Continuity between the romantic nationalism of Weber and Schumann, the *völkisch* anti-Semitism and racism of Wagner, and the official racism and totalitarianism of the Third Reich thus had an institutional foundation, which underscored the sense of crisis in the eyes of Weimar progressives. Nationalist and racist musicians joined the Lagardes, Langbehns, and Moellers in their quest for the regeneration of culture by political means and for a restoration of healthy politics through the spiritual regeneration of culture.

Hans Pfitzner's musical-political writings reflect this two-fold dynamic of pre-Nazi musical-political polemics and confirm the continuity thesis of historians who have analyzed "the roots of the Nazi mind" or the progressive "destruction of reason." In order to test Lukacs's sweeping synthesis in music, the musical counterpart to the post-Darwinian racial anthropology of a Gumplowicz, Woltmann, or Schultze-Naumburg has to be examined, and to that end the representative racial scholarship of Richard Eichenauer appears most suggestive. A teacher, composer, musicologist, SS *Untersturmführer*, and author of the 1932 publication *Musik und Rasse*, Eichenauer articulated the final response to crisis, while like all other participants in this debate on the state of music on the eve of the Third Reich, giving expression it it in the eyes of his opponents.

Hans Pfitzner composed much music, offered master classes of composition at prestigious music academies, was recognized by fellow musicians as a major composer of his day and like his idol Wagner, wrote political polemics on the situation of German music and culture in general, which he held to be in a critical state. Similar to Furtwängler, he addressed an alleged crisis in music whose order of tonality, room for the "human spirit," and general sense of proportion and purpose were threatened. The alleged chaos in music mirrored conditions in Germany, the West and the world, and music symbolized that condition. Salvation would thus be possible through a regenerated music, while music, it appeared, could only be restored to its ennobling mission by a revitalized society--the classic predicament of the völkisch politicians of cultural despair.[52] In differing with Furtwängler's stand, Pfitzner asked for the intervention of politics in the affairs of the arts.

Pfitzner addressed music and the world in his extensive writings. As a composer and writer about music, he was a traditionalist conservative who believed in a musical tradition worth preserving against "subversive" expressions in composition--materialistic atonality in the sophisticated and alien jazz in the popular realms--as well as the complementary music commentary.[53] He felt our Western art music to be unique in that it had evolved a perfect system of tonality, a balanced relationship between the musical material and the human spirit, and--totally from within itself--the miracle of harmony, a new and essential element not to be found in nature.[54] Like all self-chosen defenders of civilization, he feared for its fragile, artificially human, and thus precious nature, which is nonnature--an expression of his fundamental pessimism--and he wondered whether it would survive. Can this creature of the human spirit be preserved against the modernist (the machine) in music whose objectivism and materialism is striving toward the elimination of civilization, the disintegration of all national culture, and a return to chaotic nature?[55]--he asked as he turned from crisis in music to stating his alarm over the deficiencies of German culture.[56]

His polemics strayed from musical discourse to politics and to "warfare of cosmic dimensions."[57] The progressives in music and music criticism, anathema already for their understanding and rendering of music, were accused of participation in the anti-German conspiracy.[58] Pfitzner's essays and musical works were placed in the context of national and universal conflict and crisis, which reached such an acute state in his mind that radical political solution had become necessary. His outburst in conversation with the writer Franz Werfel that "Hitler will show you--Germany will yet win,"[59] demonstrates his commitment at a time when Hitler's success was by no means a certainty.

The issues on all levels, personalities and subjects as well as national categories, were clearly established and the racial orthodoxy of the Third Reich was anticipated with the Jew emerging as the embodiment of an opposite principle.

Pfitzner also dealt with Jewry in relation to "The fate of our national art, specifically music." Since to him the national element constituted the basis of his discussion on music, he regarded internationalism as a "poison of the people" and the Jew as uprooted and international. He actually denied being anti-Semitic, stating that those Jews who agreed with him were acceptable, and that he, indeed, had "Jewish friends." However, the Alljuden were active in international Bolshevik subversion,[60] and he took exception to the existence of a "Jewish critic in a German national newspaper" who had accused him of being against Beethoven--such is the state of music and decency in Germany, he wrote. Although he allowed for good Jews, he clearly insisted on racial characteristics of all peoples, which were expressed in their art, the state of war, and "the weapons to be used in battle." The language of his defense against the enemy who ranges from "atonal chaos" to "primitive jazz," "international bolshevism" to "American materialism," and "political pacifism" to "international slush" in the arts,[61] moved him close to National Socialism, although his recognition of the adversary's strong points, for instance, the virtuosity, perfection, and creative originality manifest in jazz;[62] and his idealism, which permitted Jewish contributions to German art, bring into question total identity of the "prophet" with the reality of the Third Reich.

In short, a reading of Pfitzner's extensive writings offers examples of continuity as well as discontinuity with the Musikpolitik of the Third Reich. His grouchiness and ill temper kept him from easy integration into Third-Reich musical organizations. He did not join the party, nor did he readily sign solidarity proclamations with the Third Reich.[63] Even in strictly ideological terms, his racism was not clearly defined. For such a definition, Richard Eichenauer's Musik und Rasse was to play a central role.

The study of racial determinants in cultural achievement had infiltrated German institutions of learning before the Third Reich. Music too had been studied relative to the racialist literature of Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss, Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Alfred Rosenberg, and Hans F. K. Günther. Yet, when Richard Eichenauer published his Musik und Rasse in 1932, he acknowledged race to be a young science. Nonetheless, he pointed out that explicit race theory had roots in the comparative study of music of different nations. Whereas earlier superficial studies had simply referred to the distinct music of Europe as that of the white race, he now recommended the refinement of the scientific study of racial determinants of music, an endeavor he felt to be consistent with the program of National Socialism. Committed to that ideology and equally rooted in a conservative-romantic musical tradition, he had no problem rejecting modern trends as deviations from racial norms on the basis of scientific evidence. He assumed the "new racial science" to be generally known--especially that of Günther--and proceeded to present a methodology,[64] which served as a general reference for racialist musicology throughout the Third Reich.

It is this positive formulation of racism that also served as reference to critical theorists in their discovery of racism in the structures of art and letters even when not explicitly stated or admitted. Similarly, the reality of fascist totalitarianism positively instituted and formulated, served as a model for the various studies of authoritarianism and fascism by critical theorists. In retrospect, some of the pre-1933 analyses were indeed understood to be validated by post-1933 events.

Steeped in National Socialism and the romantic-völkisch tradition, Eichenauer wrote no less than a primer for Third Reich racialist musicology. Music was to be studied as a product of the whole person, whose racial identity, in turn, was revealed by the music so understood. The biological basis of music and musicians thus established, Eichenauer compiled a list of physical traits of musicians that served as clues for the racial identification of music. However, he held the features of what he called the "racial soul" as more important because it was not subject to the deviation encountered in physical traits, yet he held this soul to be as pronounced and distinct as physical characteristics.[65]

As an antidote to cultural relativism, abstractionism, and the internationalism of music, the German racist sought recourse in absolute racial characteristics of human beings and their musical products, in timeless and characteristic values, in set definitions of good and evil as of friend and foe, and in the struggle between racially determined antagonists. Moreover, only members of a race can truly appreciate the musical products of their race and, as a German, he acknowledged his preference for German music in the full confidence of that being a superior music. Yet, even though his purpose and the end result were clearly stated and the history of music was understood in the same terms--by Eichenauer as by many others, including internationally known musicologists[66]--the new race science admittedly had to be refined as racial norms had to be constantly verified by the classified material. Data and theory reinforced each other. The scholar simply had to acquaint himself with this racial law, the racial traits of the objects of his study, biographical detail for confirmation of basic racial characteristics as well as deviations, and the musical works themselves. Music thus contributed to the establishment of racial norms which, in turn, facilitated the classification of music.[67]

This musical-racial soul theory accorded with the classics of Nazi art theory, Schultze-Naumburg's much-cited *Kunst und Rasse*, for instance, in which the physical traits of artists, especially their faces, were classified relative to cultural and environmental factors.[68] Similarly H.F.R. Günther compiled comparative lists of literary and plastic art objects on the basis of racial traits of the artists in his important book on *Rasse und Stil*. A racial musical typology was thus rooted in the general Nazi approach to the study and classification of the arts and other products of the mind. Race defined prevailing styles--introduced as objective conditions--whereas differences within a style were attributed to the individuality of the artist (composer). Citing Karl Ludwig Schemann, *Rasse in den Geisteswissenschaften*, 1930, and Richard Müller-Freienfels, *Psychologie des deutschen Menschen und seiner Kultur*, 1930, Eichenauer thus permitted musical individualism not in reference to the evolution of music understood to be the product of an object--(the musical materials and inherited structures)--subject dialectic in time, but as idiosyncratic deviation. Timeless racial standards prevailed, even in the case of known musical masters whose stature was celebrated in their ability to reveal the racial soul of their people and whose racial identity was therefore of utmost concern to the Nazi musicologist.[69] The rapid succession of modern styles was dismissed as irrelevant and inconsequential--a result of racial mixing--but not indicative of basic racial changes.[70] In the atmosphere of what Rosenberg had described as *Völkerchaos*, the decadent phase of modern music had found its time and place to develop. To root out the latter and guide music back into its healthy path, the Third Reich would have to secure the regeneration of the race, a project of ruthless biological warfare, which would take centuries.[71]

In the laboratory of music-biologism--to which thousands of books and articles bear witness[72]--Adorno found explicitly stated what he had discerned in the musical structures and librettos of bourgeois music culture and read in some romantic-*völkisch* music commentary--a racial community in *Parsifal*, the first storm trooper in the person of Siegfried, and the virulent anti-Semitism in Wagner's essays, which was mirrored in some of the characters of his music dramas.[73] A relationship is suggested between Nazi reality and the anathemas of the terminology of Adorno's analysis of modern music. Time was to stand still in the thousand-year Third Reich, during whose twelve-year span Adorno examined the spell-binding effects of Wagner's music: in the dream realities affected by the high-pitched violin tremolos of the Venusberg music or the reference to bourgeois values placed in a medieval setting in the Meistersinger--the suggestion that if those values existed then and now they will always exist. Love at first sight, primeval drives, basic natures, categorical enemies, pseudo-rebelliousness and pseudo-naturalness, roaring laughter of those in power (Wotan) at the expense of those who suffer (Alberich), good and evil embodied in racial opposites, a stage on which the gods and men converse, class conscious, and representative individualism contrasted with idiosyncratic and counterrevolutionary rebels, and many other of Adorno's suggestive terms and interpretations of Wagnerian characters and settings testify to familiarity with the realities of the Third Reich and its official music commentary.

The fellow emigré Thomas Mann discovered his own affinity to Adorno's ambivalence toward the genius Wagner in the 1940s, and Wilhelm Furtwängler, whose own denazification took several years, praised the "heroic" Pfitzner shortly after the war, when such protestation did not help his own cause but no one spoke in behalf of Eichenauer. In normal times the Eichenauers have to be sought in the unspoken referential world of analysts who remember the unmediated world of domination only too well. It is perhaps for this reason that a few old critical theorists became liberals. Though skeptical of liberalism as well, Adorno increasingly became estranged from the traditional Marxist concentration on the economy and focused instead on aesthetics and mass culture. If in the 1930s he offended nonfascists with references to fascistoid features of their work and lives, he revealed his sensitivity to the overwhelming threat of barbarism. The Götterdämmerung had preceeded the Holocaust. His famous question whether after Auschwitz a lyric poem is still possible was formulated by him, in other words, already before Auschwitz.

NOTES

[1] Theodor W. Adorno, "Musikleben," *Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie: Zwölf theoretische Vorlesungen*, rev. ed. (Frankfurt/Main: Rowohlt, 1968), p. 130.

[2] Wilhelm Furtwängler, "Chaos und Gestalt," *Vermächtnis* (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1956), p. 135.

[3] Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideologies* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1961); Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics: The Roots of the Nazi Mind*, rev. ed. (NY: Capricorn Books, 1965); Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970).

[4] Wilhelm Furtwängler, *Vermächtnis: Wilhelm Furtwängler Briefe*, ed. Frank Tiess (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1964).

[5] Peter Yates, *Twentieth Century Music: Its Evolution from the End of the Harmonic Era into the Present Era of Sound* (New York: Minerva Press, 1967); William W. Austin, *Music in the Twentieth Century from Debussy through Stravinsky* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966).

[6] Roger Sessions, "Problems and Issues Facing the Composer Today," *Problems of Modern Music: The Princeton Seminar in Advanced Musical Studies*, ed. Paul Henry Lang (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962). p. 23.

[7] Erich Valentin, *Hans Pfitzner, Werk und Gestalt eines Deutschen* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1939), p. 71.

[8] Winfried Zillig, *Von Wagner bis Strauss: Wegbereiter der neuen Musik* (München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1966), pp. 14-15.

[9] See especially Theodor W. Adorno, *Dissonanzen: Musik in der verwalteten Welt*, 3d. ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965); *Moments Musicaux* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1958); *Musiksoziologie* (1962); *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, 2d. ed. (Frankfurt/Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1958); *Prismen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1955).

[10] Theodor W. Adorno, *Versuch über Wagner*, rev. ed. (München/Zürich: Droemersche Verlagsanstalt Th. Knaur Nachf., August 1964).

[11] Adorno, "Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 1, 1/2 and 3 (1932).

[12] Adorno, "Reaktion und Fortschritt," *Moments Musicaux*.

[13] See Adorno, "Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik," *ZfM* 1 (1932, Doppelheft 1/2), p. 105.

[14] Title of his major philosophical work, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1966).

[15] Adorno, "Reaktion und Fortschritt," pp. 153-54.

[16] Ibid., p. 155.

[17] Furtwängler, "1930," *Vermächtnis*, p. 10.

[18] Artur Schnable, *My Life and Music* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 41.

[19] Curt Riess, *Furtwängler* (Bern: Alfred Scherz Verlag, 1953), p. 99.

[20] See Michael Meyer, "The Nazi Musicologist as Myth Maker in the Third Reich," *Journal of Contemporary History* 10/4 (October 1975).

[21] Arnold Schönberg, *Schöpferische Konfessionen* (Zürich: Verlag der Arche, 1964), p. 77.

[22] Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston/Toronto: Little Brown and Co., 1973), p. 177; quoting Adorno from an article "on Kafka during the forties" in which he returned "to an argument he had used earlier in his critique of Kierkegaard." These views are developed at greater length in Adorno, *Philosophie der neuen Musik*.

[23] Adorno, *Prismen*, p. 166; Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, p. 183.

[24] Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, p. 183.

[25] Robert Heilbronner, *Marxism: For and Against* (New York/London: W. W. Norton, 1980), p. 39.

[26] On the Düsseldorf Reichsmusiktage, 1938, see Joseph Wulf, *Musik im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Gütersloh: Rowohlt, September 1966), pp. 460-71.

[27] "Die Musik soll nicht schmücken, sie soll wahr sein," in *Probleme des Kunstunterrichts: Musikalisches Taschenbuch* (Vienna, 1911) quoted in Adorno, *Philosophie der Neuen Musik*, p. 45.

[28] In addition to the above-cited works of and about Furtwängler see Berta Geissmar, *The Baton and the Jackboot* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1944); Friedrich Herzfeld, *Wilhelm Furtwängler* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 1941); Wulf, *Musik*, pp. 85-90.

[29] Furtwängler, *Vermächtnis* (1956), p. 49. Furtwängler praised *Doktor Faustus* in 1948 though, typically as a musician, he referred to Mann as Literat who manifested extraordinary mental versatility in place of commitment and responsibility. (*Wilhelm Furtwängler Briefe*, Letter 170.)

[30] Ibid., p. 23.

[31] See notes 3, 19, 22.

[32] Furtwängler, *Vermächtnis* (1956), p. 57; passim.

[33] Ibid., p. 63.

[34] Ibid., p. 29.

[35] Furtwängler's concession is well-developed in Adorno, *Versuch über Wagner*.

[36] Riess, *Furtwängler*, p. 115.

[37] For commentary on the Bayreuth Festival, 1876-1914, see Robert Hartford, ed., *Bayreuth: The Early Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). See also Adorno's "Musikleben," *Musiksoziologie*, pp. 129-48; *Versuch über Wagner*; and Wulf, "Wagneriana," *Musik*, pp. 311-22.

[38] Riess, *Furtwängler*, p. 33.

[39] Furtwängler, "Chaos und Gestalt," *Vermächtnis*, pp. 137-38.

[40] Furtwängler, *Vermächtnis*, p. 48.

[41] It must be noted that Furtwängler did not see himself as

naive politically as particularly his former secretary Berta Geissmar has alleged in her sympathetic book, even though he acknowledged her integrity and loyalty. In a letter to his friend Emil Praetorius (April 24, 1946) he objected to her reference to him as nervous and afraid. His "inner emigration" was purposeful, and he was aware of his actions. In a celebrated letter to Thomas Mann (July 4, 1947) he indeed claimed that everybody in Germany knows that of those who stayed no musicians had opposed the Nazis as clearly as he in spite of Nazi propaganda which had exploited his presence in Germany. (Wilhelm Furtwängler Briefe, Numbers 155 and 163.)

[42] Furtwängler, Vermächtnis, pp. 118-22.

[43] See Michael Meyer, "A Reference in the Music Commentary of Theodor W. Adorno: The Musicology of Volk and Race," Humanities in Society 2/4 (Fall 1979), pp. 401-16, for aspects of the following review of Pfitzner and Eichenauer.

[44] See Wulf, Musik im Dritten Reich; Michael Meyer, "Prospects of a New Music Culture in the Third Reich in Light of the Relationship between High and Popular Culture in European Musical Life," Historical Reflections 4/1 (Summer/été 1977), pp. 3-26, for examples of the racialist component in Third Reich Musikpolitik.

[45] From a vast literature on culture and the arts in the Third Reich, see George L. Mosse, Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1968); Hildegard Brenner, Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963); Josef Wulf's series of documentations on Die bildenden Künste im Dritten Reich (Gütersloh: Rowohlt, 1963); and for further bibliography Karl Dietrich Bracher, The German Dictatorship (London/New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), pp. 517-19.

[46] See note 3.

[47] See the recent questioning of numerous generalizations about German and German-Jewish history in Peter Gay, Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

[48] See George Lukács, Die Zerstörung der Vernunft (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1962), pp. 582-84, for a discussion of Gobineau in this light; and for a comparison Michael E. Biddis, Father of Racist Ideology: The Social and Political Thought of Count Gobineau (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970) and George L. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1971). See the last part of Ernst Nolte, Three Faces

of Fascism: Action Francaise, Italian Fascism, National Socialism (English translation New York/Chicago/San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 427-54, for an analysis of antitranscendental fascism.

[49] H. S. Chamberlain includes three musicians in his list of eight great Germans (*Foundations*, 1922 edition). Yet the role of musicians in other than music histories has rarely been recognized.

[50] Henry Raynor, *Music and Society since 1815* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), pp. vii, 1-14. On music's critical and negative social potential, see Theodor Adorno's entire music-sociological oeuvre and an analysis of the relevant parts of Adorno's work in Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, pp. 173-218.

[51] On this and other journal sources, see Wulf, *Musik*, pp. 72-73, and Michael Meyer, "Musicology in the Third Reich: A Gap in Historical Studies," *European Studies Review* 8/3 (1978), pp. 349-64.

[52] For general reference see Hans Pfitzner, *Gesammelte Werke* (Augsburg: Dr. Bruno Filser Verlag, 1926).

[53] See examples throughout Pfitzner's collected works that deal with atonality as "the machine" in music (Ibid., p. 222) or "chaos . . . the artistic parallel which is threatening European states," and jazz, the "great danger to the European soul" (p. 115), the anathema to "the truly creative artists [who] are not affected [by them]" (p. 122). It is equally important however, to note that Pfitzner carries on his part of the dialogue in ernest. His relationship to National Socialism exists on an ideal level. He entertained genuine fear of decay of national consciousness, culture generally and his own field of music. His attack on modernity expressed a profound pessimism, which was easily translated into the *Musikpolitik* of the Third Reich in the area of the institutionalized aspect of music life. The consequences cannot be blamed on Pfitzner, who reacted to a world falling apart, but who did not foresee the effects upon culture when subjected to total censorship. In purely musical terms, he maintained a conservatism without any National Socialist implications. He fought progressives who saw the essence of music in terms of its material construction, while, like Furtwängler, he believed in the sense of balance. Uniqueness of a composition can be guaranteed by clinging to a traditional tonal arrangement and repetition because change of essence is implied in every compositional context (p. 214).

[54] Ibid., pp. 122, 166-86.

[55] Ibid., p. 225.

[56] Valentin, *Hans Pfitzner*.

[57] In condemning Busoni, Pfitzner emerged with his *Futuristengefahr* as champion of conservatism. He defended the great masters against the suggestion of being only parts in a chain of progress, which will in its individual parts lose much relevance with the passing of time. The progressive Busoni, an optimist, saw music at its beginning stage. Pfitzner supported a more common view according to which music had reached a height that was threatened in the contemporary setting.

[58] In this most characteristic attack on a leading contemporary music critic, the issues of twentieth-century music, in the German context, were crystallized. "Art cannot be discussed without touching on the question of nationality, nor can we speak of national or international art without touching on the deepest roots of artistic creation, as our time contains a threat to all established norms," he wrote in the preface to the third edition in 1927. "It is not possible to deal with any aspect of German creativity without considering the question of existence of the German people."

[59] Alma Mahler-Werfel, *And the Bridge Is Love*, 2d. ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1950), p. 200.

[60] Ibid., pp. 109-10.

[61] Ibid., pp. 118, 250-51.

[62] Ibid., p. 120.

[63] On his controversial status in the Third Reich, see Wulf, *Musik*, pp. 334-41.

[64] Richard Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse* (München: J. F. Lehmann, 1937), pp. 10-12.

[65] See Hans F. K. Günther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (München: J. F. Lehmann, 1929).

[66] See, for instance Friedrich Blume, *Das Rassenproblem in der Musik* (Wolfenbüttel/Berlin: G. Kallmeyer, 1939); further on Blume see Wulf, *Musik*, pp. 347-48.

[67] Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse*, pp. 16, 22.

[68] Ibid., p. 16.

[69] Wulf, *Musik*, pp. 434-46.

[70] Eichenauer, Musik und Rasse, p. 23.

[71] Ibid., p. 316; and other references in Wulf, Musik, pp. 345-64.

[72] Wulf, Musik.

[73] Adorno, Versuch über Wagner.

18

Jewish Treason against the Laws of Life: Nazi Religiosity and Bourgeois Fantasy

ROBERT A. POIS

Over the years, psychohistorians have made increasing use of the concept of "group fantasy." Even if the term is not utilized explicitly, reference has been made to a putative state in which a given group of people, due to events of a physically singular or traumatic nature, comes to share or participate in a fantasy, a recrudescence of accumulated myth-grounded responses to historical challenges.[1] Naturally, psychohistorians generally must believe that group fantasies are the products of phylogenetic forces. Their various contents certainly are time-bound and, in some cases, quite singular. Even the most nonreductionist psychohistorian, however, must percieve general, underlying forms, which are representative of phylogenesis. In this chapter, the writer, while not concerned with ascertaining phylogenetic origins, has no intention of calling this assumption into question. Rather, assuming that the existence of group fantasies has been determined, we will be focusing upon one that he perceives as being of immense importance for Weimar Germany's bourgeoisie--the fantasy of return to a natural order immune from the challenges presented by military defeat and by the social, economic, and political uncertainties posed by life in Weimar Germany. This order was one in which elements perceived as inimical, or at least alien, to German national life would either have no role to play or would exist as entities to be overcome. National Socialism was in large measure both a product of and response to this group fantasy.

As indicated above, especially for one sympathetic to psychohistory, there exists the temptation to ground a given fantasy in more general phylogenetic concerns. That kairotic "return of the repressed," which has played so important a role in Freudian historical speculations, must come to mind whenever one focuses upon any variety of group fantasy.[2] Ultimately, such an explanation might well be valid. Here, however, we will be focusing upon the nature and contents of a particular fantasy, leaving phylogenetic concerns for others professionally better able to deal with them.

For some time, it has been an article of faith that there were, from the point of view of politics and ideology, two bourgeois camps in Weimar Germany. One variety, at least at first, was willing to accept the Republic, was generally opposed to those various irrationalities that constituted the substratum of National Socialist beliefs, and, on the whole, displayed tolerance with regard to the Jewish question. The other group, however, conservative, racist, or both, came more and more to prevail, its ranks being swollen by deserters from the first camp.[3] In some respects, this interpretation is a valid one. Bourgeois organizations such as the Center party and the German Democratic party--an increasingly forlorn group--and, to an extent, the Left wing of the German People's party, were generally more willing to talk the language of political pluralism and were certainly more "tolerant" than right-wing members of the German People's party and the reactionary German National People's party, to say nothing of the National Socialists.[4] Further, it is true that the decline of the Republic can be measured in direct proportion to the decline of, say, the German Democratic party. Thus, the two-camps approach cannot be dismissed out of hand. At the same time, though, investigation into what must be seen as fundamental conscious emotional concerns of representatives of the bourgeois class as a whole reveals that there was a general, shared fantasy that cut across political lines; a fantasy which, to no small degree, became actualized in the most basic doctrines of National Socialism.

One could make the argument, of course, that German liberals or, if one wishes, bourgeois moderates, even if they shared certain concerns with conservatives or representatives of the radical right, differed quantitatively to such a degree on such issues as the role of parliamentary government, racism, anti-Semitism, and so on, that to lump them together with their far more stridently intolerant and antipluralistic fellow burghers is unfair. Furthermore, another argument, most particularly with regard to the so-called liberals under consideration, could be made; namely, that, most particularly in a political situation characterized by a more-or-less steady bourgeois drift to the right, campaign rhetoric ought to be distinguished from genuine beliefs. In response to the first potential objection, the author is certainly willing to admit that there were meaningful differences between the radical right-wing and moderate sections of the German bourgeoisie. At the same time, though, the acceptance by both groups of certain fundamental attitudes, at times virtual superstitions, is of immense significance and points to the persistence and power of those elements, which were constitutive of the German bourgeois fantasy. The first objection raises few problems and can be answered with little expenditure of time or energy. Consideration of so-called private remarks of various liberal bourgeois figures of importance in Weimar Germany will reveal that public statements made in the supposed heat of political campaigns either were actually representative of these private remarks or soon came to be.

Even if one does not totally accept the so-called Fischer Thesis in its entirety, there can be little doubt that Germany's bourgeoisie had an immense stake in victory in World War I.[5] Domestic tensions and sacrifices during the war, the anguish of defeat, and governmental chaos following this defeat took an immense psychic toll. To be sure, the German working class also suffered greatly physically and psychologically. It, however, had several advantages over the bourgeoisie. First of all, there was the comforting balm of a progressive ideology; the hope that, with the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic, the first steps in the direction of a more equitable society had been taken. For Social Democrats, this was of some comfort. Communists, while eschewing republican forms, could derive satisfaction from more strident teleological expectations. Paradoxically, it was the ruling class that, from the point of view of hope in the future, was left high and dry. The so-called revolution of 1918 had turned out to be historical froth, which, nonetheless, had sufficed to drown the Spartacists. Economic power remained in bourgeois hands. Military shame and republican uncertainties, however, could not be fully assimilated. In mitigation, there was unbridled fantasy, and, both for those who as "republicans of reason" (*Vernunftsrepublikaner*) evidenced a grudging willingness to work within the framework of parliamentary republicanism and for those who rejected republican solutions outright, this was of immense importance throughout the tenure of the Weimar Republic.

In 1917, the then liberal Ernst Krieck, a leading voice in educational reform, published *Die deutsche Staatsidee*. This work, completed under the grinding pressures of total war and attendant home-front scarcities, was written in the idiom of German romantic speculation. Thus, when the author spoke of the state in organic terms, as being representative of a whole *Volkstum*, he was not exactly breaking new ground. Neither was he when he declared that the state had to be grounded in Life, which, he suggested "embraced nature and spirit as it did two poles."[6] What Krieck—who joined the National Socialist party in 1928—expressed, however, was a concern for holistic immersion in life which, in one way or another, would characterize bourgeois fantasizing during the Weimar period. The results of World War I were hideous and, even for liberals, hard to swallow. A heroic Germany had gone under and, to the liberal Friedrich Meinecke, it was obvious that "No state could rule for long on the basis provided by the protagonists of the Left, with their Jewish, sentimental-soft ideas."[7] In this regard, it is of interest to note the solution to post-World War I problems proffered by the realist, Meinecke—a sort of internal emmigration into the infinite. This proposal appeared in Nach der Revolution, and in this context Meinecke offered the pre-World War I Wandervogel youth movement as an example of how it could be done.

> In the hearts of happy, wandering youth, the feeling for the homeland began to grow again. And the most German in our art and poetry was truly none other than the recapitulation of our landscape in the eyes of the artist--that . . . synthesis of idyllic Herzlichkeit with ascending, overpowering feeling for the infinite. . . . So, many of us today retain, even in our narrowness, a longing for the innermost recesses of our feeling, after the most German Germany in nature and spirit.[8]

Meinecke had accepted the formation of a republic on realpolitical grounds. In his eyes, in the realm of politics, Vernunft--reason--had replaced Herz--heart. Yet, the dean of German liberal historiography always retained a certain antiurban and anti-Semitic bias, at least in the social sense. Both conditioning and accompanying this was a tendency which we have seen in the case of Ernst Krieck--an attempt to draw strength from or seek solace in an immersion of life forces, the infinite, or nature. Concern for putative forces of this ilk was not new and was hardly confined to Germany, although it perhaps achieved its greatest resonance in so-called Lebensphilosophie. In Weimar Germany, though, we can see this attaining unparalleled prominence as a fantasy dimension to political and spiritual considerations.

As suggested in Meinecke's statement in Nach der Revolution, discouraged bourgeois intellectuals often sought out salvation in a sort of "reborn" German youth, one open to life forces of a profound character. Krieck, who, by the early Weimar period was beginning his trek towards the radical right, declared that the most valid philosophy of education always had to bear in mind that "all knowledge, all experience is, first of all, a means in the service of life formation" and that the educational experience was of singular importance because, on the basis of individual experience, one could not arrive at a comprehensive "world picture" (Weltbild).[9] The eventual goal of a "life forming" education would be to create the total man, a sort of updated version of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister and concurrently, there would be an emphasis upon the strengthening of character rather than upon a perceived narrow intellectualism. While Krieck, at this point, did not subscribe to the notion, so dear to many on the German right, that immersion in life forces necessitated submission to nature, he exhibited an almost sentimental attitude towards those who, for one reason or another, remained outside the realm of education. "The human in the state of nature is amidst us and within us; in its purity, he is the new-born child in all its helplessness."[10] This empathy for the children of nature, evidenced in Weimar Germany, contributed to political decisions.

Ernst Krieck became a National Socialist in 1928. In his romanticizing of youth, however, he was at one with many liberals of the period. We have considered Friedrich Meinecke. It is important to point out that many of Meinecke's fellow liberals, members of the ill-fated German Democratic party, regarded German youth as somehow embodying rationally inexpressible verities. To be sure, much of this stemmed from efforts to compete with the radical right in drawing young people to their particular political cause. Nevertheless, it is striking that the editors of *Der Demokrat* thought it perfectly in order that the January 5, 1923, issue of their journal be introduced by quotations from the anti-Semitic obscurantists Heinrich von Treitschke and Paul de Lagarde, quotations in which the writers extolled youth's readiness to fight for concrete ideals.[11] When the German Democratic party essentially sacrificed its republicanism in the name of ill-defined *völkisch* concerns, this was accompanied by a plethora of articles defending that decision and calling upon all of democratic persuasion to recognize that the fusion with an anti-Semitic *Jungdeutsche Orden* to form the politically absurd *Staatspartei* was necessary in order to provide a nonauthoritarian outlet for youthful idealism. "The idea of German youth," Kurt Goepel proclaimed, "is simply Germany, Fatherland, homeland." Urban Germany had proved to be too impersonal and mechanistic for Germany's young people. The state had a duty to provide "the expression-form of the *völkisch* will to national community," this was necessary to satisfy the spiritual needs of German youth.[12] This fascination with youth went beyond melioristic political considerations and indeed was the expression of a fantasy that was of immense importance in the psychic makeup of bourgeois Weimar Germany. Somehow, youth embodied both historical and timeless virtues, elements that had been lost in an increasingly urbanized and industrialized Germany. Youth, in its ingenuous commitment to ideals, *was* Germany and, most assuredly, not the Germany born of military disaster in 1918. It was in this fascination with youth and youth movements that the Weimar liberals were very closely tied to exponents of neo-conservatism and the radical right.

The interest displayed by German youth for the radical right and vice-versa has been the subject of numerous studies.[13] For our purposes, it is of immense importance that representatives of right-wing thinking perceived youth in somewhat the same fashion as did many German liberals.

The German right, opposed to liberalism from the beginning, could be somewhat more consistent in its extolling of German youth, a youth which, in many ways, had been and would continue to be antiliberal. In a virulent attack on liberalism, Moeller van den Bruck, who already had established a name for himself as translator of Dostoevski and as an ardent foe of post-World War I Germany, declared that, with regard to the newly-founded Republic, "the youth in Germany feels the basis of the betrayal."[14] German youth, in its honesty and in its ingenuous commitment to principle, was willing to declare its opposition to a spiritually dishonest republic and to "recognize the enemy as being liberals."[15] According to Moeller van den Bruck, German youth, in many ways apolitical and naively idealistic, represented Germany. Both liberals and conservatives were thus united in their view of youth as representing a forthright, honest, and, almost *because* of its apolitical character, significant commentary upon Germany's historical situation. For the right, however, this adulation of youth had a religious dimension. As Karl Bernhard Ritter saw it, youth, as the future of a *Volk* community (*Volksgemeinschaft*), was constrained to see that "religion is a matter of the community, and thus, in the first instance, a matter of concrete historical community, a matter of the *Volk*. Each truly living religion is a *Volk* religion."[16] Thus, youth was called upon to grasp the fundamental role that was being assigned to it—to be the bearers of a Christian religiosity that was, in essence, Germany itself. Frank Glatzel, editor of the monthly journal *Jungdeutsche Stimmen*, declared that the society of 1922 lacked "the heart which beats for the whole body." For the youth movement of pre-World War Germany, the *Wandervogel*, "the point of departure was . . . the degeneration and decomposition of society, as well as the natural *Volk* feeling."[17] The *Wandervogel* group, which could well serve as examples to a deracinated society, "had no program written on its banners," nothing but "life . . . and experience."[18] In an interesting sequence of ideas, Glatzel first declared that the summer solstice ceremonial fire, which had been of great traditional importance in the *Wandervogel* movement and which continued to be prominent in the activities of right-wing youth movements after the war, was part of a new, youthful religious experience, which had to be appreciated as such. The author then went on to concern himself with the antiparliamentary, antimonarchical, and antiparty nature of German youth. To be sure, he concluded, "we know that the social question is the core question of the *Volksgemeinschaft*; that socialism as idea is the necessary antidote to liberalism."[19] This was not only, however, "a question of correct distribution of goods . . . but just as much a question of condition of soul."[20] In one paragraph full of bromide-laced bourgeois fantasy, Glatzel captured the attitude of the radical right, as well as many liberals, towards German youth. Somehow, in its very lack of concreteness, in its longing for a new religiosity and a nonsocialistic socialism, and in its condemnation of day-to-day party politics, it was the *real* Germany. Naturally, for some liberals, the antiliberal nature of right-wing German youth, was rather too much to endure. Like many of their ideological counterparts all over the world, however, many Weimar-period liberals felt distinctly uneasy about their social and ideational position—perhaps even a bit guilty. Some of this can be observed in an article written by Gertrud Bäumer and published in the liberal journal *Die Hilfe* after the disastrous (for the Democrats) May 1928 elections.

Bäumer, noted bourgeois feminist and literary critic, seemed to don right-wing garments as she expressed interest in the Jungdeutsche Orden, placing particular emphasis upon its opposition to the "party essence." Besides paying greater attention to this "Order," Bäumer maintained that the German Democratic party should recognize that Weimar Democracy was rooted "not in the pompous relativism of liberal big-city dwellers, but in many völkisch and soil-bound strengths, . . . and is conservative-bourgeois in all questions of conscience."[21]

The reaction of Germany's bourgeoisie to the introduction of parliamentary government is well known and need not be further documented here. They were opposed to it, by and large, and even the German Democratic party, which out of a sense of Realpolitik declared itself in favor of parliamentary government, evidenced a certain degree of suspicion towards the new institution from the beginning, a suspicion which, over the years became translated into a rejection on the part of many of its members.[22] Growing distrust of parliamentary government was a general phenomenon in bourgeois circles during the Weimar period. Behind the objections to an imposed parliamentary system was something else--the fantasy of return.

If one examines the statements of Meinecke and Bäumer, one is struck by the thought that, for these liberals, there was a real, somehow more valid, order beyond that of Weimar Germany. For Meinecke, there was the "most German Germany in nature and spirit." For Bäumer, there were "völkische and soil-bound strengths." What these representatives of republican pluralism were stating was that postwar Germany, a foreign-imposed, big-city entity, was not real; that, somehow, behind all of the problems manifest in military defeat and parliamentary bickering, there was another Germany, the real Germany. This point of view was held by other German liberals. For Willy Hellpach, psychologist and the Democratic party's presidential candidate in the first presidential election of 1925, the ultimate source for German democracy had to be Germany's farmers, a class indifferent to big-city cries for tolerance in political and religious matters.[23] In a word, the most stolid, conservative--timeless, really--element of German social and political life was the source of all things positive, including that democracy to which, at least in its Weimar form, many liberals were only formally committed. Positive national strengths were rooted in a class that fantasy had endowed with well-nigh mystical powers. The real Germany was one that eluded rational political analysis. Nevertheless, there was a natural order, which not only provided foundations for whatever positive elements there were in German public life, but served as a source of comfort for those increasingly alienated from Weimar republicanism. This order, antirepublican to be sure, was nonetheless the basis for democratic republicanism. The implicit contradiction in all of this might well have been obvious to German liberals on a certain level of consciousness. As we have seen with regard to Bäumer's attitude towards German youth, however, there was a stubborn unwillingness to dispense with fantasizing about a real, more natural Germany.

Interestingly enough, one of the most fantasy-obsessed of Weimar Germany's beleagured democrats was Walther Rathenau, at first minister of reconstruction and then foreign minister under Josef Wirth, chancellor between 1921 and 1923. Rathenau, the most prominent Jew in German political life, was assassinated on June 24, 1922, by right-wing terrorists who might well have adhered to some of the same mystical ideals to which this spiritually most confused individual clung throughout his life.[24] Walter Rathenau's father, Emil, founder of the AEG electrical firm, had done as much as anybody to bring "modernity" to Germany. Walther Rathenau himself, of course, was a businessman of no mean acumen. Furthermore, as head of the Raw Materials Board during the First World War, he had established a reputation for economic realism. The Treaty of Rapallo existed as proof of his ability to engage in level-headed, well-nigh cold, international diplomatic horse-trading. Yet, throughout his life, Rathenau had exhibited a romantic alter-ego. For this most rational of industrialists, the pursuit of transcendence was of immense importance. Individualistic spirituality was the means by which this spiritually perplexed capitalist sought to bind himself to timeless forces, acceptance of which, in his eyes, represented a rejection of his own Judaism.[25]

Rathenau served the Weimar Republic valiantly and well and, in large part, perished because of this service. In many ways, though, Rathenau, like so many of his liberal colleagues, never completely adjusted to republican life and to a new state form born of defeat. Throughout his life, he had combated what he perceived to be grossly materialistic influences. As an example of this, we can consider a 1917 speech. In it he declared that he felt constrained to attempt to fulfill a mission that he thought nature had given him: to combat the "material, which had been tossed into this world like weeds from a strange continent."[26] He had to "infuse this unspiritual with spirit."[27] Part of this spirit was a spiritual Germany from which he drew strength. "This spiritual Germany lives, it lives in you and it lives in several others and it appears completely different than the Germany of which one hears and of which one speaks."[28] The Germany of warriors was certainly "strong and great" but, in the final analysis (a comforting thought in 1917 and even more so in 1922 when the speech was reproduced in the Deutsche Rundschau), it was spiritual Germany which mattered. Peace treaties mattered little, and Germany's future would not be decided on the "battlefield of Flanders" but would be upon "the battlefield of our hearts."[29]

Rathenau's message was a gentle one and, unlike many of his countrymen, even some of his fellow liberals, he evidenced little bitterness over the stalemated course of the war, and cries for revanche were muted, to say the least. In this essay, however, the reader can observe that fantasy of another, more spiritual Germany, one implicitly "natural" in its spirituality. Material Germany might well have been stalemated on the battlefield, and starvation might well be prevailing on the home front; but, there was an ultimate reality behind all of this, the reality of the German spirit. This message was carried into the post-World War I period.

In 1920, Rathenau published a work entitled Die neue Gesellschaft, a piece which offered a guarded prognosis for Germany's future. In this rambling essay, he revealed a lack of enthusiasm for parliamentary republicanism that was characteristic of many German liberals.[30] The solutions offered by Rathenau to the problems posed by defeat and disillusionment boiled down to one overriding one: fulfillment of a uniquely German "mission." "The way to the German mission, to German development /Bildung/, which shall no longer be the development of classes, but the development of the Volk, stands open through equalization of labor. The whole land is the same as a team; each stands before the same passage. Physical labor is no longer retarded by the pressure of overexhaustion, spiritual labor no longer divorced from the Volk."[31] Rathenau, in brief, was calling for that traditional Volksgemeinschaft, which always had waxed large in the fantasy world of the German bourgeoisie. "We don't need more rulers," he declared in a 1920 address before the Berlin Democratic club. "What we need are stewardships, responsibilities, communities, self-governing, responsible communities."[32] He saw an important role for his party in this process, particularly inasmuch as the German Democratic party was "no longer a party of big interests."[33] A communal Germany in which, without real societal change, of course, each person had a role in the fulfillment of a spiritual mission--this was Rathenau's fantastic (in the literal sense of the word) conception of how to deal with the seemingly numberless problems that tormented the Weimar Republic.

For Rathenau, as for other liberals, there was a mysterious "other Germany"--one which existed above and beyond day-to-day political life. Inspite of, or perhaps because of, his alienation from much of German life due to his Jewishness, he seemed to have loved this Germany with an intensity that defies conventional historical analysis. In his diary, Harry Graf Kessler described an interview with Rathenau's sister. "The war crushed him," she said, "because his 'beloved' /Germany/ had been overthrown." He had wanted to defend his "beloved," but, being a Jew, he had never been able to obtain an army commission, thus "his Jewishness hung like a millstone around his neck."[34]

Right-wing writers and critics tended to be both more strident and more consistent in their various expressions of the great bourgeois fantasy of Weimar Germany. For one thing, they obviously could attack liberalism with greater consistency than the liberals themselves even though, as we have seen, liberals often seemed to be quite eager to shed their melioristic principles in favor of supposedly more heroic ones. In his previously-cited essay, "An Liberalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde," Moeller van den Bruck declared that "liberalism is the freedom to have no convictions, and at the same time maintain that this precisely is conscience."[35] Liberalism appeared when a community lost its cohesiveness, it was the expression of a society which is no longer a community.[36] People who remained part of nature, the "Naturvölker," "do not know liberalism. For them, the world is a unified experience which man shares with men."[37] People who had been able to form themselves into cohesive states also had the ability to keep liberalism under control. Deracinated "society peoples" ("Gessellschaftsvölker"), however, had ceased to be a community, and it was here that liberalism was able to take hold.[38] Liberalism, in the eyes of probably one of the most prominent right-wing spokesmen in post-World War I Germany, was a symptom of communal disintegration.

Right-wing thinkers often maintained that liberal or left-wing ideologies were unnatural and hence not worthy of serious consideration. In his 1920 article, "Biologie und Kommunismus," Hermann von Rosen spoke of the necessity of understanding so-called laws of life through studying biology.[39] Thus, "any revolution which is possible only through deviation from natural, evolutionary laws appears as an anomoly to us." Nature was "not communistic, above all, not democratic."[40] Nature was individualistic and aristocratic, and communism, in its appeal to human rights was incredibly naive. There were no rights in nature, only laws.[41] Nations had to live according to the laws of life. All who defied these laws, and hence revealed themselves as unnatural, were doomed. Von Rosen sounded almost positivistic in his rather cool appeal to biological laws. Yet, throughout, there was also an implicit utopianism: if a people adheres to those natural laws that express themselves politically in a "natural" aristocracy, this people will have tapped into eternal forces. For von Rosen, as for other representatives of bourgeois right-wing thought, his was an age in which outmoded, transient values were being replaced by new beliefs grounded in timeless values. During this time, Ernst Krieck declared that humankind had "to seek out a new attitude to the powers of life and of occurrences; a new Mythus, as exponent of a new belief and life-feeling, is being born."[42]

Krieck looked forward to a time in which the individual would attain fulfillment as a "valid member of the community of life with all its forms, values, goals, knowledge, and skills."[43] Wilhelm Stapel, editor of the racist journal Deutsches Volkstum and later a strong supporter of Nazism, pressed this point in an openly more völkisch direction, in his essay "Volk und

Volkstum," when he declared that "Volk is an irrepressible, natural community, differentiated from other forms."[44]

Representatives of the German right, like many liberals, were seeking out their nation's salvation in an immersion in nature, or in recourse to certain fundamental "laws of life," as Krieck was fond of putting it. Unlike the liberals, with the possible exception of full-blown romantics such as Däumer, they could be more consistent in their efforts since they felt no need to somehow reconcile their beliefs with republican principles and liberal meliorism. All of them were concerned with some sort of national rebirth or, in Krieck's case, with the birth of a new Mythus. A very specific means of helping to bring this about was provided by Heinz Brauweiler who, in a widely-publicized essay, suggested that Roman law be replaced in its entirety by traditional German law, which he thought was more socially conscious and hence sensitive to the needs of the whole community.[45] "In place of the contemporary artificial and arbitrary division of the Volk, of the state body, through parties and economic organizations, which all are more or less filled with thoughts of class and class struggle, there will be a natural division, grown out of nature."[46] German law, the product of a German spirit apparently rooted in nature, would assist in restoration of this natural order.

Walther Rathenau, in his concern to infuse a materialistic world with spiritual values, came close to offering a religious solution to Germany's problems. In this, he differed somewhat from his liberal colleagues. Right-wing spokesmen, however, exhibited more of a willingness, indeed eagerness, to proffer what one would have to call religious answers to the problems of a deracinated Volk. Some of those who concerned themselves with this issue spoke the jargon of traditional romanticism. Will-Erich Peuckert, in his article "Gott-Natur," blamed the Enlightenment for separating God from Nature. Fortunately, the romantics of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century served to restore the God/Nature synthesis.[47] Peuckert saw the restoration of "Naturphilosphie" as being of fundamental concern. A new "unity of God/Nature" was needed in order to restore spiritual balance for the German people. This could best be accomplished if more attention were paid to "our farmers and . . . the 'primitives' on the land."[48] These were the humble possessors of timeless, soil-bound truths.[49] For individuals such as Peuckert, the search for some far-off fusion between God and nature was indicative of a more general concern, which we have seen expressed by both liberals and rightists; his was a concern for totalism, a complete immersion into nature or life forces. Such was the goal of one of the most distinguished existentialist philosophers, Martin Heidegger, who spent a lifetime attempting to pass beyond what he percieved to be linguistic errors and philosophical obscurantism and to embrace the very ground of all speculation, nothingness, as it turned out to be.[50] The great philosopher's genuine concern to penetrate into the very core of natural being, something which was first evident in his Sein und Zeit of 1927, led him to embrace, if only for a brief period, the Lebensphilosophie of National Socialism and to reject "academic freedom" as signifying "unconcern." Academic freedom had been "a capricious exercise of intentions and inclinations and was noncommitment."[51] In these remarks, the reader can sense an attitude towards liberalism rather similar to that expressed by Moeller van den Bruck--it was symptomatic of a lack of commitment to the natural, organic community. Some representatives of the right, despairing at what they perceived to be the gap between idealism and day-to-day political chicanery, saw the infusion of religiosity into politics--or, perhaps more accurately, the transformation of politics into a religion of the Volk--as being the only way out of national degradation.

Rudolf Pechel, editor of the Deutsche Rundschau, in an essay which appeared in a 1920 edition of the journal, declared that many Germans were now willing to follow a dictator. All that was needed was the appearance of a "great idea imbued with transcendental strength, deep human love, and great righteousness and purity." Such an idea, or more precisely, one who embodied it, "will immediately find millions of supporters."[52] In this hour of parliamentary degradation (coincidentally, the essay appeared around the time of the Kapp Putsch, but had been written sometime before this occurred), strong personalities were needed, personalities that went beyond matters of state and, in fact, embodied the German spirit.[53] Pechel, whose editorial independence would later get him in a great deal of trouble during the National Socialist regime's rule in Germany, appeared to be actually looking forward to a dictatorship--one rooted, of course, in transcendental national truths. He was calling more for a religious transformation of values than for dictatorship in the traditional sense of the word. This became crystal clear in his 1922 essay, "Das Wort geht um," in which Pechel declared that "we Germans are now entering the timespan of our fulfillment."[54] In words both hoary and eerily prophetic, Pechel went on: "The duty to Volkstum became a religious challenge. The path to this religion, which is already itself a religion, can be traversed only by individuals."[55] What was needed here, Pechel declared--bringing up an issue considered in his 1920 essay--was a leader. Such a leader would correspond to the figure presented by Paul de Lagarde. This person was one "in which lives the most distinguished quintessence of the German spirit." The leader had to be an individual characterized by "hate against the unnatural Unnatur." In the final analysis, Germany was being confronted by a choice between "God or Satan."[56] Drastic measures were being suggested, but, "the voice of our blood releases us from time-bound laws."[57] This approach was perhaps apotheosized by Paul Krannhals who, in his 1923 work, Das organische Weltbild, boldly declared that "for the future leaders of the German soul, politics will be, simultaneously, religion, and they will have to cleanse the German house of those for whom religion has become politics."[58]

For some on the German right, the fantasy of return had to be crowned by a spiritual revolution that was necessarily religious in character. Politics were conceived of as being corrupt, as degrading the existence of the German people. There was, as Pechel stated, an "unnatural" aspect that had to be purged from German life. The future leaders of Germany would be men of deep and abiding faith, ones who could say, as Martin Luther did, "Hier steche ich, ich kann nicht anders" (Here I stand, I can do no other).[59]

For bourgeois Germans, the Jews, at the very least, represented a troublesome element, a group whose role in German life was problematical. Even liberals, who could hardly be accused of racism or of harboring mindless prejudices, spoke of a "Jewish problem," some of them even after the massacres of World War II.[60] Meinecke declared that anti-Semitism was the first step to National Socialism and that things would have gone better if the "Jewish problem" had been confronted earlier. Heuss, during the course of an address, "Mut zur Liebe," given on December 7, 1949, before the Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit, spoke of a "Jewish-German and Jewish-Christian problem." While Heuss was hardly anti-Semitic in any systematic sense and, after World War II, went out of his way to lend support to those Jews who remained in Germany and to the state of Israel, his use of the above term points to the power of an idea; namely, that there was--or had been--a "Jewish Problem" of sorts. Friedrich Meinecke, as we shall see, tended to play down German responsibility for how this so-called "problem" was resolved. Heuss never rejected the idea that German responsibility had to be assumed. Both Meinecke and Heuss, however, seemed to be unable to see Jews as being an organic part of the German national community. Few German liberals could be accused of systematic racism. Yet, a strong dose of at least social anti-Semitism was part of the spiritual baggage which they carried into the chaotic Weimar period. In the post-World War I fantasizing in which so many of them engaged, the Jewish role, or better, purpose in German life, became problematic.

On the surface, there was reason enough for liberals, not fully committed to republicanism, to be suspicious of the Jews. Jews, by and large, supported the Republic and one of their number, Hugo Preuss, had played an important role in writing the Weimar constitution.[61] The German Democratic party, which Heuss, Meinecke, and virtually all bourgeois supporters of republicanism either joined or voted for, derived a good deal of its support from the German Jewish community. The Jews appeared to have benefitted from republicanism and, as post-World War I Germany went from crisis to crisis, those who seemed to have advanced their positions through an apparently ineffectual form of government had to have stood out in the minds of individuals who, liberal or not, always had retained a residue of suspicion with regard to parliamentary government. However, for many of the liberals, as for their right-wing countrymen, the Jews became suspect primarily because they seemed to have no natural role in German life. Certainly, for both liberals and, for that matter, for many on the right, this did not necessitate that violent measures be undertaken to correct the situation. Nevertheless, such an attitude was hardly conducive to sustaining meaningful resistance against those willing to indulge in such unpalatable measures.

As we have seen, Friedrich Meinecke and Gertrud Bäumer fantasized about a deep-rooted, more real Germany--something which lived in a timeless realm, far-removed from military disaster and cosmopolitan, big-city cynicism. For both of these individuals, German Jewry during the Weimar period proved to be troubling. Meinecke, originally contemptuous of the German left, with its "Jewish, sentimental, soft ideas," found it particularly difficult to deal with the Jewish, liberal press. Usually, he maintained in an essay of 1926, this press had served the national interests. It could not be denied though, that, from time to time, it had manifested "a somewhat Jewish resentment."[62] Of immense importance for Meinecke was that certain impiety towards the past which had been shown by the left-wing and liberal press. From the time in which it first emerged onto the national scene, Meinecke had attacked the National Socialist party as representing a demagogic and divisive danger to Germany. Indeed, it was in large measure because of these attacks that he was removed from the editorship of the Historische Zeitschrift in 1935. Nevertheless, while criticizing the Nazis for their demagogic style, he was willing to admit, in an essay of December 21, 1930, that he saw certain valuable elements in the National Socialist movement. Besides its concern for a "strong national will, the passionate feeling in regards to our political dependency," there was its "ethical revolt against big-city dirt."[63] For Meinecke, hardly a systematic racist in any sense of the term, the liberal press, "big-city dirt," and that "somewhat Jewish resentment" were a sort of hardened underside of "Jewish, sentimental softness." As we have seen, in his post-World War II work, The German Catastrophe, Meinecke did suggest that, as he saw it, there was a definite "Jewish Problem." In his eyes, the Jews themselves bore a large share of the responsibility for it. As he stated:

> The Jews, who were inclined to enjoy indiscretely the favorable economic situation now smiling upon them, had since their full emancipation aroused resentment of various sorts. They contributed much to that gradual depreciation and discrediting of the liberal world of ideas that set in after the end of the nineteenth century. The fact that besides

> their negative and disintegrating influence they also achieved a great deal that was positive in the cultural and economic life of Germany was forgotten by the mass of those who now attacked the damage done by the Jewish character.[64]

In this statement we can see him drawing a sharp line between Germans and a "Jewish character" that often was destructive, frequently expressing itself in a "negative and disintegrating manner." (Millions of those who presumably bore this odious character within them had, of course, been just recently exterminated, something upon which Meinecke placed little real emphasis.) One is compelled to ask just what it was that this Jewish character was "disintegrating." Meinecke was never too clear about this, but we can get a good idea, perhaps, if we ponder a statement he made concerning those positive elements he saw in National Socialism. The emergence of liberalism, he said, besides providing for individual liberation "had left society too much to itself and allowed the old ethical ties such as family, custom, and social stratification to relax while no energetic consideration was given to the creation of new ties. Society was in danger of becoming amorphous."[65] Hitler appeared to have been sensitive to this and particularly so with regards to the needs of German youth.

For Meinecke, the yearning for that eternal Germany had caused him to fall back upon the *Wandervogel* experience after World War I. After World War II, there were the "Goethe Circles."[66] Part and parcel of this fantasy was the notion that Jews were not really part of *this* Germany. They were different somehow and, in their "disintegrating" form, dangerous to a sort of natural order that, for Meinecke, represented Germany in its most authentic form.

Otto Gessler, a German democrat who was defense minister between 1920 and 1928, was not one of those relatively rare liberals who greeted the new-born Republic with enthusiasm. Indeed, throughout, he maintained a considerable degree of loyalty for not only the Hohenzollern but the Wittelsbach dynasty of Bavaria, Gessler's home *Land*.[67] Hohenzollerns, the Wittelsbachs, the pre-World War I orderly society bequeathed Germany by Bismarckian genius--these became increasingly important to Gessler as his bitterness towards Weimar increased. It was partially because of his love of this Germany that he became associated with elements of the anti-Hitler underground in World War II and, after the July 20, 1944, assassination attempt, was arrested and tortured by the Gestapo.

For Gessler, Weimar-period Jewry came to embody everything that was wrong with Germany. The big city was the source of that cynicism, cosmopolitanism, and pacifism that so annoyed him. "I considered it and still consider it today to be one of the most serious weaknesses of the Weimar system that it, out of its liberal ideology, did not tear out this big-city degeneracy, root and branch."[68] He furiously attacked the left-wing Jewish press and literary circles. "With cold cynicism they tore down everything upon which healthy German national feeling depended and treasured each phenomenon of decadence as a sign of the progress of civilization."[69] For Gessler, that "upon which healthy German national feeling depended" was respect for time-hallowed institutions such as the army, various forms of monarchism, and the ingenuous wholesomeness of a presumed past age. Far more than Meinecke, and possibly even Bäumer, Otto Gessler, for eight years holder of one of the most important of ministerial posts, perceived a singularly negative Jewish spirit, expressing itself in urban degeneracy and unnatural cynicism.

Harry Graf Kessler, a man of extraordinary decency and intelligence, was a strong defender of the Weimar Republic--this, despite his noble background (he was known as "the Red Count")--one of the most devoted of pacifists, and an admirer of Rathenau. He was an enemy of National Socialism from the beginning and, throughout his life, was totally opposed to political romanticism in any form. Nevertheless, on Tuesday, November 30, 1920, he recorded the following in his diary:

> Danzig is a little Babylon. Unbelievably international and cosmopolitan in the midst of its Gothic German gables. Profiteers, whores, and sailors. Americans, Poles, and Jews shading off into Germans. Many of the Poles with a veneer of Americanism. At night, drunk as swine, they demonstrate in the dance-halls a charming combination of American and Polish facets of intoxication. Eastern Europe under the influence of Wilson. Money flies; gold delirium. Such a circus hasn't been seen for years.[70]

Kessler, bitterly opposed to racism and anti-Semitism, cosmopolitan to his very roots, had his own memory of better times. A man of unusual self-knowledge, he had his defenses against such intrusions of fantasy-conditioned hatred (for such it was and, no doubt understandably so) into his cognitive processes. Others, however, had no such defenses and, indeed, might have condemned them as cowardly if they did.

For many of the German right, the fantasy of a unified, Volk-community, grounded in the past and embodying the noble principles of the real Germany, led them to view Judaism as a disruptive, alien, unnatural force. Liberals, as we have seen, displayed the same tendency from time to time; but; for the most part, commitments to republicanism and "tolerance," no matter how tenuous these might have been, served an inhibiting function. No such inhibitions exited on the right. Here, one often heard the call for a true, natural "German socialism." This variety of socialism, corporate in nature, had been betrayed, Max Hildebert Boehm declared, by a new form of socialism--non-German Marxist socialism. The bearers of this form were not hard to find. "The Jew," Boehm maintained, "has German social history beginning anew in Paris in 1789."[71] German socialism rooted in the German community, was natural; "Jewish socialism," for such it was in Boehm's eyes, was not, but was, rather, grounded in events and institutions foreign to Germany. For those concerned with a strong, deep-rooted state, Asiatic examples of a lack of state-consciousness served as warnings. "Politically, the Jews are typically Asiatic," Helmut Göring stated in a 1922 essay. Their conception of state-life was limited in the extreme. Judah and Israel seldom were able to get together on anything of importance. "Beyond its law tablets, this indifferent people feels itself uncertain when opposed to the imponderabilities of state; it becomes theoretical and fanciful!"[72]

The fear of some sort of Asian incursion into Germany in particular and Europe in general was expressed by Charles E. Maylan in his 1930 essay, "Die psychoanalytische Methode." The Nietzschean author was intensely disturbed by the threat posed to European cultural values by a form of psychology that appeared to appeal to the values of the "herd." While not opposed to some aspects of psychoanalysis, its general tone suggested non-European, Aryan roots. Indeed, Freudian psychoanalysis was representative of a "growing Asiaticism" within Europe, the most prominent representatives of which were Lenin and Freud.[73] The bearers of the Asiatic influence utilized Christian terms such as "equality, freedom, and justice" in a totally disingenuous manner and were primarily concerned with tearing down others in order to elevate themselves, such efforts stemming from a "deeply rooted inferiority complex."[74] There were positive aspects to psychoanalysis, Maylan declared; a new means of "spiritual, creative love" (words which would have turned Nietzsche's stomach) had been made available.[75] However, Asiatic, foreign influences, so visible in Freud, had to be dispensed with before those liberating elements could be efficacious. In his article, Maylan did not use the word "Jew"; but, to people whose intellectual perceptions had been honed on the whetstone of archetyping, the implication had to have been obvious.

Contempt for and fear of "alien" influences was generally centered on the Jews. As might be expected, however, the French came in for their share of criticism. An article written by Karl Toth in 1921 was devoted to just such a critique. In large measure this piece placed emphasis upon the womanish nature of French culture as contrasted with the masculine German culture.[76] The weibliche character of the French culture was expressed in its shameful and shameless pursuit of luxury and the entirely artificial and theoretical nature of French freedom. German freedom, on the other hand, was concrete and manly, and this could be seen in Kant's categorical imperative.[77] The French, Toth declared, were completely unnatural. In fact, they feared nature, and this could be seen in the unnatural aspect of their chateaux and in the shameful way in which defenseless animals were abused on the streets of Paris.[78] Thus, on the one hand there was German culture--masculine, natural, dedicated to good, hard work. On the other one could ponder its French counterpart--feminine, unnatural, dedicated to the pursuit of luxury. In many ways, the accusations hurled at the Jews by Otto Weininger around the beginning of the twentieth century were now being expressed by Karl Toth with regard to the French.[79] In any case, we can see that Toth's 1921 article fit the general fantasy pattern we have considered.

Criticism of the Jewish religion as embodying the character of a soulless, mundane people was not new. In this regard, the writings of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Richard Wagner come to mind. Weimar Germany saw no lack of such criticism. One critic, T. R. von Hoesslin, went so far as to declare that the Jews had had nothing to do with the emergence of monotheism; that this could not have originated out of "the psychic developmental materials of the Jewish people."[80] The distinctly inferior character of Judaism and the Jewish people was revealed in Moses' obtaining the ten commandments. The Jews had to be told to obey. The ethical, good life could not come naturally out of this people.[81] Furthermore, "the transcendental feeling which seeks out the divine in the innermost recesses of the world is foreign to Judaism."[82] Emphasis upon the transcendental experience came to the West only through Jesus Christ, who von Hoesslin compared to Lao Tze. In view of the author's attitudes towards Judaism, it is legitimate to ask whether he was concerned with separating Christianity from previously assumed Old Testament roots, something that was hardly unprecedented in German cultural history. In any case, the Jews had been represented as being a mundane, unnatural people who, as to be expected, produced a religion congruent with its character.[83]

When the Nazis came to power, several of the right-wing figures we have considered became ardent supporters of the new regime. Indeed, as we have seen, Ernst Krieck joined the party as early as 1928. Most, however, did not, and Rudolf Pechel, the outspoken editor of the Deutsche Rundschau, offered editorial and personal opposition to such an extent that he eventually was thrown into a concentration camp. There could be no questioning of his courage or commitment to what he perceived to be conservative principles. Pechel survived his experience and, after the war, was one of the first to come out with a history of the German resistance movements against Hitler and to offer, along with Friedrich Meinecke, something of an explanation for the "German catastrophe." If one examines these writings, however, a strange, rather disturbing phenomenon becomes apparent: Hardly any time at all was expended on considering the Nazi solution to the "Jewish problem."[84] In this regard, Deutschenspiegel is particularly intriguing. On page 7 of the work, Pechel calls upon Germans to undergo a moral revolution in order to lift themselves out of the swamp of the Nazi period, a swamp which has become known through "names such as Auschwitz, Maidanek, Belsen and other concentration and extermination camps."[85] From this point on, however, the author makes no mention of the final solution and, instead, devotes himself to a crude sort of psychohistorical—at times, racist--explanation of why German history took the fated course it did. With great passion, Pechel attacked those elements of the German national character that he saw as being dangerous. Most prominent among them were "disunity, lack of external and inner discipline . . . constriction of feeling . . . lack of healthy human understanding as /a/ regulative of action." These unhealthy characteristics were responsible for the German people remaining spiritually rent asunder, characterized by wide swings between sentimentality and brutality.[86]

Throughout Deutschenspiegel, Pechel gives no indication that he was aware that he himself was utilizing a thoroughly racist approach to attack a racist regime. Perhaps, though, this was due to the fact that, inspite of his supposed concern over the existence of concentration and extermination camps, Nazi racism was not really a pressing issue for him. What seemed to disturb him the most was the shame that had somehow been brought upon Germany. The role of the Jews in all of this did not seem to matter very much. For Pechel, as for the liberal Meinecke, World War II, after all, had been a German catastrophe. If one examines the post-World War II writings of some of those who both sustained and derived comfort from the great bourgeois fantasy of Weimar Germany--the pursuit of that timeless, nonpolitical, unified natural Germany that stood above and beyond military disaster and political confusion--one must be impressed by just how little the fate of Jews really mattered to these people. Certainly, what happened to them was unfortunate, and they never denied that the Holocaust had taken place. At the same time, however, their rather obvious lack of interest in the fate of European Jewry can only assist in illuminating further the prominence of an almost automatic, indeed "natural," anti-Semitism during the Weimar period. Somehow, in the natural ordering of things, the Jews had no real positive role to play.

Until now, we have been concerned with a general bourgeois fantasy, not, in a specific sense, with something that can be viewed as a religion. We have noted, however, that several right-wing thinkers were interested in the restoration of a sort of religion of nature or thought, that politics itself had to be infused with a religious spirit. The National Socialists have been described as maintaining allegiance to no ideals, as being purely pragmatic in character. In one area, though, their allegiance to principle was obvious, and this was both due to and rationalized by a religion of nature in large measure grounded in bourgeois fantasizing but, assuredly, much more consistent.

Many commentators have emphasized the religious or pseudo-religious character of National Socialism.[87] Few, however, have described it for what it really was--a religion of nature. Why this has been the case is not easy to fathom. Perhaps, in their emphases upon the necessity of living in harmony with nature and in their extolling of the "natural man," the National Socialists appear to be too close for comfort to present-day, liberal environmentalism. In any case, those National Socialists who mattered--the ones in the upper and middle echelons--adhered to a weltanschauung that can only be described as being religious in character.

For Hitler, the National Socialist movement drew its strength "from a complete and comprehensive recognition of the essential nature of life."[88] National Socialist adherence to natural laws, the "laws of life," as many Nazis chose to put it, allowed for the emergence of a new human being. "The new man is among us!" Hitler declared. "He is here! I will tell you a secret. I have seen the vision of the new man--fearless and formidable. I shrank from him."[89] For Hitler, his role and that of the National Socialist movement was somewhat uncertain. At times, he seemed to think that he was the new man, at others he more modestly viewed himself and the movement, or only himself, as representing an incubation stage in the emergence of the new man. One thing can be said for certain: Hitler saw the movement as embodying laws of life. Thus, it took precedence over any given political or institutional forms, including the state. If, he declared in a statement of 1938, "the formal bureaucracy of the state should prove itself to be unsuitable to solve a problem, the German nation will set in action its living organizations in order to assist in the breakthrough of its life's necessities."[90] The state, that unit hallowed by German political and philosophical speculation, would take second place to the demands of a people's "life necessities," demands that could only be met by those acting in conscious fulfillment of the laws of life.

The authentic grounding in life, which many National Socialists saw as the primary strength of their movement, allowed them to justify the intervention of ideology into all areas of public affairs. The notion of value-free objectivity in science, for example, was absurd. After all, according to Bernhard Rust, minister of education, The National Socialist weltanschauung emerged from life, and any true science was possible only on "the basis of a living weltanschauung."[91] These views were echoed by the Nazi youth leader Heinz Wolff, who declared that the so-called objectivity characteristic of sicentific liberalism served to make people forget that science was the creation of living men, of men of flesh and blood.[92] Throughout the Nazi writings that we have thus far considered, we can observe a fundamental assumption; namely, that there existed a permanent natural order of things upon which the National Socialists were able to draw. This, in reality, elevated them above political parties and the state and, as Hitler himself often maintained, gave them a religious caste. "Man," Hitler once proclaimed, "is God in the making."[93] This statement has a curiously Hegelian quality about it. For Hitler, however, this new man was not that being which emerged out of reflection upon the World Spirit's peregrinations through history but, rather, that authentic being who was grounded in nature, in laws of life.

It was this emphasis upon immersion in life--a notion which, in many ways, had a pragmatic dimension that made everything done in the name of National Socialism ultimately self-justifying--which had proved so attractive to Martin Heidegger. Such was also the case with Ernst Krieck who, having joined the National Socialist party in 1923, really came into his own as one of the official pedagogues after Hitler came to power. "The age of 'pure reason,' of 'absolutes' and 'value-free' sciences has ended," he declared in a 1933 work.[94] Science now had to be seen as taking part "in the general shaping of life, the technical shaping of the external ordering of life as well as in the internal forming of human beings."[95] A new German humanity had to be created, one in which all elements of life, including science, had to have roles to play.[96] German efforts to carry out those tasks necessary in this process had been continuously threatened. "Rome, the French, Jews, Americans, to the point of niggerification, [*Niggertum*] have attempted again and again to overthrow German fulfillment."[97] The answer to these threats was, of course, Hitler, a man who "has succeeded in tapping a subterranean vein of *völkisch* life and channeling the spring-source."[98]

The new German human being who Krieck saw as emerging in his time was what he called the *gebundene Mensch*--literally, the "linked man"--a person tied to the *Volk*-community through the National Socialist party. Total, natural harmony was his happy lot. The "*gebundene Mensch* sees himself suspended between mother earth and father heaven, between darkness and light . . . and is a living whole in which life and becoming, task and toil fulfill themselves. . . . The *gebundene Mensch* is the aristocratic man, the man of race, breeding, and honor."[99] To be sure, the problems confronting such a person were immense--degeneration of family ties, decline in the number of children, and the unnatural situation that had been created by the enfranchisement of women.[100] Yet, by 1936, it would appear that Krieck had become positively ecstatic over the role that National Socialism was playing in bringing together all aspects of life.[101]

Immersion in life, in some sort of natural order that was timeless and yet German--a concern that had been so prominent in bourgeois circles during the Weimar period--was enticing to all manner of folk. The cleric, Friedrich Gogarten, who even in his efforts to reconcile religion with the new order did take pains to differentiate between Christianity and National Socialism, had to declare that the movement came "out of the core of human life" and thus embraced the totality of existence.[102] The person unwilling to accept the fact that true freedom came only with the rule of a state governed by the National Socialist movement was only an "abstract individual."[103] Despite Gogarten's unwillingness to see Christianity and Volkstum as being exactly one and the same thing, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he perceived National Socialism as somehow sanctifying national life.

For the National Socialist minister of agriculture, Walther Darré, there was no need to qualify an enthusiastic approval of blood-and-soil efforts to bind all Germans together in embracing Volkstum. Past and present would become as one "when the farmer's plow again breaks soil over the graves of his ancestors."[104] A sense of community had been tarnished by liberals. In this regard, Darré attacked the liberal conception of marriage. Such a conception encouraged naked egotism, and racial needs often had been forgotten. The sole purpose of marriage, Darré declared, was the child. In fact, the child was sacred, and its nurturing was the "ethical demand of our time."[105] In this context, Darré, in his enthusiasm, went beyond German bourgeois taste in declaring that children were so important that circumstances of birth, that is, legitimacy or illegitimacy, were really of no consequence.[106] The role of the woman--presumably either within or out of wedlock--was crucial. Like a farmer, she had to bring things to fruition. If her blood was not of the highest quality, the son would be sickly and not be able to attain the level of his father.[107] Darré, of course, represented an element of bucolic romanticism in the National Socialism movement which, in many respects, had to be dispensed with over time.[108] Nevertheless, in his concern for the maintenance and advancement of an assumed natural order, or a time-hallowed Volkstum rather beyond rational analysis, he shared several of the more prominent concerns of Germany's bourgeoisie. As a Nazi, he adhered to a religion of nature, rejecting Christianity which, he declared, had introduced an unnatural sense of shame with regard to the human body.[109]

It was, perhaps, in the realm of anti-Semitism that the National Socialists went well beyond the expectations of liberal and conservative Weimar-period bourgeois writers and publicists. Certainly, few of them could have anticipated anything quite like the final solution. In one crucial way, however, the Nazis shared--and admittedly elaborated upon--an attitude that was rather general among bourgeois circles in Weimar Germany--this was their view of the Jews as "unnatural," as somehow not belonging to an authentic order of being.

"The Jew," Hitler proclaimed, "is the antiman, the creature of another god. He must have come from another root of the human race." Aryan and Jew were totally different beings. "The two are as widely separated as man and beast. Not that I would call the Jew a beast. He is much further from the beast than we Aryans. He is a creature outside nature and alien to nature."[110] According to Hitler, the Jew was far removed from that natural world of soil-bound men and ingenuous animal life, which was the life-sustaining habitate of the Aryan. The only conceivable way, as Hitler saw it, in which the Jews could influence the natural world was as a disease; the Jew was a virus, and "the discovery of the Jewish virus is one of the greatest revolutions that have taken place in the world. . . . How many diseases have their origin in the Jewish virus!"[111] For Heinrich Himmler, "the Jew is a parasite which, like the parasites of the animal and plant world, lives from the strengths and productive labor of host peoples. The Jew is the blood-sucker of the world."[112]

As Darré, the ingenuous agriculturalist, saw it, even the best soil could sustain weeds (Unkraut), and the hard-working farmer had to be on guard against them. The various decrees against the Jews served a valuable function because, "in the peasant sense," they served to "free us from the weeds of Jewish blood."[113] These weeds--the Unkraut, which was perhaps materialism to Rathenau?--had been responsible for the unnatural shame that people had come to associate with their bodies, something that had come out of a decomposing Jewish influence. "Jewish desecration of German women corresponded to the witch-persecution of the church; both have a common spiritual father--Jahwe!"[114]

An interesting link between the National Socialist religion of nature and general bourgeois fantasizing about the natural community was provided by Wilhelm Stapel, the conservative thinker. Stapel had emphasized the natural character of the Volk-community. As in the case of Krieck, his star rose when the Nazis came to power, and he produced a number of works on the "Jewish Question" and related topics. On November 21, 1936, he delivered an address entitled "Literarische Vorherrschaft der Juden in Deutschland 1918 bis 1933." In this speech, which was presented at the University of Munich, Stapel declared that the Jews, particularly during the Weimar period, did not want to become "artificial Germans," but rather "attempted to make the Germans into artificial Jews."[115] In this context, it did not matter whether a Jew was an assimilationist or a Zionist. "Assimilation and Zionism were two methods of constructing a domination. They were two ways of a secularized messianism."[116] Jews, he went on to say, produced only mediocre original work and functioned mainly in a negative sense, as critics. Stapel gave several reasons for this, the most important of which was that the German language could never be their language, even if they were raised to speak it from childhood. It was not something which "had come out of the Jewish substance, the Jewish soul, and the Jewish bodily structure /!7."[117] Furthermore, Jews, living as they have been in the "Galuth," have had "a strong need for discussion and polemic. Through polemic, one attempts to make the other inwardly uncertain in order that he accepts whatever one brings him."[118] Through polemic and through their hold on the publishing houses, the Jews had attempted to interfere with, if not stunt, the natural development of German literature. It was the Jews who were responsible for bringing in the degenerating influence of psychology into the literary world, as well as "denatured" liberalism.[119] In a most revealing attack on Jewish emancipation, Stapel declared that the greatest mistake had been to consider the Jews as a man when, in reality, he remained the same Jew "which he was from the beginning."[120]

There can be little doubt that, in its claim upon "laws of life," in its nature worship, and in its concern to bring about the age of the new man, National Socialism viewed itself in well-nigh religious terms, even though the movement often spoke in a positivistic idiom. Most assuredly, its primary mission--the destruction of a foe that was "an enemy to life"--was a sacred one. In these aspects, of course, National Socialism certainly went beyond the fantasizing of most Weimar-period bourgeois, whose dreams of a timeless, yet naturally German community did not involve the physical destruction of those who were not perceived as having a role in it. At the same time, though, one must appreciate the fact that for many liberals as well as conservative and radical right-wing thinkers of Weimar Germany, Jews were unnatural, deracinated beings who really did not have a positive role to play in German life. For liberals at least, toleration was the rule. This concept, however, had a rather vapid ring to it under the circumstances.

To be sure, the notion of the Jews as being the unnatural bearer of a mechanistic, soulless civilization had a long pedigree in German cultural history. In the Weimar Republic, however, itself born of military disaster and international humiliation and beset by problems of pluralism to which most Germans were unaccustomed, fantasizing about a presumed natural order of things--and about those who were in one way or the other unnatural--did have more sharply defined political consequences than previously. Many of those who fantasized, of course, did not support Hitler, and a few even struggled against him. For most bourgeois Germans, however, the fate of the Jews did not provide much of a rallying point. Indeed, as we have seen, even after the conscientiously carried out slaughters of World War II, it was not an issue which one pondered, except to the extent that the role of the Jews in bringing this disaster upon themselves had to be considered. Nazism attained victory in its most meaningful campaign not entirely because millions of people lent it unqualified support at all times. Of equal importance was the cold fact that in its putatively "life-grounded" religiosity, it represented a concretization of bourgeois fantasizing about a natural, soil-bound order and a rejection of those who, at the very least, did not belong to this order or at most threatened its emergence. Of course, most bourgeois Germans were incapable of performing those monstrous acts carried out by Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) and concentration camp functionaries. The removal of a people, however, which seemed to exist as an unassimilable entity within the body of the German Volk, was not a painful thing to bear. In the end, the establishment of a natural order would assure that all would be set aright.

In 1920, there appeared a booklet entitled Die Unbesiegten. The work was a collection of sayings and apborisms gleaned from leading figures in German cultural and political history. It was meant to offer encouragement to a defeated and disheartened German public. As far as the great bourgeois fantasy of return was concerned, an anonymous saying can perhaps be perceived as being of some significance: "Der kommt am weitesten, der nicht weiss wohin er geht." "He goes furthest who knows not where he is going."[121]

NOTES

[1] As examples of this, see Peter Loewenberg, "The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort," *American Historical Review* LXXVI (1971); Rudolf Binion, *Hitler Among the Germans* (New York: Elsevier, 1976); Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Group Think: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972). Lloyd deMause developed the group-fantasy concept to what could be considered its logical conclusion when he declared that all forms of human organization, including the state, are really group fantasies. See deMause "Group Fantasy in History," *Journal of Psychohistory* 6, no. 3 (Winter 1978-1979), and his most recently published book, *Foundations of Psychohistory* (New York, 1982). For a review of the various uses made of this idea, see Peter Loewenberg, "Psychohistory," in *The Past Before Us—Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed., Michael Kammen (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980).

[2] For an excellent discussion of this, see Philip Rieff, "The Meaning of History and Religion in Freud's Thought," in *Psychoanalysis and History*, ed., Bruce Mazlish (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1971). Leon Poliakov, in his *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe*, trans. Edmund Howard (New York: Basic Books, 1974), has explained what he perceives to be a universal tendency to seek reunion with nature in largely Freudian terms. See particularly his discussion on pp. 329-30.

[3] Conventional histories of the Weimar Republic tend to present things in this fashion. As examples, we can point to Erich Eyck, *A History of the Weimar Republic*, 2 vols., trans. Harlan P. Hanson, Jr., and Robert G. L. Waite (New York:

Atheneum, 1962); and S. William Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy. A Political History of the Reich from 1918 to 1932 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965).

[4] Even here, though, certain qualifications have to be made. See Robert A. Pois, The Bourgeois Democrats of Weimar Germany (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Soceity, 1976) for a critique of the social and political stances of leading members of the German Democratic party. Several of the themes regarding German liberalism developed in this chapter were considered in this work, albeit in a quite different context.

[5] Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967). In this seminal work, Professor Fischer placed the major portion of responsibility for this war and for baldly imperialistic war aims upon a military-industrial alliance that he saw as effectively directing German foreign and military policies.

[6] Ernst Krieck, Die deutsche Staatsidee (Jena: E. Diedrichs, 1917), p. 3.

[7] Friedrich Meinecke, Erinnerungen, Band II, Strassburg, Freiburg, Berlin, 1901-1919 (Stuttgart: Koehler, 1949), p. 266.

[8] Friedrich Meinecke, Nach der Revolution (München: Oldenbourg, 1919), pp. 69-70.

[9] Ernst Krieck, Philosophie der Erziehung (Jena: E. Diedrichs, 1922), p. 1.

[10] Ernst Krieck, "Erziehung und Entwicklung," in Die Neue Front, Ed. Moeller van den Bruck (Berlin: Paetel, 1922), p. 144.

[11] Institute für Zeitgeschichte, Der Demokrat, 4 Jahrg., Nr. 1, January 5, 1923, p. 1.

[12] Institute für Zeitgeschichte, Kurt Goepel, "Jugend und Staatspartei," in Blatter der Staatspartei, 11 Jahrg., Nr. 23, December 5, 1930, p. 543.

[13] Among others, see Walter Laqueur, Young Germany (New York: Basic Books, 1962); George L. Mosse, The Crisis of the German Ideology (New York: Grossett & Dunlap, 1964); and Kurt Sontheimer, Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik; Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 and 1932 (München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1962).

[14] Moeller van den Bruck, "An Liberalismus gehen die Volker zugrunde," in Die Neue Front, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 29.

[15] Ibid., p. 33.

[16] Karl Bernhard Ritter, "Religiose Grundeinstellung der Jungend," in Ibid., p. 96.

[17] Frank Glatzel, "Die Jungendbewegung," in Ibid., p. 182.

[18] Ibid., p. 183.

[19] Ibid., p. 184.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Gertrud Bäumer, "Konsequenzen des Wahlausfalles," in Die Hilfe, No. 12, (June, 1928), p. 270.

[22] Regarding the German Democratic party, the following articles are of interest: Attila Chanady, "Anton Erkelenz and Erich Koch-Weser: A Portrait of two German Democrats," Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand 12 (1967); "The Dissolution of the German Democratic Party," American Historical Review 73, No. 5 (1968); "Erich Koch-Weser and the Weimar Republic," Canadian Journal of History 7 (1972); Bruce B. Frye, "The German Democratic Party: 1918-1930," Western Political Quarterly 16 (1963); Ernest Portner, "Der Ansatz zur demokratischen Massenpartei im deutschen Linksliberalismus," Vierteljahrshefte fur Zeitgeschichte 13, No. 2 (1965). See also Robert A. Pois, The Bourgeois Democrats of Weimar Germany.

[23] Willy Hellpach, Politische Prognose für Deutschland (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1928), pp. 209-10.

[24] Rathenau's tendency towards mysticism and a sort of Jewish self-hatred has been the subject of much scrutiny. See, among other works, Peter Loewenberg, "Walter Rathenau and the Tensions of Wilhelmine Society," in Jews and Germans from 1860 to 1933: The Problematic Symbiosis, ed. David Bronsen (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1979); Alfred Kerr, Walther Rathenau: Erinnerungen eines Freundes (Amsterdam: Querido Verl.: 1935); Harry Graf Kessler, Walther Rathenau: Sein Leben und Sein Werk (Berlin: Verlags Anstat H. Klemm, 1928); Robert A. Pois, "Walter Rathenau's Jewish Quandary," in Yearbook XIII (1968) of the Leo Baeck Institute, London, 1968).

[25] It must be stated that Rathenau, inspite of his opinion that Judaism was nontranscendental in character, never seriously entertained the idea of conversion. His theological writings have been treated in the previously cited works of Kessler and Pois.

[26] Walter Rathenau, "Tischrede zum 50. Geburtstag 29. September, 1917," in Walther Rathenau, Schriften und Raden, Auswahl und Nachwort von Hans Werner Richter (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1964), p. 380. This speech was reprinted in a 1922 issue of the Deutsche Rundschau as "Ansprache an Freunde." See Der goldene Schnitt: Grosse Essayisten der Neuen Rundschau 1890-1960, (Frankfurt am Main: Christoph Schwerin, 1960).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., p. 387.

[29] Ibid., p. 383.

[30] Walther Rathenau, "Die neue Gesellschaft," in Walther Rathenau, Schriften und Reden, p. 230.

[31] Ibid., p. 346.

[32] Walther Rathenau, "Demokratische Entwicklung," in Ibid., p. 376.

[33] Ibid., p. 377.

[34] Harry Kessler, In the Twenties: The Diaries of Harry Kessler, trans. Charles Kessler (New York: H. H. Rinehart & Winston, 1971), pp. 333-39. For a psychohistorical interpretation of some of the issues raised here see Loewenberg, "Walter Rathenau and the Tensions of Wilhelmine Society."

[35] Moeller van den Bruck, "An Liberalismus gehen die Volker zugrunde," in Die Neue Front, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 6.

[36] Ibid., p. 18.

[37] Ibid., p. 19.

[38] Ibid., p. 20.

[39] Hermann von Rosen, "Biologie und Kommunismus," Deutsche Rundschau, Band CLXXXII (January-March 1920), p. 183.

[40] Ibid., p. 184.

[41] Ibid., pp. 185-86.

[42] Ernst Krieck, "Erziehung und Entwicklung," in Die Neue Front, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 131.

[43] Ibid., pp. 138-39.

[44] Wilhelm Stapel, "Volk und Volkstum," in Ibid., p. 84.

[45] Heinz Brauweisler, "Ruckkehr zum deutschen Recht," in Ibid., p. 245.

[46] Ibid., pp. 250-51.

[47] Will-Erich Peuckert, "Gott-Natur," Deutsche Rundschau, Band CCXII (October-December 1927), p. 154.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] For those perplexed by Heidegger's strained neologisms and his, at times, virtual poeticizing of philosophical issues, Thomas Langan's, The Meaning of Heidegger: A Critical Study of an Existentialist Phenomenology (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965), provides an excellent guide through his ideational writings. For an excellent critique of some dubious elements in Heidegger's thought see Hazel Barnes, An Existentialist Ethic (New York: A. Knopf, 1967).

[51] Martin Heidegger, "Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universitat: Rede gehalten bei der feirerlichen Ubernahme der Rektorats der Universitat Freiburg am 27.5. 1933, Breslau, 1933," in The Nazi Years: A Documentary History, ed. Joachim Remak (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 58-59.

[52] Rudolf Pechel, "Und dennoch!" Deutsche Rundschau, Band CLXXXII (January-March 1920), p. 459.

[53] Ibid., p. 460.

[54] Rudolf Pechel, "Das wort geht um," in Die Neue Front, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 72.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., p. 74.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Paul Krannhals, Das organische Weltbild (München: F. Bruckmann, 1928), p. 185.

[59] Ibid.

[60] See Friedrich Meinecke, Die deutsche Katastrophe, trans. by Sidney Fay as The German Catastrophe (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 15, 58; and Theodor Heuss, An und Über Juden, Aus Schriften und Reden (1906-1963), comp. and ed. Hans Lamm (Düsseldorf-Wein: Econ Verlag, 1965), p. 123.

[61] Just how important this role was can be seen in Wilhelm Ziegler, *Die deutsche Nationalvrsammlung 1919/1920 und ihr Verfassungswerk* (Berlin: Zentralvertrag gmbh, 1932.

[62] Friedrich Meinecke, "Die deutschen Universitäten und heutige Statt," in *Politische Schriften und Reden*, ed. Georg Kotowski (Darmstadt: Toeche-Mittler, 1953), p. 411.

[63] Ibid., p. 113.

[64] Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe*, p. 15.

[65] Ibid., p. 73.

[66] Ibid., p. 120.

[67] Otto Gessler, *Reichswehr Politik in der Weimarer Zeit* (Stuttgart: D. T. Verlag Anstalt, 1958), p. 336.

[68] Ibid., p. 173.

[69] Ibid., pp. 173-74.

[70] Kessler, *In the Twenties*, p. 134.

[71] Max Hildebert Boehm, "Korperschaftliche Bindung," in *Die Neue Front*, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 37.

[72] Helmut Goring, "Macht und Staat," in Ibid., p. 405.

[73] Charles E. Maylan, "Die psychoanalytische Methode," *Deutsche Rundschau*, Band CCXXIV (1930), p. 240.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., p. 242. Emphasis was Maylan's.

[76] Karl Toth, "Französische und Deutsche Kultur," *Deutsche Rundschau*, Band CLXXXVII (1921), p. 304.

[77] Ibid., p. 13.

[78] Ibid., p. 20.

[79] A good, pithy treatment of Weininger is to be found in Solomon Liptzin, *Germany's Stepchildren* (Philadelphia and New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1961).

[80] J. R. von Hoesslin, "Zur Psychologie des Monotheismus," *Deutsche Rundschau*, Band CLXXXIV (1920), p. 193.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., p. 195. Actually, the seeking of divinity *within* phenomena would suggest a form of immanency rather than transcendentalism.

[83] Gertrud Bäumer, *Sinn und Formen geistiger Führung* (Berlin: F. A. Herbig, 1930), pp. 142–44. Walther Rathenau had come down on this point in emphasizing the superiority of the New over the Old Testament. For his discussion of Judaism's lack of transcendentalism, see his letter of June 21, 1912, to Rabbi Daniel Fink. This can be found in Walther Rathenau, *Schriften*, ed. Arnold Hartung et al. (Berlin: Fischer, 1965), p. 104.

[84] The works under consideration are *Deutsche Widerstand* (Erlenbach/Zurich: Rentsch, 1947) and *Deutschenspiegel* (Berlin: Wedding Verlag, 1946).

[85] Pechel, *Deutschenspiegel*, p. 7. Emphasis is Pechel's.

[86] Ibid., p. 17.

[87] Among others see, George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975); Friedrich Heer, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler: Anatomie einer politischen Religiositat* (München: Bechtle, 1968); J. P. Stern, *Hitler: The Fuhrer and the People* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975); and James M. Rhodes, *The Hitler Movement: A Modern Millenarian Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). See Robert G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (New York: Basic Books 1977), for a psychohistorical interpretation of the Hitlerian "religion."

[88] Herman Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks: A Series of Political Conversations with Adolph Hitler on His Real Aims* (London: W. Heinmann, 1939), p. 243.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Max Domarus, ed., *Hitler; Reden and Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Band I Zweiter Halbband 1934-1938 (München: Suddeutsche Verlag, 1965), p. 525.

[91] Bernhard Rust, "Das Nationalsozialismus und Wissenschaft," *Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Wissenschaft*, Reden Von Reichminister Rust und Prof. Ernst H. C. Krieck, (Hamburg: Carl Winter, Verlag, 1936), p. 19.

[92] Heinz Wolff, "Politik und Wissenschaft," in *Volkischer Beobacheter*, Munchener Ausgabe, Nr. 25, 54. Jahrgang (January 25, 1941), S.1.

[93] Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, p. 242.

[94] Ernst Krieck, Nationalpolitische Erziehung (Leipzig: Armanen Verlag, 1933), p. 1.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid., p. 8.

[97] Ibid., p. 26.

[98] Ibid., p. 36.

[99] Ibid., pp. 56-57.

[100] Ibid., pp. 59-61.

[101] Ernst Krieck, Das Nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Wissenschaft: Heidelberger Reden von Reichminister Rust und Prof. Ernst Krieck, (Hamburg: Carl Winter Verlag, 1936), p. 23.

[102] Friedrich Gogarten, Einheit von Evangelium und Volkstum (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlag, 1933), pp. 10-11.

[103] Ibid., p. 13.

[104] R. Walter Darré, Neuordnung unseres Denkens (Goslar: Die Goslarer Volksbucherei, 1940), p. 28.

[105] Ibid., p. 42. Emphasis is Darré's.

[106] Ibid. If one accepted this viewpoint, of course, the question of marriage itself would be superfluous.

[107] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[108] For a revealing study of the Nazi approach to agricultural issues once the movement had attained power see, J. E. Farquharson, The Plow and the Swastika: The NSDAP and Agriculture in Germany, 1928-1945 (London and Beverly Hills: Sage Press, 1976).

[109] Darré, Neuordnung, p. 50.

[110] Rausching, Hitler Speaks, p. 238.

[111] Adolf Hitler, Secret Conversations 1941-1944, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1953), conversation of February 22, 1942, p. 269. Here, of course, Hitler was representative of a well-established attitude. Paul de Lagarde, although lacking the former's ideological consistency, had declared: "One does not negotiate with trichinea and bacillus. . . . They will be annihilated as quickly and as thoroughly as possible," The French utopian

socialist, Charles Fourier (1772-1837) referred to Jews as "parasites" and a "social contagian." Richard Bienvenu, ed., *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love and Passionate Attraction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 199.

[112] Josef Ackerman, *Himmler als Ideologe* (Gottingen: Musterschmidt, 1970), p. 159.

[113] Darré, *Neuordnung*, p. 16.

[114] Ibid., p. 54.

[115] Wilhelm Stapel, *Literarische Vorherrschaft der Juden in Deutschland 1918 bis 1933* (Hamburg: Schriften d. Reichsinstitut für Geschichte d. neuen Deutschland, 1937), p. 13.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., p. 15.

[118] Ibid., p. 17.

[119] Ibid., pp. 26, 41.

[120] Ibid., p. 32.

[121] Karl Robert Langewiesche, *Die Unbesiegten: Worte deutscher Denker* (Taunus and Leipzig: Verlag der Blauen Bucher, 1920), p. 5.

19

Failures of Thought in Holocaust Interpretation

GEORGE KREN AND LEON RAPPOPORT

" . . . and now the only visions of the world that can be taken seriously are those that come through the irrevocably ash-darkened prisms of post-Holocaust sense and sensibility." Mistakenly seen as mere rhetoric by some readers, this closing statement of our book[1] was in fact meant to be understood quite literally as the thematic conclusion following from analyses of the failures of law, religion, and science--the three pillars of Western civilization--to prevent the Holocaust. This chapter is an elaboration and extension of the theme in question, with the primary focus of inquiry being the impact of the Holocaust on meaning as such, especially in connection with the general failure of Holocaust scholarship to recognize this problem as the source of a painfully clearcut inability to offer meaningful interpretation. Despite its importance, and perhaps because of it, we use the phrase "meaningful interpretation" here, in a very general fashion, as being composed of two elements: explanation and exegesis; the former involving the familiar what-leads-to-what type of causal analysis, and the latter involving less familiar questions of "what has changed," and "how come?" It is especially on this point that Holocaust scholarship has been most inadequate.

This is not to say that all scholars are totally blind to the problem. Friedlander, for example, reviewing efforts to make teaching of the Holocaust an academic subject, suggested that any serious consideration of the Nazi mass murder, as well as other aspects of warfare and genocide in the twentieth century, forces re-examination of the Enlightment idea of progress, and he argues further that historians and social scientists have only "made adjustments" while maintaining the ideal.[2] In another context, Feingold, after examining the question of responsibility of guilt for the Holocaust in admirable detail, concluded that the ultimate mistake of the Jews was their naive belief in the reality of "a spirit of civilization, a sense of humanitarian concern in the world, which could have been mobilized to save Jewish lives."[3]

These remarks, like our own quoted above, point to a problem that has generally been ignored, avoided, or not perceived at all, namely that the Holocaust contradicts or calls into question all forms of knowledge suggesting that it could not occur. This we call "the problem of meaning"; its unacknowledged presence so distorts and contaminates prevailing interpretations of the Holocaust as to warrant the critical indictment "failure of thought."

THE MEANING PROBLEM

If the analysis to follow is approximately correct, then future scholars will probably say of the twentieth-century intellect that its continuing failure in the face of the Holocaust was the first unmistakable sign of its collapse. And they might further observe of that intellect or "mentality" (with appropriate footnoting of its early critics: Nietzche, Kafka, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Burckhardt, Wittgenstein, and others), that having emerged during the preceding two-hundred-year rise of the mass industrial era, only to see that era ending in unprecedented mass destruction, the complex of moral and material values and logic systems defining the modern universe of rational thought, whereby intellect could interpret the human condition, was now either speechless or reduced to empty arguments over its own impotence.

The problem of meaning to be examined here constitues an important basis for the foregoing judgment and may be perceived in the Holocaust literature in various forms, ranging from concrete symptoms of scholarly frustration and distress, to confusions rooted in uncritical acceptance of established epistemology. The concrete symptoms are quite blatant, but they have for the most part been carefully ignored, perhaps because they lead too quickly to a threatening recognition of what might be termed the paradox of Holocaust knowledge; namely, that the more one comes to know about "the facts," the less one seems able to conclude about their meaning. Virtually no important question that has been studied in factual detail had yielded answers on which there is a satisfactory consensus. Instead, just the opposite appears to be the case: After detailed study has been accomplished, the disagreements over interpretation become more, rather than less severe. This condition is ubiquitous in the literature, as a few salient examples should demonstrate.

Increasing knowledge about the Judenrat authorities and the Jewish police organizations associated with them has reduced rather than enhanced the possibility of reaching any general conclusion as to whether those involved should be condemned as collaborators or respected for their intention of trying to "save what could be saved." The recently published Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow, for example, makes a strong case supporting many of his actions as head of the ghetto community. From his standpoint, some of the most contemptible Jews were those leaders who used their connections to desert the community and escape to America.[4]

The role of anti-Semitism in the Holocaust grows ever-more debatable as knowledge accumulates. Helen Fein's recent quantitative analysis argues that the best predictor of Jewish destruction in the various Nazi-controlled territories was the degree of prewar anti-Semitism in those territories.[5] But Poliakov suggests that such anti-Semitism is better understood to be merely symptomatic, not causal,[6] and our own review of this matter, including Fein's data and methods, led us to maintain that indigenous government autonomy under the Nazis was the best predictor of Jewish survival.

The problem of Jewish resistance also remains ambivalent. Material emerging over the past decade has shown that violent resistance was far more prevalent than previously had been known. But all the new information about extraordinary efforts toward armed resistance has only succeeded in undercutting the prior concensus that violent resistance was virtually impossible. No amount of new information, however, can alter the still-unresolved moral dilemmas posed by violent resistance.

Another exemplary case involves the debates over presumed SS psychopathology. Our own interpretation, based partly on the excellent documentary studies of Boehnert and Segev[7] as well as other sources, argues that the vast majority of SS, even those in the murder camps, were essentially normal and must be understood as such. This raises serious questions about the prevailing psychiatric conception of normalcy per se, however. Insofar as psychiatric inferences of psychopathology depend less upon actions than circumstances, even extreme violence may not be judged "abnormal."

There is an almost endless supply of examples like these showing that as further knowledge accumulates, the important substantive and moral issues not only slip further away from direct analysis and interpretation, but often become transformed in the process, sometimes to emerge, like born-again Christians, as neat, law-abiding vehicles for the display of methodological cliches. But concrete manifestations of the problem of meaning are not limited to instances in which additional evidence tends to obscure and deform the very questions it was supposed to resolve. In other cases, where the points in question are not open to empirical investigation, meaning can become lost in the labyrinths of scholarly discourse.

A relatively pure example of the latter may be seen in the controversy over whether or not the Holocaust should properly be defined as a genocide of the Jews, in which they became historical victims "like all the others": the Albigensians, the

Armenians, the Japanese at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the American Indians, the Cambodians, and so on. The advantages of doing this always seem quite obvious in the context of positivist social science, since it opens the way for comparative studies which may then yield a general model of genocide that can be applied to all cases. Indeed, there is already at least one such study that has received high praise for introducing an ahistorical descriptive theory of genocide developed for the case of the Armenians.[8]

The disadvantage of portraying the Holocaust as genocide is that this conception robs the event of its uniqueness. As Bauer and others have argued, the policies leading to the destruction of the European Jews and the circumstances under which it was carried out are profoundly different from all other cases of genocide, and even in terms of numbers killed, the Holocaust is unique.[9]

The question, therefore, remains: Was the Holocaust unique, or rather (merely?), a genocide like all the others? It is a very significant question because depending upon how it is answered, the general orientation of interpretative analysis will obviously vary a great deal.

In a comprehensive review of relevant scholarly perspectives on this "enigma of uniqueness," the Eckardts can reach no important conclusions.[10] Leaving no apparent intellectual stone unturned, however, they proceed to discuss the philosophical, theological, and political ramifications of the enigma in accord with eight different conceptual implications for its meaning, and they end by moving away from the original question, suggesting that what it really signifies is a problematic relationship between social ethics and sociology of knowledge. Whatever else is accomplished here, it seems clear that the meaning of the original, difficult question under consideration eventually gets lost in the abstract discourse it has provoked. Moreover, it is exemplary for our present purposes to emphasize that the Eckardts never consider that if the Holocaust _is_ in fact a uniquely new development in the history of Western civilization, then its occurrence may (1) disconfirm the idea of social ethics as a useful category of thought, and (2) demonstrate the obsolescence of sociology of knowledge as a useful mode of social inquiry.

Up to now we have been concerned to point out some relatively concrete symptoms of the problem of meaning and have noted a few salient examples. These examples and others like them eventually create the necessity to look deeper. Given the manifest difficulties of interpretation cited, the focus of attention shifts quite naturally away from substantive questions and toward underlying conceptual structures by which they are formulated. The problem of meaning then imposes itself in terms of abstract theory and/or epistemology. Hence there emerges a more basic, global question of meaning: Can it be that satisfactory interpretation of the Holocaust has been prevented not by confusion over subject matter (uncertain evidence, biased or ambivalent forms for its articulation) but by confusion about the conceptual tools applied to the subject matter? It is our contention that this is, in fact, the case, and that it ultimately arises from the inevitable failures of a post-Holocaust scholarship that has largely been conducted on the basis of a pre-Holocaust epistemology.

The limitations of this epistemology generate problems of meaning at all levels of Holocaust scholarship. For the moment, however, it is sufficient to identify the rudimentary source of the problem as lying in the prevalent tendency to treat normative assumptions of historical explanation as if they were absolute. The specific aspects of epistemology in question here are commonly accepted psychosocial-historical logic systems that are based upon established definitions of, and distinctions between, facts, theories, and value statements. Like all abstractions, these conceptual structures are essentially reifications, but as successful reifications supported by wide consensus, they remain above suspicion when phenomenal contradictions occur. Thus, to consider a simple illustration, it is possible to analyze the Holocaust by placing the facts of repression and then destruction of the Jews in a plausible historical sequence or chronology based on a theory of anti-Semitism. (That is, cause: Jews are conceived by their persecutors as evil deniers of Christ; effect: they deserve punishment.) Normative explanation of the Holocaust as the consequence of anti-Semitism is thereby attained, and interpretation--the meaning of the Holocaust--follows directly in terms of the issues associated with anti-Semitism; most generally, how to prevent it. Hence the explanation appears to be virtually equivalent to the meaning. What is missed here, and almost entirely ignored in the literature as well, is the question of how the world, including anti-Semitism, must be seen differently after the Holocaust.

In cases where this question of meaning is acknowledged, it is frequently by-passed via appeals to the limits of historiographic competency; as if by referring to imponderable issues of epistemology posed by encounters with mind boggling horrors, one might properly be excused for terminating the work of analysis where it ought to begin. This position has the apparent virtue of maintaining the appearances of scholarly modesty, yet insofar as it denies the imperative to seek expansion of existing boundaries of scholarly effort commensurate with the magnitude of the problematic subject matter, it must be rejected as a retrograde, defensive orientation. In our view, it is precisely when the existing historical and psychosocial imagination becomes most profoundly stymied that the demand for creative analysis and interpretation should be most keenly felt and acted upon.

It also bears emphasis that the meaning problem we are concerned with is not just a matter of philosophical speculation. Existing interpretations of the Holocaust--or explanations masquerading as interpretations--do not provide an adequate social, emotional, or historical ground on which ordinary people may come to grips with it as a human event defining our culture in the same way as nuclear energy plants and Beethoven symphonies define our culture. Nineteenth-century slavery, for example, was understood to be a part of the culture that supported it, and was conceptualized with enough clarity for ordinary persons to see its moral, political, and socioeconomic dimensions without much difficulty. It was not an intimidating horror to be avoided, but a concrete reality to be interrogated and resolved either in terms of the prevailing world view or via the construction of an alternative world view.

The foregoing viewpoints are articulated in the remaining sections of this chapter, which is devoted to: (1) Contemporary approaches to Holocaust interpretation, (2) Marxian and Freudian morality, (3) failures before the Holocaust, and (4) a summary and prospectus.

CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO INTERPRETATION

> What looks . . . like an interest in the nature of the object being studied or the area being explored, may be primarily an effort by the organism to calm itself down and to lower the level of tension, vigilance, and apprehension. The unknown object is now primarily an anxiety producer, and the behavior of examination and probing is first and foremost a detoxification of the object, making it into something that need not be feared (Abraham Maslow).[11]

The literature of Holocaust interpretation may be ordered into four readily identifiable and clearly different (if occasionally overlapping) categories. Briefly, and by reference to the primary value orientations and assumptions each brings to the subject matter, these categories or approaches are: (1) the established liberal-eclectic, (2) the Freudian and neo-Freudian, (3) the Marxian and neo-Marxian, and (4) the metaphysical-religious.

Although these approaches obviously reflect opposing world views based upon very different theoretical-philosophical convictions, it is noteworthy that insofar as substantive Holocaust scholarship is concerned, there is no major disagreement between them over the large-scale historical evidence; they generally accept the same thematic formulation of the problem-to-be-solved (How could it happen? What does it mean that it did?); and they similarly tend to submerge the problem of meaning in the problem of explanation. But the latter point will become clearer as we examine each approach in turn.

1. The Established Liberal-Eclectic Approach

It is difficult to specify the established orientation to Holocaust scholarship and interpretation without falling into tautological semantics. That which is the established, dominant way of doing things is, manifestly, "establishment" or "mainstream." And the character of such scholarly work in Western European and American society is typically liberal and eclectic. Among historians and philosophers of science, T. S. Kuhn's description of "normal science" has become the accepted technical label for the liberal-eclectic and usually positivist-empiricist theories and methods of contemporary science. In Holocaust scholarship, the equivalent of the normal science paradigm is made up of narrative histories and empirical analyses grounded on the same underlying liberal eclectic and positivist rationality underpinning the hard sciences.[12]

These works generally interpret the Holocaust as an aberration, a terribly dark, bizarre event growing out of the irrational Nazi racial ideology. In order to establish meaning, therefore, the task of analysis then becomes one of reconstruction: determining the sociohistorical sequence of what led to what and explaining the peculiar circumstances of Hitler's rise to power as well as the more specific details of the persecution of the Jews, beginning with conventional anti-Semitism and ending in their physical destruction.

This general approach presents the Holocaust as a kind of historical morality play justifying the ideals of Western liberal democracy by showing what can happen when madmen gain power and racism is allowed to prevail. Finer grain historical work is devoted to explaining specific aspects of how the madmen came to power and how they were able to impose their will (via the SS, for example) once they had it. This explanatory effort has been supported and enhanced by the qualitative case-history and theoretical studies of psychiatrists and psychologists concerned with the special psychodynamics of the Nazi leaders, their appeal to the masses, and the makeup of their more devoted followers. At a more general group level, quantitative empirical research by sociologists and social psychologists has provided abstract principles for the explanation of aberrant, destructive behavior. Some of the better known examples here include studies of authoritarianism that have been applied to German national character; studies of conformity and obedience to authority indicating mechanisms whereby ordinary people might behave atrociously; and more recently, Helen Fein's multiple regression model of the Holocaust, wherein the numbers of Jews killed in various parts of Europe serve as the statistical criterion for evaluating the weights assigned to such predictor variables as levels of prewar anti-Semitism and degrees of Nazi control.[13]

All of the foregoing historical and psychological categories of work demonstrate the established, conventional orientation towards the problem of interpretation, namely, that the meaning of the Holocaust must be sought via explanations of how it came to pass. And this tendency to equate meaning with explanation is frequently confirmed by statements to the effect that by developing detailed explanations, we will have the means of avoiding such terrible horrors in the future. Implied, if not stated, is the idea of the Holocaust as an aberration that can be prevented from ever happening again if enough knowledge can be gained to explain how it happened in the first place. The major thrust of this interpretation is to minimize the significance of the Holocaust. In contemporary textbooks, for example, it does not receive close attention but is subsumed under the rubric of German mistreatment of conquered populations. There is little room here, quite obviously, for considering what it may mean to us now as a factual event in the history of our civilization. Above all, there is no hint of any reason why we should now feel secure with explanatory interpretations of the Holocaust provided in accord with the same intellectual paradigms which, earlier on, failed to perceive its onset.

2. The Freudian and neo-Freudian Approach

The essential basis for Freudian and other psychiatric interpretations of the Holocaust is its blatant irrationality and unspeakable cruelty. It is virtually a truism that wherever gratuitously intense, "irrational" human destructiveness has appeared in the modern world since Freud, his theory has invariable served as the main point of departure, if not the entire structure, for rational psychosocial interpretation. Freud himself set the pattern for this in his famous essays "Why War?" and "Reflections on War and Death."

The Freudian formula, which may be applied to irrational violence across the board from individuals to groups, masses and nations, holds that the more senseless the violence, the more obviously it must be rooted in some form of instinct repression of which the person, mass, or state is not consciously aware. Such repression creates a burden of tension (anxiety, hostility), which eventually must be released (catharsis) either by turning it inward (self-destruction, psychoses and neuroses) or outward via creative redirection (sublimiation), or destructive attack upon a convenient target (scapegoat).

At both the individual and sociocultural levels, the specific dynamics of experience (personal, historical) leading to the conditions for violence will vary a great deal and be concealed by all sorts of socially approved and/or institutionalized defense mechanisms. Interpretation of violence, therefore, requires the informed, discerning eye of a theorist who can penetrate to its hidden sources.

Where sociocultural and historical trends underlying the Holocaust are concerned, such writers as Erich Fromm and Wilhelm Reich have maintained that its sources lie, respectively, in the disruptions of communal life produced by the industrial revolution and the suppression of sexuality. Other analysts, such as Bruno Bettelheim and Elie Cohen, who observed extraordinary behaviors among prisoners and guards in the concentration and death camps, have suggested that patterns of apparent violence and passivity may be traced to the breakdown of inhibiting superego- and ego-protective psychosocial mechanisms. And the Nazi leadership, mainly Hitler, but a number of high and medium rank leaders as well, has been studied intensively via the method of psychobiography. Here too, one may choose from among different interpretations, but the general trend fits the basic model noted earlier, insofar as personal repression and politicized forms of catharsis emerge as primary sources of seemingly inexplicable motives.

The many significant insights provided by Freudian and neo-Freudian works on Holocaust problems are well known enough to be stipulated without elaboration. It is not so obvious, however, that this approach is perfectly complementary to the established historical and social science aberration interpretation. In this connection, it is clear that an implicit, mutually supportive division of labor prevails among conventional, established forms of Holocaust scholarship. Historians and others explain the aberrant circumstances opening the way for Nazi power, while psychiatrists and psychoanalysts explain the aberrant motives among the Nazis.

Taken together, and viewed in a larger perspective, these two approaches have obviously dominated Holocaust research, and their explanatory theories have generally been accepted as the only sensible interpretation.

3. The Marxian Approach

There are so many different forms and facets to Marx's own writings, let alone those of his followers, imitators, and interpreters, that no brief summary can claim to present a comprehensive review of how Marxists (what kind? where? when?) approach any important event.

Concerning the Holocaust, however, the main themes of virtually all seriously committed Marxian discussions are not so difficult to identify because: (1) The destruction of the Jews per se has not been seen as a very important topic for analysis; it is usually subsumed and treated as part of all the other ruthless destruction caused by the Nazis. (2) The Holocaust is typically portrayed as the final outcome of European anti-Semitism for which a sound, well-established, socioeconomic explanation was produced by Marx himself. And (3) Marxist scholars have avoided direct engagement with the Holocaust not only because anti-Semitism can be a "sensitive" political issue in the Soviet Union and many Third World nations, but also because it is difficult to find explanations for extraordinary irrational violence in a very rational, economically-based social philosophy. Consequently, although the following discussion is relatively brief, it includes most if not all of the main themes of Marxian Holocaust interpretation.

In Marx's own theory of anti-Semitism, the Jews were seen as being both the historical progenitors of capitalism and also among the chief victims of the industrial class society it produced. More specifically and apart from its origins in the early history of Christianity, Marx saw anti-Semitism nurtured and encouraged by the ruling class, especially during times of crises, because it served as a means of diverting the attention of the masses away from recognition of their true condition, and/or, away from awareness of the fact that the policies of the ruling class were responsible for the crisis. In this sense, anti-Semitism is a preeminent form of false consciousness. In the modern era, moreover, anti-Semitism has a clear economic function: By providing the Jews as a ready-made target for popular discontent, it enhances the ability of the ruling class (monopoly capitalism) to exploit its workers. The theory of anti-Semitism, therefore, is directly linked to the general economic theory of capitalism.

Applied to the Holocaust, such Marxian theory offers useful guidelines for analysis of how the Nazis were able to exploit anti-Semitism during their drive for power in the Weimar Republic. Once their control was established, however, and the Jews were reduced to second class legal status via the Nuremburg laws (1935) and the confiscatory forced emigration program, it would appear that Marx's theory of anti-Semitism was more or less fulfilled, although it is arguable that subsequent utilization of Jews for slave labor is also relevant.

Why then kill Jews in wholesale lots when they could otherwise have been exploited economically, if only by working them to death? Marxian theory has no real answer to this question because it does not conceptualize situations in which a genetically based ideology of human destruction can take prolonged, systematic priority over the achievement of economic benefits.

Some Marxian theorists maintain that economic motives may be found for the mass killings insofar as they involved not only slave labor but also the collection from dead victims of their hair, clothing, gold tooth fillings, and other valuables. Yet such views do not stand up to close scrutiny; even the SS economics bureau objected to the mass killings as being inefficient and disruptive of important war production activities.

Other Marxian writers have argued that the socioeconomic benefits of Nazi anti-Semitism initially set the stage for the Holocaust, but then become secondary to the political significance of Hitler's obsessive desire to eliminate the Jews. Thus, apart from his personal hatreds, another reason for the Holocaust was his realization that by killing so many people "for nothing," the remaining subject peoples including the Germans, would be so intimidated as to become willing servants to his policies. This ignores the fact that the subject peoples were already intimidated by methods other than the "final solution." Moreover, like so many other Marxian arguments—that the German capitalist ruling class wanted the Jews got out of the way, or that this same class had to allow Hitler to kill the Jews as a reward for his anti-communist services in their behalf--this is quite strained and lacks even surface plausibility as well as any substantive support.

It is noteworthy, finally, that an important critique of Marxian efforts to apply the economic theory of anti-Semitism to the Holocaust has been developed by Konrad Kwiet.[14] After reviewing the work of East German (DDR) scholars, he observed that of all the Nazi leadership, it was Hjalmar Schacht who best represented the interests of German capitalism, yet it was Schacht who resigned as finance minister in 1937 in protest against the excesses of pre-Holocaust Nazi anti-Semitism.

4. The Metaphysical-Religious Approach

The range of perspectives here is represented in exemplary fashion by the salient works of Emil Fackenheim, Elie Wiesel, and Richard Rubenstein. These authors have all engaged the problems of explanation and meaning in explicit metaphysical terms, inclusive of, but extending well beyond the relatively commonplace issues of politico-religious theology. The latter have received attention from ecumenical Christian philosophers such as Franklin Littel but since their discussions have generally involved Christian responsibility for anti-Semitism, and whether or not Jews should still be held responsible for the death of Jesus and so forth, we will not be concerned with them here.

The basic premise of Fackenheim's extensive work is his assertion that the Holocaust is a form of Jewish "sacred history"; an epoch-making event comparable with the destruction of the Temple by the Romans or the emancipation of Europe's Jews in the eighteenth century. He explains the Holocaust as a culmination of centuries of anti-Semitism, a more or less inevitable catastrophe of Christian, not Jewish, civilization. In this connection, he differs sharply from some traditional Jewish theologians who see the mass destruction plainly as a punishment from God visited on the Jews for their disobedience; their assimilationist tendencies under the Enlightenment, and/or their subsequent Zionist politics. Fackenheim argues that the destruction was too indiscriminate and cataclysmic to fit the theology of punitive judgment.

By the same token, he also rejects secularist views of the Holocaust as an aberration or accident of history, since the God of history would not permit such errors. Virtually by a process of elimination, then, Fackenheim comes to interpret Auschwitz as a manifestation of the will of God, a commandment, in fact, for Jews to hold fast to Judaism even in the face of the most terrible forces seeking to crush it.

Contradictory as it may seem to secular reason, and here Fackenheim appeals to Hegelian dialectics for help against lesser logic systems, the Holocaust commandment is put forward as a revelation insisting upon Jewish survival and rebirth, not death. The birth and persistence of the State of Israel is at least in part taken to be a realization of this commandment. But he further insists that all Jews who retain their Jewish identity after the Holocaust when every claim to rationality would seem to demand its denial, whether or not they live in Israel or practice their religion, are in this way bearing witness against Hitler and thus against the corruption of Western civilization that allowed him to flourish.

The general explanation and meaning of the Holocaust, therefore, comes down to a form of dialogue between the disaster wrought by secular Christianity and the manifest mission of the Jews to testify against it by virtue of their continued existence. For Fackenheim, Auschwitz represents an epochal breakpoint in Jewish history yet remains metaphysically coterminous with the core theological history of the Jews.

Richard Rubenstein takes a completely opposite position. Far from being conceivable as a new, tragically heroic episode in the on-going covenant between God and his chosen people, Rubenstein sees the Holocaust as the end of the covenant. The historical Jewish God finished as another victim of Auschwitz. Having been nearly obliterated by unrestrained secular power operating in the service of traditional anti-Semitism allied with scientifically rationalized racism, Jews now have no other choice except to abandon their God-Ideal and to seek to realize their values as unaided humans through construction of their own community. And this cannot be accomplished if they continue in their traditional diasporic indifferences to secular power.

Theologically and symbolically, therefore, the meaning of the Holocaust is the death of God. It is especially noteworthy, however, that Rubenstein argues this position not from the outside, as a rationalist skeptic, but from the inside, working within the fundamental assumptions of traditional Jewish faith. Thus, if the historical Jewish God is so cruel as to ordain a Holocaust or so impotent as to be unable to prevent it, that God must in either case be rejected; the contract must be abrogated.

Being neither a philosopher nor a theologian per se, the authority of Elie Wiesel's writings on the metaphysical significance of the Holocaust derives from the dedication of his art to his life experience, first as prisoner and later as survivor of Auschwitz. Unlike most survivors who have understandably made strenuous efforts to distance themselves from the Holocaust, Wiesel had devoted himself to staying in close touch with it and has made it the central focus of a remarkable body of literature.

Apart from its literary value, however, this work demands consideration in the present context because it epitomizes the endless dialogue over meaning between the living and dead victims, as well as their living or dead ideas of God. In many respects that can hardly be enumerated, Wiesel's work has been to dramatize the experiential implications of the conflict between those who, in one way or another, either take the position of Fackenheim or of Rubenstein or else waver between them. The extraordinary tension of his work, therefore, follows from Wiesel's struggle with the unresolvable paradox: One cannot, after Auschwitz, accept that there is any immanent basis for morality either in God or humanity; yet there is no way to bear life without the presence of something in which to believe.

Caught in this paradox, the protagonists of Wiesel's fiction may be seen as enacting a pilgrim's progress through all the familiar scenarios of desperation--withdrawn apathy, warfare, murder, suicide, madness--only to find them ultimately false and useless.

In the end, the prototypical survivor makes a conditional peace with himself through realization that the paradox of morality is not a problem to be solved but to be lived with as a condition of human life. Confronted with this condition, it is the task of each individual to work out a pathway from despair to affirmation. Wiesel thus moves toward an existential posture wherein doubts and dialogues concerning the Holocaust remain painfully vivid, yet become livable when both the severe limits and redeeming possibilities of human thought and action are finally grasped.

The similarities and conflicts between the three positions outlined above should be readily apparent. In all of them, of course, arguments with and about God outweigh every other consideration. This hermeneutical orientation is very significant from our point of view, because unlike the other approaches described, here one may see an immediate, almost axiomatic rejection of pre-Holocaust civilization so far as important values and beliefs are concerned. Consequently, distinctions between explanation and meaning are all but wiped out, and the salient issue becomes salvation; either for Jews-in-general or for their archetype in the person of the survivor.

The four general approaches to Holocaust interpretation provide in many ways a brief tour of the salient forms of culture analysis presently practiced in Western civilization. That is, regardless of whether the subject matter were something other than the Holocaust, such as art, science, or male-female relationships, one would still find that the general routes toward interpretation, the approaches or forms of social thought we have called liberal-eclectic, Freudian, Marxian, and metaphysical, remain quite the same because they are really all there is. Moreover, although the difficulties and limitations noted within each of these approaches when they are applied to the Holocaust might easily show up in connection with other subject matter, the unequivocal intensity of what is at stake here cuts to the bone of every form of interpretation.

When the majority of established scholars, for example, speak of the Holocaust as an extraordinary aberration, and provide detailed accounts of how this aberration occurred, to the astonishment of all concerned except for the handful of its central planners, does this not mean, in effect, that even "advanced" human societies can be so wildly unreliable that none of their pretentions to "civilized" values can be taken for granted? And since the very forms of throught and analysis employed to construct the aberration interpretation are themselves intimately rooted in and reflective of the civilized values and beliefs of the Enlightenment now revealed to be untrustworthy (actually falsified by evidence that they fail to prevent unspeakable destruction), does this not discredit the basis for the interpretation? In other words, if one takes the aberration theme seriously enough to pursue its implications, it ultimately turns back upon itself, calling into question the rationality it is based upon.

At the metaphysical-religious end of the interpretation spectrum, a similar type of paradox also exists and causes very serious problems, but of a different sort from those we have identified for conventional scholars. Those who believe in a divine power called "god" face a dilemma. If an event of such terrible magnitude as the Holocaust could occur by chance, as an aberration, then can there be any divine power worthy of the name? And if it was not a random event but actually ordained by a divine will or power, then how can one accept such a power to be an object of belief or worship?

Unresolvable, this dilemma imposes itself as a huge, intimidating burden upon all Jewish theology and metaphysics. Like Sisyphus with his heavy stone, Jewish moral philosophers seem condemned to be forever pushing this intolerable weight up the infinite mountainside of existential meaning. Worse yet, those few who honorably and knowingly acknowledge this burden (there are many who do not) and struggle to grapple it forward, are further condemned to struggle with each other as well. Does the Holocaust affirm the presence and will of God for Jews to reestablish their religion in its traditional homeland (Fackenheim)? Or does it terminate the historical Jewish God ideal (Rubenstein), leaving Jews only with the desperate necessity to maintain themselves in a garrison state? Or does it, finally, only convey massively irrefutable evidence of the existential emptiness within which Jews either may or may not choose, by their own act of will, to affirm a God ideal (Wiesel)?

Compared with the consensus prevailing among most established secular scholars, who seem comfortably at ease with the aberration interpretation, the disputes and contradictions among the metaphysical writers appear passionately arbitrary and perhaps childishly irrational. But if our analysis to this point is correct, then the bitter epistemological struggles characteristic of the metaphysical approach may ultimately be judged as the more appropriate line of interpretation because it at least keeps alive the fires of critical controversy and painful confrontation. The liberal secular approach, by contrast, goes on with explanatory business-as-usual, almost as if nothing had happened.

The two remaining approaches to Holocaust interpretation, via Freudian and Marxian theory, have each, to a certain extent, been assimilated to the established aberration theme of secular scholarship. As we have seen, Freudian works explain the unusual motives of the Nazi leadership in terms of psychopathology (individual aberration), whereas Marxian analyses of Nazi policies offer explanations in terms of the economic benefits of anti-Semitism (a collective false consciousness). Liberal eclectic scholarship has no special difficulty joining these ideas together and adding various empirical findings to demonstrate how they combined in Germany to yield the preconditions for an aberration as large as the Holocaust.

Freudian and Marxian thought can only be pasted together in this fashion, however, so long as the profound antagonisms between them are put aside in favor of their technical explanatory points of convergence. Thus, for example, Marx's structural-economic theory of anti-Semitism appears to blend easily into Freud's relevant psychodynamic formulations of projection and scapegoating. Yet the two systems are not simply theories of social behavior susceptible to reconciliation at the hands of clever scholars; they are moral world views based on radically opposed fundamental assumptions. The antithesis here is so intense that each conceives the other to be symptomatic of the illnesses it aims to correct! (To the Marxist, Freudian theory and practice is a bourgeois self-indulgence diverting attention away from the real material sources of human suffering; to the Freudian, Marxist theory and practice is a complex defensive rationalization and compensation for failures of psychosexual development.)

Furthermore, it remains an unresolved Marxian mystery how the conventional historical-economic forces behind anti-Semitism could have gone amok to produce the Holocaust; and it remains similarly a Freudian mystery how persons so dominated by pathological symptoms as Hitler and the other leading Nazis could have come to control and preside over the reorganization of a complex nation state. But there are problems with both systems of thought that must be addressed in depth because they suggest that the Marxian and Freudian failures vis-à-vis the Holocaust are rooted in their conceptualizations of morality.

MARXIAN AND FREUDIAN MORALITY

In both Marxian and Freudian thought, morality as such is generally treated as an epiphenomenon; an artifact of the sociocultural framework rather than a defining quality of the human condition. There is no golden rule nor any other absolute standard prohibiting any of the various forms of human destructiveness to be found in either the Marxian or Freudian canons. Instead, both relegate traditional ideas of right and wrong to the status of either primitive, religious superstition, and/or evolving social norms serving to maintain existing power structures: of the ruling class (for Marx), or the patriarchal father (for Freud). The general thrust of both systems, therefore, is to eliminate or trivialize all conventional notions of moral responsibility by revealing their sources in the oppressive economic and psychosocial structures of society.

This is not to say that the Marxian and Freudian systems have no moral dimension. But their moral dimension is indirect; derivative from their fundamental commitments to human liberation from economic and psychosocial forms of oppression. The basic analysis of morality presented in both systems emphasized that unless special circumstances intervene, the ideas of right and wrong prevailing in society and within individuals will remain beyond the reach of deliberate, self-conscious control. Groups and individuals will remain dominated by the morality associated with their economic and psychosocial situation, unless they can reach a new level of self-awareness via revolutionary activity or psychoanalysis. Yet even in these exceptional situations, the liberty that may be experienced contains no special ethic except group- and self-realization. To be liberated in these (Marxian or Freudian) terms, therefore, is to be freed from any absolute standards of right and wrong.

Such freedom can also carry with it an imperative to violate the prior socially inculcated moral restraints against destructive aggression, especially insofar as those restraints may now be perceived as instrumental to the prior state of oppression. According to the Marxian system, destructive violence may in fact be required in aid of the revolution; and according to some branches of Freudian theory, personal violence (acting out) may be construed as therapeutic catharsis in aid of ego development. In both systems, it appears that normative morality is a disguised instrument of oppression that may be transcended; but once a liberating transcendence is attained, morality becomes quite problematic, something to be decided upon depending on circumstances. It is precisely at this point, however, that the locus of moral thought becomes external to the group or the individual, since determinations of right or wrong can only be made according to objective interpretations of circumstances.

These interpretations, of course, are attained by following the guidelines of theory; either Marxian or Freudian as the case may be. This is a major epistemological move away from the traditions of religious metaphysics and liberal pragmatics. The end result, manifestly, is that right and wrong are no longer matters of internal conviction or reflexivity, but are, instead, remote constructions of circumstances mediated by theory. Once this epistemological quality of Marxian and Freudian thought is understood, it becomes painfully apparent that, at the level of daily moral praxis, they cannot provide any formal stipulations defining right and wrong behavior.

The many formal similarities between Marxian and Freudian conceptions of morality may seem to contradict the prior critique of eclectic scholarship by ignoring the antithesis between them. Yet this antithesis can only be fully appreciated once the points of formal similarity have been acknowledged, for it is in their mechanisms and procedures of moral interpretation--their "rules of the game"--that Marxian and Freudian thought stand in total opposition to one another. In a brief, necessarily oversimplified way, it may be said that the moral touchstone of Marxism is economics; other things being equal, any activity enhancing the extent to which workers can own and control their own productive labor, thereby avoiding alienation, will be liberating and thus morally good. The touchstone of Freudian morality is effective psychosexual development; other things being equal, activities enhancing the individual's achievement of the psychosexual stage of genitality will be liberating and thus morally good.

The antithesis here hardly requires elaboration, except to specify that when they are applied at the level of common praxis, the chief point of conflict between the two systems lies in their radically different assumptions about the sources of human motivation. Is it reducible to a matter of economics or psychosexual needs and instincts? Should external material circumstances be seen as the generative source of inner psychosexual development or vice versa? There is no adequate answer to such questions, although compromise solutions have been attempted by stepping outside of both systems. This was tried by critical theorists Adorno, Marcuse, and others, but it leads inevitably to another dilemma: If liberal thought is rejected as being false in accord with Marxian and Freudian analyses, and if the global exclusivity claimed by the Marxian and Freudian systems are both rejected in order to argue that both may be correct when they are considered within some higher level system that neither one will accept, then what sort of thought system has one arrived at? What are the "rules of the game" in this supra-Marxist-Freudian system that purports to embrace both of them? The critical theorists could not answer this question, except by attempting to convert the general strategy of relentless Marxian-Freudian criticism into a philosophical system. This was Adorno's aim in his final and most obscure work, Negative Dialectics. By all accounts, including those of the most devoted admirers of critical theory, it does not succeed in constituting a new system.

FAILURES BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

It is not clear whether the palpable failures of Marxian and Freudian thought in the face of the Holocaust should be conceived as demonstrating that the two systems are altogether false in their claims toward general interpretations of society or that they are simply much more limited in their applicability to human affairs than their progenitors could possibly imagine. After all, neither Marx nor Freud nor any of their chief exponents could think that anything like the Holocaust might ever occur at the center of European civilization. It is clear, however, that neither Marxian nor Freudian views of human motivation are adequate to interpret the behavior of the victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust.

More specifically, when examining such "perpetrator" issues as the evolution of the final-solution policy, the functioning of the SS organization which carried it out, or the behavior of individual SS commanders of death camps, there do not appear to be any important problems that can be resolved in accord with economic motives. If anything, the theory of motivation based on dialectical materialism suggests that a policy of the magnitude, ferocity, and counterproductivity of the final solution would never be adopted by rational men and could never be implemented effectively by irrational men.

On the other hand, although Freudian psychosexual theory suggests that atrocious horrors may be committed by certain individuals (working out bizarre psychodynamics via ego defensive acts of aggression) and sometimes groups; namely, the Jim Jones cult murders and mass suicides, it also suggests that such horrors will be limited and relatively rare insofar as they depart from normative social values. If anything, psychosexual analyses of individual and group behavior processes implies that the conduct of mass killing, torture, and brutalization of defenseless men, women, and children as a matter of daily routine should be a social-emotional impossibility. There were in fact some cases of SS men, and many more among their victims, who did commit suicide or allow themselves to die quickly rather than go on with life under such circumstances; had more of them done so, Freudian theory would have a stronger claim to fit the events.

In general, it may be acknowledged that such concepts as Marx's notion of alienation and Freud's notion of compartmentalization, projection, and other defense mechanisms can be usefully employed to help explain how ordinary men may adapt themselves to extraordinary atrocities, but even in the hands of the most adept scholars, these concepts merely offer tentative grounds for speculative discussions beyond the scope of their parent theories.

It is noteworthy, in this context, that Freudian theorists, some of whom were themselves prisoners in death camps and concentration camps, have done much more work on Holocaust problems than Marxian theorists. Almost without exception, these writers (for example, Bettelheim, Cohen, Fromm, Frankel, Lifton, E. A. Rappaport) try to show how the Holocaust experience requires basic modifications of important Freudian assumptions, as well as different forms of process interpretation. So far as SS behavior is concerned, one of the major points of contention has been the question or moral values: Were the SS men with criminal superegos as some theorists claimed? Were they banal, self-seeking mediocrities? Or were they instead, so very high in the qualities called authoritarianism that their morality was superceded and subordinated to their need for obedience to a charismatic leader? Other questions concerning the behavior of both victims and survivors of the camps have generated still more controversy, particularly when they involve matters of apparent victim passivity and reasons why some prisoners seemed better able to survive than others. The fact that vast uncertainty and conflict remains about such matters, even among the most credible and articulate of Freudians who have had nearly forty years to sort out the evidence, is in itself very clear evidence that the theory is inadequate to interpret the events.

This conclusion is also supported by A. E. Rappaport's little known but very significant professional analysis of how Freudian theory fails before the traumatic experiences of Holocaust survivors.[15] As both a survivor and a psychoanalyst consulted by other survivors, Rappaport brought unique credentials to his scrutiny of theory. His conclusions that (a) it was wrong to apply the concept "traumatic neurosis" to the behavior problems of survivors, and (b) that a traumatized ego--contrary to the teaching of Freudian theory--could result from atrocious experiences in the absence of any predisposing childhood conflict or trauma, are developed in a way that gives a very practical and moving sense of the difficulties created by the fact that Freudian theory does not fit Holocaust trauma and, consequently, cannot offer much help to its survivor clients.

SUMMARY AND PROSPECTUS

Our main arguments have been that: (1) The various modes of thought applied to the task of Holocaust interpretation have all been inadequate because they do not acknowledge the extent to which their epistemological assumptions, theoretical structures, and methodologies have been compromised or falsified by the fact that the Holocaust happened. (2) The internal contradictions and confusion between explanation and meaning characterizing the eclectic empiricist and metaphysical approaches are evident. (3) The Marxian and Freudian approaches to the Holocaust fail for two reasons that have not been appreciated. As moral world views, the two systems share with liberal empiricism the idea that morality may be conceptualized objectively and thus enable rational evaluations to be made of right and wrong. By shifting the locus of morality to material and psychosexual circumstances, however, the end result is only a new form of complex subjectivity offering no assurances against tendencies toward mass destruction. Furthermore, insofar as the two systems provide theories of motivation, they both turn out to be largely irrelevant to the problematic behaviors of Holocaust victims, perpetrators, and survivors. In none of these groups, does one find significant evidence suggesting that either material gain/loss or psychosexual gratification/frustration was anything more than a fringe motive for the majority.

Based on the foregoing considerations, our general thesis is that all or most of the important failures of thought before the Holocaust follow from a more basic and pervasive failure to recognize that the Holocaust has altered the boundaries of human possibilities: Because of the Holocaust, we must recognize _that reality has been changed_. It now includes as actual happenings and plausible likelihoods, events that were heretofore simply not thought of, or else thought of but dismissed as bizarre fantasy. By relying upon philosophical assumptions, values, theories, and methods rooted in pre-Holocaust visions of reality and possibility, scholars have consistently and systematically either missed or misconstrued important problematic aspects of the Holocaust.

What occurs at the level of psychosocial theory seems directly expressive of Feyerabend's formal critique of science in general, namely, that insofar as new evidence is obtained, it will be assimilated into the preexisting expert consensus even if this requires a radical deformation of the evidence in order to maintain the credibility of the consensus. Feyerabend argues further that whatever evidence cannot be fit into the preexisting consensus will be ignored or devalued as subjectively biased, mystical, or otherwise flawed.[16]

It is noteworthy, moreover, that within their own specific histories both Marxian and Freudian thought contain very dramatic instances of alternative viewpoints and critiques that were directed at the same general points of theoretical significance that we have identified in connection with the Holocaust. Within the Marxian tradition, the views of theorists such as Sorel, who emphasized the influence of myth over human behavior, and of Bakunin, who argued for the reflexive independence of small groups as against the intrinsically oppressive hierarchical organization of masses, both exemplify a concern with themes that were anathema to Marx but now appear very cogent in relation to the Holocaust and subsequent events of this century. (Revival of interest in anarchist theory among contemporary intellectuals is no accident.)

In the Freudian tradition, the major internal critiques came from Jung and Reich. Jung's ideas about racial archetypes, especially his Nietzchean ambivalence about the Germanic "blonde beast" were dismissed by Freud as evidence of his latent anti-Semitism; and Reich's work on the psychosexual basis of Nazism as a mass movement was also rejected. Both of these renegade Freudians were able to perceive some of the darker aspects of European culture in ways that Freud's commitment to an outmoded scientific rationality apparently prevented.

Mainly judged to be failures in their own time, these revisionist currents within the Marxian and Freudian traditions have in one form or another made steady gains ever since the Holocaust. When taken together with other dissident currents of modern thought, such as the critical theory of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, and the existentialism of Sartre and Heidegger, there begins to be visible among the many overlaps and common predispositions between them a loosely linked body of thought--full of contradictions, obscurities, and apparent dead ends, to be sure, that is strikingly relevant to the Holocaust experience. It is in these philosophical, psychosocial, and historical domains of the cranky, quirky critics of all that is held dear by the modern democratic or authoritarian industrial state, that the latent forms for an adequate post-Holocaust social epistemology may be perceived.

Without claiming any special priority or making any pretense toward a fulfilled, programmatic vision, it is possible to suggest at least three key premises for such an epistemology. If, as we have tried to show, the facticity of the Holocaust defies interpretation via the main streams of pre-Holocaust social thought, it is because the events of the Holocaust reveal their central conceptual structures to be either false or inadequate. First among these conceptual structures is the Enlightenment ideal of material and moral progress via science and technology. It is now clear, however, that these enterprises are ruthlessly amoral and that their potential for human progress, (liberation from fear, want, and so forth) is matched or exceeded by their potential for human destruction—whether in the form of weapons, death camps, or disease-causing chemicals in the natural environment. Consequently, science and technology are not to be trusted; not to be taken at their face value, for they lead as easily to Auschwitz as to Disney World.

Furthermore, science and technology are not neutral instrumentalities of human will, as is so often claimed by those with the highest stakes in maintaining their present-day hegemony. On the contrary, the record of the twentieth century in general and the Holocaust in particular shows that the Promethean qualities of instrumental power conferred by science/technology have functioned in fact as irresistible seducers toward fundamentally antihuman thought and antihuman social policies. It is a familiar and credible argument, in this connection, that every advance of science/technology has been accompanied by a further decline in the ontological status of human beings from subjects to objects.

A second and closely related conceptual structure supporting pre-Holocaust epistemology is the Cartesian splitting of the psyche leading to the normative view of rationality. The Cartesian split is more and more generally recognized to be the origin of the modern domination of abstract, analytical thought over reflexive human feelings. A post-Holocaust epistemology cannot accept such a split. In fact, from the standpoint of the Holocaust, it seems obvious that we must stand Descartes on his head and declare: I am, therefore I think, feel, and so on.

The thrust of this proposition is not to eliminate any or all forms of rationality, but to restore the balance between abstraction and reflexivity. This requires alteration of the subject-object relationship, both in terms of the presumed differences between subjectivity and objectivity, on the one hand, and on the other, of the now-conventional thought models allowing subjects to be converted into objects.

Finally, a third and crucially important general premise of post-Holocaust epistemology must be recognition that the chief social instrument of human suffering in the twentieth century--epitomized in the Holocaust--has been the modern state. Whatever else it may be or might have been, the bureaucratic, hierarchical, rationalized structure of the modern industrial state is a social invention that has evolved in this century into an historically unparalleled engine of efficient human destruction. It is the primary empirical means and constitutes the technical-methodological framework whereby the sundry forces within society can be coordinated to function against the immanent interests of sensate humanity. As Jules Henry suggested in the title of his psychosocial analysis of American society, we may see "Culture Against Man" revealed not only in warfare, but also in the daily, prosiac activities of the state. Furthermore, as we have argued elsewhere in detail, the failures of law, religion, and science revealed in the Holocaust are intimately associated with the fact that these three pillars of Western civilization have all come under control of the modern state, beyind which there is no higher authority today anymore than in Europe circa 1939-45.

It should be emphasized again, by way of conclusion, that once interpretations of the Holocaust as a species of insane anti-Semitism and/or historical aberration are rejected for the reasons we have discussed, then it can only be perceived as on acute manifestation of the modern transformation of European civilization. Embodying many of the antihuman trends already glimpsed and occasionally prophesized by some pre-Holocaust thinkers who tried to warn against the terrible ontological consequences they saw latent in the growing dominance, above all, of science/technology, rationality, and the structure of the modern state, the Holocaust forces deep critical reconsideration of the epistemological underpinnings of the European Enlightenment. In our view, the Holocaust is nothing less than a horrible monument to the confusion and failure of the modes of thought that have dominated twentiety-century Western civilization. Nazism jioned together the mythic, aggressively destructive elements of human culture with those of nationality, technology, and bureaucratic social control. We see this symbolized today when terrible new weapons systems are named after Greek or Hindu Gods. Unself-conscious efforts to interpret the Holocaust in accord with such modes of thought cannot succeed; if post-Holocaust epistemology does not yet exist, then it is necessary for us to begin to invent it. From this standpoint, Holocaust interpretation can only be accepted as valid insofar as it becomes the means of revealing the deep structural thought systems that made it possible and then exploring routes toward their alteration, guided by emerging new visions of the ideal of a unitary and indivisible humanity.

NOTES

[1] George Kren and Leon Rappoport, The Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behavior (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980), p. 143.

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[3] Henry L. Feingold, "Who Shall Bear Guilt for the Holocaust: The Human Dilemma." American Jewish History 68, no. 3 (1979), pp. 261-82, quotation p. 281.

[4] Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermisz, eds., The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow (New York: Stein and Day, 1979). See p. 21 for editors discussion of the point in question.

[5] Helen Fein, Accounting for Genocide (New York: The Free Press, 1979).

[6] Leon Poliakov, interview in Le Nouvel Observateur, Paris (November 24, 1980), pp. 56-62.

[7] Gunnar Boehnert studied the personnel records of the SS officer corps; Tom Segev studied former concentration camp commanders. Both projects (unpublished) are mentioned in detail in G. Kren and L. Rappoport, The Holocaust and the Crisis chapter 4, "The Unique Institution."

[8] Vahakn N. Dadrian, "A Theoretical Model of Genocide," Sociologica Internationalis 14 (1976), pp. 99-126. A sophisticated discussion of the ahistorical approach to genocide is given by Irving Horowitz, Genocide: State Power and Mass Murder (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1976).

[9] Yehuda Bauer, The Holocaust in Historical Perspective (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), pp. 30-36.

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[11] Abraham Maslow, The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 20.

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[13] Fein, Accounting, pp. 350-51.

[14] Konrad Kwiet, "Historians of the German Democratic Republic on Anti-Semitism and Persecution," Yearbook XXI, Leo Baeck Institute (1976), pp. 173-98; an exceptionally cogent critical review of major themes of GDR Holocaust scholarship from 1948 through 1973. A relevant case study of controversies among Polish scholars circa 1973-77 is given by Tadeusz Szafar, "'Endecized' Marxism: Polish Communist Historians on Recent Polish Jewish History," Soviet Jewish Affairs, London, Vol. 8, 1, (1978), pp. 57-71.

[15] Ernest A. Rappaport, "Beyond Traumatic Neurosis: A Psychoanalytic Study of Late Reactions to the Concentration Camp Trauma," The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, vol. 49, part 4 (1968), pp. 719-31.

[16] Paul Feyerabend, Against Method: Outline of an Anarchist Theory of Knowledge (London, NLB, 1975).

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Epilogue

HARVEY C. GREISMAN

Because scientists look for continuities to explain things, and because it is widely assumed that as time passes it is easier to make dispassionate judgments about historical events, the job of explaining the Holocaust becomes harder with each passing year. Instead of clearing up, the contradictions just multiply as the scholar must reconcile one of the most brutal mass exterminations in human history with the artistic and scientific achievements of the West's most literate nation. It is to the credit of the editors of this volume and to its contributors, that they do not attempt grandiose metahistorical theories. The essays in this book treat discrete sections of the topic in modest portions and are informative without being overly technical. In the best spirit of social science research, these essays will help to pull together the many pieces of the puzzle so that someday one can come to understand why the years 1933-1945 happened the way they did.

Although explanation of the Holocaust by some grand sweep of Hegelian logic would be Quixotic to say the least, the data-rich articles in this book should be seen against a backdrop of human behavior, needs, and drives. One of the salient background elements of the Holocaust is tied to the question of its uniqueness. Was this the first such event of its kind, and if it was not, what is it about the Holocaust that makes us cringe forty years after the event?

Long before the Roman senate passed its famous resolution, "Delende Est Carthago!" the desire of one people to totally obliterate another was an established part of human behavior. Subjugation and wholesale enslavement are closely related to warfare throughout ancient history, and fossil evidence indicates that the cruder ancestors of modern human beings behaved similarly. Complete annihilation of a tribe or the inhabitants of a city or region also occupied many places in written history, myth, and the grey world that lies between them. Motivated by revenge or the more complex desire to ensure sameness and uniformity, attempts to eradicate whole peoples crop up from time to time. The Basques may represent the final remnant of the most enormous holocaust of prehistory, while, on somewhat less speculative ground, the Louisiana Acadians are all that remain of a community transported two thousand miles southward to remove the danger they posed as an eighteenth-century "security risk."

The British engineered the diaspora of the Acadians, we well as a slaughter of Scottish clans which, after the disaster at Culloden, assumed genocidal proportions. While considering the long list of England's assaults on ethnic minorities, the potato famines of the 1840s probably come as close to a holocaust as the nineteenth-century imagination would permit. As history moves away from the vendetta mentality of the localized traditional world and into the cost-benefit sentiment of raison d'état, it takes on the characteristics of the industrial system. The question as to whether papal authorities would have used gas chambers and cremation mills to obliterate the Hussites, Albigensians, and Taborites if they had them handy may be intriguing, but it gets us nowhere. The point is that the machinery and organization required for the kind of holocaust that was leveled against the Jews in this century was simply unavailable in the past. It is only with the European imperium over Africa that one sees the first glimmer of the holocaust mentality wedded to the industrial model. Joseph Conrad's stygian imagery in Heart of Darkness really predicted more of the future than Jules Verne or H. G. Wells: The Western imagination grasped the fact that the assembly line could be made to produce automobiles, to dismember cattle, and to eliminate great numbers of human beings.

Because of twentieth-century events, the term "holocaust" has come to be applied strictly to the extermination of European Jews during the Third Reich. In effect, the twentieth century has witnessed any number of holocausts in which ethnic, religious, or racial groups have been systematically annihilated by legitimate government authorities. "Who remembers the Armenians?" was Hitler's laconic answer when some moderate Nazis questioned the wisdom of the final solution. Few then recalled the massacre of three million Armenians by the Turks during World War I. Only professional historians and others who keep track of such things remember them at all.

New research into German policy in occupied nations had yielded some provocative material regarding the Nazi philosophy of human extermination. It is now acknowledged that several million ethnic Poles were killed by the Germans under the explicit command from Berlin to depopulate Poland for German settlement. The mass murder of Ukranians has also been discovered. Although Poles and Ukranians may have cooperated with the German occupiers in seeking out and exterminating the Jews, it was in the end to no avail since they, too, were considered racial inferiors and allotted their own spot on the Nazi timetable of annihilation or enslavement. Xenophobic hysteria was not uncommon during the 1940s, and the Allied nations were hardly immune to it.

The technological advances of the twentieth century, especially in the areas of communication, information retrieval, transport, and management have provided an impressive list of holocausts. What, then, makes the ordeal of the Jews in Europe so special? The answer lies partially in the style with which the Germans, "the most educated people in Europe," dispatched so many of their own citizens. Standing small children against a wall and shooting them for no reason other than a flimsy accusation of racial inferiority evokes a certain repulsion. But disposing of them in large factories specifically designed for the purpose is really a quantum leap in the science of death. The Holocaust involved the active participation of the industrial, scientific, and business communities. The efficiency of the whole undertaking was calculated down to the last detail. Extracting gold fillings from teeth, employing body fat for soap manufacture, and using skin for lampshades are characteristic of the expertise associated with cost-effective business enterprise. The rationalized procedures and assembly-line methods that produced goods could also be utilized to destroy human beings for the manufacture of consumer goods.

Modern industry proved itself extraordinarily versatile during the Third Reich, and one can only wonder to what lengths these techniques would have been improved had the war not turned against the Germans. Social research into bureaucracy and complex organizations can give us some clues: It is entirely possible that long after every Jew in Europe had been killed, the Holocaust machinery would have continued to function. Pressure to keep it going would have come from the industries that supplied the equipment, from the railroads that shipped the "raw material" to the camps, and from the functionaries who managed the administrative apparatus. As for victims, there is every indication that the Slav "race" would have been next and after them other candidates could be nominated for subhuman status as the need presented itself.

There are several ideological villains in the Holocaust drama, but the essays in this volume amply demonstrate the prominent role played by biological nationalism. From the curious mélange of opinion, fact, theory, and myth that constituted Victorian science, the idea of a master race emerged as one of the most powerful and compelling. Once the scientific community obliged by "proving" that some races were inferior to others and that it was perfectly reasonable to judge someone by his ancestors' "blood," the door was open to the most fantastic abuses imaginable. Far from having been burnt up in the Götterdämmerung of 1945, biological nationalism and the doctrine of a master race are today enjoying something of a comeback.

Dobkowski and Wallimann have done us a genuine service in assembling this excellent collection. It is, sadly enough, most timely, because the intellectual forces that justified the Holocaust of the 1940s are as active today as they were then. Indians in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina may not be openly branded as "mongrel races," but they are likely to be exterminated just the same, and with an ideological justification that bears a striking resemblance to that used during the Third Reich. Although objective conditions in today's world seem to cry out for a dissolution of national boundaries, pleas for reason are drowned out by the celebration of tribal fantasies. Threats of nuclear war, global famine, and energy scarcity seem unimportant to petty dictators and world leaders alike, who childishly beat the drum of nationalist ideology.

After the Nazi takeover in Germany, all art and literature considered non-Aryan was destroyed. In Vienna, Freud learned that his books had been burned. The founder of psychoanalysis believed that this showed progress. He reasoned that in the Dark Ages he, as well as his books, would have been burned. Freud died in England before he could find out that his opinion was not justified. Had he remained, he, too, would have been consumed by the Holocaust. Freud was not alone in his failure to imagine just how far Western "civilization" could regress. The tribal fantasies of biological nationalism can create a world more akin to that of the primal horde than the Dark Ages. Group fantasies about master races can only help to bring about the final holocaust which, if nothing else, will be considerably less sectarian than its predecessors.

Bibliographical Essay

Compiled by Michael N. Dobkowski and
Isidor Wallimann with the assistance
of Michael Berkowitz

This bibliographical essay is not meant to be comprehensive, but suggestive. We have included items that have been particularly useful to the editors and that complement the essays contained in the volume. Since the essays in this volume examine the interrelationships between social, economic, and cultural change on the one hand and political development on the other, most of the items listed reflect that approach.

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