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Conservative Elite Anti-Semitism from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich

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For National Socialism, creating a common racial identity would forge unity among Germans. Race would overcome the regional, religious, and especially class divisions that had plagued Germany since unification; divisions that war, defeat, and an unstable republic exacerbated.¹ Moreover, race fused Nazi foreign and domestic policy into an indissoluble and lethal whole. The Nazi regime envisioned that expansion would not only provide economic prosperity outside the vagaries of the world economy, eliminating in the process “useless eaters,” who consumed resources that the Aryan population deserved more. The Third Reich would also reorganize Europe according to racial hierarchies, permanently fixing Germany’s enlarged boundaries while simultaneously destroying the Bolshevik pestilence. Expansion would thus overcome the historical fluidity of Central and East Central Europe, or in Nazi terms, purify that region of “subhumans” whose very existence contested German racial and national hegemony. The Jews, the symbol of national fragmentation and class polarization par excellence, the epitome of the diversity so characteristic of the area that the Third Reich targeted as “living space,” would be exterminated.²

Obviously, the Third Reich proved chillingly thorough in pursuing its racial and biological policies. Although racism and anti-Semitism had been pervasive and often violent throughout Europe, both reached their apogee in National Socialist Germany. Germany’s industrial might, its well-developed bureaucratized state, and its technological sophistication gave the Nazi regime the wherewithal to initiate extermination. More significantly, however, Germany lacked a deeply rooted democratic, secular, and emancipatory tradition that would have legitimated the acceptance of minorities.³ In addition, the historically contested issue as to Germany’s “true” boundaries, one that the territorial adjustments of Versailles exacerbated, transformed German racism into a uniquely venomous form of integral nationalism.

The weakness of domestic opposition sustained the Third Reich's inhumanity. National Socialism met defeat only at the hands of a superior military force. To be sure, the Nazi regime failed to create the harmonious *Volksgemeinschaft* of its propaganda. The social Darwinian competition that characterized politics and economics under the Third Reich, as well as the entrenched subcultures that resisted Nazi encroachments upon their long-established values, remained constant. Competition and conflict, the outgrowth of the Führer's nihilistic charisma, in fact fueled the radicalizing of Nazism. Nevertheless, the Nazi police network contained dissent and the periodic attempts to overthrow Hitler collapsed from their congenital weaknesses, including the lack of popular support. Many of the regime's "successes," notably those of Hitler himself, drew approbation until military defeat became inevitable.⁴

Nowhere was the persistence of competing interests groups clearer than in the Nazi party's uneasy "alliance" with Germany's conservative establishment; that is its large estate owners (most of them from the eastern Prussian provinces), army officers, high-ranking civil servants, as well as business and cultural leaders, including the clergy of the German Evangelical Church. Yet nowhere was the underlying legitimacy of Nazism as evident: Conservative elites remain essential to any discussion of the rise and rule of National Socialism from the "end phase" of the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich's collapse in 1945. Despite deep divisions among elites and their equally strong reservations as to supporting a governing coalition with the Nazi party, key members of the "establishment" negotiated the appointment of Hitler as chancellor on January 30, 1933, through the good offices of President Hindenburg. Moreover, the mushrooming of Nazi mass support, which rendered the party indispensable to the government of "national concentration," could not have occurred without the grass roots politicization of East Elbian estate owners against the Weimar Republic. Finally, the "partnership" between Nazism and conservative elites, although saturated with competition and mistrust, survived until the Third Reich's defeat. Not only were elites essential to rearmament and the suppression of the left (particularly the army, the bureaucracy and industrialists dependent upon bolstering the domestic market), most of the establishment willingly participated in plunder and genocide. The Nazi regime never grew so independent of conservative elites as to dispense with them altogether, for its very totalistic conception of warfare required the equally total commitment of Germany's bureaucracy, its military, and its economy.⁵

How anti-Semitic was the conservative "establishment" and what relationship did anti-Semitism play in the conservative-Nazi partnership? This is a crucial question, given the debate regarding the ideological basis for the complicity of elites in the "Final Solution." That discussion impinges directly on the issue as to how much Hitler and the Nazi hierarchy distanced themselves from their conservative allies.⁶ In fact, wide variations existed in the degree of hostility toward Jews that elites expressed. At one extreme lay the dark obsession with the Jew as the destroyer

of quality, breeding, hierarchy, and true individuality that shaped the world view of the Pomeranian Junker Jürgen von Ramin, and in the attitudes of other young noblemen.⁷ Notwithstanding its implicit affirmation of the Junker nobility's fitness to rule by virtue of birth, Ramin's conviction resembled Nazi fantasies about the Jews as rootless international parasites, who caused the disintegration of national identity and whose assimilation polluted healthy racial stock. At the other extreme, however, arose a more qualified position that surfaced in moments of conflict in the conservative-Nazi alliance. Protestant clergy and lay people associated with the Confessing Church, who after the Nazi takeover resisted the attempt of Nazi-sympathizing "German Christians" to restructure the German Evangelical Church according to Nazi organizational and racial principles, are a good example. Although distrustful of Jewish "influence" in German society, which it saw as emblematic of the erosion of Germany's Christian culture, the Confessing Church condemned Nazi anti-Semitism as a secularist, and thus illegitimate, redefinition of the Evangelical Church constitution.⁸ Thus, if Nazi anti-Semitism threatened to undermine institutions deemed essential to German culture, then it had to be kept within bounds.

Regardless of its fluctuating intensity, anti-Semitism was prevalent among conservative elites and symbiotically attached to other prejudices. For conservatives, the Jew became shorthand for the multiple ills of modernity. Those included the decline of Christianity and "traditional" morality, the spread of urbanization and the empowerment of the masses, not to mention the paramount evils of socialism and "Bolshevism." In all of its manifestations, modernity threatened the hierarchies that buttressed the German nation. To be sure, elites differed among themselves as to which aspect of modernity produced the greatest dismay. The international economy, for example, disadvantaged East Elbian estate owners, whose commodities competed unsuccessfully with foreign imports, but not industrialists geared toward export, whose profitability depended on an open marketplace. Thus, the Jew as the embodiment of international capital was more significant for the former, who resented the bilateralism of successive Weimar governments that laid claim to Germany's global economic position. Nevertheless for all conservatives, the Jew crept into anxieties about economic profitability and competitiveness, the postwar constraints upon German continental hegemony and overseas imperialism, and particularly class conflict that undermined the social position of elites.

No political party or social stratum in Germany, not even the working class, was free of anti-Semitism, yet the residual power of conservative elites rendered their aversion to Jews so much more consequential. At minimum, the Jews represented for elites a "question" or a "problem" in need of remedy, which elites were in a position to offer. Conservative elite solutions started with the insistence that legal limitations be imposed on the allegedly disproportionate influence of Jews in politics, the professions, and culture. They extended to the suggestion that Jews be deported elsewhere, be it Palestine or even Canada. Furthermore, the anti-Semitic

recommendations of elites culminated in outright extermination. After war broke out, conservative anti-Semitism easily became radicalized in the service of *Lebensraum*, most obviously among those directly involved in conquest and occupation.⁹ Although until the war, conservative elites generally did not alight on the Jew with the same vehemence as the Nazi leadership, a characteristic they shared with the majority of the German population, the major enemies in the world view of conservative elites and the indissoluble linkage of anti-Semitism to them, sustained the conservative-Nazi partnership despite the conflict that endangered it. It is therefore impossible to separate anti-Semitism from other “isms” in the outlook of elites. Yet neither can we assign anti-Semitism less significance than other issues given the awful consequences of the package of prejudices to which conservatives adhered. Let us look closely at the place of anti-Semitism in each of the three phases of the conservative-Nazi relationship, the Nazis’ rise to power, the stabilization of the Third Reich, and finally the war years.

Conservative Anti-Semitism, the Nazi Electorate, and the Hitler Cabinet

Local studies dealing with the electoral growth of National Socialism suggest that anti-Semitism cannot by itself account for the Nazi party’s emergence as a popular movement.¹⁰ Nevertheless, in rural regions that after 1928 provided crucial support for the Nazis, the Jew served the Hitler movement effectively as a scapegoat for the woes besetting agriculture. This was especially true in agricultural areas with an entrenched estate-owning elite. The instrumental value of anti-Semitism exposed the deep connections between the radicalizing from below of a significant faction of the conservative establishment, East Elbian estate owners, and the politicking by elites in the corridors of power. The Jew proved useful not merely as the symbol of avaricious money lenders sucking the life blood of hard-pressed peasants, as well as godless Bolsheviks, who would turn churches into cinemas. “He” also symbolized the “Marxist” republic that had subjected Germany to the rape of Versailles and to the international economy where commodity prices had collapsed. Anti-Semitism became a discourse that allowed the rural population to vent its anger at the Weimar system to Nazism’s benefit without attacking estate owners, whose support the Nazis desperately needed.

In the Junker-dominated province of Pomerania for example, the Nazis periodically condemned estate owners and the rural associations they led for their antisocial “reactionary” behavior, particularly their exploitation of dependent agricultural laborers. Yet the ties between the Nazis and the “traditional” right that first emerged in the rural campaign against the Young Plan, including those between the SA and the Stahlhelm, outlasted the internecine conflict between them. Estate owners found the Nazis useful in their assault against the “Marxist” republic for its biases against agriculture and its erosion of Christian culture. Indeed the Jew rarely received exclusive attention in the politics of the traditional right by “himself.” Nevertheless, the Jew’s insidious connection with, indeed personification of, the

foes that conservatives and Nazis attacked in common, as well as “his” utility as a populist ploy, facilitated the local partnerships that fostered right radicalism. The relationship between the traditional right and Nazism in Pomerania was of no mean significance. Organized agriculture in Pomerania, like that of the other eastern Prussian provinces, became bastions of the “National Opposition” that joined Alfred Hugenberg’s rump German National People’s Party with the Nazi movement, an alliance that ultimately gave birth to the Hitler chancellorship.¹¹

Conservative Anti-Semitism and the Establishment of the Third Reich

Once the Nazis took power, anti-Semitism underwrote the conservative establishment’s acceptance of the regime’s anti-Jewish inclinations. It continued to prove its instrumentality in the contest between conservative elites and Nazis as to who would become senior partner in their alliance. The racially and politically driven purge of the civil service that accompanied the centralization of government and the elimination of Weimar federalism could not have occurred without the collaboration of senior bureaucrats. Civil servants strove not only to “restore” a routinized, efficient, and disinterested state service that Weimar’s corrupt party politics had supposedly undermined. They also sought to strengthen the bureaucracy’s claim to represent society against the competition of the Nazi party. The drafting of the Nuremberg Laws arose from similar motives, even if the subsequent execution of the new racial restrictions met with the pragmatic resistance of various ministries. Furthermore, the steady exclusion of Jews from the German economy met with at most muted protests from industrialists, many of whom saw the elimination of the left, rearmament, and despite initial misgivings, the drive for autarky as the way out of the depression.¹² All told, antisemitic legislation might not have ranked highest among the priorities of elites, yet the counterrevolutionary nature of those priorities unavoidably and negatively affected the status of Jews. Moreover, the anti-Semitism of elites precluded serious concern for the victims of the drive toward dictatorship and racial purification.

There were of course objections to the vulgar anti-Semitic violence of the SA, most notably (and tellingly) when that violence threatened to discredit the objectives of elites or the institutions elites dominated. Unlike Hitler’s inner circle, that is, Nazi party radicals, and the regime’s security apparatus including the SS, conservatives adhered to the policy of exception. Modifying the integralism of Nazi ideology that considered Jews so alien as to make it impossible for them to become “German,” conservatives begrudged some Jews their exemption from anti-Jewish legislation if they conformed to German “norms,” and if using those norms meant preventing the wholesale imposition of party standards. Thus, President Hindenburg used his influence to ensure that Jewish civil servants, who had served in the military during World War I, be exempted from the Civil Service Law, the promulgation of which simultaneously sanctioned and contained the radicalism of the party. Or the Confessing Church maintained, in contrast to the German Christians who tried to

“synchronize” and “aryanize” the Evangelical Church after removing the regular ecclesiastical leadership, that baptised Jews should be considered Christians first. One’s commitment to Christ necessarily superceded one’s secular, racial identity.

Yet such qualifications hardly negated more generalized antisemitic feelings, and the primary pursuit of elites to achieve a *modus vivendi* with the Nazi regime. Anti-Jewish legislation, after all, curbed the corrosive effects of Jews in German life that persisted despite Jewish assimilation. Moreover, the regularized “legal” anti-Semitism issuing from the state bureaucracy did not jeopardize the goals of rearmament, the revision of Versailles, or expansionism by arousing unfavorable foreign publicity, as did the street violence of the Storm Troops and the German Christian *Gleichschaltung*. If restoring order in the German Evangelical Church meant defeating the intrusion of a secular racist ideology and the *Führerprinzip*, the restoration of order in German society meant not only curtailing the left, but also eliminating the “excessive” role of the Jews. In turn, the purge of the SA leadership in June 1934 and Hitler’s withdrawal of support from the German Christians one year later, testified to the value that the regime assigned to its partnership with elites.¹³

Conservative Anti-Semitism and Nazi *Lebensraum*

Following the outbreak of war, the anti-Semitism of elites, intermingled with other hatreds, helped to produce the hideousness of the German occupation in East Central Europe and the invasion of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the brutal acquisition of *Lebensraum* would have been unthinkable without the ideologically motivated participation of elites. Recent scholarship has not merely illuminated the degree to which the military and bureaucracy, as well as the medical, legal, and academic professions, shared Nazism’s animus toward the slavish *Untermenschen*. It has also shown how all willingly contributed to the mass murder of Jews. It has further stressed the extent to which business elites profited from the Third Reich’s rapaciousness. German corporations not only demanded that the regime provide them with foreign labor to compensate for the shortage of German workers. They exploited those reserves with scant regard for considerations of health, dignity, or humanity. Even though Nazism’s compulsive warmongering threatened established business procedures and objectives, and even though the gigantic *Reichswerke Hermann Göring* competed with private industry for the resources of occupied Europe, German business never spurned the regime’s favors. The transfer of assets during the aryanization of Jewish businesses following *Kristallnacht*, and IG Farben’s dependence upon conscripted labor, particularly at Auschwitz, (not to mention the manufacture of Zyklon B by one of its subsidiaries) are good examples.¹⁴ Aside from such exceptions as the horror that pervaded the conservative underground at the atrocities being committed in the east, or the hesitant and anything-but-unconditional protests of the Confessing Church against racially motivated killing, Germany’s establishment showed little reluctance to participate in genocide.¹⁵

There is, to be sure, the contentious debate over the timing of the “Final Solution,” one that raises the question as to how extensively anti-Bolshevism contributed to the Holocaust. Did the decision to exterminate all Jews come as early as December 1940 during the planning of Barbarossa, or in the summer of 1941 from the euphoria over the rapid victories over the Soviet Union? Or did it arise during the fall of 1941 out of rage against the failure of what had been predominantly an anti-Bolshevik, rather than an anti-Jewish, “crusade?” Regardless, there is agreement that anti-Bolshevism at least facilitated the complicity of conservative elites in genocide. The assault upon the Jews of Europe, most of whom lived in the region that the regime targeted as Germany’s *Lebensraum*, could not have assumed the magnitude it did without the desire to extirpate “Marxism” at home and abroad, a major objective of conservatives and Nazis both. Nor would it likely have occurred without the marriage of anti-Bolshevism to anti-Semitism that existed in the minds of elites and Nazis both. The language of elites, and not just that of the Nazi party, routinely described “Marxism” as “Jewish.”¹⁶

Some Concluding Observations

What lessons should we draw from this brief discussion of conservative elite anti-Semitism? What relevance do those lessons have for ongoing discussions in the fields of modern German history, and Holocaust studies? For one, it suggests that although elites could be less vociferous on the subject of Jews, even their more qualified or reserved brand of anti-Semitism proved deadly enough in the economic and political crises of interwar Europe. Those consisted of the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the political prominence of the moderate left elsewhere and the distributive struggles that engendered, the collapse of the international capitalist economy and the drive for autarky, and finally, the impermanence of the postwar peace settlement. Especially in East Central Europe, the creation of “successor states” with all of their internal weaknesses, whose legitimacy the major powers would sacrifice in any case, failed to resolve the nationalist conflicts prior to the Third Reich’s own attempt to do so through its paradigmatic “ethnic cleansing.” Taken together, the objectives that conservatives pursued in common with the Nazi regime were to remedy the systemic difficulties of the twenties and thirties. Even the relatively modest “legal” anti-Semitism of elites so evident during the early years of the Third Reich, coupled with the desire of elites to eliminate the left, did not just simply fail to restrain the counterrevolutionary radicalism of the Nazis. Rather, it legitimated the Third Reich’s expanding network of repression.

Because the anti-Semitism of elites arose in part from anxiety over the erosion of Christian values, the provocative argument of the late Detlev Peukert that the Holocaust stemmed from the contributions of secularization, the emergence of scientific medicine and their obsession with racial hygiene misfires, even without Peukert’s failure to confront anti-Semitism seriously as the most devastating

outcome of Nazi racism.¹⁷ The relationship of Christianity to modern anti-Semitism as a theological and cultural problem is as relevant to the Holocaust as the “pathologies” of modernity. After all, Confessing Church pastors and laypersons, who militantly resisted the German Christians because the German Christians violated the New Testament still succumbed to the inherent anti-Judaism of Christian scriptures. Biblicism fortified the Confessing Church against the German Christians, but it also encouraged the Protestant opposition to endorse Nazi anti-Semitism in the political realm.¹⁸ Although we must acknowledge that the contribution of Christian anti-Judaism to the Nazi regime’s genocidal anti-Semitism defies explanation by a simplistic teleology, we must also recognize that historically the relative *lack* of secularization in Germany meant less tolerance of cultural and ethnic diversity.¹⁹

Moreover, the integration of anti-Semitism with the goals of conservative elites challenges another trend in the field of modern German history: the emphasis upon the autonomy of Nazism from the conservative establishment. This development becomes apparent from the positions staked out in a number of debates. They include the preoccupation with Nazi populism and the antielitism of the Hitler movement’s supporters. They also entail the abandonment of the class analysis embedded in most theories of fascism because “class” cannot do justice to the enormity of Nazi racism. Finally, against the thesis that the anti-Bolshevism of elites and Nazis together propelled the “Final Solution” after the failure of Barbarossa, there arises the argument that Nazi anti-Semitism became genocidal on its own well before the German invasion stalled outside Moscow.²⁰ The conservative-Nazi alliance, so it seems, is less able to explain the destructive dynamism of the Third Reich than the regime’s self-generated radicalism.

Indeed it is obvious that we must take Nazi anti-Semitism seriously and avoid burying it under the weight of allegedly more relevant hatreds. One need not devalue the significance of antileftism for elites to appreciate that elite racism settled dangerously in an entire package of hostilities that could not be disengaged from each other.²¹ Yet it is equally important to see Nazi racism for what it was, namely the attempt to overcome social, and especially class, divisions in German society through racial purging and the creation of *Lebensraum* in the east. The racist core of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* simply does not make sense apart from the bitter class conflict that existed in Germany following World War I. Those conflicts became evident not only in the Third Reich’s assault against leftist organizations. They also, albeit in a more subtle way, came alive in the regime’s assiduous attempts to integrate the once-marginalized German working class into the “national community.” Through a combination of full employment, Taylorist performance incentives, welfare benefits, leisure-time activities and tourism, not to mention the creation of vast pools of low-wage, forced-laboring *Untermenschen*, Nazi labor policy testified to the the regime’s desire to succeed as the real “socialism.” The

Third Reich would embody the “socialism” of national unity, not the class-specific internationalist variety of “Marxism.” Expansionism and the Final Solution would eliminate the causes of national disintegration and invent a secure national identity.²²

In addition, the Third Reich’s need for conservative elites, their skills, expertise, and industry, did not diminish, despite the increasing ability of the Nazi leadership and Hitler to dictate the timing of expansion and the regime’s economic priorities, not to mention the seething displeasure of business, the military, and the bureaucracy over the party’s destructive interventions.²³ A wealth of scholarship makes mincemeat of the argument that the Third Reich created a “social revolution” in both meanings of the phrase, class structure and consciousness.²⁴ Some among the conservative establishment, industrialists especially, disliked autarky and the regime’s dirigist intervention in the economy. Others, including the senior bureaucracy and the military, grew appalled by party cronyism and Nazi attacks on leading institutions. Nevertheless, conservative elite resistance remained a belated and feeble affair. Certainly the near absence of industrialists from the conservative underground is one way of sustaining this point, for as Ian Kershaw suggests, German industry itself was “structurally implicated” in the Third Reich’s imperialism even if the regime’s ideological goals assumed precedence over economic ones.²⁵

We must press Kershaw’s point further, however. We cannot fail to appreciate the significance of the July Twentieth movement as the precursor of liberal democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany in both its postwar incarnations, although one could justifiably argue that the democratic and humanistic instincts of the conservative underground have been exaggerated.²⁶ Moreover, we should acknowledge the personal growth and gnawing guilt of many opponents of the regime, who like the Protestant pastor Martin Niemöller belatedly admitted that preserving the integrity of established institutions and their guiding principles was futile without an equally fervent commitment to the regime’s victims in all their diversity.²⁷ Yet the hesitant and weakly rooted efforts of the conservative underground contrast markedly with the much firmer determination of conservative elites, taken together, to destroy the Weimar Republic, regardless of the divisions among them. The integration of anti-Semitism with the return to authoritarianism, the drive to undo the postwar peace settlement, and the restoration of “order” at home against the left was crucial to actualizing the Third Reich’s potential for destruction.

¹This article is the revised version of a paper I gave at the Annual Meeting of the German Studies Association in Dallas, October 2, 1994. My thanks to Alan Steinweis and Gerald Kleinfeld for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article, and especially to Christopher Browning, who suggested that I submit this for publication.

²Despite the inherent disagreements among these contributions, this summary draws upon the insights of Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine europäische Ordnung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993); Michael Geyer,

"Historical Fictions of Autonomy and the Europeanization of National Identity," *Central European History* 22, nos. 3/4 (1989), 316–42, esp. 341, and Arno J. Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The "Final Solution" in History* (New York, 1988).

³John Weiss, *Ideology of Death. Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany* (Chicago, 1996), unapologetically and compellingly makes a case for the continued relevance of Germany's (or at least Central Europe's) *Sonderweg* from the liberal-democratic traditions of western Europe. Omer Bartov's *Murder in Our Midst. The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation* (New York and Oxford, 1996), relates the Final Solution to the impact of industrialization and World War I without directly addressing the question, why was it Germany that initiated the Final Solution?

⁴See in particular the work of Ian Kershaw, especially *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich. Bavaria 1933–1944* (Oxford, 1983), and *The "Hitler Myth." Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987).

⁵Studies that are indispensable to understanding the disintegration of the republic and the creation of a Hitler-led cabinet include David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic. Political Economy and Crisis*, 2 ed. (New York, 1986), Hans Mommsen, *Die verspielte Freiheit. Der Weg von der Republik von Weimar in den Untergang 1918 bis 1933* (Berlin, 1989), Gerhard Schulz, *Von Brüning zu Hitler. Der Wandel des politischen Systems in Deutschland 1930–1933* (Berlin, 1992), and Heinrich-August Winkler, *Weimar 1918–1933. Die Geschichte der ersten deutschen Demokratie* (Munich, 1993).

⁶The debate has been particularly sharp between Arno J. Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* and Christopher R. Browning, "The Holocaust as By-product? A Critique of Arno Mayer," *The Path to Genocide. Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge and New York, 1992), 77–85.

⁷"Junker," *Pommern-Adel. Nachrichtenblatt für die Mitglieder der Landesabteilung Pommern der Deutschen Adelsgenossenschaft* 3, no. 8 (1927). For the racism of young nobles generally, see Georg H. Kleine, "Adelsgenossenschaft und Nationalsozialismus," *Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte* 26 (1978), 100–43.

⁸The best work on the anti-Semitism of the Confessing Church is Wolfgang Gerlach's *Als die Zeugen schwiegen. Die Bekennende Kirche und die Juden* (Berlin, 1987).

⁹The proposal to deport Jews emerged in the plans of the wartime conservative underground. See Christoph Dipper, "Der 20. Juli und die 'Judenfrage'," *Die Zeit*, no. 27 (8 July 1994).

¹⁰One of the first to argue this was William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power. The Experience of a Single German Town*, rev. ed. (New York, 1985). The first edition of this book was published in 1965. John Weiss's analysis of Nazi campaigning in *Ideology of Death*, 271–87, is a conspicuous exception.

¹¹This represents a condensation of the argument I present in *The Sanctity of Rural Life. Nobility, Protestantism, and Nazism in Weimar Prussia* (Oxford and New York, 1995). See also Dieter Gessner, "'Grüne Front' oder 'Harzburger Front.' Der Reichslandbund in der letzten Phase der Weimarer Republik-Zwischen Wirtschaftlicher Interessenpolitik und Nationalistischen Anspruch," *Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte* 29 (1981), 110–23. For the contributions of Hugenberg to Weimar's demise, see especially Larry Eugene Jones, "'The Greatest Stupidity of My Life': Alfred Hugenberg and the Formation of the Hitler Cabinet, January 1933," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992), 63–87; and Reinhold Quaat, *Die Deutschnationalen und die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik. Aus dem Tagebuch von Reinhold Quaat 1928–1933*, eds. Hermann Weiß and Paul Moser (Munich, 1989).

¹²See Jane Caplan, *Government without Administration. State and Civil Service in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 1988), 131–88. For the impact of Nazi radicalism on Jewish policy, and particularly the impact of Jewish policy on the civil service, one should start with Uwe Adam, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf, 1972), 51–64, 114–58. Ministries were often concerned about the shortages in staff that would result in a thoroughgoing implementation of the racial laws. Although not enamored of the regime's autarkic predelections, the directors of IG Farben tolerated the removal or reassignment of many of its Jewish employees and excused Nazi racial incidents to its international affiliates to overcome its reputation as a "Jewish" firm. See Peter Hayes, *Industry and Ideology. IG Farben in the Nazi Era* (Cambridge, London, and New York, 1987), esp. 90–94.

¹³For a discussion of the Confessing Church's attempts to preserve the autonomy of the German Evangelical Church as a whole—one that places the Protestant opposition in the context of the conservative-Nazi partnership—see my *The Confessing Church, Conservative Elites and the Nazi State* (Lewiston and Queenston, 1986).

¹⁴Hayes, *Industry and Ideology*, esp. 325–76. In the past fifteen years or so, the record of the German military has been exposed to mounting criticism. See especially Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army* (New York, Oxford, 1991), Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden. Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945* (Stuttgart, 1978), and Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges. Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938–1942* (Stuttgart, 1981). See also Richard Overy's essays, now published together in *War and Economy in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1994) and the summary in the introduction, esp. 11–18. Although the heavy industry of the Ruhr, the old business elite, suffered most from the competition of the Reichswerke Hermann Göring, newer industries profited significantly. There is now an extensive literature on German medicine and the Nazi regime. See especially, Michael Kater, *Doctors under Hitler* (Chapel Hill and London, 1989), Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York, 1986), Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene. Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), and Paul Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (Cambridge, 1989). Michael Burleigh's work, *Germany Turns Eastward. A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1988), documents the insidious racism of German academic experts on Eastern Europe.

¹⁵See Kurt Meier, *Kreuz und Hakenkreuz. Die evangelische Kirche im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1992), 225–36.

¹⁶For a deft assessment of the debate on the genesis of the "Final Solution," consult Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 3d ed. (London and New York, 1993), 88–107, and Christopher Browning's guarded and partial agreement with Mayer's interpretation in "Beyond 'Intentionalism' and 'Functionalism': A Reassessment of Nazi Jewish Policy from 1939 to 1941," in *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, eds. Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (New York and London, 1993), 211–33, esp. 22. See as well Philippe Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews. The Genesis of the Holocaust*, trans. Patsy Southgate (London, 1994), who places the decision to exterminate in the fall of 1941 while stressing the primacy of anti-Semitism in Hitler's thinking. For the argument that the Final Solution came together in December 1940, consult Richard Breitmann, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (Hanover, N. H., 1992).

¹⁷See "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science," in *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, 234–52.

¹⁸This is one of the most significant implications of Gerlach's *Als die Zeugen schwiegen*.

¹⁹See Steven T. Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, vol. 1. *The Holocaust and Mass Death before the Modern Age* (New York and Oxford, 1994), 580. Despite my disagreement with the approach and many of the arguments in Paul Lawrence Rose's *German Question/Jewish Question. Revolutionary Anti-Semitism from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton, 1990), the desire to eradicate Jewish identity common to Christian anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism both offers a fruitful point of departure. Equally suggestive is Mayer's suggestion as to the survival of the "crusade" in European culture, both at the elite and popular levels. The crusading ideal, a deeply anti-Semitic one at that, provided a broadly Christian context for the emergence of the Nazi agenda. See *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?*, esp. 217–19 and 226–33. For the Christian legacy in Germany, see Weiss, *Ideology of Death*, 335.

²⁰Tim Mason, "Whatever Happened to 'Fascism'?", in *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, 253–62, was only somewhat more positive about the utility of "class" than he was in his epilogue published posthumously in the English translation of his *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, entitled *Social Policy in the Third Reich. The Working Class and the 'National Community'*, trans. John Broadwin and ed. Jane Caplan (Providence and Oxford, 1993) 275–369. The challenge to the elite-dominated history of the so-called "Bielefeld school" that led the field in the 1970s came primarily from Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn. See especially *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford and New York, 1984). This trend has cut across different political perspectives as Henry Ashby Turner's *Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (Oxford and New York, 1985) demonstrates. Despite his acknowledgement of the importance of anti-Bolshevism, Christopher Browning remains convinced of the priority of racism in Nazi thinking. See "Beyond 'Intentionalism' and 'Functionalism'," 224–25.

²¹This is the main problem in Arno Mayer's *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* Although Mayer is entirely justified in stressing the importance of the assault against the left that united elites and the Nazis, anti-Semitism assumes an altogether secondary status in his analysis.

²²See especially Tilla Siegel, *Leistung und Lohn in der nationalsozialistischen "Ordnung der Arbeit"* (Opladen, 1989), Ronald Smelser, *Robert Ley. Hitler's Labor Front Leader* (Oxford, New York, and Hamburg, 1988) and Marie-Luise Recker, *Nationalsozialistische Sozialpolitik in Zweitem Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1985). My concern here is with Christopher Browning, whose insistence upon the priority of Nazi racism against Mayer risks suppressing the deep and implicit significance of class to Nazi ideology.

²³Smelser, *Robert Ley*, esp. 218–60; Caplan, *Government without Administration*, 131 ff; and Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Armee, Politik und Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1933–1945* (Paderborn, 1979).

²⁴I agree with Ian Kershaw's assessment in *Nazi Dictatorship*, 140–49.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 54.

²⁶Hans Mommsen's "The Social Views and Constitutional Plans of the Resistance", in *The German Resistance*, ed. Hermann Graml (London, 1970), remains unsurpassed in its analysis of the July Twentieth movement's fundamentally conservative premises. The resistance as the precursor of postwar democracy still figures heavily in conservative attempts to break free from the legacy of Auschwitz. See Gunter Hofmann, "Der Krieg der Erinnerungen," *Die Zeit*, no. 6 (9 February 1996).

²⁷Guilt becomes a recurring theme in interviews with survivors of the "Church Struggle," see Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People. Protestant Protest against Hitler* (New York and Oxford, 1992). For Niemöller's belief in the solidarity of all people, which became a

pronounced feature of his postwar theology, see James Bentley, *Martin Niemöller* (New York, 1984), 159–78. The approach of the fiftieth anniversary of the July 20, 1944, assassination attempt against Hitler has drawn a plethora of commentary on both sides of the Atlantic. For examples, see *Contending with Hitler. Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, ed. David Clay Large (Cambridge, 1994), and the special issue of *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 42, no. 7 (1994). As the latter collection demonstrates, the July Twentieth conspiracy has always figured prominently, either positively or negatively, in the legitimation of the two postwar German states, only to be reinterpreted anew since unification.