The German intellectual's adjustment to National Socialism

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THE GERMAN INTELLECTUAL'S ADJUSTMENT TO
NATIONAL SOCIALISM

By

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B.A., University of Montana, 1971

Presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
1975

Approved by:

Chairman, Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

Date
Cleary, Mark C., M.A., Summer, 1975  

History

The German Intellectual's Adjustment to National Socialism (102 pp.)

Director: Oscar J. Hammen 0 J.W.

This study is an investigation into the German intellectual's collaboration with the National Socialist German state. Qualitative rather than quantitative, it is a speculative interpretation of the forces that influenced willing support of the Nazis by the German intelligentsia. As a societal study, the thesis puts the intellectual into the larger drama of the national enthusiasm for Hitler in 1933, and it examines the possible motives, pure and cynical, for the spiritual coordination (Gleichschaltung) of the German academician. The premise of the work is that the majority of German intellectuals had a free and individual choice. This choice, despite its Faustian implication, was often no more dramatic than a scholar's decision to stay in Germany and continue his career under Nazi auspices.

Atomization, coupled with narrow professionalism, made the German intellectual easy to control and willing to work for the Nazis. That this was not true in all cases does not negate the fact that it was true in the majority of cases. Presentation of personal accounts of the Gleichschaltung give the reader a feeling for the mood in Germany between 1933 and 1945. The main conclusion, though highly speculative, is that: (1) German intellectual adjustment to Nazi rule was apolitical, and (2) political amorality among intellectuals in a modern industrial nation is encouraged by social and professional compartmentalization within a technocratic environment.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express appreciation to Mr. Dwane Anderson, Instructor of German at the College of Great Falls, for his support, advice and criticism of "The German Intellectual's Adjustment to National Socialism" and for his assistance in obtaining German language sources through the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace in Stanford, California.

Thanks, too, goes to Herr M. Bihlmaier at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart, Germany for his timely correspondence on bibliographical materials for this work.

Finally, to Dr. Oscar J. Hammen, Professor of History at the University of Montana, for his patience and flexibility in what, at times, seemed a nebulous undertaking, my lasting gratitude.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The German Intellectual's Adjustment to National Socialism" is an interpretation of the social and institutional foundations that made such an adjustment not only possible, but natural. "Adjustment" is the most appropriate word when the change is described from a conservative German viewpoint. The Weimar era required tremendous mental readjustment of traditional conservative standards in politics and society. In sharp contrast, National Socialism seemingly offered a return to many of the old values by curtly rejecting Western democracy and the conglomeration of liberal and socialist ideals that threatened the conservatives' peace of mind. The change to Nazism was buffered by a remembrance of better times and the hope that Weimar and defeat could be forgotten in the bustle of activity surrounding the New Order.

The renewed emphasis on absolute authority expressed in the N.S.D.A.P. (National Socialist German Workers Party) leadership signaled a corresponding demand for obedience within a national hierarchy. It struck a firm chord of resonance with the class-consciousness of the German people. The educated middle class saw their hopes reborn as every-
where strength and quality were being called for to build
the New Germany. Their sons naively envisioned a place for
the working intellectual alongside the Nazi leadership at
the head of the New Order. Did not progress in a modern
world demand the intellectual's talents?

But, while the decision to help build the New Germany
by becoming a party member or by offering specially acquired
talents may have been a popular, even frivolous gesture for
many Germans, continued participation became an individual
choice for the German intellectual. Unlike the common sol­
dier or Nazi party member of low rank and poor background,
the German intellectual did not feel genuinely trapped in a
particular position. He was quite capable of providing his
own alternatives by writing out the necessary resignation or
application for transfer if, in his judgment, his work had
soured for him. This was true at least during the years be­
fore the war. The intellectual had been recruited for his
personal abilities and skills in a specialized field.

There was a tendency in some men that tied them to their
agreements, once the bargain was struck. This was especially
ture if the agreement required little or no physical and/or
psychological discomfort. For the technician living in Nazi
Germany, the intense concentration of a highly specialized
career closed off all matters not pertaining to that career.
In addition, a mania for self-imposed isolation improved a
specialist's powers of concentration, removing him from even the most repulsive distractions to his work. Many psychological "discomforts" were thus avoided at the outset. News of war atrocities, for example, could be systematically ignored by an armaments researcher as a distraction from his work. As an indirect participant, he scarcely felt the need to rationalize atrocities, even if he created the devices that made such crimes possible. In a situation of direct involvement in atrocities, the specialist attempted to isolate himself in the same way, with varied success. In some cases, career dedication hardened the psyche's defenses to overcome all distractions. This applied to a small, but very significant percentage of German intellectuals.

It is important at this point to define specifically what is meant by "intellectual" in the context and scope of this work. The German intellectual in question was university-educated, invariably. His social and economic circumstances led him to seek employment in a university, civil service or commercial environment where his university specialty would be respected and given primary emphasis. The intellectual used his degree as a springboard to the goals of material security, social rank and personal distinction in his chosen career field. His attitude was expansive. "To do great, important work" was considerably more important to this intellectual than "to become rich," though a moderate standard of
living was assumed, because of background, without saying. Professional rank, too, had an overwhelming attraction for such a man.

The intellectual in this work appears as a product of a mellowed German middle class, but he is tired of old solutions to new problems. He may accept or reject his background consciously, but his class background must be assumed tacitly. For the purposes of this interpretation the German intellectual is characterized by his attitude toward, and compliance with, orders. His willingness to follow precise orders might be mitigated by his university training to discuss motives, investigate meanings and offer alternatives to difficult problems. In short, there may be for the intellectual a willingness to question orders that might otherwise be blindly obeyed. The numbed, "I was only following orders" excuse might not apply to those German intellectuals in the active service of Hitler and the Reich.

There is, in the author's opinion, a qualitative difference between the actions of the German intellectual and the actions of the common soldier. Alongside the intellectual's influence in the administration of the Third Reich, must be measured his deeds and his culpability. But, at the same time, this paper is not a condemnation of the German intelligentsia. This work portrays the German intellectual as an isolated individual, like many other Germans, trying to
adjust himself to the phenomenon of National Socialism.

Obviously, the intellectual's talents allowed him greater opportunities for cooperation with the Nazis than did the skills of more common Germans. Likewise, the indictment of intellectuals in the SS (Schutzstaffel or "protection unit") and Gestapo reflected on the German intelligentsia as a whole. Even the crimes reviewed by the International Tribunal at Nuremberg were intellectual in nature: the plans for gas chambers, mass crematoria and "death train" timetables required the skills of chemists, engineers, doctors and administrators. The cold-blooded planning of the Nazi death camps may be judged as the greatest horror of the Second World War.

But as the tribunal at Nuremberg sought to identify war criminals and avoid a blanket condemnation of the German people, so "The German Intellectual's Adjustment to National Socialism" seeks to separate personalities from causes and give a balanced picture of the German intellectual in the Nazi era. Moreover, the individual impressions of the Gleichschaltung (coordination) and the conclusions in the summary chapter point to minor and major themes that are significant. Respectively, these minor and major themes are: (1) German intellectual adjustment to Nazi rule was apolitical, and (2) political morality among intellectuals in a modern,
industrial nation is encouraged by social and professional compartmentalization within the technocratic environment.
To understand the German intellectual of the Hitler era, one must have a general idea of the social and educational forces that shaped his thinking. A study of education society in the Imperial and Weimar periods is of value, especially if one has a knowledge of the conservatism and narrow professionalism found in German universities before the turn of the century.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by narrow professionalism. First, there was an unwritten agreement between the civil authority and the university that the academic institution would function independently, without regard to politics or the society as a whole. The university had its place in society and would serve the society as a source of bureaucrats (especially under Bismarck), but aside from this function, it agreed to exist apolitically. In this manner, Wilhelminian Germany was administered by civil servants, and the university stayed out of politics.

Within the university, narrow professionalism signified the individual scholar's mandate to devote himself entirely to a special discipline or interest. Even if the university were to lose its independence under Hitler, the individuals
within the various departments of the university still maintained, to a degree, their personal independence. Conversely, the individuals within the university were the university, and the Nazi Gleichschaltung may not have been carried out in practice as much as in appearance. Many reactions were possible, and the universities' reaction to Nazi legislation is clouded with shadows of difference.

Generally though, the German universities before 1933 retained much of their traditional independence thanks to the official policy of non-interference. They continued to choose their own professors and to maintain their faculties in a strict hierarchy of titled rank.¹ But while the structural traditions of the German university were sustained and even strengthened, spiritual unity within the university community had gone by the way. The humanist traditions of the eighteenth century had been replaced gradually in the nineteenth century by a trend toward self-interested scholarship. The freedom to specialize became the newest cry for academic freedom in Germany. It was answered throughout the land with new specialized schools, departments, faculties and disci-

¹University faculties intensified this concern for rank by acknowledging a whole list of stratified titles and classifications for themselves and their protégés. A thorough description of the most common university titles is described by Robert H. Lowie in his Toward Understanding Germany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 77-79.
plines. Traditional university standards of political non-involvement were strengthened by the student's acceptance of a highly-specialized curriculum. In effect, the university community offered a spectrum of independent disciplines which the rector readily accepted as no more than the will of the times.²

With the exceptions of the University of Heidelberg³ and the newer institutions in Hamburg and Cologne, a liberal education was waived by students for more intensive studies. A natural casualty of the specialized schools was the German radical, whose influence inside the university waned before the popularity of the romantics and the social historians.⁴

²Gabriel A. Almond noted in The Struggle for Democracy in Germany (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), pp. 18, 19:

"The institutions of higher education trained loyal potential leaders in government and business....Patriotism and nationalism were standard intellectual fare to which imperialism was added and both elementary school teachers and university professors had as a rule to be politically and socially conservative....With rare exceptions like Max Weber, the number of original thinkers willing to criticize the existing order declined markedly, while the physical sciences developed brilliantly."

³Heidelberg was noted for its longstanding, liberal traditions, and the university successfully weathered the mania for specialization which was, at that time, so common among more conservative institutions.

⁴Author's note: This does not mean that students and even junior faculty members were apathetic to social ills and the demands for their remedy. Rather, German universities shunned revolutionaries who aspired to professorial rank. A German faculty was unwilling to modify its conservative non-
A naive acceptance of organic national unity was the extent of political education for the greater part of the university. The academician did little more than succumb to social pressure when he chose freedom in controlled doses as "a right to be exercised only in the service of the community." 5

In a world of growing specialization, the German university was isolated from the outside world by the serious scholar's desire to mind his own business. Specialized research in the pure sciences required the discipline of a monastic, but many Germans considered it a small price to pay for the recognition it brought them. The German university, likewise, gained recognition as a foundation of scholastic brilliance. Thus, the specialist and the German university thrived symbiotically, each gaining strength from the other.

involvement in politics. Survival of the German university (in times of political trial) was predicated on the loyalty of its faculties to the existing order. Specialization, particularly in the sciences, diverted student attention away from the political sphere and was encouraged for that reason by the faculty. When the genuine radical lost his audience to the romantics and social historians, the German faculties were much relieved.

5 Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance (New York: Praeger, 1958), p. 59. Ritter further commented: "Thus national consciousness in Germany was not bound, as was the case in the West, to democratic ideas; it rested on the strong traditions of the German middle-class education even if liberals as liberals were to some extent opposed to them. Even after 1918 the admirers and advocates of Western democratic constitutions and ways of life were only a minority."
Another side of specialization was the university's fraternity organization. The German student corps offered an exclusive comradeship difficult to resist. With their dueling codes and drinking traditions, fraternities had special attractions for all but the most serious of students. The social life of any German university owed much to its student corps, if only for the sheer manpower the system could raise for celebrations and official functions. The administration too had a measured respect for the fraternities' will, especially the most conservative of these corps.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the political activity of these corps took an ominous turn. In the 1890's, a movement to bar Jews from German fraternities was started by members of the existing corps. By 1894, Jews had been effectively excluded from the German fraternity and refused even constituent status in any official university organization. Jewish fraternities offered a positive alternative, and the Jewish Corps at Breslau had been in existence since 1886. Jewish fraternities proliferated in the years that

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6George L. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964), p. 196. Mosse's work indicates that in southern Germany the prohibitions applied to baptized Jews as well. In the North, Jews who had converted to the Christian religion were considered acceptable, but the Eisenach Resolution of 1919 rescinded this technicality due to "the inherited racial divisions" that prevented Jews from becoming fraternity brothers.
followed, but they were officially ostracized from university affairs. Faculties and administrators sided with the non-Jewish Corps in cases of racial violence, which was not unusual at the turn of the century. 7

Friction between Jews and anti-Semites continued randomly but perceptibly through the First World War and into the Weimar era. 8 In 1920, Jews again were barred from the dueling privilege in many German universities. The situation was aggravated further in 1922, when student riots at the University of Berlin broke out over a memorial service for Walter Rathenau, the German-Jewish statesman.

During the First World War, a cultural pessimism settled over the German university. When the First World War ended, psychological effects of collapse wore on. The intelligentsia drew in upon itself. The effects of the war and its loss left strong feelings of resentment not always manifested as outrage at the Etappe, "the stab in the back."

7In 1901, the faculty at the University of Heidelberg dissolved the local Jewish fraternity on the grounds that its existence "endangered peace among the students." (Ibid., p. 197.)

8Between 1904 and 1918 Jews found increasing opportunities for dueling partners. This was made possible by official recognition of Jewish fraternities on many German campuses. However, in 1910 the Kyffhauser Bund published a statement on anti-Semitism in their universities indicating that such prejudice was "common to all academic circles" and seemed to stem from volkish sentiments "intellectualized and transferred to elitist frameworks [i.e., fraternities] for implementation." (Ibid., p. 198.)
Skepticism and pessimism combined to make many Germans reject previously existing social values. The writings of Ernst Jünger, a former soldier whose four years on the Western Front had hardened him to an incredible degree, offered a well-developed nihilistic philosophy that appealed to a great many Germans and not an inconsiderable number of intellectuals of the Front Generation. The conservative intellectual's distrust of the new republic only intensified the political isolation of Germany's great universities.

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"No one in postwar Germany gave vent with such vehemence to the resentment against bourgeois culture and civilization at home and against foreign influence and domination abroad as did Jünger in his writings between 1920 and 1933...he preached a gospel of heroic struggle and pan-destructionism." Pinson emphasized that Jünger's work rested on his concept of the "soldier-worker" elite, a sort of Prussian Bolshevik type, who would tear down the sham of postwar German culture and replace it with a blood and iron socialism—not necessarily of the Nazi genre. Despite the elements of militant bolshevism inherent in Jünger's philosophy, Pinson hastened to add: "...the actual effect of his writings, like those of Spengler [e.g., *Decline of the West*] and Moeller van den Bruck, a rightist literary critic, was to attract to National Socialism elements of the population that could not have been won over by other means—a cultural and educated youth who strictly speaking did not follow the Hitler program but who combined in an indefinite, nebulous, and purely emotional fashion pan-German and militaristic nationalism with a revolutionary temper bent on decisive action at all costs."


10 Expanding on this condition, Kuno Francke stated in his *German Afterwar Problems* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,
To this situation was added the pressure of inflated student registration. The student boom in the Weimar era was caused chiefly by a combination of greater educational opportunity and much greater unemployment. As legions of new students descended on the universities, competition for honors increased among teachers as well as students. Thus, disillusionment and overcrowding laid the cornerstone for the bitterness and frustration that plagued German universities. In addition to the strict obedience to academic rank that survived, German scholars developed a decided talent for ruthless criticism of their peers and competitors. In conflicts between inferiors and superiors, it is the observation of Hans Maier that the rivalry between the Dozent (assistant professor) and the Ordinarius (ordinary professor) was both intense and long-term. In his essay, "Nationalsozialistische Hochschulpolitik," Maier noted that the Dozent was kept in

1927), p. 5:
"And yet, what a service could these intellectuals [i.e., of the old regime] have rendered to the young struggling German Republic...if they, particularly the teachers in the Gymnasia and the university professors had whole-heartedly accepted the new political responsibilities which the collapse of the old order brought for them....Instead of that, a defiant pessimism seems to have settled upon the minds of these men."

11I. L. Kandel, The Making of Nazis (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934), p. 456. In 1900, only one out of every 250 Germans had graduated from a university. By 1933, this figure had risen to one out of twenty-two.
his place by the "oligarchy of the ordinary professors" in the Weimar period. Only in the Nazi era was strict observa-
tion of rank discarded for a political, fluid form. The formation of the Dozentenschaft (Assistant Professors League), said Maier, answered the grievances of the Dozent and improved the "legitimate and material positions for the extraordinary professors over the ordinary professors."  

By the mid-1920's anti-Semites had gained a foothold, and faculty members as well as students were aiding them against the Jews. Aryan educators were not above appealing to prejudice in their attacks on Jewish opponents. Into the arena of intensive research, anti-Semitism and competition stepped the Nazis. Adjusting their rhetoric to the receptivity of stu-
dents and professors, the Nazis capitalized on the political naivete of their listeners within the intelligentsia. Where consistency was not a factor, Nazi rhetoricians gave full play to telling the audience what it wanted to hear. This tech-
nique proved no less successful with the middle-class intelle-
tlectual than it had with the working classes or the indus-
trialists.

As National Socialism grew in political strength from the mid-1920's onward, it recruited professors and students as propagandists. Student frustration was working in the

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12Helmut Kuhn et al., Die Deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich (Munich: Piper, 1966), p. 85. (Paperback.)
Nazis' favor. In 1925, the newly-organized Deutsche Studentenschaft (German Student League) declared its desire to merge with its racially-exclusive Austrian counterpart.\(^\text{13}\) The German Minister of Culture, C. H. Becker, refused this request and his counter proposals only added to the league's frustration. With considerable Nazi encouragement, severe student riots broke out in 1931, affecting universities in Berlin, Cologne, Griefswald, Halle, Hamburg, Breslau, Kiel, Koenigsberg and Munich. While these riots produced few, if any, changes in the German university, they set a dangerous precedent and convinced the Nazis that student riots were a useful tool in the rise to power. In the riots of 1931, administrators remained passive, ignoring attacks on Jews and leftist members of their faculties. By 1931, the Deutsche Studentenschaft had grown to 140,000 members and was, by far, the largest German inter-university organization. In 1931, it came under the Nazi party's control. Hitler's star was in the ascendant, and his place in Germany's future was anticipated in the universities.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Despite its anti-Semitic tendencies, the Deutsche Studentenschaft was not, in 1925, a Nazi-controlled organization. As late as 1929, German fraternities actively competed with the Nazis for student recruits, though their conservative and anti-Semitic appeal paralleled the appeals of National Socialism. (See Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology, p. 271.)

\(^{14}\) David Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 71. Before the party membership rolls were closed to applicants in 1933, the Nazi party had grown from roughly 850,000 in 1931 to nearly 2,500,000.
CHAPTER III

HITLER IN POWER: THE UNIVERSITIES CONFORM

In January 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. He was in a position to raze the "liberal and Marxist" influences of Weimar by sweeping away every vestige of that regime. As he had promised for years, Hitler accomplished this task with incredible swiftness and ruthlessness. The German states were reorganized into Gaue or districts, each with a Gauleiter or governor appointed directly by Hitler and thus directly responsible to the Chancellor.

One of the first acts of the new state authority was a move to regulate the number of new students entering the universities. On April 25, 1933, the Reich Minister of the Interior (Frick) announced a nationwide ceiling of 15,000 on the number of Gymnasium (high school) graduates to be allowed to enter German universities. This figure was less than one-half of the 40,000 students expected to graduate from preparatory schools that spring. While the quota limit

1 Kandel, Making of Nazis, p. 511. Gymnasium examination committees were formed to decide who, among the new graduates, would be allowed to enter the universities. Although the orders came from the Ministry of Education, the committees were made up of local Gymnasium teachers. The final decision to reject a student weighed fully on them.
was severe, it would effectively relieve the overcrowding and social pressure the university had experienced for years. Unemployed graduates had been a chronic complaint in Weimar Germany, and Hitler decided to remedy the problem at its source. 2

In the same announcement of April 25, Frick declared that all Jews would be expelled from German universities. Wolfgang Kunkel, a physics professor and senior lecturer who had considerable knowledge of the universities at Göttingen, Heidelberg and Berlin during the Nazizeit (Nazi times), indicated that reactions to the summary dismissals of Jewish professors and students were mixed:

There were instances of students standing up for their teachers: In Berlin a number of young assistant professors and instructors of the law faculty undertook a protest against the dismissal of their older colleagues—-with the result that they themselves were discharged, putting an end to their academic careers.

On the other hand,

It is hard to say, but such conduct [denunciation of one's colleagues] was based on latent anti-Semitism dating, as I suggest, from the Weimar era. It was brought out by fear of being implicated, a wish that one not put himself in the line of fire of the terror that had begun to rule.

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2 Franz L. Neumann stated in Behemoth (Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 399 that official policy reduced the total university enrollments for all of Germany from 97,576 in 1932 to 51,527 in 1938. Neumann also feels that the social composition within the universities during this period remained a constant middle-class to upper middle-class standard.
in the German universities in the summer of 1933.\(^3\)

The far-reaching effects of the April 25 decree were immediately felt. Hans Maier noted that in Berlin in April 1933:

Nazi students made demands of the acting Rector (Kohlrusch) in "Twelve theses Against the Un-German Spirit in the University" which was a blue-print for National Socialist disorganization of the university--Jews were never to be admitted as academic instructors or be allowed to publish in the Hebrew language (!). In Kiel the students demanded, under threat of violence, the dismissal of 28 professors; works by assistant professors that were deemed "un-German" were seized by student groups at several universities. Individual institutes were stormed.\(^4\)

The expulsion of the Jews was carried out with thoroughness and efficiency. More than sixteen hundred academicians, of whom eleven hundred were professors or lecturers, were expelled within the first year of Hitler's rule. According to Hans Maier, the Academic Aid Organization in London reported 313 ordinary professors, 109 extraordinary professors, 75 honorary professors, 322 instructors and 42 lecturers dismissed. From scientific institutes, 133 researchers, 232 assistants and 174 recent graduates were dismissed in the 1933 purges.\(^5\) The technical institutes fared somewhat better

\(^3\)See Kuhn et al., *Die Deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich*, pp. 118-119.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 78.

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 82.
than university schools: their losses amounted to 10.7 percent of their staffs while the university average was about 15 percent, with medical schools losing the greatest numbers and law schools sustaining the highest percentage of losses—21.2 percent of their staffs. 

Jews were not the only victims of the early mass dismissals but as "racial enemies of the state" their visibility proved higher than that of the Social Democrats or other "dangerous liberals" among their colleagues whose Aryanism temporarily saved for them their university posts. Nevertheless, these more secret enemies of Nazism would be under close observation shortly. Subsequently, premature pensioning became the most common method for removing outspoken critics among German faculties. The first phase of National Socialist university policy, said Hans Maier, was effected by the Nazis through the Reichswissenschaf tsministerium.

6 Karl Dietrich Bracher, The German Dictatorship (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 269. Among those intellectuals who emigrated from Germany, the problems of readjustment did not end with their successful immigration. While the physicists and mathematicians had no trouble in adjusting to lecturing in a foreign country once they had mastered the language, the lawyers had particular difficulty readjusting their skills to a new law system.

7 On July 24, 1933, a declaration required all members of the civil service to present a written statement of their loyalty to the Reich. Primary and secondary school teachers (university instructors were not members of the civil service) composed 22 percent of the estimated 700,000 civil servants, and their records were reviewed to weed out any undesirables. By January 1934, the Ministry of Education was satisfied that its work had prompted "diligent compliance with the government." (See Kandel, Making of Nazis, p. 500.)
(Reich Ministry of Education). It was ushered in by four events, which can be seen as the four steps of the Nazi Gleichschaltung of the German university. A moritorium of classes taught by unpopular professors began the sequence of events, using demonstrations, book-burnings and riots ("started mostly by Nazi students," said Maier) to create the impression of a genuine student revolt. With feigned indignation, the Nazi authorities directed the Ministry of Education to introduce step two--state control through regimentation of the entire German university system. At the same time, a thorough purge of "undesirable" assistant professors and students completed step three of the Nazi plan.

Following the regimentation and purge, the Nazis presumed to make the German university "the center of a new folkish self-leadership, engaged in building offices of learning." This fourth step, an undertaking to be led by all the newly appointed university lecturers and those older scholars "whose hearts had turned to the movement" was reasonably successful.\(^8\) The reaction from university personnel who survived the major purges was surprisingly like the response given by the German civil service: without significant protest, Gleichschaltung was accepted by some as a bearable imposition, and by others as an opportunity to

\(^8\)Kuhn et al., *Die Deutsche Universität*, pp. 76-77.
reap government patronage. But, it would be unfair to typify the reaction only in these terms. Optimism, skepticism, even disinterest were also factors in the individual’s response.

According to Wolfgang Kunkel:

For many university teachers the seizure of power by Hitler was either welcomed or accepted as an unavoidable event to make the best of. Some—but not too many, although among them were prominent scholars—let themselves get caught up in the spiritual intoxication sweeping through Germany in early 1933. They really believed that a better age was beginning, a rebirth of German character with an emphasis on National Socialism.

Further,

Other professors...more or less unaware of the threat, the mindlessness of National Socialism, saw in it the signs of a revolution...they believed they were chosen to help build the New Order that would lay the foundation for the development of an authoritarian state system.

Considering opportunism and idealism as two possible motivations, Kunkel declared:

I must mention here, and make perfectly clear...that the baseness of many of my erstwhile colleagues in uniting with National Socialism was not simply a matter of opportunism but was more often an example of genuine idealism that they gave away freely to an evil thing.9

9Ibid., pp. 120-121. Schoenbaum noted in Hitler’s Social Revolution, p. 263:

"...those sympathetic to the National Socialist cause advanced into positions vacated by Jews and political opponents and occasional party protégés and charlatans like Hans Gunther, the racist, or Willy Borger, the Cologne Trustee of Labor were
An Aryan stance could further many ambitions in Nazi Germany, not the least of which was university advancement or professional prestige. An unprincipled use of anti-Semitic criticism lent tremendous emphasis to a scholar's work, silenced his critics in Germany and discounted the work of his opponents. Again, Wolfgang Kunkel noted:

There was also pure opportunism, naturally. There were people who could forget their political past, and continue their careers or (unless they did not need to) rationalize the validity of making a sacrificium intellectus. To such people it was never wrong.10

Kunkel acknowledged that "the Germany university was brown" (i.e., Nazi) but he stated that many within the university neither helped nor hindered the Nazis in this transformation. Concerning dogma, most lecturers and researchers made no concessions and the nonsense of "German Physics" (a system that denounced Einstein's theory of relativity) "was not taken seriously, in the scientific sense, by anyone."11 During the purge of the universities, whole schools of thought went into exile and many of the remaining disciplines were perverted, but some areas went untouched.

10 Ibid., p. 121.

11 Ibid., pp. 125, 131.
Every one of the dismissed professors reported that the older generation of scholars was left undisturbed by the Nazis, provided, of course, that it was not active against them.\textsuperscript{12}

At the same time, however, the rate of professional advancement within the faculty system was accelerated. The Privatdozent, characteristically a long transitional period in a scholar's life, was reduced due to vacancies brought about by purge dismissals. There was a shortening of the newcomer's partial-status time, before he received full teaching rank. This was particularly true in the medical schools and law schools, where vacancies were very numerous.\textsuperscript{13}

In 1933, the German conservative middle class generally believed that the rough edges of National Socialism could and would be ironed out. To accelerate this refining process, members of the intelligentsia involved themselves in "parlor Nazism" a sort of political dilettantism.\textsuperscript{14} Since the majority of the Nazis' critics had been expelled from public life, intimidated or deported by the end of 1934, the arguments for or against cooperation with the New Order was largely a matter

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Schoenbaum, \textit{Hitler's Social Revolution}, p. 263.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 263.
\item \textsuperscript{14} In \textit{The German Dictatorship}, p. 248, Bracher believed that the Old Guard Nazis recognized and rebuffed the newcomers as opportunists and parasites, but "...this does not alter the fact that intellectual fellow travelers at first rendered most valuable assistance. Goebbels, the 'intellectual' among the Nazi leaders, was the one to see and exploit this most skillfully...."
\end{itemize}
of individual conscience and Nazi propaganda influence.

K. F. Werner summed up the situation very well:

As we have seen, the alliance of army, industry, university and church with the regime must have suggested itself in the union of the German people, in their growing well-being with each succeeding year under Hitler. Without being the same thing, the people and the party had many things in common: one did not like the Jews, one loathed the communists or feared them, one appreciated the "order" that now reigned and noted the harsh punishment against profiteering... one applauded the disappearance of unemployment, one was pleased with the "homecoming" of the Saar, Austria, the Sudetenland, Memelland, and Danzig. The appetite came with eating, not only for the Nazis.¹⁵

Ignoring opportunism as the compelling force, there were several other considerations that might drive a professional scholar or working intellectual into the arms of the Nazi party.

One factor that required serious thinking was the Nazis' de facto control of cultural life within Germany's borders. On September 23, 1933, the Chamber of Culture became an official organization of the Reich. It was included under the Ministry of Propaganda and it had been the special project of Dr. Goebbels. The chamber was composed of seven divisions: the chambers of art, cinema, writing, journalism, radio, theater, and music. An advisory council which in-

cluded the presidents of these affiliated sub-chambers was created to advise the Propaganda Ministry of the chamber's progress and to meet periodically with Dr. Goebbels for his comments and orders. 16

The Reich Culture Chamber was defined as a control and censorship agency to which all intellectual workers had to belong. In effect, an artist's exclusion or expulsion from the chamber meant the end of his career in Germany. So much for the artists, musicians, writers and cinematographers and the university faculties of art, music, literature, and journalism. But what about the departments of medicine, law, history and philosophy?

Here the Ministry of Education had technical jurisdiction under the provisions for all general education within the Reich. In reality, this jurisdiction was applied only randomly after 1934 as more specialized teachers' clubs and associations became responsible to the Nazi party. The Federal Institute for the History of the New Germany rewrote history to Nazi specifications. The National Socialist Lawyers' Organization did their part by writing articles that

16Richard Strauss accepted the presidency of the Reich Music Chamber and Hans Blunck accepted a similar post in the Literature Chamber. The support of these two famous personalities for Goebbels' Culture Chamber was only one facet of intellectual cooperation. Rudolph Binding, Max Halbe, and Hans Johnst supported Blunck's decision and assisted him in the Literature Chamber. (See Bracher, The German Dictatorship, p. 267.)
condemned the Jews. These were only two of the organizations that took over the Education Ministry's surveillance of university personnel.\footnote{Newmann, \textit{Behemoth}, pp. 123-124.} As K. F. Werner noted:

The assistant professors were forced to join the National Socialist Assistant Professors Union while the students were forced into the National Socialist Student Union. The scholars forcibly cut off from foreign countries lost their contact with foreign research and degenerated into spiritual provincialism. Professors, who with determination pointedly opposed or at least would consider announcing their opposition, had to put such appearances into the surrounding context, so that they read as a hymn to the new state. These images were undeniably true, so much that if one has not lived under the totalitarian system, one can not visualize the hardship and helplessness of those who could not agree with the system and yet had to live and suffer under it.\footnote{Werner, \textit{Das-NS Geschichtsbild}, p. 47.}

Although the articulated stance in favor of the Nazi government was a factor that influenced an academician's professional actions, his life was conditioned to jump when the department said so, and this fact did not change under the Nazis. Werner stated:

Where did the assistant professors who were suited to follow the party line come from? Their number stayed low, and the clamor over their shortcomings did not last long. The criteria for their suitability put them in the hands of the newly established ordinary professors and each had to resign himself to the will of the faculty. The faculties fought against the state with silent opposition, meeting the graduation
and promotion of such candidates with hostility or indifference. They continued to maintain the departmental point of view with few exceptions. No overt resistance was detected, but passive resistance was successful through their departmental attitude.19

Another factor influencing a scholar's acceptance of Nazi will was its non-interference in his work. While political activities were carefully regulated, specialized research, because of its inherent complexity, was allowed to continue unhampered. That this last most important refuge of narrow professionalism was left inviolate may explain why Germany continued to enjoy the benefits of an advancing technology while social sciences and the arts stagnated in the confines of Nazi Kultur. In many cases, the researcher was astonished at the encouragement and honors that his work received. The more functional discoveries always excited party circles. From the time a researcher received his first official accolades, it was a short interlude before the flattered intellectual accepted research grants or assignments to one of the Nazis' special projects. Praise was as much an inducement to open cooperation as terror, social pressure or the demands of earning a living.20

19 Werner, Das NS-Geschichtsbild, p. 68.

20 In the 19th edition of Adolf Bartels' literary history, the author wrote: "I cannot deny that I was proud when Adolf Hitler on May 1st of this year bestowed on me the Eagle Plaque of the German Reich." (See Lowie, Toward Understanding Germany, p. 160.)
end, it was this positive attraction of National Socialism that kept most of Germany's intelligentsia at home after 1933. Nothing could match the first waves of enthusiasm that engulfed Germany in 1933, but the intellectual's disillusionment was tempered by new self-respect and the faith that his work was valuable, even to the Nazis.

Of necessity, the Nazi state recognized the absolute demand for intellectuals in a modern technological state. Where progress was concerned, no modern nation could subsist on the service of technicians alone. The pure scientist, theorist or researcher was an irreplaceable part of the industrial state. The university and whatever harmless trappings it possessed were, likewise, essential. If researchers and theorists were needed, the university would have to stay. Grudgingly, Hitler admitted this fact. In a speech in Berlin on December 12, 1940, Hitler told the workers at the RheinmetallBorsig Works:

I was obliged to take a stand that in the existing situation we could not afford to make experiments. It certainly would have been simple to eliminate the intelligentsia. Such a process could be carried out at once. But we would have to wait fifty or perhaps a hundred years for the gap to refill—and such a period would mean the destruction of the nation.21

The younger generation of Nazis assimilated this basic truth faster than their elders. Parlor Nazism and the inter-

lectual had been rejected by the Party Old Guard in 1933 and 1934, but student youth leaders were accepted by the Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) from the mid-1930's onward.\textsuperscript{22}

Increasing numbers of students were sent abroad by the Nazi Student Exchange program and the SS was recruiting university graduates to fill its special branches. This Nazi patronage was a realistic maneuver to recruit the intellectual and use his skills to promote National Socialism's grand designs. The most pragmatic of Germany's intellectuals realized and accepted this arrangement, profiting from the terms of their cooperation. But, this was not always the case, as K. F. Werner observed:

When one has attempted to describe this area \textit{Gleichschaltung} through sketches, one has come closer to answering the question of the professors' reaction to Hitler's rule. Of the weak connection between the ordinary professors, the mass influence of the students, and the NSDAP before 1933 one must call attention to the fact: Before the assumption of power, no ordinary professor was a party member. It is a statement that should be stressed, that the universities with their senates and faculties

\textsuperscript{22}Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution, p. 75:
"If through 1936 Hitler Youth leadership tended to be the monopoly of the "young workers" the apprentices and shop clerks of the pre-1933 days, from 1936 on it tended to become an affair of the academically educated middle class. Klonne estimates that from 1936 on more than 50 per cent of the Hitler Youth leadership was recruited from 'respectable middle class' circles, and that the higher ranks included 25 per cent university students and graduates."
thought of the victorious party as "another world," confronting it like the church. That notable Nazis like Goebbels, who had completed a university education, and some young scholars and assistant professors associated themselves with the party scarcely changed the fact that before 1933 Alexander von Muller was no professor. Certainly the coordination was felt in the university and underpinned by the student organization. Hans Maier states the case of the researchers in the Reich Ministry of Education--in 5 years 45 percent of all official chairs of learning were transferred to other parties.23

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23 Werner, Das NS-Geschichtsbild, pp. 43 and 45. Werner stressed that the academic hierarchy was severely shocked, but it was not neutralized.
CHAPTER IV

ACCEPTANCE OF NAZISM: CAUSES

The acceptance of Hitler and rule by the Nazis was not merely the capitulation of the German intellectual, but was an event shared by elements of all the social strata of Germany, excluding the Jewish community. Likewise, the German intellectual’s adjustment was an isolated instance of a more general condition, but it had so many points in common with the national acceptance that it appears a congruent, though smaller, example of the larger phenomenon. For the moment, this larger spectacle deserves our attention.

When Fabian von Schlabrendorff wrote The Secret War Against Hitler, a study of the German resistance and his part in it, he began his work with a condemnation of the view, popularized by William Shirer in The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich that, as Shirer put it, "Nazism and the Third Reich, in fact, were but a logical continuation


of German history."^3 Von Schlabrendorff saw this as an "incredibly primitive" view, believable because it contained cliché elements of truth that "are more misleading and harmful than actual falsehoods." Since Nazism had rooted firmly in German soil, some analysts feared that it might germinate successfully in other educated lands. To allay this fear, von Schlabrendorff believed, non-German observers attempted to "prove that Nazism and its rule were peculiarly and exclusively German."^4 Shirer's thesis that Luther and the Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, and Prussianism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the three major antecedents leading to Hitler's rise, with the Prussian military machine and a subservient state bureaucracy as an immediate foundation for the Reich--were countered by von Schlabrendorff's more realistic appraisal of the immediate events. These were: the economic collapse after World War I (and a chronic instability in the Weimar economy mirrored in the faces of six million jobless workers); the spiritual demoralization following the defeat; and the widespread feeling

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^3Ibid., p. 133. Von Schlabrendorff cites R. D. O. Butler's From Luther to Hitler and Erich Fromm's studies of the Reformation as examples of the Shirer genre. This form of hindsight, centered on the Nazi experience, and looking backward from the atmosphere it generated, is ironically not unlike the Nazis' own image of themselves as the culture-bearers for a new civilization based on a past German barbarism. (See von Schlabrendorff, The Secret War, p. 16.)

^4See von Schlabrendorff, The Secret War, pp. 14, 16.
of indignation and anger over the Versailles Diktat.  

But neither the obedience of the vast majority nor the resistance of the minority of Germans can be explained in such simplistic terms. No matter how these "causes" are determined, or with what prejudice, an answer to the question of the Germans' adjustment to Nazism requires a deeper investigation into the psychological reactions of an entire people. Along this line, von Schlabrendorff holds that civil obedience to the legitimate political power of National Socialism (after 1933) was not the only restricting factor in the German resistance movement. There was a "reality" fabricated and harped on by the Nazis that became a limited psychological reality in Germany. This was the proposition that all power of any kind in Germany would be labeled "National Socialist," that resistance to National Socialism in any significant way would be crushed, and that any other resistance, if successful in any permanent way, would be insignificant.

Von Schlabrendorff maintains that Hitler's constant hammering on the single theme of National Socialism as Germany's inextricable link to the future served as a point of reference.

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5 Von Schlabrendorff viewed these events and conditions as essential or "...Hitler would never have succeeded in making himself the master of the German People...." (Ibid., p. 21.) Further, public skepticism of Weimar's parliamnentarianism aided Hitler in his abolition of its forms, including all previous restrictions on the power of the Chancellor and President.
and a uniting ideal that blinded most Germans to differences
and dissidents alike. Those splinter groups that existed
after 1933 had little chance of mass support in Nazi Germany
and remained isolated pockets of resistance.

This is not to say that de facto National Socialism was
a consistent, well-defined ideology or that the Nazi party
was a united hierarchy, dispensing the Führer's wishes with­
out alteration of intent or misunderstanding of final objec­
tive. On the contrary, because of the elements and personal­
ities that made up the N.S.D.A.P. were so diverse, the move­
ment was more an emotionally-directed menagerie than a total­
itarian order. The ideology of Nazism was more developed

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6 See von Schlabrendorff, The Secret War, pp. 23, 24,
29. Again, to maintain this reality, the Gestapo served as
both a symbol and as a real force in eliminating all resis­
tance. Actually, it did not neutralize all resistance
groups in Germany immediately (or in some cases, even event­
ually)--this due mainly to a lack of intelligence informa­
tion leading to the identification and arrest of state
enemies. But, the Gestapo gave the psychological impression
that it could liquidate all its unseen enemies, with the
result that many potential centers of discontent in the
Wehrmacht (Armed Forces), in industry and labor remained
undefined or ineffectual.

7 As A. J. Ryder stated in his Twentieth Century Germany:
From Bismarck to Brandt (New York: Columbia University Press,
1973):
"Yet, within the party, behind the facade of
total conformity, fierce conflict remained. Among
leading Nazis the struggle for power or for influ­
ence over the Führer--often the same thing--led to
bitter rivalry: Himmler against Röhm, Rosenberg
against Goebbels, Göring against the generals, the
generals against the Ministry of Economics, later
Speer against Göring, Himmler against Bormann,
Speer against Sauckel, to mention only some of the
than Italian fascism, according to Koppel Pinson in his work, Modern Germany. But, Pinson also pointed out that Nazi ideology could be modified or overruled when expediency dictated. He stated, for example:

...it [National Socialism] did not occupy the same position of dogmatic authority nor did it receive the same degree of technical and scholarly implementation that Marxism received in the Communist dictatorship in Russia.  

Thus, party ideology was flexible, and it was subject to divergent interpretations. Socialism for the Nazis, for example, was not an economic principle contending to replace private industry with public control of the means of production. Pinson believed that Hitler considered this distinction a trifle, that the Fuhrer's aim was to socialize the people, not their industry and property.

Ryder noted a continuing feud between the ideologues in the party and the technocrats "who wanted efficiency and a quiet life." According to Dr. Ryder, Nazism was no more than authoritarian anarchy. The Third Reich did not achieve a full totalitarian implementation or even the consistency of ideology seen in Soviet Russia in the 1930's. While Ryder is unfair to compare the short development of National Socialism (principally if not entirely through Hitler) to the much longer gestation period of Communism, pronouncing the former unusable and the latter functional, he does have a point: Nazi Germany was never as politically efficient, all-encompassing or totalitarian as its foreign contemporaries believed it to be. The image of Nazi totalitarianism was a fabrication of excellent propaganda, for it convinced Germans and foreigners alike.

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8 Pinson, Modern Germany, p. 490.
9 Ibid., p. 499.
Concerning Hitler's use of expediency in most ideological matters (e.g., his rapprochement with big business and labor, despite an avowed promise to defend small business), Edward N. Peterson in *The Limits of Hitler's Power* stated:

Hitler's belief in anything other than power is difficult to discover in governmental operations. Anti-Semitism would be the exception. Yet even here, so strange as it seems, no clear course is apparent from 1933 to Auschwitz.⁠¹⁰

On anti-Semitism in Nazi ideology, Hajo Holborn, a German emigre who came to the United States after his expulsion from teaching in 1933, commented on Hitler's unscrupulous use of anti-Semitism and the effect such racial hardening would have on the German people:

Hitler's biological materialism excluded all ethics. In the pursuit of its struggle for power, which is the dictate of the blood, the race-conscious people could use any means....He [Hitler] derided the stupidity of the bourgeoisie and the old upper classes for being hampered by humanitarian scruples. Only people with a fanatic belief in race would be able to fight without being bothered by humanitarian and traditionalist inhibitions. Hitler readily admitted that such people would be barbarians.⁠¹¹

⁠¹⁰See Edward N. Peterson, *The Limits of Hitler's Power* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 10. On page 4, Peterson explained: "...He [Hitler] was a remote umpire, handing down decisions from on high when his underlings could not agree, or, almost as frequently, not giving a decision, but delaying it until a more propitious occasion, which rarely came...." Peterson noted that this is not his opinion alone, but that it is shared by Alan Bullock, Helmut Heiber, and Hermann Rauschning, who all agree to Hitler's bohemian procrastination in decision-making.

No matter how inconsistent, uneven or completely vicissitudinary the Führer's administration of state was, Hitler's ideological conception of the Nazi as a stereotype bearing the cruel characteristics of the Nietzschean superman (but none of the individuality) remained unchanged. It was a personality Hitler fancied for himself, and incarnated in the SS ideal.

Because few leaders in the Nazi hierarchy fit the superman image physically and/or mentally, they all compensated psychologically by overemphasizing this ideal in their speeches and writings. The effect was to provide a common ground for competing groups within the Nazi movement: the blond, blue-eyed superman—the ideal Aryan type—was applauded from all sides as the goal of National Socialism. To provide this type with a foundation for its subjugation of Germany, Europe and the rest of the world was the only worthwhile function of National Socialism. Anti-Semitism's direction to the eventual elimination of the Jewish question served only to was an end in itself for Hitler, it also served as National Socialism's best tool for psychological conditioning. The desired outcome, as A. J. Ryder emphasized in a quote attributed to Hitler from Jochim Fest's The Face of the Third Reich (London, 1970) was: "...My pedagogy is hard....In my fortress of the Teutonic Order [i.e., the Ordensburg] a youth will grow up before whom the world will tremble. I want a violent, domineering, undismayed, cruel youth....it must bear pain. There must be nothing weak and gentle about it. The free splendid beast of prey must once more flash from its eyes." (See Ryder, Twentieth Century Germany, p. 366.)
enhance the breeding environment for the superman. It would remove all (?) foreign elements and provide the pure conditions necessary for the proper rearing of the superman.

Such bombast was, pathetically, the only concept on which Nazis agreed, or to which they consistently paid lip service. It was an abstraction that remained unchanged in Nazi ideology to the end of the war and Germany's collapse. In reality, the ideal was only a focal point for vested interests, both personal and professional. The Nazi party would have dissolved had it not triumphed politically, and had it not been held together by Hitler until such time that industry, labor and the army provided it with the necessary forms to harden it into an institution.

A question arises concerning National Socialism and German society. To what extent was the latter eroded by the former? To what extent did the latter modify the intentions and actions of the former, buffering fanatical zeal or checking nihilistic impulses? Perhaps a look at the SS, since it was largely after 1933 that it developed, and since it developed into such an important organization, would be instructive.

The SS, as mentioned earlier, rapidly expanded in numbers and political force after 1934. Heinrich Himmler, as Reichsführer SS and head of the Gestapo, combined police, intelligence and para-military units to give the SS a political influence that extended into virtually all areas of
German life. But to maintain this influence competently, Himmler realized that he had to make compromises. The first of these was technical: intelligence specialists of the Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service) were recruited for university degrees and special skills, not just for racial characteristics, although initially these standards were maintained. (During the war, loosening of standards in the SS led to recruitment of Latvians, Russians and even Muslim auxiliaries—the manpower shortage was increasingly severe.) But Himmler's greatest desire was to adjust the SS to German society, and to make the SS "respectable." As Hajo Holborn observed in his History of Modern Germany:

A good sprinkling of noblemen among the commanders of its military units and a large number of academically trained people, particularly medical doctors [could be found in the SS].

Holborn also said that Himmler cultivated social respectability for the SS by "appointing many high government officials and industrialists honorary members of the SS. after 1933." Men like Walter Schellenberg, Reinhard Höhn, Franz

12 See Holborn, History of Modern Germany, p. 748.

13 According to Karl Saller, Die Rassenlehre des Nationalsozialismus in Wissenschaft und Propaganda (Darmstadt: Progreß-Verlag, 1961), p. 105, the SS instituted a SS. Dienstalterliste (nobility list) in 1938 that offered the following:

von 16 Obergruppenführern waren 3 adelig (noble)
von 61 Gruppenführern.......... 5 adelig
von 49 Brigadeführern .......... 7 adelig
von 217 Oberführern ............ 19 adelig
und 305 Standartenführern...... 24 adelig
Alfred Six and Otto Ohlendorf played parts in the leadership of the SD. With the exception of Ohlendorf, these personalities had little in common with Ernst Junger's soldier-worker, Nietzsche's superman or Hitler's ideal Aryan warlord. Between the real and the ideal, the gulf appeared unbridgeable, yet it was spanned by propaganda both in films and speeches. A compromise in ideals was easily handled. Indeed, the skill with which Hitler juggled ideas and made deals became a fundamental condition for all Nazi political activity at the highest levels.

One result of political maneuvering after 1933 was the disillusionment of party fanatics and "old street fighters." The situation was very mixed, however. On one hand, the Röhm purge was a denial of the old Nazi party, a sacrifice of the SA in a deal between Hitler and the Reichswehr (old army). On the other hand, literally thousands of old party men were given patronage all out of proportion to their administrative abilities or skills. Ultimately, the arbiter in cases of high-level power struggles between personalities was the Führer. Adolf Hitler's moods colored his decisions with inconsistency.

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14 Edward Peterson suggests in the introduction to his work, Limits of Hitler's Power, p. xiii, that in action the Third Reich's political personalities operated much as their counterparts in the Western democracies, using "...force and counterforce, conflict, and compromise as in the more public power struggles in democratic societies." (See also p. xiv.)
Probably the best indication of the change in the Nazi party was seen in the adjustments it made in the German economy, and the effects this work had in shifting party power. It is clear that the Nazis in governing Germany were as much changed by the experience as Germany was changed by being administrated by the Nazis. The early administration was blessed with some huge successes: unemployment was wiped out; industrial production doubled; the Gross National Product rose 87 percent in five years. Food production also increased, according to A. J. Ryder and, as a result of efficient rationing, food supplies during the war were adequate to sustain the population of Germany. In 1916-1918, they had not been sufficient. There were the Autobahnen (motorways), praised by Nazi propagandists and acknowledged by foreign observers as a great achievement in their own right. There was the rapid modernization and expansion of the Wehrmacht, together with the creation of Göring's shining star, the Luftwaffe (Air Force). In short, Germany experienced

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15 See Ryder, Twentieth Century Germany, p. 345. Ryder's figures show a drop in unemployment in Germany from 6 million to 3.77 million at the end of 1933. At the same time, industrial production was up 13 percent and income in agriculture was up 20 percent. By 1938, unemployment reached a low of 400,000 and industrial production and the GNP were nearly double that of the 1933 level.

16 Ibid., p. 357: "...German population did not experience the shortage of food it had known in 1916-18. The intake of the average civilian remained at or near 2,700 calories a day for most of the war; even during the winter of 1944-5 it was about 2,450."
an economic revival under the Nazis that surpassed that of
any western nation in the Depression era.

But behind these successes there was conflict. Ryder
touched on the state of confusion arising from competing
Nazi agencies:

...Inadequate supplies of steel and other
materials, of transport and labour were
competed for by four rival organizations:
Göring's Four Year Plan office, Thomas in
the O.K.W., Funk's Ministry of Economics,
and the Organization Todt which was re­
ponsible for building the new motor
roads, the fortifications in the West,
and many other projects.17

While this multiplicity of economic organizations allowed
the Nazis to produce in many areas at once, there was consid­
erable waste and duplication of effort. This was particularly
true during the first years of the war. Indeed, both Holborn
and Ryder consider Albert Speer to be the crucial resource
that kept the Reich going after 1942.18 At the time of Speer's
appointment as head of the Organization Todt, there were four
other competitors for critical war materials. They were:
Göring's Four Year Plan office, Thomas' O.K.W. Economics and
Armaments branch, Funk's Ministry of Economics and Seldte's
Labor Ministry. Initially Speer, with Hitler's approval, made
inroads into Thomas' and Göring's areas of resource control.

17See Ryder, Twentieth Century Germany, p. 351.

18Author's note: Speer assumed control of the Organization Todt after Dr. Todt's death in a plane crash in February, 1942.
Then in June 1943, Thomas resigned after being accused of defeatism and Speer assumed some control of O.K.W. Armaments. One year later, Speer had complete authority over armaments production for all the services of the Wehrmacht.  

Whereas before 1942 Speer's chief connection with Hitler had been as the "Führer's architect," he now assumed a position of central importance at the very highest level of leadership under Hitler. As such, the Speer phenomenon can only be seen as a triumph of the technocrats over the ideologues. The personality of the party had changed greatly in the war years, partly due to the demands on the leadership and the economy, and partly due to the failures of several key personalities. Hess' flight to Scotland in 1940 and Göring's failures at Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and in supply efforts for Stalingrad all worked to change the texture of Nazi leadership under Hitler.  

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19 See A. J. Ryder, Twentieth Century Germany, p. 433. Dr. Ryder believed that Speer deserves much of the credit for Germany's increased war production. In 1944, he noted that production of tanks (in tons) was seven times larger than production in 1941. While 9,540 aircraft of all kinds were built in 1941, 34,350 aircraft came off assembly lines in 1944. Between 1941 and 1944 munitions output tripled, and Speer had cut out so much waste and duplication that only "a relatively small rise in the consumption of steel and an even more modest expansion in the numbers employed was noted." Hajo Holborn's figures for the increase in war production coincide with Ryder's statistics, but they differ in determining peak production: Ryder says the peak was reached in the fall of 1944 and Holborn claims it was reached in June, 1944. (See Ryder, Twentieth Century Germany, p. 436; and Holborn, History of Modern Germany, p. 756.)

20 Rudolf Hess, as Party Secretary and Hitler's early party comrade had flown to Scotland to offer Britain peace
Central among these changes was Martin Bormann's control of Hitler's appointments as Party Secretary. Party leaders had an intense hatred for Bormann for isolating the Führer. As Edward Peterson observed:

Under Bormann the party became much less the beerhall crowd going wild during an emotional Hitler speech than the lifeless bureaucracy they abhorred. ...21

From Röhm, Hess, Goebbels and Göring the party power shifted to Bormann, Himmler and Speer. While ultimate power rested with Hitler, this shift was indicative of a maturation during the last years of the Reich. The lines of power remained confused and Göring, Goebbels and lesser notables in the hierarchy continued to challenge Bormann, Himmler and Speer and the technocrats. But the changes in Nazi party administration and the directions of National Socialism were predicated on the outcome of significant events during the war and adaptations demanded by the economic needs of Ger-

terms, quite without Hitler's sanction or knowledge. The Führer was furious at this betrayal. Göring as "Second Man in the Reich" began losing Hitler's favor after he failed to stop the British evacuation at Dunkirk (an honor he had asked for, convincing Hitler that General Heinz Guderian's Panzer were not needed, and should be held back). Though officially Hitler's successor (after 1939), Göring, according to Edward Peterson, was eclipsed by Himmler and Bormann by the end of 1943. (See Peterson, Limits of Hitler's Power, p. 73.)

21Ibid., p. 435. Peterson stated in his introduction (p. xiv): "...the basic assumption is...that Hitler's power was not complete but limited in some way by most of the people with whom he had to deal directly or indirectly." Certainly, Bormann had a key power in determining who would get an audience with the Führer.
many during the whole period, 1933-1945. It is best to note here, as Herbert Marcuse would, that with the success of the Nazis' conservative revolution, the need for Nazi revolutionaries ceased. What was needed after 1933 were Nazi bureaucrats, technicians and professional administrators. The shift in power and influence from the old party members to the new "Parlor Nazis," careerists and technocrats bears this out. The demands Germany put on the Nazis transformed them and their party. The adjustment of Germany to National Socialism was not one-sided.

We can return to an explanation of how German society was changed or eroded by National Socialism, and to what degree the Nazis were accepted, supported and obeyed. For this analysis, the author will concentrate on the positions held by Hajo Holborn, A. J. Ryder, Edward N. Peterson, Hans Kohn, and Koppel S. Pinson. In no way does the author consider these five sources as exclusive or definitive, but they do offer a "moderate" historical analysis of the German adjustment to Nazism.

Koppel Pinson is aligned closely with Hans Kohn in his views and the two historians can be taken together.²² Both emphasize the influence of Ernst Jünger and Oswald Spengler.

²²Pinson stated in his introduction to Modern Germany, p. x, that his position was most strongly influenced by "Professor Hans Kohn, who by personal contact as well as by his published works has helped to give direction as well as stimulation to much of my thinking."
on young intellectuals in the postwar era. While Kohn and Pinson saw the revolt against reason as an especially German reaction to humanism, liberalism and the Enlightenment, Kohn was the first to declare:

National Socialism was as little the natural or logical outcome of German history as Leninism was of Russian history. There is no inevitability in history.... However, Communism and National Socialism were made possible by the historical and political traditions of the two nations involved—not by what they had in common with the West but by what separated their intellectual and social development from that of the West.23

This separation occurred at the end of the Napoleonic wars but probably even before Waterloo. Kohn saw a conscious deviation in German thought after 1812. With the liberation of the German states from French control, the Germans appeared to turn into "a dynamic nation whose will centered upon power and the power state." While westerners "distrusted and feared its abuse," Germans "felt an almost religious reverence for power."24 Fichte, Hegel and Marx are seen as leading thinkers

23 See Hans Kohn, Mind of Germany (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), pp. 8, 9. On page 490 of his Modern Germany, Pinson wrote: "...National Socialism represented the most extreme manifestation of the twentieth century revolt against reason. Its basic psychological character was anti-intellectualism. Instead of reason, it founded its entire ideological structure on the appeal to emotion and the appeal to force."

24 See Kohn, Mind of Germany, p. 10. At the same time, Kohn admits that Germany's disjointed political condition made this preoccupation with the power state no more than an esoteric exercise, until Prussia's ascendancy in the 1860's.
preoccupied with the nation, the economy and the state, and their writings eulogized the state as a self-fulfilling entity—according to Kohn. Whereas westerners moved away from authoritarian concepts, the Germans identified with these ideas and elevated them to a philosophical level. Kohn concluded that Germany experienced several generations of anti-Western and anti-intellectual thought before Hitler, and that German intellectuals were attracted by the Nazis' avowed nihilism, Geist und Macht (spirit and power), and identification with radical authoritarianism as the principle means of fulfilling Germany's historical mission.

The collapse of 1918 only brought these desires into focus. The popularity of Spengler's Decline of the West and Jünger's work has been mentioned. Kohn believed that the Front Generation was bitterly contemptuous. Germany had been separated from the West for generations, but the Front Generation separated itself from German society and even Christianity.25 Pinson agreed with all of this, noting that the Nazis' frank brutality was attractive to the Front Generation and to some of the younger generation who did not experience the war on the battlefield.26 In typifying the atmosphere that the


26 Author's note: Others among the younger generation were also part of the Front Generation—they had seen service in France in 1918 when some of them were only fourteen or fifteen years old.
Nazis were trying to create, Pinson noted:

...The thirteen years of Nazi rule opened up a chasm of primitive drives and animalic forces that seem to separate the world before and after Hitler by a time span of thousands of years.27

Indeed, initially this is what Nazi fanatics wanted most from their conservative revolution. The triumph of National Socialism would mean the defeat of the Bourgeoisie, the wasting away of the Church, the elimination of weak-kneed intellectuals and financially privileged classes, and the ascendancy of neo-feudalism. The SA (Sturm Abteilung or "Storm Division") man was to be the archetypal proletarian barbarian--strong, hard and cruel. The flow of emotions was toward the nihilistic. If in the pursuit of conquest Germany was destroyed, it would include everything and everyone in that destruction. As Pinson explained:

Nazi demands could never be satisfied because "being satisfied" ran counter to the entire spirit of the movement.28

But Edward Peterson believed that after 1934 the Nazi party was not motivated by fanatics (other than Hitler). It was an illusion that the party was a center for fanatical sacrifices. The "sacrifices" were words, not actions.29

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27 See Pinson, Modern Germany, p. 479.
28 Ibid., p. 490.
29 See Peterson, Limits of Hitler's Power, p. 433. The mellowing influences of success even reached the Gestapo, for as Peterson said, the Gestapo was a terror weapon seldom used "against anyone of status, the party powerful, or any of the powerful of state, army or industry, although Hitler...
wise, it was Peterson's opinion that before World War II, the Nazis made few political demands on the German adult population, so much so that the horrors of the death camps in the East came as a complete surprise to many. Peterson contended that the Germans were far less eager to pursue the directives of the party and Hitler than foreign observers believed during the war. He stated:

If nothing else, one passively drags one's feet, a reason why Germany was at its slowest in 1939-42 in preparing for total war. This statement may or may not be true, but Peterson's views (as demonstrated in this and earlier segments) indicated the believable middle ground between complete political non-involvement by the Germans in Nazi matters, and the propagandists' boastings of Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer. Peterson believed, and the author tends to agree, that the

had few illusions that these men were really committed to him...."

30 Peterson noted in Limits of Hitler's Power, p. 443: "...the state, until the war, made few demands on adults, except for public silence. Privately one could tell jokes and complain. Children were more exposed to society's demands, but this is true wherever there is a compulsory education. Hitler deliberately avoided asking too much. The post-war evidence of horrible excesses of the NS outside Germany came as a double surprise to many Germans who had observed the compromises Hitler found necessary with them."

31 Ibid., p. 449. Author's note: While I do not deny that human laziness was a tendency in Nazi Germany as it is in any system, I disagree with Peterson that Germany's production rate was slowed because of it. Speer's continued appeals to Hitler for total war mobilization of manpower (together with an increase in the women's labor force) finally led to the necessary directives which Speer implemented with great success, even during the heaviest Allied bombing.
majority of Germans and even a majority of Nazis proclaimed their loyalty, but privately disregarded Reich directives.

While an erosion of old public standards by Nazism was visible in the Third Reich, the framework of pre-Nazi Germany remained sound under the cloak of Nazism. This is understandable only if one agrees with Kohn and Pinson that many elements of German tradition were co-opted in the Nazi view of authoritarianism, militarism, racism and devotion to the power of the state. It does not mean that Nazi atrocities were the logical culmination of German history or German social ethics. As Peterson observed, some historians trace the origins of Mein Kampf (my fight) to Charles Darwin and Social Darwinism, but it "seems more historically accurate to find the origin in a trench, not in a book."  

A. J. Ryder and Hajo Holborn dealt with the subject of German accommodation to Nazism and the subject of intellectual adjustment within the German university. Ryder spoke for the traditionalist position when he suggested:

The readiness with which the bulk of the German people adjusted themselves to Hitler's dictatorship suggests a deeper explanation than mere susceptibility to propaganda or even intimidation. It indicates a psychological predisposition that was more than willing to respond to the highly emotional appeal to a charismatic leader.  

\[32\] Ibid., p. 12.

\[33\] See Ryder, Twentieth Century Germany, p. 309. German intellectuals were not much different from their countrymen in this respect. There were exceptions to the emigration of

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Ryder touched on the purge of the universities, which
differed with the institution and faculty. The scholars' pas-
sive acceptance of the removal of Jewish and politically
undesirable Aryan educators was equal to their indifference
to their assigned role as "ideological soldiers" of Nazi
culture who would see self-interested research as "out of
date, relics of a discredited liberalism." It is Holborn,
however, who fills in many of the gaps in Ryder's descrip-
tion of the adjustment.

First, the election of the German president, while a
matter of popular vote, bore no similarity to the election
of an American president. Traditionally, the Germans were
likely to elect an outstanding bureaucrat or soldier, free
of party concerns, instead of a party man. As evidence,
Holborn can submit the fact that Paul von Hindenburg was the

the intelligentsia after 1933 that are notable. As Ryder
observed: "Among them were Gerhart Hauptmann, the
veteran playwright whose early ties had been with the
socialists and who had been especially honoured by the Re-
public. Hauptmann offered Hitler his enthusiastic support.
So did Heidegger, the philosopher, who as Principal of
Freiburg University told his students: 'The Führer, himself
and alone, is the present and future reality of Germany and
its laws.' Richard Strauss, the composer, became the first
President of the Reich Chamber of Music." See Ryder, Twen-
tieth Century Germany, p. 358.

34Ibid., p. 360.

35See Holborn, History of Modern Germany, p. 548. The
American presidency is usually filled by a Republican or
Democrat who, Holborn believed, "is unable to be above par-
ties, let alone oppose party government."
Weimar Republic's president--hardly a "republican" choice for the office. The trend in German politics was to the anti-republican, both among the Communists on the left and the neo-conservative parties on the right. As Holborn said of Weimar near its close:

To the great mass of the anti-republicans no problem existed. To them there was no question but that the Nazi party, which called itself a "movement" rather than a party, was the final rally of the German people against liberalism, democracy, capitalism, and their ruinous consequences.36

Holborn sees the neo-conservatives as prime movers in the political activation of students and the older intelligentsia. The Jünger parallel was emphasized by Holborn as it was by Kohn and Pinson. Likewise, Holborn agreed that there was a philosophical gap between German and Western thought, and that German intellectuals prided themselves on their isolation from the West.37

36 Ibid., p. 660. Of course, Holborn is excluding the Communists from this particular anti-republican feeling.

37 Ibid., p. 665. On the same page Holborn also said: "...The intellectuals were entirely unconcerned over the widening gulf between German and Western European-American thought. On the contrary, Germany's isolation appeared to them desirable. This separation was finally carried over to the basic moral principles of Western civilization. It is true that few of the intellectuals went to this length ...Spengler's crude statement that he was on the side of 'blood against spirit' was one of the early demonstrations of the eclipse of the German intelligentsia in the moral leadership of the people."
Holborn steps back to modify his position on the intellectual's political significance in Weimar Germany. First, Weimar did not change the German university significantly. As in the Wilhelminian period, the universities ruled themselves and were administered by conservative faculties. The power of these faculties was even stronger during the Weimar period, due to the Republic's fundamental inconstancy and weakness. Secondly, while the German professor was a respected individual, he did not have any political power outside the university, and his academic specialization, compounded by political ignorance, dissuaded him from becoming more than a follower, in the political sense. Finally, overcrowding in German universities led to less contact between professor and student; when the student corps filled the vacuum in the student-professor relationship, it took over responsibility for the political indoctrination of the student.38 Holborn concluded:

...it [the German university] chiefly produced men proficient in special skills or special knowledge but lacking not only in the most primitive preparation for civic responsibility but also a canon of absolute ethical commitments.39

38 Ibid., pp. 653, 654, 656. Holborn believed that most German academicians kept politics out of their lectures. He contended that politics had little bearing on the quality of work in the sciences. The humanities and social sciences were another matter, but Holborn believed that their decline was due less to political boredom than to losses in the First World War.

39 Ibid., p. 813.
Thus, in answer to the question: how was German society changed by National Socialism, the erosion of German society seemed most pronounced on the ethical scale. At least on the surface, the Germans were condemned for lacking the moral courage to overthrow Hitler. But as we see here, the Nazis did not begin the ethical or moral erosion of German culture. Rather, this decline predates the Nazis by an indefinite number of years.
CHAPTER V

PROPAGATION OF THE NAZI STATE:
SCHOOLS AND THE SS

To insure enforcement of the Reich's Laws as Hitler dictated, the office of Secret Police (Geheime Staatspolizei, or Gestapo) was established in April 1933. It was transformed into a special police force in November 1933.¹ The procedural cooperation between the Gestapo and the Administrative Court system made the entire German legal apparatus a genuine extension of the Führer's hand for terror or coercion, since arrest by the Gestapo usually meant conviction in the courts. The pervasiveness of the Gestapo's jurisdiction could be coupled to the omnipresent SS (Schutzstaffel) which, by 1936, had grown in size to 100,000 men.² If there were any doubts in the German public's mind as to Hitler's complete control of Germany, by 1936 these doubts had disappeared.

¹The Gestapo's general powers were not outlined formally until a Prussian statute defined these powers on February 10, 1936. (See Ernst Fraenkel, The Dual State (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), p. 9.

²In fact, most Germans made little distinction between the branches of the Gestapo and the SS because both organizations were under the direction of Heinrich Himmler, who answered only to Hitler. (See Lowie, Toward Understanding Germany, p. 52.)
But control without continued support from at least a portion of the German population would be short-lived. Hitler realized that the future of Nazi Germany rested with its children and what they would make of the Führer's legacy. With no particular originality Hitler decided that at the outset of his rule, German education would have to be coordinated for the benefit of National Socialism and its propagation.

History books were rewritten and educational priorities readjusted. In nominal agreement with Hitler's scattered outline for education, physical education was given first priority. Character development and assimilation of "useful" knowledge were the second and third goals of primary education. By the time a child had reached Gymnasium age, his individual strengths were developed to a stage of specialization, theoretically, that would indicate his future career field. The Gymnasium and other more technical schools were to intensify their specialized curricula to capitalize on the individual's strengths, limiting his studies to his strongest abilities.  

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3 As Karl Dietrich Bracher noted in The German Dictatorship, p. 262:
"In principle this goal [i.e., Nazification of German education and history] was achieved in 1933. Just as teachers and parents capitulated to the pressures of the regime, so on the whole did the indoctrination of youth succeed. The young, who were receptive to heroic legend and black-and-white oversimplifications, were handed over to the stupendous shows of the regime....The teacher, fearful of his
To guarantee a supply of future Nazi leaders, the Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (National Approved Political) or Napola schools were created by the Ministry of Education in April 1933. Given equivalent rank with the Gymnasium, but greater political status, the Napola school resembled, as its name suggested, a political leadership school. In addition, the Adolf Hitler Schools and the Ordensburgen (Castles of Order) were created to complement the Napolas, providing specialized Nazi indoctrination from primary through college levels.

For those young Germans desiring more traditional education opportunities, the party tried to apply pressure to insure cooperation from the universities and technical schools.

civil-service status and subject to denunciation by pupils and parents alike, was rapidly coordinated.

In 1936, the Napola schools came under SS control. The Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Oberschule at Feldafing was the Napola's only official competitor; it took students only "from the ranks of proven Party members." (See Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution, pp. 277, 278.) By 1938, there were twenty-one Napola schools, including four in Austria and one in the Sudetenland.

See Val Dean Rust's German Interest in Foreign Education Since World War I (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Malloy Lithoprinting, Inc., 1965), p. 111. The Adolf Hitler Schools were based on the "Country Home School" project engineered by Alfred Andreesen, a leader in Germany's foreign education research. Andreesen recommended use of the Leitz education form, similar to the English Public Schools System. Hitler accepted Andreesen's plan and it was used in the Adolf Hitler Schools.

See Kuhn et al., Die deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich, p. 80.
Party pressure worked two ways: (1) to open university doors to young Nazi leaders; and (2) to close them to the "selfish" intellectual whose anemic record of political participation and leadership disqualified him from political leadership.

The same pressures could be applied more effectively to the university graduate looking for civil service employment. Harsh realities dictated that the young German intellectual accommodate himself to the Nazis, or give up his education and career. If the alternative to active participation in Nazi activities was mediocrity or failure, the German intellectual would choose the party. Ambition usually succeeded where indoctrination could not; applying this rule, the proponents of National Socialism gained far more than they bargained for: by satisfying ambition, they recruited active intelligence. By indoctrination, they had amassed only blind loyalty.

The SS, with its reputation as an elite corps, proved a powerful temptation to young university graduates seeking party employment. More than flashy uniforms and on-campus recruitment, the SS offered special training and assignments that were particularly attractive to the young intellectual. The Allgemeine or "General" SS took a special interest in research investigation, ranging from archeology and biology to security investigation and foreign intelligence. 7 Their

7In Hitler's Social Revolution, pp. 236 and 237, Schoenbaum stated: "Meanwhile university graduates, the traditional
demand for university graduates was understandably high. In addition, the SS had high social status as one of the most important organizations in the party.

The alert young intellectual observed that the SS was a functional, steadily growing organization that had eclipsed the SA in power since the Röhm purge of June 30, 1934. In the final analysis, the SS was the wave of the future in Nazi Germany: it was the Führer's personal guard and a major tool of political power within the party and Germany as a whole. The ambitious university graduate recognized this fact and often accepted SS recruitment as the first step in his private rise to power in the Nazi party.

The SS of 1939 was a far different organization than the tiny fanatical Schutzstaffel Guard of 1929. Its size was made manageable by the diversification of its branches, its armies of technical and cultural specialists, linguists, source of civil service recruitment, continued as before to go into the civil administration...they tended to gravitate to the centers of speedy promotion and growing influence like the propaganda and Interior Ministries, rather than the more traditional administrative centers."

"Himmler's vision of the SS reinforced the organization's propaganda image, but as Schoenbaum noted on page 291 of Hitler's Social Revolution, Himmler's reveries were brought down to earth by the requirements of reality: "From beginning to end, Himmler preached 'racial' elitism, presided--as he saw it--over by a new knightly order. [He] dreamed of feudal domains, new gods, a state of nature. At the same time, his policy precluded anything of the sort. Institutional survival in an industrial society requires administrators, not knights; diplomas, not blue eyes. Himmler consequently recruited administrators and diplomas."
and scientists. The SS's reputation for fanaticism and indoctrination was counterbalanced by its special branches' reservoirs of intellectual talents. In some instances, the actual results of SS indoctrination showed far less appreciation for racial dogma than simple interest in making the best of one's SS career. The intellectual character of the new SS was mirrored in its leadership and the academic atmosphere surrounding many of the Schutzstaffel's departments.

But within the SS organization, the SD (Sicherheitsdienst) was a breeding ground for the intellectual's personal schizophrenia. Here, the intellectual's sense of honor and duty

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9 Heinz Hohne noted in The Order of the Death's Head (New York: Coward McCann, Inc., 1970), p. 155:

"The RUSHA Educational officers were always complaining of the Verfungungstruppe's lack of interest in ideology and even the Allgemeine S.S. tended to yawn....In January 1939 Standartenführer Dr. Cásar, Head of the S.S. Educational Office, complained that racial policy instructions was making little impact on S.S. men -- 'Boredom with these subjects is gradually becoming noticeable among the men'."

10 On page 216 of The Order of the Death's Head, Hohne stated:

"With few exceptions the heads of all the important Zentralabteilungen and Hauptabteilungen were academics holding a degree; the Zentralabteilung 'Organization' was under Wilhelm Albert, who had an engineering degree, Hauptabteilung 'Staff Duties' under Dr. Herbert Mehlhorn, a lawyer and economist, the Zentralabteilung 'Ideological Combatting of Opposition' under Professor Franz Six, the Zentralabteilung 'Reports on Spheres of German Life' under Professor Reinhard Hohn and the Zentralabteilung 'Counter-Espionage Enemy Intelligence Services' under S.S. Oberführer Heinz Jost."
was complicated by the hideousness he saw, and the atrocities he would be asked to commit.

The SD was the intelligence and special investigations branch of the SS and it was in a position to know what went on in almost every area inside the party. Both its outer offices and headquarters were heavily staffed with respectable young intellectuals. Businessmen, municipal officials, professors and scientists were some of the SD's best intelligence contacts. Thus, the organization's informers and spies added a curious respectability to the SD network. Having accepted National Socialism as a crusade for the salvation of the German race, the SD intellectual considered his work an essential part of a great cause. It was respectable, even honorable, work.

The SD personnel were exposed to realities of National Socialism in its crudest form: mob violence against Jews. Disgusted with this senseless brutality, the SD formulated its first solution to the "Jewish Problem." Articulated by

Despite the romantic visions of undercover work dreamed by the SD recruits, Hohne noted on page 217 of The Order of the Death's Head:

"These secret service intellectuals showed a curious maidenly aversion to the word 'spy,'. Schlierbach, the theorist on police work who was closely connected with the S.D., wrote that it would be 'unworthy of the National-Socialist State to make use of spies and agents....' Only at a later stage, when the intellectuals had long since lost their scruples, did Walter Schellenberg put some order into the contact system; from then on every Headquarters knew its contact men."
SS Untersturmführer Elder von Mildenstein, the SD plan called for a government-supervised emigration of all German Jews to Palestine. What was inherent in the SD's attitude was a desire to solve the so-called Jewish problem in a cold, rational manner. This precluded mob violence as a rational alternative, and on June 5, 1935, the Schwarze Korps declared:

The National Socialist Movement and its State opposes those criminal machinations [i.e., inciting mob violence against the Jews] with all its energy. The Party will not tolerate prostitution of its sacred struggle for the good of the nation by street riots and destruction of property.12

The SD's official criticism of mob action was indirectly aimed at the Party Old Guard and was a precursor of future disagreements between the old street fighters and the new elite. Intra-Party friction increased when intellectuals within the SD took upon themselves the responsibility of "thought police for the Reich." Instead of reporting to the Gestapo, the SD's leaders were now ordering investigations of Gestapo personnel, and maintaining surveillance of any Nazi leaders they considered suspicious. Combining professional ambition with idealism, Sicherheitsdienst authorities proudly declared their mission to improve the Nazi state, police its intrigues and

12. Hohne noted in his explanation of the SD's reaction (ibid., p. 328): "The S.D. intellectuals wanted to be thought radical National Socialists, but they also wanted to be regarded as 'decent' and this type of anti-Jewish action [i.e., Streicher's Stürmer crusade] seemed to them harmful anti-Semitism."
denounce its excesses.\textsuperscript{13}

The SS offered its intellectuals a precious right, scarcely seen in the party and never exercised outside the Nazi hierarchy. This was the right to criticize party officials, denounce opponents within the party leadership, and debate the feasibility of Ministry programs and plans. Naturally prudence had to be exercised, but the top-level SS or SD administrator answered to only a half-dozen superiors, including the \textit{Führer} himself. Even the SD intellectual of lower rank had the recourse of complaining to his immediate superior.

The academic atmosphere of the SD was conducive to reasoned argument and low-key debate. Blind obedience to orders was unnatural there, and mechanical responses were out of place. In the final analysis, the SD intellectual was a specialist and a professional. Both these qualifications meant that he \underline{complied} with orders instead of obeying them. Superficially, the distinction between obedience and compliance was small, even undetectable. Rather, it was a psychological difference separating the intellectual's actions from the reactions of a common herd. Compliance with

\textsuperscript{13}The SD went as far as to suggest that a one-man dictatorship should obey some rational concept. According to Höhne (ibid., p. 212): "Domination, power for its own sake, became a new ethical norm, a duty to be performed by a self-elected elite, which had long since outgrown the plebeian National Socialism of the Party veterans."
orders meant a mind had to be involved in the accomplishment of the deed. Principles had to be weighed with intelligence and conscience before the proposal was accepted or rejected. The action, whatever it might be, had been reasoned.
CHAPTER VI

ACADEMIANS: DIE BRAUNE UNIVERSITÄT

On the personal level, how did academicians react to their "coordination" by the Nazis? It must be remembered that collaboration was a personal matter for the German intellectual, whether he worked in some obscure corner of a university laboratory or presented his lectures to hundreds of students. Officially, the goal of learning in Germany had changed. Could the professors now wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to political education when they had heretofore escaped into self-interested scholarship?

In 1964, Rolf Seeliger published the first volume in a series entitled Die Braune Universität (The Brown University) which was subtitled "German Teachers Yesterday and Today." As the title suggests, the series was about National Socialism in German universities in the Nazi era. Seeliger endeavored to secure as much information as possible on university articles, dissertations and other works by academicians, to present this material in a selective manner (complete with quoted excerpts) and to allow the author or authors an opportunity to reply, comment or criticize his handling of their work.
By way of criticism, it must be said that Seeliger used a "shot-gun" approach. That is to say, his choice of subjects was made on a purely random basis. All shared Seeliger's requirements of teaching experience in Nazi Germany, recent teaching experience in Germany, and some direct connection with Nazi organizations, articles, or research projects. The degree of involvement appears not to have been the crucial factor in Seeliger's analyses. He refused to categorize beyond his initial requirements. The division into volumes of Die Braune Universität is arbitrary, and more a matter of publication dates than subject unity. While roughly 40 percent of his subjects made no response (Seeliger counted thirty-three replies among fifty-four professors and lecturers chosen for his series), the Stellungnahmen (replies) given by the majority ranged from notational corrections and clarifications of context to short confessions, denials and even short essays on their experiences of Nazification of the German university.

The resulting work is an uneven collection of challenges and replies. One wonders how greatly Die Braune Universität might have been improved if Seeliger had interviewed his subjects personally, getting specific answers to his very direct questions. Nevertheless, the work offers a wealth of spontaneity and candor from scholars whose skills ranged from law and theology to literature and philosophy. The series is not limited to academicians of a specific age or rank--the Assis-
tant, Ordinary professor, and Professor of 1933-1945 are all represented, though in a scattered assortment. Seeliger's strength is his brevity of comment, which is framed as a sort of challenge to his subjects. Occasionally, this technique takes on the trappings of a full indictment, with pyrotechnical results. Dr. Andreas Predöhl, for example, replied scathingly:

You did not do a service to your subject when you made the same error that the occupation powers did: namely, lumping everyone who somehow had a functioning position in the Nazi era into the same boat with the real Nazis. The German universities, which are always being criticized, were never as "brown" as you make them out to be.¹

Each volume of *Die Braune Universität* begins with a statement of some aspect of Nazification in the German university. These prefaces are of a very general sort, but they are reinforced with footnotes and quotations. In volume 5, Seeliger produced a significant piece on doctoral degrees and their legitimacy in the Nazi era. He followed it up convincingly with a short biography of Dr. Franz Six. Since both Hans Maier and Wolfgang Kunkel agree that the Dozenten (assistants) of the 1930's had a significant role in the Gleichschaltung of the universities, a look at Seeliger's position on this subject is appropriate.

According to Seeliger, the question of doctoral degree validity during the years of the Nazi era was prompted by the fact that dissertations on race theory and anti-Semitism were accepted as legitimate theses for doctoral candidates. Concerning these degrees, Seeliger quoted the "Sozialdemokratische Pressdienst" (Social Democratic Press Service), Bonn, November 2, 1965:

The deprivation of some doctoral degrees raised another problem that had to be faced by the universities, scholars and officials. There is a number of people who in the Nazi era received doctoral degrees for dissertations whose contents were then considered legitimate scientific research. The aforementioned "doctors" engaged in pseudo-scientific propaganda theses that a real scientific investigation would show to be worthless. The racial wisdom of these "Nazi theoreticians" have a really criminal aspect. People who agreed with these polite "theories" may not have shared in the bloody work of the extermination squads... but when a simple SS. man like Schulze read the racial out-pourings of the "learned" doctors, it is no wonder that he used them as his authority to throw away his last scruples.

Thus, there is some confusion today as to whom the genuinely legitimate degrees belong, among the many Doktor-Grade (doctorates) given between 1933 and 1945. It should be emphasized that the dissertation, whatever its subject matter, was not the sole creation of the candidate. It was also the product of the faculty and was directed and blessed by the

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2Seeliger, "Doktorarbeiten im Dritten Reich," Die Braune Universität, 5:6,7.
candidate's committee.³

Seeliger indicates that the dissertation was a career vehicle for the aspiring scholar (as it always had been) but that the political aspect of a National Socialist-oriented thesis carried the scholar into a more political, less academic career.⁴ In volume 5, Seeliger gives twelve examples of dissertations completed during the Nazizeit. The topics range from "Die Gestalt des Juden auf der neueren deutschen Bühne" (The Shape of the Jews under the new German Platform) by Elizabeth Frenzel (1940) to "Die Einheit der Publizistik und ihre geistigen Grundlagen" (The Unity of Publicity and its Spiritual Foundations) by Hermann Franz Gerhard Starke (1939). Seeliger's references to chapters of these works—based on direct quotes—received mixed replies from their authors. Dissertation committees were emphasized as co-authors who were partially responsible. Six of the authors failed to reply or chose not to reply. Among the dissertations selected was Franz Alfred Six's thesis. While Six was certainly an extraordinary figure with an unusual career, his dissertation, "Die politische Propaganda der NSDAP im

³Seeliger quoted Professor D. Helmut Gollwitzer from a personal interview he had with him: "A doctoral dissertation is not merely the private work of its author; it is also the offering of the faculty under whose authority it was undertaken." (Die Braune Universität, 5:10.)

⁴Seeliger said: "For many, the dissertation was the first step in a Nazi leader's career." (Ibid., 5:12.)
Kampf um die Macht" (Political Propaganda of the N.S.D.A.P. in the Struggle for Power) (1936), contained many of the vulgarisms and rhetorical clichés of Nazi street propaganda.\(^5\)

For example, in a chapter entitled, "Das Grinsen des kommunistischen Untermenschen" (The Sneer of the Communist Sub-humans), Six harangued:

\[
\text{...The East Galician, the fat greasy Jew, the big shot, the Social Democrat blow-hards and the sneering communist sub-humans had themselves to thank for the enlighten-}
\]
\[
\text{ment of the National Socialist movement soon buried in the memory of the masses. Where the word Bourgeois rang, "big shot" echoed.}\(^6\)
\]

Trite demonstrations of this sort were replaced with more serious comments, often with hidden meaning barely under the

\(^5\)Franz Alfred Six was born in 1909 in Mannheim. He studied general statecraft, sociology, history, literary history and current affairs at the University of Heidelberg. He joined the N.S.D.A.P. in 1930 and became an SA Sturmführer, but transferred to the SS in 1935. He was a section leader in SD Security Police and became an SS Standartenführer in 1938 (also, an SS Oberführer in 1941). After brief tours on Himmler's staff, Six became an SS Einsatzgruppenchef. Six also had an academic career that paralleled his SS life--each benefited the other. He was a Privatdozent (Assistant) at the University of Koenigsberg and became an extraordinary professor in 1939. As an ordinary professor in foreign politics and deacon of the Foreign Education faculty at the University of Berlin, he was named as the future chief of Security Police for the SS for England in "Operation Sea Lion." Six was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment at Nuremberg, but was released in 1952. He died sometime before Die Braune Universität was published. (See Seeliger, Die Braune Universität, 5:65.

\(^6\)Ibid., 5:64.
surface. Six's chapter "SA/SS: Ihr Sterben war Propaganda der Tat" (SA/SS: Their Dying was an Act of Propaganda) hit an exposed nerve with the SS veterans and the SA survivors of the "Night of the Long Knives." Six stated:

> In their behavior and their discipline the SA. man and the SS. man (the latter in his special actions) were the outer manifestation of the National Socialist world idea, the incarnation of the strength of the National Socialist movement. The great activity and force of the SA. and SS. lay in their courageous acts and services...the dying of hundreds from the formations was a sacrificial act that could only come from the strength of conviction and the power of the spirit...Their dying was an act of propaganda, a testimony to the power of an idea and a movement.  

The degree of subjugation and downgrading of scholarship that the German university tolerated is clear. Franz Six was a special case because of his SS connections, but preferential treatment and speedy teaching promotions were by no means limited to him. As other examples of Nazi careerists given special recognition, Seeliger cited Rudolf Buchner,

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7 "Night of the Long Knives" refers to the Röhm purge of June 30, 1934 in which hundreds of SA leaders were shot by SS execution squads.

8 See Seeliger, Die Braune Universität, 5:64. It is interesting to note that Six keenly observed which organizations sacrificed more—the SA or the SS. He transferred to the SS in 1935.

9 See Seeliger, Die Braune Universität, 3:34, 35. Rudolf Buchner was born in Berlin in 1908. He was an Assistant in philosophy at the University of Hamburg in 1936. His Aryan stance got him a position at the Sonthofen Ordensburg as an "Erzieher und Dozent am Erzieherseminar der Adolf-Hitler-
Konrad Meyer\textsuperscript{10} and Fritz Baur.\textsuperscript{11}

Both Fritz Baur and Rudolf Buchner replied in \textit{Stellungnahmen}, but Konrad Meyer did not reply. Dr. Baur clarified, but did not deny Seeliger's statements of his association with the SS. Dr. Buchner accounted for the eleven year gap in his career (between 1945 and 1956) as a procedural affair, 

Schulen." In 1941, he came to the University of Munich as an Assistant, a position he held until the end of the war. In 1956, he was again an Assistant, this time at the University of Wurzburg, and in 1958 he became an außerplanmäßiger Professor at that institution. When Seeliger's third volume came out, Buchner was teaching middle and recent history at the \textit{Julius-Maximilians-Universität} in Wurzburg. 

\textsuperscript{10} See Seeliger, \textit{Die Braune Universität}, 2:38-40. Konrad Meyer, a doctor of agriculture and land distribution, was born in Salzderhelden/Kreis Einbeck in 1901. Between 1934 and 1945 he was an ordinary professor and director of the \textit{Institut für Agrarwesen und Agrarpolitik} at the University of Berlin. Between 1935 and 1939, he was also head of the \textit{Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft für Raumforschung} and he became an SS Oberführer in 1942. In 1956, he was again an ordinary professor, this time at Hannover's Technischen Hochschule. When volume 2 of \textit{Braune Universität} was published, Meyer was on the Hochschule faculty for Gartenbau und Landeskultur. 

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 2:11-15. Fritz Baur (Dr. Jur) was born in Dilligen and was editor of the \textit{Kreis Tübingen} (while still in his early twenties) in 1933. After an early association with the Reichssicherheitshauptamts of the Reichsführer SS, Baur's academic and professional career moved quickly into other areas: he was an assistant at the University of Tübingen in 1937, Landgerichtsrat at Hechingen in 1939, Assistant at the University of Tübingen again in 1941, and extraordinary professor at the University of Gießen in 1942. In 1954, Baur was an ordinary professor at the University of Mainz, then transferred to the Law faculty of the University of Tübingen in 1956 only to arrive as Seminar Director in Law at the \textit{Eberhard-Karls-Universität} in Tübingen when \textit{Die Braune Universität} reached publication.
not as a political banishment. Concerning Seeliger's documentation, Buchner pronounced it "streng korrekte" (very correct). Baur, on the other hand, offered the following:

I will not try to talk my way out of this, that it makes a difference if one lives in a state where freedom is guaranteed or in a system which as of February 28, 1933 suspended all such guarantees. You already know that in a practical sense they wiped out all the rules.

What I will say is the following: In the years after 1933 things were said and written that shame one even today--twenty or thirty years later--it seems unintelligible. I conclude, as frankly as I can, that I cannot make excuses that I was too young...that idealism overcame us, or that we were afraid about earning a living or, on the other hand, that our generation was afflicted with a physical or psychological flaw that freed us from the pangs of conscience. The "flaw theory" is a point of view that can be elaborated on, but not defended.12

Melodramatically, Dr. Baur demonstrates that excuses of idealism, cowardice or naivete are inadequate to explain the Gleichschaltung even for the individual case. Even a combination of these forces and motivations within the crucible of Nazi Germany scarcely explains why a majority of German intellectuals either supported or passively accepted the political, professional and social conditions of the Nazizeit. What can be explained is the segmented and contradictory nature of the German intellectual's adjustment to Nazism.

To neutralize public opposition, the Nazis had to isolate the individual. This had been accomplished for them partially (even before they became a movement) by the collapse of 1918 and the Spartacist insurrection. An alienation born of political pessimism, economic dislocation and mob violence isolated a majority of Germans from each other. The German intellectual can be seen as a distinct example of the alienated German (depending on his connections with the Weimar government—an intellectual working for the civil service might not be as isolated as his jobless fellows), just as Germany can be seen as an alienated nation within Europe.

The degree of this alienation was an individual matter, but in the larger sense, the Nazis had to increase this atomization, no matter what its degree, to neutralize all opposition. Along this line, the Gestapo's mission was to identify enemies of the state, but its real achievement was to break up any German groups outside Nazi party organizations. Certainly, fear of punishment by the Gestapo had a greater effect than actual persecution in keeping most Germans atomized in the political sense.

There was an intellectual isolation that accompanied the compartmentalization of German life into Nazi organizational units. It is significant that when intellectuals lacked the courage to resist Nazism by forming their own
groups, loneliness and the need for an identity sometimes pushed them into the branches of the Nazi party, and hence into the arms of the Nazis.\textsuperscript{13}

The irony of the Nazi state was that it was best served by intellectuals who probably, under other circumstances, would have remained apolitical. If the cult of personality surrounding Hitler and (to a much lesser degree) Göring, Goebbels, Himmler and Hess was at all warranted, it was because these men had so isolated the individual German as to seem as elephants before an ant---an ant that could expect little support from any of the millions of his fellows if he chose to confront these elephants.

But the cult of personality was a sham. It was a construction of the Propaganda Ministry and it was successful principally through the film medium. Superb filming and skillful editing made \textit{Triumph of the Will} (Riefenstahl, 1938) a propaganda masterpiece. It created the illusion that all Germany was spiritually dedicated to National Socialism and Adolf Hitler. This was a fabrication. While the atomization of the German people was remedied apparently

\textsuperscript{13}Author's note: I am not suggesting that resistance movement of many kinds did not exist in Nazi Germany, nor for that matter, that only a few Germans were dissatisfied or secretly hostile to National Socialism in any of its forms. I believe, however, that most Germans as individuals accepted Nazism as a legitimate political order, or a governing power that they could do little to change---because they mistook a lack of massive opposition as evidence of massive approval.
by National Socialism, this appearance belied the feelings of the majority of Germans when articulated upon self-reflection. The German intellectual's adjustment to Nazism was contradictory and made more complex by self-delusion, corruption of principle, inexperience or simple naivete. Similarly, the motivations that would lead two academicians to write, let us suppose, two nearly identical propaganda pieces for the Dozentenbund (Assistants Union) might be altogether different. Further, there was no guarantee that either author would express sincere feelings, especially when their statements were wrapped up in party cliches.

This lack of sincerity is evident in one of Rolf Seeliger's challenge replies. Seeliger quoted Dr. Andreas Predöhl from his article "Großraum, Autarkie und Weltwirtschaft" (Room, Autarky and World Economy) in Das Neue Europa (1941):

The victory of German arms has brought up the question of a European economy. In the last few years the National Socialist economy has transformed itself so that it can now unite economically with other continental European lands to run such an economy.15

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14 Andreas Predöhl (Prof. Dr. Pol. Sc.; Dr. jur. h.c.) was born in Hamburg in 1893. A Dozent at the University of Kiel in 1924, he became an ordentlicher Professor in 1930 at the Handelshochschule in Koenigsberg.

15 See Seeliger, Die Braune Universität, 5:64. According to Seeliger, Dr. Predöhl was the chairman of the research committee of the Gesellschaft für Europäische Wirtschaftsplanung und Großraumwirtschaft e.V. (Berlin) with which SS Brigadeführer Werner Best, State Secretary Roland Freisler...
While this statement is an unremarkable example of Geopolitical thought, Seeliger puts Dr. Predöhl on the defensive by quoting him thusly. In addition, Seeliger mentioned some unflattering connections between the doctor and the SS and Predöhl felt compelled to answer that he was faced with a dilemma: He did not want to appear to be a Nazi to his colleagues overseas, yet in Germany, he did not want to appear disloyal to the Nazi regime. He simply made the best of a bad situation.\(^{16}\)

It appears that, in at least one case, an academician was compelled to write and say things in the Nazizeit that he did not mean wholeheartedly. In another case, this conflict of loyalties took on a deeper significance than mere appearance. Dr. Gerhard Fricke\(^{17}\) emphasized in his reply to Seeliger in Die Braune Universität that there was a real conflict for him in trying to maintain his cultural and educa-

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(Reich Ministry of Justice and State, Secretary Leopold Gutterer (Reich Ministry for Volksaufklärung and Propaganda) were connected and over which NS-Staatsrechtler Carl Schmitt and SS Standartenführer Reinhard Höhn shared control.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., 5:69.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 3:48. Gerhard Fricke (Dr. Theol.; Dr. Phil.) was born in Waschke/Posen in 1901. At the University of Gottingen, he was an assistant in 1931. An extraordinary professor at the University of Berlin in 1934, he became an ordinary professor first at Kiel and then at Strassburg in 1941. At the time of publication of Die Braune Universität he was an ordinary professor in German literary history at the University of Cologne.

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tional convictions in the face of a collective mass movement before which scientific and pedagogical traditions "evaporated."  

This conflict of principle and politics was by no means limited to Fricke, but was shared by hundreds of German intellectuals who also made adjustments. Three such men were Gottfried Benn, Otto Hahn, and Martin Heidegger. In each case, the personality in question made his own choice without coercion. Each had favorable alternatives close at hand.

Gottfried Benn was born in 1886 in an old country village outside Berlin. His father's ancestors had taken their name from the Wends, who had inhabited that area of Prussia since the tenth century. Benn's mother was French-Swiss, but this hardly seemed an important distinction in a pre-Nazi Germany. Benn's childhood was spent in the company of the sons of local nobility, growing up as he put it, "in the heartland of Prussianism." Later, he went to the Academy for Military-Medical Instruction, by his own choice, to become an army surgeon. There was a military commitment to fulfill after

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18 Ibid., 3:48.

19 See Gottfried Benn, Primal Vision (Norfolk, Conn.: New Direction Books, 1962), p. ix. In his introduction to this work, E. B. Ashton noted that Benn was once denounced as a Jew, after the Nazi takeover, but his family records were so complete and detailed that his adversary relented, fearing that his own background would be investigated and found wanting.

20 Benn, Primal Vision, p. x.
medical school, but in 1912 Benn was mustered out of the army due to a physical defect. In 1914, however, he reentered the army and served with German occupation forces in Belgium. He had been writing poems in his spare time, and now he began writing a play, Home Front, that dealt with the decay of reality.

Not until the 1920's after years of involvement with the German expressionist movement, did Benn become famous for his literary work. His style reflected pessimism and nihilism "read, admired, and promoted by a highbrow, humanistic minority of Germans while he [Benn] with the lowbrow majority, was inching toward the primitives who were the sworn enemies of his audience."21 By the same token, Benn was often misunderstood. His lecture in 1931, The New Literary Season, showed another side of his philosophy. In this case, his defense of individual creativity, inspired by recent news of the commissars' literary censorship program in Russia, showed his concern for the survival of an independent point of view. But, in 1933, Gottfried Benn, like hundreds of other intellectuals, had to decide whether to accept the Nazis or go into the self-imposed exile of silence or emigration.

Benn never became a member of the Nazi party or claimed to be a member when the boast was fashionable. He decided,

21Ibid., p. xiii.
however, that he could not separate himself from his country or people. In a letter to a German friend in England, he revealed his reasons for staying in Germany:

So you sit at your beaches and call us to account for our cooperation in building a state whose faith is singular, whose seriousness is stirring, whose internal and external situation is so grave that it would take Iliads and Aeneids to tell its fate. Before all foreign countries you wish war, destruction, collapse, downfall to this state and its people. It is the nation whose language you speak, whose schools you attended, to whose cultivation of science and art you owe all your intellectual property, whose industry printed your books, whose stages presented your plays, which gave you fame and reputation, by whose members you wished to read in the greatest possible number.... People means much! My intellectual and economic existence, my language, my life, my human relations, the sum total of my brain—all this I owe to my people.... I close with something which you abroad, if you read this, will certainly want to know about: I am not in the Party, have no contact with its leaders, and do not count on new friends. It is my fanatical purity which your letter honors me by mentioning, my purity of feeling and thought, that determines my attitude.22

Fanatical purity or no, Benn's appointment as head of the Poetry Section of the Prussian Academy of Arts was rescinded in 1936 after Nazi censors rediscovered some of the author's early work. Branded as defeatist literature, this early evidence of Benn's capacity forced his resignation. Benn decided to return to the army, if it would have him, and

22See Benn, Primal Vision, pp. 49-52.
his "army superiors stood by him."  

It was in this last period of Germany's involvement with the Nazis that Benn's pessimism and caustic style reasserted themselves. After 1943, Benn, like many other Germans, recognized the beginning of the end. In 1944 in his "Novel of the Phenotype" Benn observed that while the phenotype of the seventeenth century celebrated "spiritualized ostentation" and that of the eighteenth century "secularized knowledge," "the phenotype of today integrates ambivalence, the fusion of every concept with its opposite."  

In "Double Life" written in 1944-1945, Benn articulates not just his own disappointment, but Germany's total disillusionment with a broken dream: 

This plainly, was the government; and now we have the fifth war year, somber with defeats and miscalculations, evacuated continents, torpedoes battleships, millions of dead, bombed-out giant cities, and still their leaders twaddle...In looking at this war, and the peace that preceded it, one thing must not be ignored: the vast existential emptiness of today's German man, stripped of whatever fills the inner space in other countries--decent national contents, public interest, criticism, social life, colonial impressions, genuine traditions. Here was nothing but a vacuum of historic twaddle, crushed education, bumptious political forgeries by the regime, and cheap sports. 

Otto Hahn, the famous radiochemist, also remained in 

\[\text{\[23\text{\cite{Ibid., p. xviii.}\]
\text{\[24\text{\cite{Ibid., p. 123.}\]
\text{\[25\text{\cite{Ibid., pp. 138-140.}\]}}
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Germany throughout the Nazi era, but his experience was more professional, and less personal, than that of Benn. Hahn was a dedicated scientist and an exemplar of modern scientific research. Yet, Otto Hahn was aware of the shortcomings of the Nazi administration, though he did little to curb its excesses outside his area of responsibility.

Hahn was born in Frankfurt am Main on March 8, 1879 and lived there until his entrance into Marburg University. After receiving his doctorate in chemistry, magna cum laude in 1901, he served a one year enlistment with his home regiment. Returning to Marburg, Hahn became an assistant to a professor of organic chemistry. The turning point in Hahn's life came in 1904, when he went to London to do radium research for Sir William Ramsay. In the process of routine experimentation in this new field, Hahn discovered a radioactive element, radiothorium. Ramsay's excited praise convinced Hahn to redirect his interests to the field of radiochemistry.

Returning to his homeland, Hahn met Lise Meitner at the University of Berlin in 1907. Their collaboration produced a number of discoveries over the next thirty years, leading to the award of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for 1944. Interestingly, Hahn received news of this award while he was

in a British internment camp in Cambridge.  

What had Hahn done to deserve internment? When he had left Germany in February 1933, he had no "serious concern for the future" and suspected that the Nazi victory would be short-lived.  

Hahn lectured at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York for most of the first five months of Hitler's rule in Germany. Letters from Berlin about the Jewish purges gave Hahn his first serious doubts, and when Max Planck asked him to assume the directorship of the Haber Institute in Berlin, he did so only because Professor Haber (who had resigned in protest) wanted him to save the institute from dissolution. "As acting director, I tried to soften especially harsh orders from the people in power," remembered Hahn, "but of course I could not do anything about the general situation."  

Within a few weeks, Hahn was sent back to his former post at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Chemistry, where he observed, with relief, that no change had been made. Here, he immersed himself in research until the Allies closed in on Berlin in April 1945. In 1946 Hahn was released by the British and he returned to Berlin to become the president of

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27 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 108.
30 Ibid.
It became obvious at the time that a nation of Otto Hahns and Gottfried Benns could be shifted from position to position, fired, outraged and controlled with impunity by the Nazis. Hahn and Benn were giants in physics and poetry, yet they were no different, politically, than other Germans whose national loyalties were exploited by ruthless political adventurers. Their civility, respect for authority and patience weighed favorably for the Nazis.

A paradox existed: A Germany ruled by the Nazis was, at the same time, a homeland for scientists and poets. The "brown" university was both brown and a university. It is pure speculation to calculate how long such a situation could have continued, with the Nazis pressing for Gleichschaltung, and the academicians stoically holding on to their traditions. True, Nazis were becoming doctors of philosophy, political scientists, etc., on the slimmest of credentials. At the same time, Gottfried Benn was writing poetry and managing the Prussian Academy of Arts. Otto Hahn was demonstrating nuclear fission to the scientific world.

At the same time, the noted German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, denounced his mentor, Edmond Husserl. Perhaps Heidegger's wholehearted support of National Socialism was more a philosophical exercise than a spectacle of a philos-

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31 Ibid., p. 284.
opher dragging his knowledge in the political mire. Nevertheless, Dagobert D. Runes maintained that Heidegger's betrayal was especially grievous:

I do not doubt that scientists and technicians, artisans and craftsmen, can be accomplished in their respective fields of endeavor and yet serve an evil master. But the philosopher is not a scientist, he is not a craftsman, he is not a technician, and his only contribution to the wide community is his love of wisdom--And if such has deserted him, he becomes another robot of the infernal crew of tyranny, and all his involved verbiage is just an evil breath in the wind of time.32

Born in Baden on September 26, 1889, Martin Heidegger studied philosophy at the University of Freiberg and received his doctorate in 1914. There followed several years of teaching before he became a professor of philosophy at Marburg in 1923. In 1928 he followed Edmond Husserl to become director of philosophy at the University of Freiberg.

In 1933 Martin Heidegger became rector of Freiberg and proclaimed his support of the Nazis in an address to the students of Heidelberg on July 1, 1933. It is interesting that Heidegger's determination to practice a phenomenological philosophy--that is, a determination on his part to disregard conventions and traditions to "uncover the structure of human reality"--made him a willing victim of the pessimistic and sensational purposes of National Socialism:

Hitherto the university has researched and taught in the same way for many decades. Research was supposed to lead to teaching, and a comfortable compromise between the two was sought...nobody ever worried about the state of the university as a community...teaching became goalless, and hid itself behind a tangle of examination regulations.

Now there is a sharp battle to be fought in the spirit of National Socialism which must not stifle on account of humanistic, Christian notions that hold us down by their imprecision. It is also not sufficient to pay lip service to the New Order...old humdrum habits will not be given a new drive by it. The only serious token of identification with the New Order is the experience of need, the grappling with reality.33

Unfortunately, Heidegger, even as he warned against delusion, was misled by National Socialism's quick, seemingly effortless successes in Poland, France and (initially) Russia. In the heady atmosphere of victory, Heidegger felt he was reacting naturally to life on a phenomenological basis.

33Ibid., p. 24.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the last 450 years, war has become more mechanized, specialized and complicated than in the two thousand years preceding this era. The sophistication of weaponry today is so far removed from the weaponry of the First World War that one can group the latter with the Thirty Years' War and place the former in a distinct position of its own. Even the Second World War, as a transition from the old to the new, equated mass with the conventional masses of men and non-nuclear firepower; mobility was measured in miles per hour and shock was measured in armor, cannon firepower and, again mass. Today on the strategic level, mobility is measured in thousands of miles per hour, firepower is measured in megatons of TNT, and shock and mass are both incorporated in the same weapon: the thermonuclear bomb.

So overwhelming are the facts surrounding nuclear capabilities of both the United States and the Soviet Union that the whole world has been changed politically and psychologically to a degree hitherto unknown. We live with the knowledge that nuclear war is unthinkable, but not unimaginable and certainly not impossible. This situation is predicated
on two weapons developed and used in World War Two: The V-2 ballistic missile and the atomic bomb.

But what has this to do with the German intellectual's adjustment to Nazism? First, the V-2 was the creation of German scientists co-opted and funded by the Nazis. Second, the atomic bomb was the goal of the Manhattan Project, a massive United States defense enterprise employing thousands of technicians, scientists and engineers. The Manhattan Project was prompted by a belief that Nazi Germany was working on an atomic bomb. Together, they represented a fraction of the wartime technology that determined our present reality and continue to influence our future.

In a larger sense, compartmentalization is the real point of this chapter. It is an increasingly common requisite of modern technology and it must be regarded for its significance. Moreover, the amorality of compartmentalization as a "fact of life" in industrialized cultures must be emphasized.

There was a chord of resonance in the excitement that the German rocket scientists at Peenemünde felt for their work and the enthusiasm that American scientists at Los Alamos expressed at the prospects of the atom bomb. As Dieter Huzel said later

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1According to Stephane Groueff, Manhattan Project (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1967), p. 24, Dr. Leo Szilard, a Hungarian emigre and physicist, convinced Albert Einstein to sign a group letter from concerned physicists to F.D.R. in which the president was warned that, in all probability, the Germans had begun work on an atomic bomb.
of the attitude held by his colleagues:

Looking back, from now, 1962, I realize that the Peenemunde engineer's view of the V-2 was little different from the Convair engineer's view of the Atlas, or the Douglas engineer's view of the Thor today.²

There is no suggestion of self-righteousness or hatred for the enemy in Huzel's words. Rather, the common ground for the German engineer and the American physicist was the beautiful intricacy of their work. The application of their skills to war came as only an afterthought. The overwhelming impression one gets is that naivety, disinterest and narrow professionalism unite to make the intellectual see his work in virtum, without the least concern for what impact the end product will have on society. There is a dreadful irony in Wehrner von Braun's case: At the end of the war, von Braun and most of his staff sought out the Americans and offered them their services. The United States, in turn, offered these rocket specialists a smooth passage to America, and von Braun later became an American citizen.³ The man who


³See von Braun and Frederick I. Ordway III, History of Rocketry and Space Travel (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1969), pp. 114-116. On page 104, Frederick Ordway III stated: "...Even more important, however, was the know-how that was literally captured when the majority of German rocket scientists and engineers surrendered to American soldiers in 1945. For the Germans were dominant in every field of missiles and rockets during World War II. In a very real sense, they created modern military rocket technology. Virtually all postwar missile developments were based, in varying degrees, on what went on in Germany."
provided Hitler's vengeance weapon also helped build the Minuteman and Titan missile systems and helped send Americans to the moon. Just where were/are von Braun's allegiances?

Such a question misses the point. Von Braun's political allegiance is of secondary importance both to himself and to the people with whom he has dealt all of his life. The emphasis has been on his ability to produce successful results in rocketry, and these successes have provided the major source of satisfaction in his life. Von Braun did not work for Hitler, nor did he work for the Americans. Von Braun worked for the advancement of rocketry. The relatively little damage done by the V-2 assuages his conscience, if any rationalization is needed at all.⁴

Today, we Americans are ready to blot out several hundred millions of the enemy, if that enemy launches a nuclear attack on us. The arrangement is reciprocal; an attack by us would prompt massive retaliation from the Soviet Union. This is the principle of nuclear deterrence, which keeps both superpowers from doing the unthinkable. The weapon systems are so vast in destructive power and so numerous and myriad in deployment and type that neither side presently has any hope of victory in a nuclear war. Will this situation continue forever?

⁴Fifteen hundred V-2's landed in England causing 2,500 deaths and what is termed "heavy" damage. (Ibid., p. 108.) However, at the same time, Allied bomber groups had destroyed Hamburg and Dresden completely during the war, with roughly 150,000 deaths among the inhabitants of these cities.
That is unlikely. The history of warfare is a history of obsolescence; a defense has been found for every weapon heretofore, even the psychological defense of nuclear deterrence. Weapons of a revolutionary type that will make the submarine fleet, the missile squadron and the bomber wing obsolete are not improbable. In the not-to-distant future, such weapons seem likely.

What may not change is the intellectual community's willingness to build such weapons. The German intellectual's adjustment to Nazism is an object lesson in amoral participation. Disregarding the morality of Nazi Germany in the last war, one still finds that the intellectual community in Germany accepted the Nazis and actively supported them in many instances. At the same time, the intellectual community in America supported the United States government in its search for the atomic bomb. Some of the American intellectuals, like Robert Oppenheimer, had second thoughts about the bomb, but only after the fact. With all the naïveté of debutantes, the intellectuals handed the United States military a weapon one thousand times more powerful than any conventional bomb of comparable weight (the H-bomb is roughly one million times more powerful) and recoiled with girlish astonishment when the nuclear warriors demanded hundreds more.

If there is a bridge over the gap between the German
intellectual and his Western counterpart, it is this: the intellectual in the purest sense, isolates himself from other segments of society and consequently confuses social and ethical ignorance for innocence. The intellectual community of any nation should have some responsibility for that nation's direction politically and ethically, but this is not the case. Whenever intellectuals have sought political power in America (with some outstanding exceptions, like Thomas Jefferson), they have been looked on with suspicion, amusement or ridicule. The "egghead" prejudice of the 1950's comes to mind.

The caricature of the wizened old scientist puttering about his test tubes, or the hoary scholar blowing dust from his tomes is still one of America's favorite jokes. The increasing complexity of scholarship continues to isolate the intellectual from the rest of society to a large degree. Added to this isolation is the atomization of society as a whole. Workers, soldiers, diplomats, politicians, businessmen, etc., become more and more symbols of their work and less and less men with a common bond of ethics or morality. Perhaps the only great attraction of totalitarianism is that it functions compartmentally (just as we function in the West) but it goes to great lengths to try to unify its people under an "ism." This attempt, like the Nazi experiment, may be a well-oiled fabrication. It is quite possible that the Soviet Union as a technological state, suffers the same atomization
of its peoples that we do—perhaps they experience this problem to an even greater degree. A statistical analysis of atomization is impossible, but social isolation is pronounced in the industrialized states, and it is tangible if not statistically measurable.

The German intellectual was but an isolated entity in a segmented society. As a member of the "masses," he could not be expected to unite with his fellows to provide an ethical or moral barricade against National Socialism. The Nazis knew this, and dealt with the German intellectual piecemeal. They extracted his knowledge, exploited his talents, and used his discoveries and inventions. In return, they gave his life direction, anointed him with praise, and gave him a new sense of identity. Traditional morality had no part in this process. The Nazis operated under their own rules, without regard to preconceived notions of universal humanity or principled restraint, and the German intellectual operated not by morality, but by expediency.

The German intellectual became an increasingly indispensable member of German society during the Hitler era. In a technological age, this was true for any modern nation and any national group of intellectuals. While there were always exceptions to the rule the majority of the German intelligentsia were not emigres, concentration camp inmates, or underground resistance fighters. Fully 80 percent of all university-
educated Germans gave valuable service to the Reich in peace and war. Many did so freely; others had to be drafted and offered various degrees of resistance.

A naive observer would assume that Nazism drew its major strength from the handful of fanatics who composed its top leadership. This attitude is especially characteristic of the observer who is ready to denounce German war crimes, but not the German people. Simplified reasoning might lead one to conclude that since any crimes against humanity committed by an authoritarian state require orders from instructing officials, clearly-defined war criminals can be found among the political hierarchy. The Nuremberg Tribunal worked on this principle, because it was believed to be sound.

But National Socialism required more than leadership in order to build its strength in Germany and reach out for half the world. It needed the tacit approval of all but a small minority of the German people. In order to genuinely succeed Nazism had to insure its support or at least a lack of opposition from all walks of life and every social station. Only the Jews could be excluded for obvious reasons.

As a technological state on the road to war, Germany depended on the loyalty and creativity of its intelligentsia to sustain itself. More than manpower, the Wehrmacht depended on advanced weapons of war and was strengthened by continual improvement of these weapons. Germany's engineers, mathema-
ticians, scientists and doctors—in short, Germany's academic community and professional intelligentsia—provided the left side of the equation for victory. Their research findings made Germany's war technology possible.

This thesis was written to illustrate the German intellectual's reaction to Nazism, the conditions dictating his willingness to conform, and some suggestion of his involvement in so-called war crimes. His class background, economic status, and professional attitude in no way precluded active cooperation with the Nazi government. The myth that educated intelligence implies heightened morality, likewise, was proven false in the German intellectual's case.

The German intelligentsia's conformity under the authoritarian system points to a universal law of human nature. The human animal generally seeks the course of least resistance. Only the unusual person struggles when he does not have to struggle. National Socialism worked on the authoritarian principle and applied the tactic of two courses: one required acceptance, or at least no resistance to the dictates of the Nazi party; the other, more difficult psychologically and physically, meant recognized opposition, leading to expulsion, imprisonment or death. With such alternatives, most Germans either chose to support Nazism or refused to resist it. It was a Machiavellian exercise. The German intellectual's adjustment to Hitler was only one example of its success.
But, how effective was the Gleichschaltung in strengthening the Nazis' state machinery? That is, with the intellectuals under control, to what extent were the Nazis' aims carried out? In many cases, intellectuals in the SS complied with directives to the letter, but one would be naive to assume that in all areas of state bureaucracy (even within the SS) that every instruction was followed exactly, or passed down the chain-of-command exactly as stated.

An additional purpose of this thesis was to give some consideration to individual impressions of the Gleichschaltung, to discuss some authoritative views on the German adjustment to Nazism, and allow the author to suggest a theory: Political amorality among intellectuals is possibly a function of social and professional compartmentalization in modern technocracies. If expediency was the rule among German intellectuals between 1933 and 1945, I suspect this fact of life has changed very little in the last thirty years. Nor, is this condition limited to Germany. A system of ethics is very often the first casualty of expediency. If all ethics are negotiable, then atrocities may result. Other industrialized nations of the West suffer the atomization of sophisticated technology and have professional intellectuals just as narrow-minded and self-interested as any found in Germany. Hopefully, the present generation is more aware of the dangers of expediency than the German intellectual of 1933 may have noted, but ignored. If not, the future may be fatal to us all.
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I. Primary Sources


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III. Additional Sources


