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Before the “Final Solution”: Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Anti-Semitism in Interwar Germany and Poland*

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Today's states are the graves of nations. (ALFRED DÖBLIN, 1925)¹

Before Hitler's regime launched the wartime genocide, political anti-Semitism in central Europe rose to levels of destructiveness unprecedented in modern history. Though most ruthless in Nazi Germany, anti-Jewish agitation and legislation also struck hard at Polish Jewry. Indeed, in no other lands of modern Europe did the Jewish question in politics attain a more fateful significance than in Germany and Poland, although its role was weighty everywhere in central and eastern Europe. Yet the historical literature offers no sustained comparison of the character and trajectory of anti-Semitic political movements in the two neighboring lands.

In the following pages I will argue that such a comparison is not only possible but yields as well an illuminating perspective on the social matrix of modern central and eastern European political anti-Semitism in general in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is an undertaking vulnerable to misunderstanding, above all because the shadow of the Holocaust engulfs all forms of anti-Semitism. It was German anti-Semitism alone, in the racialized status it acquired under National Socialism, that resulted in genocide. This article proposes, however, that in their pre-World War II dynamics the Polish and German variants of political anti-Semitism displayed common features deriving from their embeddedness in comparable patterns of socioeconomic development. This is not to say that anti-Semitic politics in Poland were belatedly traveling precisely the same road that political anti-Semitism in Ger-

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¹ “Die Staaten von heute sind das Grab der Völker”; Alfred Döblin, *Journey to Poland* (New York, 1991), p. 152, *Reise in Polen* (Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau, 1968), p. 200.

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many followed. At issue here are similar but not identical historical processes, with varying outcomes, in part commensurable and in part incommensurable.²

Briefly stated, the propositions advanced here are that, both in Germany and in Poland, pre-World War II political anti-Semitism voiced the subjectively conceived interests of modernizing Christian middle-class elements striving for advancement in the emergent industrial-capitalist order at the expense of a Jewish population whose social and political integration into the developing national state was, for various reasons, increasingly vulnerable to attack. Other groups—especially those, such as sinking artisans or other members of the “old middle class,” who are customarily regarded as “backward-looking”—held a stake in anti-Semitism, but their influence on the course of anti-Jewish policy was weak. As the initially liberal interwar economy and political order sank deeper into crisis, the role of the authoritarian or totalitarian state as instrument and accelerator of anti-Semitic radicalism gained steadily in significance, so that anti-Jewish agitation and legislation became ever more important attributes of state action, rather than postulates of oppositional political movements.

The perspective adopted here entails the view that, prior to and independent of the wartime mass murder, the central and eastern European Jews—despite their indubitable cultural and religious vitality—faced the threat, and in the German case the actuality, of the dissolution of their collective and communal existence. This was a consequence not only of the rise to power in the interwar period of political movements embracing fascist or right-radical programs of anti-Semitism, but also of a structural crisis in the relation of the Jewish community to the modernizing state reaching back to the late nineteenth century.

This is an argument that, though not framed in cultural terms, accepts that intellectual and ideological commitments, no less than material considerations, constitute social and political interests.³ While it confines itself to the German and Polish cases, it suggests some grounds for extending the analysis more broadly to central and eastern Europe.

Although the following pages aim primarily to expand interpretive rather than empirical horizons, they open with a discussion of a previously neglected document of exceptional interest in the study of Polish-Jewish relations in the 1930s. This section serves to underscore the gravity of the problem of Polish anti-Semitism and the depth of the sociopolitical crisis besetting Polish Jewry.

² On the objectives and techniques of comparative-historical analysis, see Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York, 1984); and Theda Skocpol, “Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology,” in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, ed. Theda Skocpol (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 356–91.

³ Compare Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), pp. 13–17.

After presentation of some analogous evidence on the endangered position of the German Jews in the Weimar Republic, there follows a consideration of recent debates concerning the salience and intensity of anti-Semitism in German society in the pre-1941 period. The objective here is to transcend the categories of the contending historiographical schools of intentionalists and functionalists, which were framed with the explanation of the wartime genocide in mind, so as to attain a broader view of the radicalization of anti-Jewish politics in the interwar years. The discussion then turns to the literature on anti-Semitic agitation and governmental action in interwar Poland, where the tendency to stress the destructive effects of popular and official anti-Semitism does battle with the inclination to emphasize the limits to the disabilities of the Jews under Polish rule and the survival to 1939 of their individual and communal liberties.⁴ On this question I take a qualifiedly pessimistic view, but I stop short of arguing that on the eve of World War II Poland was succumbing to homegrown fascism. The article closes with some reflections on the relationship of central European anti-Semitism to modernity and antimodernity.

* * *

In August 1934 Neville Laski, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, undertook a fact-finding trip to Austria, Poland, and Danzig on behalf of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the principal American Jewish foreign relief organization. This was, he wrote, a necessary step in view of "the distressed condition of the Jewish populations in central and eastern Europe and the feeling which had grown that they had been forgotten and that the German Jewish crisis had served further to remove an appreciation of their difficulties from our minds."⁵

In a report composed upon his return to England, Laski concluded that, largely for economic reasons, Austria was "a nest of anti-Semites."

The Austrian people are poor. The Austrian professional classes are very depressed. The young people of the lower middle classes who seek professional appointments are

⁴ See Ezra Mendelsohn, "Interwar Poland: Good for the Jews or Bad for the Jews?" in *The Jews in Poland*, ed. Chimen Abramsky et al. (Oxford, 1986), pp. 130–39, and "Jewish Historiography on Polish Jewry in the Interwar Period," in *Jews in Independent Poland, 1918–1939*, ed. Antony Polonsky, Ezra Mendelsohn, and Jerzy Tomaszewski, vol. 8 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* (London, 1994), pp. 3–13.

⁵ Neville Laski, "Report on Journey to Austria, Poland and Danzig. August 15 to 31, 1934," file 788 (Poland), pp. 1–21, Archive of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, New York City (hereafter cited as Laski); quotation from p. 1. Neville Laski was the brother of Harold Laski. On the JDC, and on American Jewish foreign relief undertakings in general, see Jehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1929–1939* (Philadelphia, 1974). Laski's trip was also commissioned by the American Jewish Committee.

like the young Nazis—disappointed in their expectations. I asked while I was in Austria what Austrian Nazis stood for apart from the question of pan-Germanism. I was told . . . that things could not be worse than they were and that as so many Austrians anticipated some sort of eventual union with Germany, to be an Austrian Nazi was to be a contingent holder of a job. To be a Nazi was to be an optimist.

Laski thought that anti-Semitism was aggravated by the presence “of so many Jewish professional men” who, as the Austrians tended to forget, were frequently “as impoverished and struggling as themselves.” Likewise, while the Austrians saw that a “not inconsiderable portion of Austrian trade, wholesale and retail, is in the hands of Jews,” they did not “stop to consider whether or no this trade is successful.” “The Minister for Commerce incidentally mentioned to me Lueger, the [prewar] Burgomaster of Vienna, and said that he had created anti-Semitism in Austria but that it had been scientific because Lueger said ‘He is a Jew whom I say is a Jew’ and he thereby avoided any anti-Semitism against a useful Jew. It is a commentary on the hold which Lueger had upon the people of Vienna that I saw at least half a dozen statues and statuettes to him in Vienna and that the present Burgomaster of Vienna is notoriously an anti-Semite.”⁶

Arriving in Warsaw, Laski wandered about the Jewish quarter. “I have never seen such poverty, squalor and filth. It made me despair of civilization. I have read much of Poland. I have heard much of Poland. But nothing that I have seen or heard in any degree pictures what I saw with my own eyes.” Warsaw was, he concluded, “a teeming city of wretchedness.”

To his inquiries about the causes of anti-Semitism in Poland Laski received mixed replies. A Jewish deputy to the Polish parliament, speaking anonymously, told him that “in the first place it was due to an aggressive nationalism. The Poles wanted to have the place to themselves.” Second, there was a “jealousy of Jewish intellect and the possibilities of Jewish position, influence and wealth if the Jews were given untrammelled opportunity of advancement.” A prime contributor to the economic depression among the Jews was “the fact that the State and the municipal councils do not buy from Jewish traders except in small amounts and they are the biggest buyers in Poland.” He added that “when any government department considers a question they systematically set themselves to find out how they can hurt the Jews.” As they walked the streets, “we passed a sky scraper building owned by the Provincial Ins. Co. He told me that on the intervention of the government no Jews were employed in that building,” nor was that the only such case in Warsaw.⁷

⁶ Laski, p. 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–8. The Polish government’s domestic economic policies discriminated sporadically, but not systematically, against the Polish Jews. See Jerzy Tomaszewski et al., *Najnowsze dzieje Żydów w Polsce w zarysie (do 1950 roku)* (Warsaw, 1993), pp.

Laski met with Foreign Minister Józef Beck's principal secretary Gwiazdowski, a converted Jew who only reluctantly conceded that anti-Semitism existed in Poland, adding defensively that it was "much worse in Germany." "He trotted out the suggestion that there should be emigration. I asked him where was the land, the money, the technical means and the will of the Polish Jews to leave Poland? He had no answer. I then asked him what less right the Jews of Polish citizenship had to live in Poland than the Poles themselves and whether he had forgotten Poland's obligations under the Minority Treaties." "Strangely enough," Laski reported, "my resentment of his blindness in relation to anti-Semitism did not meet with any aggressive reaction." Laski's hosts and guides applauded the sharp tone he adopted with such officials, telling him that the Poles were sensitive to western opinion and "that in any event it was impossible for a Jew of Poland to speak in the same terms if he valued his future security."⁸

Beck himself, whom Laski found to be "altogether an impressive figure" (even though "he looks as though he had had a wild time before he attained to ministerial responsibility"), also denied that the Poles were anti-Semites. Laski told Beck that the British and American Jews on whose behalf he was speaking "appreciated that the government of marshal Piłsudski was much more favorable to the Jews than any prospective alternative government, but we did feel that much could be done to ameliorate the position of the Jewish population." Beck conceded that the Warsaw ghetto made a "bad impression," but he added that "Poland was a very poor country and . . . millions of Poles were also in a bad condition." In any case, the Polish government "was anxious to demonstrate, particularly to the Jews of England and America, that they wished to treat their Jews fairly."⁹

Taking a different view, Marian Kościalkowski, minister of trade, admitted to being "appalled by the misery and suffering of the Jewish population in Poland." Anti-Semitism was, he said, "common" and "probably ineradicable." It was "used by all parties for election purposes." "Any party [Kościalkowski added] which favored the Jews would find itself in a serious position. He said 'Un grand nombre de Juifs sont communiste, mais ce n'est pas la politique, c'est la misere' [*sic*]. [A large number of Jews are communist, but this isn't politics, it's misery.] I said I was glad to hear him say this. Could that not be said on a public platform? He said it was impossible. No-one would have the courage, but it was true." There was, the minister thought, "no solution of the

205–6. Like Laski, the German Jewish physician-novelist Alfred Döblin was shaken by his encounter with the poverty of the Polish Jews, but he also found more vitality to admire among the Jewish common people than Laski did ten years later. See Döblin, pp. 50 ff. and *passim*.

⁸ Laski, p. 11.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Jewish problem in Poland, [and] emigration was impossible.” At best the situation of the Jews, whom the minister described as “hommes comme les Polonais” (human beings like the Poles), would ease as the country at large escaped the grip of the depression. Kościółkowski impressed Laski. “I feel that if this Minister could only be multiplied a good many times, the position of the Jews in Poland would be infinitely better.”¹⁰

Speaking with Mr. Savery, the British Consul and a fifteen-year veteran of Poland, Laski heard that, in the countryside, “the peasants and the Jews get along pretty well because they have a mutual good natured contempt. The Jews despise the peasants for their hard and dirty work on the land, and the peasants despise the Jews for confining themselves to trade and money making.” But, according to Savery, the “disproportionate part which the Jews played in professional life . . . had been a gravely exciting cause of anti-semitic feeling,” the open expression of which had increased in the last two years. “Whether this was due to events in Germany he was not wholly prepared to say.” Another of Laski’s contacts, the Jewish parliamentary deputy Wiślicki, an “extremely prosperous merchant” and backer of the government, “agreed that anti-Semitism was an economic question. The bourgeois and intelligentsia [*sic*] were patently anti-Semitic,” while “the peasants were latent and potential factors in anti-Semitism.”¹¹

The Joint Distribution Committee’s Warsaw agent, Isaac Giterman, “said that any minister who treated the Jews fairly would cease to be minister.” Polish anti-Semitism was “inherent.” It was “substantially economic and a fight for bread.” The Polish intelligentsia were “wholly anti-Semitic,” and from the Polish side there was “no contact with Jews however they may be dressed.” Although people were accustomed to thinking that the material condition of the Polish Jews was bad, poverty was now reaching crisis proportions. In one place the Jewish public health agency (TOZ) “gave codliver oil to the children and found that whole families were putting it on bread as a luxury.” In part because of governmental discrimination, the number of Jewish artisans and shopkeepers was dwindling. Emigration was not feasible “not only because there is nowhere to go, but because there is no money.” The population was growing by forty thousand yearly, “and this is the direct road to catastrophe.”¹²

Wiktor Ehrlich, leader of the left-wing Bund party, told Laski that his organ-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹¹ Quotations from *ibid.*, pp. 13, 15. Laski’s informant was no doubt Wacław Wiślicki, about whom see Joseph Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939* (Berlin, 1983), p. 128.

¹² Laski, pp. 15–16. Giterman’s views are in large measure corroborated by Norman Salsitz’s valuable memoir of interwar life in a Galician shtetl, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland: Remembering Kolbuszowa* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1992).

ization “deems the government to be Fascist and as anti-Semitic” as the right-wing radical National Democratic movement. “The N.D.s make [pogroms] whilst the government, as the editor of the [official] Polish Gazette said, want to deal with the Jewish question in a European way, that is, to deprive Jews of all means of living.” Ehrlich held that “very much less than 10% of the Jews are comfortably off.” No solution short of “a social change from a capitalist order” was possible. Only the Polish Socialists (PPS) were, at least collectively speaking, free of anti-Semitism and prepared to fight on the side of the Jews.¹³

Finally, Laski heard from the prominent and acerbic Jewish journalist Bernard Singer that “the problem was that at least two millions of the Polish Jews were in a state of permanent starvation. It was a permanent problem.” “There are many anti-Semites in Poland who feel that events in Germany are a legalisation of their activities and they are no longer ashamed to be anti-Semites. . . . He took the view that Germany in its present form in relation to anti-Semitism, was an abnormality, but that Poland was the normal nerve centre of anti-Semitism.”¹⁴

In German-ruled Danzig, Laski was left in no doubt that the aim of Albert Forster’s National Socialist Party was “to liquidate the Jews.” Although the Nazis did not control the government, discrimination against the Jews was harsh and crippling, since “the unofficial Nazi policy [of anti-Jewish exclusion and boycott] is far stronger than the official policy of the Senate.” His unnamed informants told Laski that earlier in 1934 “Dr. Schramm, the State Commissioner, visited a school and asked a boy ‘Why do we shun the Jews?’ and the answer was given, which is taught in the schools ‘because the Jews are destructive and communist.’” He also asked, though Laski reported no reply, ‘Why do we sing the song of the long knife?’”¹⁵

Among Laski’s conclusions was the recommendation that “some check ought to be placed upon the numbers of Jews in professions in those countries.” He had been considerably shocked by the fervor and parochialism of Jewish religiosity in Poland, and he advocated policies of secularization among the “Polish Jewish masses,” as well as suggesting that “some restrictions of a drastic kind should be placed upon the ecclesiastical seminaries. They should be brought up to date from every point of view.” Of anti-Semitism Laski concluded that it was “inherent and indigenous, ineradicable and not likely to moderate until the economic conditions improve, the pressure of Jews in the professions lessens and the Hitler régime disappears.” As for the “misery” of

¹³ Quotations from Laski, pp. 19–20. Laski wrote “programmes” when “pogroms” were clearly meant. He also referred to Gitterman as “Gittlerman.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14, where Singer is referred to as “Zyngor.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

the Polish Jews—"even apart from any question of anti-Semitism"—"there is no solution."¹⁶

Neville Laski's report bears somber witness to the high intensity of anti-Semitism in the German and Polish lands in the interwar period. By the early 1930s the Jews of these countries, and indeed of all central and eastern Europe, stood exposed to grave dangers posed by discriminatory state policies and physical violence such as the newly installed Nazi regime had visited upon the German Jews in the boycott and pogroms of 1933 and the attendant legislation excluding Jews from employment in the public sector and the state-regulated professions. It was an extremely bad omen that the assault on the livelihoods and civil rights of the Jews had begun in Germany, the bastion of Jewish acculturation, assimilation, and patriotism. Paradoxically, the Weimar Republic, while it abolished the various vestiges of official discrimination that the imperial government had enforced, witnessed a radicalization and growth of anti-Semitic politics far beyond the measure of pre-1914 Germany.

Among the many testimonies to German Jewish awareness of the dangers surrounding them in the Weimar years is the unpublished report of the Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith [CV]) for the years 1926 and 1927. These had been, the report stated, "two normal years," part of the brief era of comparative economic and political stability in Germany between 1924 and 1929. Yet while anti-Semitic parties had largely vanished from the scene, the CV found itself struggling with an even more intractable enemy in the form of a widespread, diffuse hostility to the German Jews. "The spiritual after-effects of the radical *völkisch* movement [of the early Weimar years], even in the educated classes of the German nation, are the cause of a feeling of alienation, a subconscious rejection of the Jews as co-workers in the cause of the German fatherland." The difficulties of the Weimar economy, especially those associated with the rationalization movement and the unemployment it occasioned, intensified competitive pressures exerted upon Jewish firms. In the agrarian provinces, boycotts and other actions—"cold pogroms," as the CV called them in another context—drove the Jews from the small and medium towns to the big cities. In the press, "the spread of *völkisch* and anti-Jewish patterns of thought . . . has assumed massive proportions," and anti-Semitism had also penetrated the pages of formerly neutral or technical publications. The Jews faced the need to fight to protect their "right to a home (*Heimatsrecht*) in the German fatherland." They found themselves confronting the "shattering and shameful picture of the menaced condition of their German identity as Jews."¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁷ Leo Baeck Institute, New York City, "1926 1927. Zwei Jahre Arbeit im Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens EV. Geschäftsbericht erstattet der

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If, despite the great significance of the problem of anti-Jewish political movements in interwar Germany and Poland, scholars have left untried a comparative analysis of the two cases, it may be because the exercise seems unpromising. Weimar Germany was, for its day, an advanced urban-industrial capitalist society, while Poland was heavily and backwardly agrarian, its industrial centers isolated in an urban landscape thickly populated by artisan workshops. The German Jews comprised only about 1 percent of the general population, to which they were—apart from the small number of immigrant *Ostjuden* (eastern Jews) in their midst—highly assimilated linguistically and culturally, as well as in many other respects. The Polish Jews, numbering in 1939 nearly 3.5 million, represented some 10 percent of the population. Among them, only a small minority considered themselves Poles or “Poles of Jewish faith.” The rest officially counted themselves, in national terms, as Jewish and were besides, for the most part, native speakers of Yiddish, not Polish. A great many were Orthodox or Hasidic Jews, whose relation to the state was mediated and attenuated by strictly observed religious law. A great many also were Zionists, secular or religious, who, while they accepted the obligations of Polish citizenship, linked Jewish destiny with Palestine. German Jews, with some exceptions, were bourgeois and even prosperous; Polish Jews, for the most part, lived modestly or in poverty.¹⁸

Hauptversammlung des Central-Vereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens EV 11. 12. und 13. Februar 1928, als Manuskript gedruckt. Streng vertraulich.” German original of the passages quoted in text above: “Die seelischen Nachwirkungen der radikalen völkischen Bewegung selbst in den geistigen Schichten des deutschen Volkes sind die Ursache eines Fremdheitsgefühls, einer unterbewußten Ablehnung gegenüber den Juden als Mitschaffenden am Werke des deutschen Vaterlandes” (pp. 7–8); “dieses erschütternde und zugleich beschämende Bild von dem Bedrohtsein unseres deutschen Seins als Juden” (p. 99). The report pledged itself to the ideal of “eines in Vaterlandstreue, Pflichterfüllung, wortarmer aber tatenreicher Hingabe am Deutschtum und Judentum vorbildlichen deutschjüdischen Typus” (p. 8). See also pp. 67, 75. On the Central-Verein’s reports on “cold pogroms,” see Helmut Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988), p. 212. In his address to the general meeting of May 29, 1919, Ludwig Holländer voiced the CV’s very strong position on the fullness of German Jewish membership in the nation: “Wir werden uns aber weder von Antisemiten noch von Nationaljuden [i.e., the Zionists] nachsagen lassen, daß wir fremd in Deutschland seien. Dieser Begriff der Fremdheit ist die schwerste Verirrung, die jemals dagewesen ist”; see his *Der Antisemitismus der Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1919). For the opposite view, see Gershom Sholem, “On the Social Psychology of the Jews in Germany: 1900–1933,” in *Jews and Germans from 1860 to 1933: The Problematic Symbiosis*, ed. David Bronsen (Heidelberg, 1979), pp. 9–32.

¹⁸ Among general works on Germany, see Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge, La., 1980); Werner E. Mosse, ed., *Entscheidungsjahr 1932:*

Perhaps most important, the character of anti-Semitism within the larger political cultures might seem to have varied fundamentally. Where German anti-Semitism expressed the anxieties and resentments of the insecure petty bourgeoisie and the marginal intelligentsia in a setting of advanced, though destabilized, capitalism, Polish anti-Semitism bore the stamp of Catholic intolerance and the desperation-driven aggression of preindustrial peasants and artisans. In Germany anti-Semitism was—or so it might be proposed—ideological and abstract; in Poland it was concrete and brutally face-to-face.

Yet by bringing into focus the comparable aspects of the two cases—which is not to deny the differences between them—an interpretive perspective emerges encompassing central and eastern European anti-Semitism in the early twentieth century as a broad regional phenomenon rather than as a set of nationally bounded histories. In this view, modern anti-Semitic ideology and politics both in Germany and Poland figure as pathologies of middle-class formation or, in an alternative formulation, as accompaniments of embourgeoisement in a setting, unlike western and southern Europe, where a relatively large (or very large) and economically very significant urban Jewish population appeared to constitute an impediment to Christian advancement. In both countries, anti-Semitism served to justify assaults on Jewish-owned or Jewish-occupied business enterprises and medical, legal, and other professional practices, as well as bureaucratic positions, which were widely seen to block the path of upward mobility to non-Jewish aspirants to bourgeois respectability and security. In both countries, more or less sporadic anti-Semitic violence fomented by political organizations of the radical right, particularly in the 1930s, elicited considerable popular support or acceptance, reflecting widespread though normally mostly latent hostility to the Jews.

Likewise, in both cases, the anti-Jewish programs advocated by powerful right-wing parties representing the broad middle strata were finally acted on, fully or selectively, by authoritarian and fascist or quasi-fascist governments,

Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik, 2d ed. (Tübingen, 1966); Monika Richarz, ed., *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland: Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte, 1918–1945* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 13–39. On Poland, see Marcus (on Marcus's factual errors, see the review of his book by Jerzy Holzer in *Polin* 1 [1986]: 382–87); Celia S. Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland between the Two World Wars* (New York, 1977); Yisrael Gutman et al., *The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars* (Hanover, N.H., 1989); Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington, Ind., 1983), esp. chap. 1; Aleksander Hertz, *The Jews in Polish Culture* (1961; Evanston, Ill., 1988); Heiko Haumann, *Geschichte der Ostjuden* (Munich, 1990), pts. 3–4; Piotr Wróbel, *Zarys dziejów żydów na ziemiach polskich w latach 1880–1918* (Warsaw, 1991); the general history of Polish Jewry (1993) coauthored by Józef Adelson, Teresa Prekerowa, Jerzy Tomaszewski, and Piotr Wróbel (herein cited as Tomaszewski et al. [see n. 7 above]); and Polonsky, Mendelsohn, and Tomaszewski, eds. (n. 4 above).

to the Jews' ruin in the German case and with crippling effect in the Polish case. In the years between 1933 and 1939 Hitler's regime introduced discriminatory policies of such severity as to impose a form of social death upon the German Jewish community. In Poland, the semidictatorial government of Piłsudski and his successors, pressured by an increasingly vocal opposition on the radical and fascist right, implemented many anti-Semitic policies tending in a similar direction, while still others were on the official and semiofficial agenda when war descended in 1939.

Although it is open to question whether the "Final Solution" had taken clear shape in the minds of Hitler and his accomplices before 1941, it was in any case their untrammelled control of a modern military-industrial power-state that enabled them to implement genocidal actions once the circumstances of World War II made it seem propitious to do so. In prewar Poland, the fascist parties had not achieved sufficient strength to bid for state power, nor was independence of international sanctions, such as the Nazis imagined they had attained, a conceivable goal. Nonetheless, the anti-Jewish policies enacted by the post-Piłsudski regime inflicted severe disabilities on the Jewish community and in important respects bore strong resemblances to prewar Nazi practices.

Similar policies were also being implemented in Hungary and Romania, the other major homelands of the central European Jews. In the Soviet Union, Stalinism cast its shadow on the collective social and cultural existence of the Jews, though individual survival could be assured on condition of political conformity and, for the young, linguistic assimilation. Thus in the 1920s and 1930s central and eastern European Jewry nearly everywhere faced the threat of communal degradation or dissolution, if not of physical uprooting and destruction, well before the "Final Solution" was launched.

This situation represented the culmination of a deepening structural crisis that began in the German and German-ruled lands in the 1870s and 1880s, spread to Russian Poland soon thereafter, and gripped Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and the Baltic lands after World War I, if not before. Throughout central and eastern Europe the Jews came under increasing attack from the educated middle class or intelligentsia, small businessmen, and farmers, whose expectations of social welfare and advancement were disappointed or only partially fulfilled by an emergent industrial capitalist order prone to cyclical turbulence and only weakly steered by the political elites, who were typically of agrarian-aristocratic origins and often themselves inclined to anti-Semitic views. The historical moment in the process of capitalist development when the considerable Jewish contribution to capital formation and job creation had been valued by liberal-minded political authorities and the laboring population had vanished, leaving the Jews without powerful allies to face the anti-Semitic storms of the interwar years.

From this configuration there emerged in the late nineteenth century across

central and eastern Europe a broad regional anti-Semitic mobilization that called for and eventually succeeded in bringing about the devastating anti-Jewish legislation and other state actions of the 1930s. The "Final Solution" imparted to this long-term structural crisis an abrupt outcome of the most tragic nature. But even before it occurred, the Jewish communities were menaced by—or, wherever National Socialist power extended, already suffering—destruction.

* * *

In the recent historical literature on anti-Semitism in pre-Nazi Germany, two broad interpretive positions may be distinguished, in some ways corresponding to what have come to be known as the functionalist and intentionalist approaches to the period of the dictatorship.¹⁹ There is, first, the view—analogueous to the functionalist perspective—that anti-Semitism should be seen principally as a political manifestation of social distress and dislocation, particularly in petty bourgeois circles. Steered from above by antidemocratic and manipulative elites, anti-Semitism was a distorted reflection of the anomic stresses of capitalist modernization. While the resulting anti-Jewish sentiments were vehement enough, the argument suggests that they did not derive from real encounters and conflicts between Germans and Jews but, rather, from deflections onto the Jews of social antagonisms deriving from other sources.²⁰

¹⁹ A good recent survey of the contending positions, including his own, is offered by Christopher R. Browning, "Beyond 'Intentionalism' and 'Functionalism': The Decision for the Final Solution Reconsidered," in his *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 86–124. Among the early statements, see Hans Mommsen, "Die Realisierung des Utopischen: Die 'Endlösung der Judenfrage' im 'Dritten Reich,'" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9 (1983): 381–420. Compare Saul Friedländer's intentionalist counterposition, "From Anti-Semitism to Extermination: A Historiographical Study of Nazi Policies toward the Jews and an Essay of Interpretation," *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984): 1–50. On the debate generally, see Michael Marcus, *The Holocaust in History* (New York, 1987), chap. 3; and Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 2d ed. (London, 1989), chap. 5 and passim. For arguments against overemphasis on continuities between pre-1914 and post-1914 forms of anti-Semitism, see Shulamit Volkov, "Kontinuität und Diskontinuität im deutschen Antisemitismus, 1878–1945," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 33, no. 2 (1985): 221–43; and Donald L. Niewyk, "Solving the 'Jewish Problem': Continuity and Change in German Antisemitism, 1871–1945," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 35 (1990): 335–70. Among general works on anti-Semitism in pre-1933 Germany, see, in addition to Berding and Mosse, ed., Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (1964; Cambridge, Mass., 1988); and Hermann Greive, *Geschichte des modernen Antisemitismus in Deutschland* (Darmstadt, 1983).

²⁰ This was an interpretive position well established in pre-1933 Germany. See, e.g., Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, *Anti-Anti: Tatsachen zur Judenfrage* (Berlin, n.d. [1933]), article on "Antisemitismus ('Der Jude als Sündenbock')," pp. 1a–1c. For a recent, social-historical formulation of this view, see Hans-

Second, there is the argument—which correlates with the intentionalist standpoint—that, while anti-Semitism did indeed express sociopsychological tensions and instability afflicting especially the German middle strata, it targeted the Jews because tangible hostilities against them survived from earlier times, which were amplified by the Jews' actual association with political and economic positions seen by anti-Semites to be inimical to their interests. In the formulation given to this second line of analysis by Hermann Greive, Helmut Berding, and Hermann Graml, anti-Semitism—rooted in real antagonisms though it was—found expression in the form of totalizing Sorelian myth or eschatological political religion, qualities that help explain the extreme aggressiveness of National Socialist policy and practice.²¹

The second of these two positions is the more interesting and complex. But they both support the present argument, emphasizing as they do the salience of anti-Semitism in German society and its roots in the antagonisms of capitalist development (as well as in precapitalist Christian society). On the question of the sources of National Socialist electoral strength, each stands in a certain tension to the evidence that anti-Semitism played only a minor role in attracting Nazi voters. The empirical point seems firm that agitation against the Jews was peripheral to the Nazis' pre-1933 electoral campaigns and membership recruitment.²² Yet the significance of this finding must be measured in the

Joachim Bieber, "Anti-Semitism as a Reflection of Social, Economic and Political Tensions in Germany: 1880–1933," in Bronson, ed., pp. 33–77. Of pre-1914 German political anti-Semitism, Bieber writes that "it occurred regularly in close connection with the national ideology of community, anti-democratic and anti-urban ideas, militaristic tendencies, imperialistic goals . . . as well as criticism of civilization and cultural pessimism. It . . . represented but one element of the syndrome which the strata of German society who were disquieted and irritated by the process of modernization developed as an anti-modern ideology of defense and which was soon adapted and used by the power elite as an ideological support for their position of power" (p. 46). Earlier versions, with varying accents, are offered in Hans Rosenberg, *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit: Wirtschaftsablauf, Gesellschaft, und Politik in Mitteleuropa* (Berlin/West, 1967), chap. 3; Pulzer; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich, 1871–1918* (Göttingen, 1973), pp. 110–17 and passim. Also in this vein are Eva Reichmann, *Hostages of Civilisation: The Social Sources of National Socialist Anti-Semitism* (London, 1950); and Z. Barbu, "Die sozialpsychologische Struktur des nationalsozialistischen Antisemitismus," in Mosse, ed., pp. 135–56. For a valuable critique and empirical test of this approach, see Albert Lichtblau, *Antisemitismus und soziale Spannung in Berlin und Wien, 1867–1914* (Berlin, 1994).

²¹ On National Socialism as Sorelian myth, see Berding, pp. 198–202. Compare Greive, p. 167 and passim; on anti-Semitism as a National Socialist "state religion," see Hermann Graml, *Antisemitism in the Third Reich* (1988; Oxford, 1992), p. 33 and passim.

²² On evidence against the centrality of anti-Semitism in the National Socialists' strategic thinking and day-to-day operations, see Oded Heilbrunner, "The Role of Nazi Antisemitism in the Nazi Party's Activity and Propaganda: A Regional Historiographi-

light of the general notoriety of the National Socialists' racist militance and the very widespread character of *völkisch* and anti-Semitic discourse in the political life of the Weimar Republic.²³

In the analysis of anti-Semitism under the Nazi dictatorship, the functionalist view holds that the radicalization evident in the passage from the boycott movement, pogroms, and exclusionary legislation of 1933, through the widespread local violence of 1935 and the promulgation that year of the Nuremberg Laws, to the November pogroms of 1938 and the accompanying terrorization and plundering of the Jews, constituted a "negative dynamic" or pattern of accelerating aggressiveness deriving from pressures on a nonmonolithic (or "polycratic") dictatorship exerted by the *Sturmabteilung* (S.A.) brownshirts and other marginal or extremist Nazi Party elements. The power struggle among the competing agencies of the National Socialist state likewise had a radicalizing effect on official policy toward the Jews. But, whether such negative dynamics were motivated by ideological demands for "revolutionary action" against the Jews, by bureaucratic infighting, or more concretely by the aim to profit from the Jews' elimination from economic life, the functionalist position must acknowledge that the prewar stages in Nazi policy were accompanied by a considerable degree of public support or toleration. They were, moreover, sanctioned and ratified through legislation from above, to a degree that allows intentionalists to argue that prewar anti-Jewish policies reflected very clearly the Nazi leadership's will, even if it was not always unambiguously formulated and expressed.²⁴

cal Study," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 35 (1990): 397–439. Compare Marrus, pp. 11–12; Jürgen W. Falter, *Hitlers Wähler* (Darmstadt, 1991); Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1983), and "The Middle Classes and National Socialism," in *The German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (London 1991), pp. 318–37, in which the theme of anti-Semitism does not arise.

²³ On the depth of anti-Semitic sentiment in Weimar Germany, see George L. Mosse, "Die deutsche Rechte und die Juden," pp. 183–248; and Robert Weltsch, "Entscheidungsjahr 1932," pp. 535–62, both in Mosse, ed.; Werner Jochmann, "Die Funktion des Antisemitismus in der Weimarer Republik," in *Antisemitismus: Von religiöser Judenfeindschaft zur Rassenideologie*, ed. Günter Brakelmann and Martin Rossowski (Göttingen, 1984), pp. 147–78; and Berding, pp. 210–12. See also Donald L. Niewyk's conclusions on the widespread, if ambiguous, nature of pre-1933 anti-Semitism, in *The Jews in Weimar Germany*, chap. 3, *passim*. The Central-Verein's 1933 *Anti-Anti*, although it did not directly address the Nazi movement or Hitler's views, tacitly acknowledged the broad sweep of anti-Semitic ideas in a lengthy section (pts. 51–56) devoted to refutations of pseudoscientific racial theories, notably Hans F. K. Günther's, which were fashionable in nationalist and right-wing circles.

²⁴ On the debates over the extent of popular anti-Semitism in Germany, both before and after 1933, see Marrus, pp. 84–94; and the pioneering essay by Laurence D. Stokes,

In the present context, it is significant that pre-1939 German anti-Semitism arose to a considerable degree from motives of economic competition and accompanying real-life animosities felt toward the German Jews. During the Weimar years Jewish employment in the public sector rose dramatically by comparison with the imperial period. Moreover, a high proportion of Nazi Party members in 1933 were drawn from the ranks of salaried commercial employees and from the independently employed sector of the economy, especially retail trade. After Hitler's accession to power, the "Old Guard," as Barkai writes, "looked forward impatiently to the immediate ousting of Jews (*Entjudung*) from the economy and their expropriation, as proclaimed in the NSDAP party program, hoping to gain lucrative individual benefits in the process."²⁵ Some fifty thousand (about one-half) of all Jewish-owned businesses were liquidated well before the 1938 pogroms through boycotts, threats, and other Nazi policies. Here, as in the case of the expulsion of Jews with academic degrees from professional life, a very practical sort of *Mittelstandspolitik* was in evidence, benefiting some of the Nazis' strongest constituencies. The literature

"The German People and the Destruction of the European Jews," *Central European History* 6, no. 2 (1973): 167–91. For arguments emphasizing popular acceptance of post-1933 National Socialist anti-Jewish aggression, see Otto Dov Kulka, "'Public Opinion' in Nazi Germany and the 'Jewish Question,'" *Jerusalem Quarterly* 25 (1982): 121–44; Otto Dov Kulka and Aron Rodrigue, "The German Population and the Jews in the Third Reich," *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984): 421–35; and Michael H. Kater, "Everyday Anti-Semitism in Prewar Nazi Germany: The Popular Bases," *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984): 129–60. On the escalation of National Socialist anti-Jewish policies, see Hans Mommsen's argument, which rates popular anti-Semitism at the low end of the scale, in "Die Funktion des Antisemitismus im 'Dritten Reich': Das Beispiel des Novemberpogroms," in Brakelmann and Rossowski, eds., pp. 179–92. Compare Ian Kershaw, "The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich," first published in the *Leo Baeck Yearbook* (1981) and reprinted in *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, ed. Helen Fein (Berlin, 1987), pp. 317–52. Kershaw supports the functionalist approach developed by Mommsen and Martin Broszat, emphasizing popular indifference (and, to a lesser extent, opposition) to pre-1939 official anti-Semitism, but pointing to the regime's success in persuading much of the public of the reality and importance of an abstractly conceived "Jewish Question," thus securing passive acquiescence in the deportations and murders of the "Final Solution." See esp. pp. 318, 334, 342 ff., as well as Kershaw's reply to Kulka and Rodrigue in "German Popular Opinion and the 'Jewish Question,' 1939–1943: Some Further Reflections," in *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland/The Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933–1943*, ed. Arnold Paucker (Tübingen, 1986), pp. 365–86. On this question Berding (pp. 226–33) offers a moderately functionalist approach. For the intentionalist argument, see Graml, pp. 33 ff.; and Reinhard Rürup, "Das Ende der Emanzipation: Die antijüdische Politik in Deutschland von der 'Machtergreifung' bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg," in Paucker, ed., pp. 97–114.

²⁵ Avraham Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation: The Economic Struggle of German Jews, 1933–1943* (1987; Hanover, N.H., 1989), p. xi.

on public opinion under the National Socialist dictatorship offers much evidence of numerous "individual actions" staged by local party members and pro-Nazi youth against the Jews in their midst. It was symptomatic of the rapid spread of anti-Semitism in German political culture that the bourgeois and upper-class anti-Hitlerian resistance movements acknowledged the existence of an alleged "Jewish problem" that required a more or less exclusionary and prejudicial solution in a post-Nazi German state.²⁶

After November 1938, official policy toward the Jews aimed to undermine completely their economic positions in German society and to drive them into forced emigration. Here the regime attained a considerable degree of success, inasmuch as in 1939 the Jewish population stood some 60 percent lower than

²⁶ On the general question of economic resentments directed against the German Jews, see Arnold Herzog, "Juden und Judentum in der sozialgeschichtlichen Forschung," in *Sozialgeschichte in Deutschland*, ed. Wolfgang Schieder and Volker Sellin, 4 vols. (Göttingen, 1986–87), 4:123–25, and 108–32, *passim*. On public sector employment, see Berding, pp. 223–24; on *mittelständisch* membership and interest and representation in the Nazi Party, see Esra Bennathan, "Die demographische und wirtschaftliche Struktur der Juden," in Mosse, ed., pp. 129–31, and 87–131, *passim*. On forced closures and expropriation of Jewish businesses after 1933, see Avraham Barkai, "Die deutschen Unternehmer und die Judenpolitik im 'Dritten Reich,'" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 15 (1989): 227–47, and *From Boycott to Annihilation*, chaps. 1–2; and Herbert A. Strauss, "The Drive for War and the Pogroms of 1938: Testing Explanatory Models," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 35 (1990): 267–78. On the perpetuation of hostile attitudes toward the Jews in the ranks of the conservative anti-Nazi opposition, see Christoph Dipper, "The German Resistance and the Jews," *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984): 51–94. The Central-Verein emphasized the extent to which post-1914 economic developments had weakened the position of self-employed Jewish businessmen, as well as rentiers and retirees. A simultaneous increase in the number of Jewish salaried white-collar workers completed this picture of "the extraordinarily sharp *decline of the Jewish middle class*" and "*increasing impoverishment of the German Jews*" (Central-Verein, p. 27; emphasis in original). These points, which aimed to disarm economic anti-Semitism, also underpin Niewyk's argument that during the Weimar years the German Jews came, in socioeconomic terms, to resemble more closely the German population at large. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany*, chap. 2. See also the 1933 *Anti-Anti* article on department stores (pp. 75a–75c). Jacob Lestschinsky, author of numerous well-informed studies of the economic dimensions of central European anti-Semitism, wrote in 1941: "While the Nazi persecution has not enjoyed the support of the majority of Germans, it was made possible by the attitude of the middle-class business men and the members of the liberal professions. The ousting of Jews from trade was hailed by the middle class. . . . The lawyers, physicians, and academic workers who distinguished themselves in expelling and humiliating their Jewish colleagues were also motivated by economic considerations" ("The Anti-Jewish Program: Tsarist Russia, the Third Reich, and Independent Poland," *Jewish Social Studies* 3 [1941]: 148). Lestschinsky added that "a single famished intellectual may be more dangerous [as an anti-Semite] than ten less educated, starving citizens or a hundred hungry workers and peasants" (p. 149).

in 1933. In 1939 gainfully employed persons constituted only 16 percent of Germany Jewry, and half of them were ill-paid workers. The large majority lived on dwindling capital, pensions, or charity.²⁷ The outbreak of the war and the conquest of Poland did not immediately alter the government's adherence to the goal of forced emigration, which was radicalized rather than abandoned by the plans of 1939–41 to transport the German and Polish Jews under German control to the Lublin reservation in occupied Poland or to Madagascar, where they were to be confined under German domination. It was in developing these plans that the term "Final Solution" entered the National Socialist linguistic protocol.²⁸

The intentionalist position holds that genocide, if not explicitly premeditated and blueprinted before its inauguration in 1941, followed directly from the radical biologism of Nazi anti-Semitism. Mass murder was certainly embedded in the National Socialist ideology as a potentiality. It nevertheless required a particular constellation of circumstances for it to emerge in reality—including the decision by Hitler's regime to abandon further thought of negotiated peace with Great Britain, which would have required some attention to British and American concerns about German racial policy, and the plunge into a war against the Soviet Union that first yielded great German victories but then bogged down into a war of attrition, both of which favored the dynamic of mass murder.²⁹

For the purposes of the present argument, it is enough to acknowledge that National Socialist policies already before 1941 had virtually destroyed the German Jewish community, which was demographically depleted and crippled,

²⁷ Richarz, ed., pp. 49–50. On anti-Semitic developments in post-*Anschluß* Austria, and their effect on German policy, see Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992), p. 286 and chap. 19, *passim*. See also Oskar Karbach, "The Liquidation of the Jewish Community of Vienna," *Jewish Social Studies* 2 (1940): 255–78.

²⁸ Christopher R. Browning, "Nazi Resettlement Policy and the Search for a Solution to the Jewish Question, 1939–1941," in his *Path to Genocide*, pp. 3–27; Marrus, pp. 26–27, 32, 59–63, 122–23; Berding (n. 17 above), pp. 243–45; Graml, pp. 162–63. In his *Antisemiten-Katechismus* (Leipzig, 1893), one of the most widely circulated and radical anti-Semitic publications of the pre-1914 period, Theodor Fritsch wrote of the German Jews: "Mögen sie doch irgendwo ein Colonialland erwerben, dasselbe urbar machen und bebauen, selbst eine Cultur schaffen und dadurch in einen ehrlichen Wettkampf mit den übrigen Nationen eintreten!" (p. 22).

²⁹ On the relationship between the anti-Soviet war and anti-Jewish genocide, see Christian Streit, "Ostkrieg, Antibolschewismus, und 'Endlösung,'" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 17 (1991): 242–55; Marrus (n. 19 above), pp. 42 ff., 46. Streit takes account of the deficiencies of Arno J. Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The "Final Solution" in History* (New York, 1988). So too does Browning, "The Holocaust as By-Product? A Critique of Arno Mayer," in his *Path to Genocide* (n. 19 above), pp. 77–85; see also pp. 86 ff.

economically marginalized and pauperized, politically crushed and atomized, and altogether without a future in Germany.³⁰

* * *

The Polish counterpart to right-radical or *völkisch* German nationalism was embodied in the National Democratic movement, led by Roman Dmowski from its formal organization in 1897 until his death in January 1939. National Democratic (or Endek) ideology, of which Dmowski was the outstanding formulator, operated with an organic, biological metaphor of the nation (*naród*). Dmowski and his associates argued that, under the oppressive conditions of statelessness before 1918, the Poles could only defend themselves and grow strong through the most unsentimental "national egoism" and unremitting struggle with their national competitors. These included very prominently the Jews, whom Dmowski regarded as a disintegrative element in the Polish body politic. After 1918, his anti-Semitic convictions assumed obsessive and paranoid forms, so that an earlier toleration of a minor degree of Jewish assimilation into Polish culture gave way to apocalyptic visions of an impending "international crushing (*pogrom*) of the Jews" and "end to the Jewish chapter of history."³¹

The Endeks drew their support from the emergent entrepreneurial capitalist class, most of whose members were small operators; from petty tradesmen,

³⁰ Compare Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation*, chaps. 3–4; and Rürup, "Das Ende der Emanzipation," pp. 98–99, 108, 112. Of the anti-Jewish policies of the National Socialist regime in the period 1933–39/41, Rürup writes, "Andererseits liegt in der Interpretation der Verfolgungsgeschichte bis zum Kriege als bloßer 'Vorgeschichte' nicht selten auch eine Verharmlosungstendenz. Die Entlassung aus dem Beamtenverhältnis, die Nichtzulassung zum Studium und zu akademischen Berufen, der Ausschluß aus dem kulturellen Leben, die alltäglichen Demütigungen und Schikanen, der Verlust der wirtschaftlichen Existenzgrundlage erscheinen vor dem Hintergrund der Vernichtungslager als vergleichsweise unwichtige Sachverhalte. . . . Längst vor dem Beginn der Deportationen war es den Nationalsozialisten gelungen, die Voraussetzungen für die Fortdauer einer jüdischen Existenz in Deutschland gründlich zu zerschlagen" (pp. 98–99).

³¹ On Dmowski's political ideas, see his influential books, *Myśli nowoczesnego polaka* (Lwów, 1903), *Niemcy, Rosya i kwestya polska* (Lwów, 1908), and *Upadek myśli konserwatywnej w Polsce* (Lwów, 1914). Also fundamental to Endek thought was Zygmunt Balicki, *Egoizm narodowy wobec etyki* (Lwów, 1914). In the interpretive literature, see Wilhelm Feldman, *Geschichte der politischen Ideen in Polen seit dessen Teilungen* (Munich, 1917); Andrzej Micewski, *Roman Dmowski* (Warsaw, 1971); Alvin Fountain, *Roman Dmowski: Party, Tactics, Ideology, 1895–1907* (Boulder, Colo., 1980); Roman Wapiński, *Narodowa Demokracja, 1893–1939: Ze studiów nad dziejami myśli nacjonalistycznej* (Wrocław, 1980), and *Roman Dmowski* (Lublin, 1988); Jerzy Janusz Terej, *Idee, mity, realia: Szkice do dziejów Narodowej Demokracji* (Warsaw, 1971).

artisans, and prosperous farmers; from white-collar employees; from professionals and intellectuals, especially those of modest parentage rather than noble descent; from the lower clergy; and, very vociferously after 1918, from university students. These middle strata of Polish society were expanding in the interwar period, but they were greatly outnumbered by the class-conscious peasantry, represented by an increasingly militant movement of their own, and by the urban workers, who backed the left-wing reformist Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and other more conservative workers' parties. Unlike the Nazis, who eventually captured the Protestant German farmers' votes, the Endeks could not conquer the Polish villages. This condemned them to a minority status from which they could hardly hope to escape under conditions of parliamentary democracy, which in its short years of existence in independent Poland, from 1921 to 1926, they took few pains to defend in theory or practice.³²

Józef Piłsudski's coup d'état of 1926 elevated to power Dmowski's chief personal rival, around whom the noble landlords, industrial barons, and a numerous part of the intelligentsia arrayed themselves for state patronage and the protection of the pro-Piłsudskiite armed forces. Piłsudski succeeded, where the circle around German President Hindenburg and Chancellor Brüning failed, in escaping from parliamentary democracy into conservative authoritarianism rather than fascist plebeianism. Because in subsequent years many moderate or opportunist National Democrats, especially among the propertied classes, joined Piłsudski and his "cleansing"—or *Sanacja*—regime, the Endeks moved rapidly in the years 1928–34 toward a near-fascist position.

Dmowski and the older generation for which he spoke still found it difficult to break completely with the tradition of the self-limiting liberal state, the more so since their archrival Piłsudski had made a cult of Polish state power. But the younger generation, impressed by Mussolini, Hitler, Franco, and Salazar, pushed from within the Endek movement, as well as through extremist parties that splintered off from it, for a Polish combination of populist fascism and militarized authoritarianism. This entailed very prominently a radical anti-Semitism aiming at revocation of Jewish citizenship and civil equality, the economic expropriation of the Polish Jews, and their forced emigration from the country (preceded, in some plans, by compulsory ghettoization or internment). Given the nearly universal Polish nationalist antagonism toward Germany, admiration for Hitler was grudging, and Polish fascism always emphasized the respects in which it differed from National Socialism—for example, in its

³² On interwar politics, see Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland: The Crisis of Constitutional Government* (Oxford, 1972); R. F. Leslie et al., *The History of Poland since 1863* (London, 1980), chaps. 5–7; Jan Tomicki, "Partie polityczne," in *Polska Odrodzone, 1918–1939: Państwo, społeczeństwo, kultura*, ed. Jan Tomicki (Warsaw, 1982), pp. 349–407; Henryk Samsonowicz et al., *Polska: Losy Państwa i Narodu* (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 427–584.

identification with Catholicism and, consequently, its theoretical distance from self-styled “scientific” racism (though this did nothing to inhibit anti-Semitic radicalism in practice).³³

In an article of April 1933 titled “Is Polish Hitlerism Possible?” the principal Polish-language Jewish newspaper in Poland, *Nasz Przegląd*, compared the Endek movement with the conservative monarchist, antidemocratic and anti-Semitic German National People’s Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei). Only the Endek youth, the newspaper thought, possessed the energy and dynamism characteristic of the Nazi movement. But while in Germany the National Socialists offered their followers, among other things, expropriation of Jewish property, in Poland such a strategy was less promising because of the “pauperization of the Polish Jews.” Moreover, in a reference to Piłsudski’s authoritarian regime, *Nasz Przegląd* asserted that “it is a fact that in Poland ‘fascism’ already exists.” The Sanacja would not, or so the Jewish newspaper hoped, permit itself to be turned out of office by ultranationalist youth.³⁴

Following Piłsudski’s death in 1935, the Endeks and other right-wing radicals greatly intensified the anti-Jewish boycott movement they had long advocated. Between 1935 and 1937 aggressive boycott actions led to widespread

³³ Henryk Olszewski, “Der Nationalsozialismus im Urteil der politischen Kräfte Polens,” in *Das Unrechtsregime: Internationale Forschung über den Nationalsozialismus*, by Ursula Büttner et al., 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1986), 1:542–48, and 527–55, *passim*. On Polish anti-Semitism, see, in addition to the works cited above by Gutman et al. (n. 18 above); Heller (n. 18 above); Marcus (n. 11 above); and Mendelsohn, “Interwar Poland” (n. 4 above), and *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (n. 18 above); Alexander J. Groth, “The Legacy of Three Crises: Parliament and Ethnic Issues in Prewar Poland,” *Slavic Review* 27, no. 4 (1968): 564–80, and “Dmowski, Piłsudski and Ethnic Conflict in Pre-1939 Poland,” *Canadian Slavic Studies* 3, no. 1 (1969): 69–91; Paweł Korzec, *Juifs en Pologne: Question juive pendant l’entre-deux-guerres* (Paris, 1980); Frank Golczewski, *Polnisch-Jüdische Beziehungen, 1881–1922: Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Osteuropa* (Wiesbaden, 1981); Dietrich Beyrau, “Antisemitismus und Judentum in Polen, 1918–1939,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 8, no. 2 (1982): 203–32; Aleksander Smolar, “Jews as a Polish Problem,” *Daedalus*, no. 1 (1987), pp. 31–73; Anne Landau-Czajka, “The Ubiquitous Enemy: The Jew in the Political Thought of Radical Right-Wing Nationalists in Poland, 1926–1939,” *Polin* 4 (1989): 169–203; Jerzy Tomaszewski, “The Civil Rights of Jews in Poland, 1918–1939,” in Polonsky, Mendelsohn, and Tomaszewski, eds. (n. 4 above), pp. 115–28; and Jerzy Holzer, “Polish Political Parties and Antisemitism,” in *ibid.*, pp. 194–205. The National Democrats and the ideologically closely related National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny [ONR]), which emerged from a secession from the Endeks’ Stronnictwo Narodowe in 1933 (and as a successor to the Endeks’ right-radical Camp of Great Poland, banned by the government in 1932–33), possessed many but not all of the characteristics commonly ascribed to European fascism. See Wapiński, *Narodowa Demokracja 1893–1939*, pt. 3, chap. 3.

³⁴ “Czy możliwe jest hitleryzm polski?” *Nasz Przegląd* (April 1, 1934), p. 2. The upper strata among the Polish Jews were considerably more prosperous than the newspaper’s comments suggest. See Marcus, pp. 230, 246–47, and pt. 2, *passim*.

violence and, in a number of cases, to pogroms, mainly in the smaller towns, in which by 1939 many hundreds of Jews had been killed and wounded, while still more were plundered of their property and driven from their homes and settlements.³⁵ The parties of the right championed very widespread anti-Semitic sentiment favoring exclusion of the Jews from their positions in retail trade and the educated professions. They sought in this way to destabilize the regime of Piłsudski's successors, which was struggling to keep intact a "dictatorship without a dictator," bereft of plausible ideology and facing the prospect of losing what remained of the considerable popular support, including that of very many Polish Jews, which the charismatic marshal had initially enjoyed.³⁶

By 1937, the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe), as the Endek electoral organization was then called, could pass resolutions declaring that it considered "the Jews to be its chief enemy" and that "its main aim and duty must be to remove the Jews from all spheres of social, economic, and cultural life in Poland." It held that "the principle of equality without regard to religion and nationality is contrary to reason and is highly injurious to the Poles." The Jews should be stripped of the vote and other citizenly rights and barred from the universities, army, press, and the educated professions. They should be expelled from business entrepreneurship and land ownership, while the state authorities should establish programs specially devoted to training Polish Christians to replace Jewish merchants and artisans, so that the towns might be "completely Polonized." Other Endek resolutions called for ghettoization of the Jews in anticipation of their forced emigration from Poland. These were the views of what Joel Cang, who had been one of Neville Laski's advisers during his visit of 1934, described in 1939 as "the strongest, best organized, and most vital political opposition party." Underplaying other sources of anti-Jewish radicalism in Polish society, Cang wrote that the Endek party "is responsible for most of the antisemitism in Poland. Endek propaganda, carried on long before Hitler but greatly magnified since, has served to so magnify the

³⁵ According to one account, in the period from the end of 1935 to March 1939, 350 Jews were killed and 500 wounded in anti-Semitic violence. Bauer (n. 5 above), p. 184. See also Marcus, pp. 241 ff.; Heller, chap. 4; Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe* (n. 18 above), p. 74; Jerzy Tomaszewski, "The Role of Jews in Polish Commerce, 1918–1939," in Gutman et al., pp. 141–57; Simon Segal, *The New Poland and the Jews* (New York, 1938), pp. 85 ff.; Raymond L. Buell, *Poland: Key to Europe*, 3d ed. (New York, 1939), pp. 288–319; Jolanta Żyndul, "Cele ackji antyżydowskiej w Polsce w latach, 1935–1937," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Polsce* 161 (1992): 53–63.

³⁶ On the post-Piłsudski years generally, see Polonsky, chaps. 9–10; and Edward D. Wynot, *Polish Politics in Transition: The Camp of National Unity and the Struggle for Power, 1935–1939* (Athens, Ga., 1974). See also, despite its unsympathetic treatment of the Jews, Waldemar Michowicz, "Problemy mniejszości narodowych," in Tomicki, ed., pp. 308–48.

Jewish problem in Poland as to become, even in the eyes of non-Endeks, the most vital problem in Poland, which calls for immediate and drastic solution.”³⁷

The government's response, in 1937, was to organize the Camp of National Unity (OZN or OZON). This was meant to become a mass-based pro-Sanacja party that would eclipse the far right while countering the rising numerical strength and antiregime radicalism of the peasant and socialist movements. In 1938 OZON came to dominate the Polish parliament, where it began drafting anti-Jewish laws of the kind adopted in Germany between 1933 and 1935, in Romania in 1934 and 1940, and in Hungary in 1938 and 1939. Already since the early 1920s the Polish government had systematically excluded the Jews from employment in the public sector, from obtaining licenses to operate businesses in the broad sphere of the government-regulated or government-monopolized economy, and from receiving any considerable government bank credits. In the 1930s the realm of official and semiofficial discrimination expanded to encompass limits on Jewish export firms, on Jewish artisan shops, on ritual slaughtering (which was a major source of tax income for Jewish communal self-government), on admission to medical practice and the bar, on membership in nationwide business associations, on access to university-preparatory secondary education and university-level student organizations, and, increasingly, on university admission itself. In 1921–22 some 25 percent of Polish university students were Jewish, but in 1938–39 their proportion had fallen to 8 percent.³⁸

As initially spelled out in 1937, OZON's position on the Jewish question called—as the government had already begun to do in its diplomatic dealings

³⁷ Joel Cang, “The Opposition Parties in Poland and Their Attitude towards the Jews and the Jewish Problem,” *Jewish Social Studies* 1 (1939): 244, other quotations from 242–43. The 1937 program of the National Radical Camp (ONR), a more openly pro-fascist organization than the Endeks, hardly differed in its anti-Jewish postulates: “The Jews should be deprived of their political rights, eliminated from all social associations, and denied the right to serve in the Polish army. They should be forbidden to participate in Polish enterprises, to employ Poles, or to work for Poles. The Polish schools should be free of Jews, and Polish cultural life should be closed to them. . . . A systematic and radical elimination of the Jews from Poland is the ultimate solution of the Jewish problem” (quoted in Buell, p. 301). Buell's book was in large measure researched by Simon Segal (see n. 35 above).

³⁸ On Jewish university enrollments, see Haumann (n. 18 above), pp. 178–79. See also Szymon Rudnicki, “From ‘Numerus Clausus’ to ‘Numerus Nullus,’” *Polin* 2 (1987): 246–68. On official and semiofficial discrimination in general, see—apart from other relevant works cited above—Żyndul. Tomaszewski warns against exaggerating the extent of Polish anti-Semitism but acknowledges its radicalism and very painful effects in the late 1930s; Jerzy Tomaszewski, “Some Methodological Problems of the Study of Jewish History in Poland between the Two World Wars,” *Polin* 1 (1986): 163–75; and Tomaszewski et al. (n. 7 above), pp. 193–96, 210–15.

with western Europe—for massive Jewish emigration from the country, whether to Palestine, Madagascar, mainland Africa, or elsewhere. The boycott movement, which was a veiled form of terror and violence, had both the government's and OZON's open backing, while OZON legislative drafts of 1938–39 envisioned a tight *numerus clausus* at the university and other attacks upon the Polish Jews' civil status and rights.³⁹

In 1937 the Polish Peasant Party staged a weeklong general strike against the government, calling for the restoration of parliamentary democracy. In 1938 the Polish Socialist Party, along with the Jewish Bund party, emerged from municipal elections with strong showings in the larger towns and cities. Though not free of anti-Jewish tendencies, both the Peasant and the Socialist parties rejected political anti-Semitism as right-wing propaganda obfuscating the villagers' and workers' interests. But rather than wringing concessions from the regime, their political successes only reinforced its authoritarian intransigence. There was, therefore, little prospect on the eve of World War II that the peasants' and workers' parties could arrest the drift toward fascism or quasi-fascism from above that was being produced by successive infusions of the authoritarian dictatorship with repressive, and especially anti-Semitic, elements.⁴⁰

The German invasion of Poland interrupted this development, the momentum of which is open to interpretation, particularly in comparison with the far greater anti-Semitic radicalism of the German National Socialists.⁴¹ It is true

³⁹ See Edward D. Wynot, Jr., "'A Necessary Cruelty': The Emergence of Official Anti-Semitism in Poland, 1935–39," *American Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (1971): 1035–58; Beyrau; Korzec, pt. 6; Marcus, chaps. 19–21; Heller, chaps. 2–3.

⁴⁰ In 1935, the Peasant Party (Stronnictwo Ludowe), added an anti-Semitic paragraph to its program, which said of the Jews that "as a middle class they occupy a far more important position in Poland than in other countries, so that the Poles have no middle class of their own. It is, therefore, most vital for the Polish state that these middle class functions shall more and more pass into the hands of Poles." Among the means to this end were the development of the cooperative movement and encouragement of Jewish emigration "to Palestine and other places." Quoted in Cang, p. 249. Cang argued, however, that the Peasant Party after 1935 turned away from anti-Semitism, concentrating instead on the struggle for land and for democratic government. The peasant, Cang thought, "is able to distinguish between his real and unreal grievances. What he needs and wants first is the land to which he is attached since ages and not the Jewish shop in the town" (p. 250). On the Socialist Party and anti-Semitism, see pp. 251–53.

⁴¹ Wynot's judgment on this issue is ambiguous. See his *Polish Politics in Transition*, pp. x, 261 ff., and chap. 9, *passim*, as well as "'A Necessary Cruelty.'" See also Polonsky, pp. 506–13; Leslie et al., chap. 7; Tomicki, ed., pp. 405–7. More inclined to emphasize the Polish government's drift toward a kind of fascism are Korzec, chap. 6; and Emanuel Melzer, "Antisemitism in the Last Years of the Second Polish Republic," in Gutman et al., pp. 126–36. In 1938, *Nasz Przegląd* (November 12, 1938) located the danger of fascism in "the spirit of the young generation." Marcus, who aims to avoid

that the Endeks and Polish fascist splinter parties could not be induced to ally with the regime before the outbreak of the war crisis in 1939, and that despite the creation of OZON the government lacked robust populist credentials. No doubt because of its fear of a negative reaction among its western European friends and allies, it failed to adopt the comprehensive anti-Semitic legislation anticipated since 1937. Yet in January 1939 OZON backbenchers tabled draft legislation similar to the Nazi Nuremberg Laws. In March 1939 the threat of the addition of harsh restrictions to the regulations limiting ritual slaughter prompted a Jewish boycott of meat products. Foreign Minister Beck persisted in pressing upon French and English officials his government's demands for assistance in facilitating Jewish emigration from Poland even as, in 1939, the Nazi shadow engulfed the country.⁴²

At the ideological level, the anti-Semitic slogans and pronouncements of the right-wing radicals, the Catholic Church, and the post-Piłsudski regime had become by 1939 "almost interchangeable." In these quarters, "the Jews were now almost unanimously seen as a 'foreign,' economically burdensome, superfluous and also morally destructive element." It had become a "doctrine of state" that they required "subordination to the will of the people."⁴³ Jerzy Tomaszewski, reflecting on the extent to which Endek and right-radical elements had been absorbed into the governmental regime in the post-1935 years,

exaggerating the menace of official policies toward the Jews, nonetheless titled his chapters on the period 1935–39 "The Onslaught of Fascism." Here he acknowledges the serious dangers posed to Jewish interests by the trend toward governmentally steered corporatism (entailing restrictions on Jewish economic organizations, and the spread of regulations excluding Jews from Polish professional associations); nationalization of large industrial firms and the growth of the system of government-influenced cartels; worsening press censorship and reduction of the national electoral system and the central parliament to tools of the government (Marcus, pp. 106, 137, 216, 338).

⁴² On the antisemitic laws and the draft legislation of 1939, see Marcus, pp. 358, 417; and Marian Fuks, *Żydzi w Warszawie: Życie codzienne, wydarzenia, ludzie* (Poznań, 1992), pp. 356–63. Compare Wynot, "'A Necessary Cruelty,'" pp. 1056 ff.; Melzer, pp. 136 ff.; Leslie et al. (n. 32 above), pp. 201–2; Lestschinsky (n. 26 above), pp. 157–58.

⁴³ Quotations from Beyrau (n. 33 above), p. 221. Compare Sanacja-regime ideologist Bogusław Miedziński's gloss on the OZON's May 1938 "Theses on the Jewish question": of Polish Jewry he wrote that "it is a foreign body, dispersed in our organism so that it produces a pathological deformation. In this state of affairs it is impossible to find a way out other than the removal of this alien body, harmful through both its numbers and its uniqueness." Removal was to be accomplished through forced emigration of the Jews, and in the meanwhile through an economic offensive against them on the domestic front, buttressed by anti-Semitic legislation to be introduced in the parliament by the OZON. Quoted in Wynot, "'A Necessary Cruelty,'" p. 1049. On the Catholic Church's policies toward the Jews, see also Segal, pp. 75–81.

concluded recently that “there opened the threatening perspective of a Polish version of National Socialism.”⁴⁴

Even though in various ways the Polish regime in fact fell short of fascism, the cumulative effects on the Polish Jews of its hostile policies, as well as of Endek aggression and the consequences of demographic growth amid still widespread economic depression, were threatening them by 1939 with conditions comparable to those to which the German Jews had been reduced. Indeed, as Neville Laski’s informants made clear, a profound sense of crisis was already present among the Polish Jews in the aftermath of Hitler’s accession to power in Germany, which followed on the heels of the Endek camp’s launching against them, in 1931, a campaign of intensified anti-Semitism whose efficacy was evident in the increasingly unfriendly policies adopted toward them by Pilsudski’s regime.

In 1939, one-third or more of the Polish Jews lived in grinding and physically debilitating poverty, induced and sustained to some considerable degree by political means. In Ezra Mendelsohn’s words, Polish Jewry on the eve of the war “was an impoverished community with no hope of reversing its rapid economic decline.”⁴⁵ In Tomaszewski’s cautious view, “a gradual pauperization

⁴⁴ Tomaszewski et al., p. 210.

⁴⁵ Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe* (n. 18 above), p. 74. On the demographic effects on the Polish Jews of interwar developments, see Shaul Stampfer, “Marital Patterns in Interwar Poland,” in Gutman et al. (n. 18 above), pp. 173–97. On the economic decline of the shtetl, see Samuel D. Kassow, “Community and Identity in the Interwar *Shtetl*,” in *ibid.*, pp. 198–220. For a contemporary appraisal of the economic dangers besetting Polish Jewry, published in 1938, see Segal (n. 35 above). The most extensive analysis of the economic history of interwar Polish Jewry is offered in Marcus (n. 11 above). This valuable if idiosyncratic work found the Jewish share of Polish “national wealth” to have increased both absolutely and relative to the non-Jewish share in the period 1929–39. Marcus also took an optimistic view of the post-1935 upswing in the Polish economy, especially in the industrial sector. At the same time, he acknowledged the advancing pauperization after 1929 of the economically weaker two-thirds of Polish Jewry, and the “staggering” unemployment among them (p. 246). As noted above, Marcus also found political trends to be running strongly counter to Jewish interests. Leaving aside his polemics against the advocates of Jewish “productivization” and occupational “restructuring,” his findings concerning the battered but still viable economic position in 1939 of the Polish-Jewish elites are compatible with the position maintained here, and dominant in the literature, that the Jews of Poland found themselves in an increasingly impoverished and perilous socioeconomic position as World War II approached. In National Socialist Germany, it was also the strongest Jewish businesses that survived longest. Compare Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation* (n. 25 above). For reasons that can only be guessed at, the standard economic history literature on interwar Poland offers no analysis of the position of the Jews, or of the impact of economic anti-Semitism on macrolevel developments. But, in stressing the impediments to sustained economic growth at the level of per capita GNP posed by the ab-

of Jewish society” was slowly occurring.⁴⁶ The Polish-born Simon Segal, a judicious analyst, wrote in 1938 of official economic policy aimed against the Jews that, “if carried to its logical conclusion . . . means starvation and slow death for hundreds of thousands.” Already government hostility had effected “an unprecedented lowering of the standard of living among the Jews.”⁴⁷ Their positions in petty commerce, though still very numerous, were eroding rapidly, both through boycott and through Polish middle-class formation as well as through the spread of rural purchasing and marketing cooperatives. They were being driven out of the export trade and turned away from the universities and learned professions. In 1939, in a third edition of his widely read report on Poland, the American scholar Raymond L. Buell wrote that “there seems little doubt that overwhelming opinion in Poland favours the elimination of the Jew from economic life and the ‘Polonization’ of commerce.”⁴⁸ Of Polish student organizations Cang wrote that “the vast majority” were “violently anti-Jewish.”⁴⁹

Incentives and readiness to emigrate were extremely strong among the Polish Jews.⁵⁰ Neville Laski reported that “everywhere I went people crowded around to ask for certificates to Palestine almost as though I carried them around in my pocket,” adding that “none were more insistent in their demands than the young men from the academies”—that is, the yeshivas.⁵¹ In Jewish political life in Poland, failure to make their influence count with the government had undermined the momentum of both the orthodox party (Agudat Israel) and the Zionists, although the desire to emigrate to Palestine had never been higher. Meanwhile, the nominally left-radical Bund, with its militant af-

sense of thoroughgoing land reform in the very backward agricultural sector, these works expose the weaknesses of Marcus’s analysis. At the same time, they emphasize the growing (not necessarily efficient) role of the state in the interwar economy, a threatening development from the Jews’ point of view. See Irena Kostrowicka, Zbigniew Landau, and Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Historia gospodarcza Polski XIX i XX wieku*, 2d ed. (Warsaw, 1975), pp. 356 ff. and pt. 5 passim; M. C. Kaser and E. A. Radice, eds., *The Economic History of Eastern Europe*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1985–86), 1:565–73, 2:3–48; Benedikt Zientara et al., *Dzieje gospodarcze Polski do roku 1939* (Warsaw 1988), chap. 11. In a similar vein: J. Taylor, *The Economic Development of Poland, 1919–1950* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1952), pt. 2.

⁴⁶ Tomaszewski et al., p. 174, cf. p. 206.

⁴⁷ Segal, pp. 136, 147.

⁴⁸ Buell (n. 35 above), p. 307.

⁴⁹ Cang (n. 37 above), p. 254.

⁵⁰ *Nasz Przegląd*, a pro-Zionist newspaper, fully supported plans for Jewish emigration from Poland, regardless of destination, so long as they did not entail compulsion. See, e.g., *Nasz Przegląd* (November 15 and 22, 1938). Norman Salsitz (n. 12 above) describes a Galician shtetl society in which opportunities to emigrate were desperately pursued (p. 232 and *passim*).

⁵¹ Laski (n. 5 above), pp. 9, 16.

firmation of the Jews' right to live in Poland, swelled to a broad populist movement of self-defense and protest against discrimination.

What the future held in store depended after September 1939 on Hitler's Germany. Had the Polish regime avoided war by yielding to Berlin's demands upon it, it might well have undergone transformation into a satellite state on the Slovakian, Hungarian, Romanian, or Croatian model. This would have boded very ill for the Polish Jews, but the future in an independent Poland ruled by Piłsudski's epigones would have threatened worse things for the Polish Jews than had yet befallen them, especially should the Nazi regime have remained in power. In the event of further intensifications of official anti-Semitic policy, the educated and propertied minority among the Polish Jews, fluent speakers of Polish who were in many ways acculturated to Polish society, would quite likely have found a niche for themselves, on the condition of further assimilation and perhaps, in extremity, partial economic divestment under anti-Semitic pressure. But that the Polish Jewish community as a whole could have recovered from the weakness, disarray, and desperation into which economic crisis, official discrimination, and ruthless Polish competition had driven it by 1939 seems highly doubtful, barring the unlikely possibility of the overthrow of the authoritarian regime by the Polish parties of the left.⁵²

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Whatever plausibility such thoughts may have, the point remains that Polish Jewry had been gravely debilitated by World War I and the experiences of the independent Polish interwar state. National Socialist anti-Semitism was undoubtedly far more destructive of the German Jews than Polish anti-Semitism was of Jewish life in Poland. But the path the Sanacja regime was following conjured up—even if it certainly was not predetermined to arrive at—the pre-1941 National Socialist end station of compulsory ghettoization, economic entrophy, cultural exclusion, and forced emigration. This was, with local variations, the path that the Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovakian regimes had already embarked upon before 1939. At the same time, the three million

⁵² On Polish attitudes toward the Jews on the eve of World War II, see Cang, pp. 241–56, *passim*; Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations during the Second World War* (New York, 1976), chaps. 1–3 (as well as pp. 150, 196–97). See also Salsitz, pp. 22 ff., 242 ff.; and the epilogue of April 1938 in Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews* (Cranbury, N.J., 1973), p. 852. The limited degree to which Christian Polish society accepted Jewish assimilation after 1914 is discussed with great subtlety in Hertz (n. 18 above); Heller (n. 18 above), chaps. 6–7; and Smolar (n. 33 above). On post-1945 Polish attitudes toward Polish Jewry, see inter alia Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory: The Jew in Contemporary Poland* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1989); and Antony Polonsky, ed., *"My Brother's Keeper?" Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust* (Oxford, 1990).

Soviet Jews found themselves compelled under threat of the Gulag to abandon the open practice of the Jewish religion and, in journalism and publishing, to bow to political controls on the Yiddish language.⁵³

These were some of the consequences of the structural crisis of central and eastern European Jewry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to which this article draws attention. It was not only or even primarily the example of Hitlerism that produced these results but, rather, a decades-long process of nationalist identity formation and socioeconomic consolidation among the Christian nations of the region that in all cases, sooner or later, led to their rejection of the presence among them of Jews as a recognizable subculture, however well integrated in the larger society they might have been.

It is a view deeply rooted in the historical literature that central European anti-Semitism was a manifestation of the "anti-modernist counter-revolution," which culminated in German National Socialism and eastern European radical right-wing authoritarianism.⁵⁴ In this perspective there is a danger of confusing modernity with liberal democracy and of prematurely consigning modern-day authoritarianism and repression to a vanishing past.⁵⁵ In Poland, the National Democrats were the embodiment of basic aspects of modernity, advocates as they were of capitalist development and middle-class formation, scientific and technological education, modernization of the villages, and untrammelled social mobility. As Joel Cang wrote in 1939, "it is safe to say that almost the whole of the newly created middle class in Poland is in principle anti-Jewish and Endek in outlook." The Endeks were gaining ever new strength from their "many followers among the constantly growing numbers of non-Jewish business people in the rapidly 'Polonized' towns."⁵⁶ In this social environment,

⁵³ Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe*, pp. 82–83. On interwar Soviet Jewry, see H. H. Ben-Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), pp. 969–78; as well as Bauer (n. 5 above), chap. 2.

⁵⁴ Quotation from Graml (n. 21 above), p. 77. See also pp. 74–76 and, apart from the relevant works cited above (esp. in n. 18), Reinhard Rürup, "An Appraisal of German-Jewish Historiography," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 35 (1990): xxiii. On east-central Europe, see Ivan T. Berend, *The Crisis Zone of Europe: An Interpretation of East-Central European History in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 17–20 and *passim*.

⁵⁵ For a skeptical perspective on the "anti-modernity" of European fascism, see Juan J. Linz, "Some Notes toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective," in *Fascism: A Reader's Guide*, ed. Walter Laqueur (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 16 and 3–104, *passim*. For a critique of interpretations of National Socialist and fascist modernity that rest upon tendentious and teleological concepts of the modern, see Norbert Frei, "Wie modern war der Nationalsozialismus?" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 19 (1993): 367–87.

⁵⁶ Cang, p. 245. Compare Lestschinsky's (n. 26 above) forceful analysis, which (too one-sidedly) underscores the motive of economic competition with the Jews in fueling anti-Semitism among the aspiring Polish middle classes and intelligentsia (pp. 152 ff.).

aggressive anti-Semitism and antagonism toward interwar Poland's other national minorities, as well as an opportunist attitude toward the structures of democratic self-government, went hand in hand.⁵⁷

Similarly, in Germany the anti-Semitism of the *völkisch* nationalist and National Socialist movements represented, among other things, an aggressive struggle for advantageous positions in the economy and in professional life. The movement toward embourgeoisement among the central and eastern European Jews, running parallel to their legal emancipation in the nineteenth century, everywhere provoked a counterreaction, rising in the interwar period to a deadly level, on the part of non-Jewish groups also striving for middle-class status and advancement. The recent literature on the rise of the modern professions in Germany, though it does not plumb the question of anti-Semitism in depth, leaves no doubt that, taken as corporate groups, lawyers and medical doctors in particular, but teachers, engineers, and other highly trained technicians as well, seized with more or less vehemence upon anti-Semitism—especially in the Weimar years—to improve their prospects of employment and upward mobility, just as they also accepted Nazi policies of “Aryanization” with equanimity or enthusiasm.⁵⁸ From the right-wing radical point of view,

⁵⁷ As Joseph Marcus (n. 11 above) wrote, “When a Polish middle class finally began to emerge around the turn of the century it became the most hostile group towards Jews; its members envied the superior competitiveness of the Jews and regarded them as the main obstacle to their own advancement—a view that later became the basis of the programme of the semi-fascist National Democratic Party that depended mainly on urban middle-class support” (p. 98). Wapiński offers a similar perspective (*Narodowa Demokracja, 1893–1939* [n. 31 above], pp. 307–9, 325–29). Compare Tomaszewski et al. (n. 7 above), pp. 172 ff. On positive attitudes among the Polish intelligentsia toward Jewish commercial and industrial magnates in mid-nineteenth-century Russian Poland, see Ryszard Kołodziejczyk, “Wybitni działacze gospodarczy Żydzi w procesie rozwoju Królestwa Polskiego w dobie niewoli (1815–1914),” in *Image przedsiębiorcy gospodarczego w Polsce w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. Ryszard Kołodziejczyk (Warsaw, 1993), pp. 39–48.

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad Jarausch, eds., *German Professions, 1800–1850* (New York, 1990), pp. 7, 19, and *passim*; Konrad Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers, and Engineers, 1900–1950* (New York, 1990), pp. 104 ff., 139; Charles E. McClelland, *The German Experience of Professionalization: Modern Learned Professions and Their Organizations from the Early Nineteenth Century to the Hitler Era* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 179, 183, 223. On Jewish entry into the *Bildungsbürgertum*, and anti-Semitic reactions against it, see Shulamit Volkov, “The ‘Verbürgerlichung’ of the Jews as a Paradigm,” in *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Jürgen Kocka and Allen Mitchell (1988; Oxford, 1993), pp. 384 ff. and 367–91, *passim*. Compare Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1991). On anti-Semitism in German academia, see *inter alia* Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 135–39, 224, 239–40. Compare Lestschinsky’s views, cited above. On comparable de-

whether among the Nazis or the Endeks, such aggressive anti-Semitism was intrinsic to successful social modernization and nation building.⁵⁹

The flash points of anti-Semitism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not in those regions where, as in interwar Poland's eastern provinces, economic backwardness had left preindustrial Christian-Jewish economic relations substantially intact. Rather, they emerged where entrepreneurial or professional groups among the Christian population, eager to reap the rewards of capitalist modernization, faced competition posed by strong and entrenched Jewish positions, however recently these may have been established. As economic growth sputtered and finally faltered in the 1930s, right-wing political movements with strong roots in the Christian middle classes pressed for statist programs of economic recovery. When these were implemented, by Hitler's regime in Germany and the post-Piłsudski government in Poland, they spelled doom or disaster for Jewish interests.⁶⁰

velopments in France, see Vicki Caron, "The Antisemitic Revival of the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered" (Brown University, unpublished manuscript).

⁵⁹ This point opposes some (though not all) of the arguments disputing the modernity of National Socialist anti-Semitism and the National Socialist regime in general proposed by Norbert Frei; by Günter Könke, "'Modernisierungsschub' oder relative Stagnation? Einige Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von Nationalsozialismus und Moderne," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20 (1994): 584–608; and by Hans Mommsen, "Noch einmal: Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 21 (1995): 391–402. The latter two of these articles presuppose an (empirically debatable) "modernization process." As for "modernity," which should not be regarded as a normative or ethical concept, racism in modern history is modern racism, as may be seen in the complicity of natural and social scientists in National Socialist racial policy and bureaucratic practice. See Detlev Peukert, "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science," in *Nazism and German Society, 1933–1945*, ed. David Crew (London, 1994), pp. 274–99. Compare Susanne Heim and Götz Aly, "Die Ökonomie der 'Endlösung': Menschenvernichtung und wirtschaftliche Neuordnung," in *Sozialpolitik und Judenvernichtung: Gibt es eine Ökonomie der Endlösung?* ed. Götz Aly et al. (Berlin, 1983), pp. 11–90; and Götz Aly, "Endlösung": Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden (Frankfurt am Main, 1995). For critiques of Aly's and Heim's arguments, see Christopher R. Browning, "German Technocrats, Jewish Labor, and the Final Solution: A Reply to Götz Aly and Susanne Heim," in his *The Path to Genocide* (n. 19 above), pp. 59–76; and Ulrich Herbert, "Labour and Extermination: Economic Interest and the Primacy of *Weltanschauung* in National Socialism," *Past and Present*, no. 138 (February 1993), pp. 144–95.

⁶⁰ Compare Abram Leon's analysis, shaped by the perspectives of the Poalei Zion and Bund movements, of the eastern European situation: "It is precisely in the regions which capitalism had most developed that a non-Jewish commercial class formed most rapidly. It is there that the anti-Semitic struggle was fiercest. . . . The more backward a region is, the more easily are the Jews able to preserve their secular positions." The "general decay of capitalism" in the 1930s, however, blocked the resolution of the struggle by means of industrial-commercial growth. "The crisis and chronic unemployment make it impossible for the Jews to go into other professions, producing a frightful

In this perspective, Germany—with its large population of middle-class Jews, many with roots in pre-1918 Prussian Poland—shared a common history with its east-central European neighbors. This identification was vehemently rejected in German political culture, as the very widespread antagonism toward *Ostjuden* in imperial and Weimar Germany showed. But the common ground remained. So far as the politics of anti-Semitism were concerned, Germany was, in the interwar era, less a land of the middle than an exemplar of the east.⁶¹

crowding in the professions which they follow and unceasingly augmenting anti-Semitic violence" (Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* [1946; New York, 1970]). For comparable views, see Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe* (n. 18 above), p. 22 and *passim*; Segal (n. 35 above), p. 73; and Beyrau (n. 33 above), pp. 217, 231, and *passim*. A related position stresses the role of the state in excluding Jews from the developing economy in the interest of Christian middle-class formation. See Bauer, pp. 28–33; and Ben-Sasson, ed., p. 957. Compare Tomasz Nałęcz, "Nowe Koniunktury (1935–1939)," in *Polska: Losy Państwa i Narodu*, by Henryk Samsonowicz et al. (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 554 ff.

⁶¹ On east European Jews and German anti-Semitism: Theodor Fritsch devoted a lengthy section of his *Antisemiten-Katechismus* (n. 28 above) to hostile descriptions of the Jews in Poland, Russia, Romania, and Hungary, conveying the impression that, if the anti-Jewish measures he advocated were not implemented, the Jews in imperial Germany might attain a similarly large presence (pp. 115–49). The Central-Verein's 1933 *Anti-Anti: Tatsachen zur Judenfrage* ([n. 20 above], pp. 47a–47c), while defending the positive contribution to the German economy made by Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe, found naturalization of *Ostjuden* in Germany inadvisable. Compare Trude Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland, 1918–1933* (Hamburg, 1986); Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison, Wis., 1982), chaps. 9–10 and *passim*; Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1987). On the Jews in Prussian Poland, see William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772–1914* (Chicago, 1980).