



Social Interpretations of Nazism: Renewing a Tradition

Author(s): Peter Baldwin

Source: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (Jan., 1990), pp. 5-37

Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/260719>

Accessed: 03/06/2008 01:23

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=sageltd>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We enable the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Peter Baldwin

Social Interpretations of Nazism: Renewing a Tradition

Social explanations, once a standard methodology in history, have been increasingly called into question during the past two decades.¹ Such accounts rely on a pyramidal conception of causation, from economic to social through political and finally to cultural and ideological levels. Crudely put, they explain political and cultural matters by reference to developments in what are regarded as causally prior strata. Ultimately, these are economic, but as actually practised, some combination of socio-economic forces is commonly referred to: hence the term social interpretation, immortalized by Alfred Cobban in the process of dismantling one of its most popular versions, the bourgeois origin of the French Revolution.² Cobban was only the flag-carrier for a wider phalanx of revision that has since swept the profession. Most moderately, updated redefinitions of class, stratification and exploitation have made social interpretations sensitive to new issues, have allowed them to identify legitimate historical actors where earlier they saw only false consciousness and irrelevance. The middle class that would not be proletarianized has been a nettlesome problem long wrestled with; new social movements, framed in terms of gender and ethnicity that are not readily reducible to the usual notions of class and therefore hard to reconcile with the classic Marxist version of the social explanation, are more recent trouble-spots.³ The social interpretation has been changed in such reformulations, but some form of social interpretation still holds the field here. In more far-reaching recastings, however, the chain of causality implied even by a modified social interpretation has been severed. Realms of historical events, political and cultural, that in the older conception were derived from underlying economic and social factors have been granted an autonomy, an ability reciprocally to influence more material layers. Ideology and intellectual forces have

Journal of Contemporary History (SAGE, London, Newbury Park and New Delhi), Vol. 25 (1990), 5–37.

achieved a status more independent than mere reflection.⁴ Ritual, drama, rhetoric and symbolism have become causal forces in their own right in recent interpretations.⁵ In other hands, the state is no longer merely the steering committee of the dominant classes, but has reached a certain Hegelian or Hintzian autonomy and space of its own.⁶ The causal pyramid of social interpretations has not simply been stood on its head or reshaped into an hourglass. The most ambitious reformulators offer the Möbius strip as a more telling analogy, with its indeterminacy of primacy, its reciprocity of priority.⁷

The social interpretation has been subject to the most concerted attack at its cornerstone: the French Revolution. There is no need to dwell here on the revision that has affected what was once widely regarded as a bourgeois revolution.⁸ It is safe to say that little of this original edifice remains standing, although equally uncontroversial, alas, to admit that nothing remotely as attractive, coherent or powerful as the social interpretation has replaced it.⁹ Recently, a similar erosion has begun to affect developments that were once regarded as the mirror image of this supposedly successful bourgeois route to modern democratic capitalism: Wilhelmine Germany. The view that Germany failed to undergo a bourgeois revolution and that this act of original historical sin explains the peculiarities and, ultimately, disasters of German history has also been questioned.¹⁰ Seen from the French revision of social interpretations, it is curious that these historians, far from rejecting the notion of bourgeois revolution, have preferred instead to expand and modify our concept thereof so that even Germany falls under its protective embrace.¹¹ Nor do they question the assumptions of social explanations, offering instead a new sociology (a bourgeoisie assuring its interests in subtle and hitherto unrecognized ways) in place of a novel methodology (a new form of explanation that does not refer back to consistently pursued class interests).

While such revisions of the Wilhelmine past are methodologically more self-conscious than path-breaking, the Nazi era offers examples of a less formalized, but more fruitful revision of social interpretations in German history. The social bases of Nazism are an issue that has generated significant empirical results, but only sporadic attempts to place these in a larger methodological framework. The validity of straightforwardly tying economic progress, class development and political outcome together in the causal chain from which social interpretations derived their strength has been questioned also

in examinations of the class bases of fascism. Yet, despite a spate of recent studies, little consideration has been given to what is meant by such examinations, what different questions may have been packed together in portmanteau problems, what broader consequences follow from undermining a social analysis of nazism. What is offered here makes no attempt to marl this already well-tilled field with new empirical clay, but seeks to sort out and straighten some of the rows and furrows, the questions that should be addressed and the implications that follow and to call attention to what appears the start of a new approach to these matters.

An examination of nazism's social bases throws up a number of interrelated questions that fall into at least two larger categories, between which the connection is, at worst, dubious and, at best, comparatively unexplored: (1) who supported the party during the various phases of its career, both before and in power, and why?; (2) what, if any, conclusions can be drawn about the nature of the regime and its most inexplicable aspects from that of its popular backing?

The content of the party's popular support, both members and voters, was clearly multifarious and much energy has been spent dissecting it. Partly the problem has been empirical, determining what the support consisted of; partly it has hinged on the theoretical implications to be drawn. Its popular backing has varied along with nazism itself: as sect, party, movement, regime.¹² Founders, men of the first hour, cadres, early recruits, true believers, mass membership, voters, *Septemberlinge*, hangers-on, *Konjunkturritter*, elite stirrup-holders, sycophants, *Märzgefallene*, collaborators: each group had its own relationship to National Socialism. Which, if any, was the defining one, the social base? Was there a privileged relation between the nazis and any particular class, similar to that usually assumed to hold for other German parties? While other political movements are routinely analysed in terms of the groups to which they pitch an appeal and the caretaking of their interests they aim to assure, a focus on such comparatively transparent relations between interest and representation may not illuminate much of the nazi phenomenon. Ultimately, the issue at stake concerns the validity of the *cui bono* logic that underlies the conclusions usually drawn about political movements from an examination of their popular support. Can they be adequately characterized by analysing their backing? Does interest representation determine a movement?

National Socialism's support must be dissected at different points in its trajectory, distinguishing most simply between the direct support of the early *Kampfzeit* and the increasingly tactical backing it garnered once power became a possibility. In its earliest years, the party was one small band among many on the south German right, supported and joined by a motley assortment of political freebooters, lumpenbourgeois, black sheep of the upper crust, and former soldiers hoping to recreate the camaraderie of the trenches.¹³ After the failure of the 1923 putsch, Hitler refounded the movement on the premise of legality, changing its nature from a group of committed cadres willing to seize power violently to a more normal party, obliged to appeal to voters and followers in its bid for recognition. Although it acted as a vague catch-all movement of protest at the beginning of this period, once it began to win support, especially after 1928, the Nazi leaders had to make increasingly binding decisions concerning where to seek backing, how to define and enlist a constituency. What efforts to focus on the urban working class was a matter of disagreement.¹⁴ In the late 1920s, the party undertook a well-known tactical shift away from its indiscriminate appeal for all disaffected groups to a socially more focused approach, once it became clear that workers were less electorally available than the lower middle classes.¹⁵

Various motives explain why different groups were attracted in the early years after the putsch and before the party came into the orbit of power:¹⁶ small businessmen were lured by promises to roll back adverse economic developments and recapture lost social status,¹⁷ as were Protestant peasants.¹⁸ Some white-collar employees agreed,¹⁹ while others sought fulfilment of ambitions for social advancement.²⁰ Professionals were similarly affected.²¹ Some workers welcomed the anti-Marxist anti-capitalism of the twenty-five points,²² deracinated academics and students sought to vent frustrations created by personal and professional obstacles,²³ intellectuals and artists succumbed to an aesthetic attraction exerted by fascism's apparent dynamism²⁴ and the young were swept along by something similar.²⁵ The apparent strength of the working class and the left in the republic heightened the search for order and authority and many Germans from all walks of life fell for the reassertion of national glory, the repudiation of Versailles.

In this period, say up to September 1930, the relationship between support and attraction was complicated only by the party's opportunism. Small, obscure and without clout, it was unlikely to have been backed by anyone not convinced that they stood to gain

from an increase in its power. The appeal was genuine and direct. The party's ability to appeal to a wide spectrum of the disaffected raises the problem whether, underneath this plethora, each group attracted for its own reasons, each succumbing to the pitch directed to it, there ran an essential connection to a particular one that was constitutive of its social base. Given the party's wooing of different groups, what can be said from looking at its social backing? To the extent that the National Socialists were rankly opportunistic, the tie between party and base differs from the simple relation of interest and its representation that held, for example, for the working class and the SPD.

The classic assertion of such a special link, the equivalent to the bourgeois revolution thesis for 1789, was Seymour Martin Lipset's analysis of fascism as the extremism of the middle, of the petty bourgeoisie.²⁶ The continuing popularity of this approach increasingly flies in the face of the evidence and is due to its status as a form of converse Marxism, an explanation in terms of declining rather than rising classes that turns fascism into the world-historical obverse of socialism.²⁷ Lipset analysed the petty bourgeoisie as a class caught betwixt and between, becoming inherently reactionary as it was squeezed during economic and social modernization by the working class below, the bourgeoisie above. The argument has two parts. First, that the lower middle classes are characterized by inherent traits stemming from their position in the social hierarchy, from their low level of education and sophistication and their heightened sense of insecurity.²⁸ Second, that these characteristics were aggravated by general structural developments and brought to a culmination by the inter-war crises. Lipset's concern was with the conditions that change the 'natural' political expression of a particular class from liberal to fascist: not developments in the political system as such, but the underlying economic and social transformations which the political system, as in classic Marxism, reflects.

Although this view of nazism as particularly connected to the lower middle class has been popular, it never bestrode the field unchallenged, and has recently been subjected to crippling attacks. Even when first formulated, the petty bourgeois interpretation had to compete with alternative accounts that refused anointment to any particular class as fascism's unique social base. For some, modern mass society allowed the nazis to attract a following from across the social spectrum. The party offered an antidote to anomie, atomization and deracination, holding out a lamp to the millions cut loose

from primary ties of family and intermediary associations to drift unmoored on the seas of a hypertrophied *Gesellschaft*.²⁹ Others who noted that the nazis' voters came not from any particular class, but from formerly apolitical groups and the young, focused accordingly on their ability to mobilize otherwise inactive groups.³⁰ In a similar way, all accounts of National Socialism that are framed in terms of general factors undermine special relationships between the party and any particular group of followers: an emphasis on nazi propaganda and tactics, on Hitler's charisma, on his ability to incorporate the quasi-subconscious aspirations of the common man all run counter to a social explanation.³¹ Portraying nazism as a millenarian movement or in terms of religious rebellion, for example, allows a tie between the party and its backing in only a socially weak sense, in that some classes and groups were more likely to set members free to fall for an eschatological appeal.³² Explaining it as a movement that addressed widespread feelings of impotence, anomie and disintegration, as a racial revolution or as a response to particular forms of moral outrage, equally undercuts a social explanation.³³ Psychological explanations framed in terms of universal traits must also, of course, come here.³⁴

In recent years, such an uncoupling of the nexus between nazism and the lower middle class or, indeed, any other single group, has accelerated.³⁵ The tie, for example, between a beleaguered white-collar salariat and radical protest movements of the right has been shown not necessarily to hold.³⁶ With his customary incisive lucidity, Juan Linz has undermined the significance of assigning nazism any particular or distinctive social base in the *Vorjahr*. Fascism was contradictory and, in the long run, ephemeral because of the tactical dilemma the movement faced as a political latecomer.³⁷ With most social niches already occupied, support had to be taken where it could be found. The movement's vague, catch-all ideology, emphasizing integration and community by negation, met its need to attract different groups with varying interests and goals. Similarly, others have undercut a simple class analysis of National Socialism, detailing the impressive social heterogeneity of the party's membership or focusing on the political events of Weimar's last years that — sudden and overwhelming — seem reducible to long-term economic and social factors only by an act of overstrained abstraction.³⁸ Richard Hamilton has attacked the idea that the petty bourgeoisie was structurally inclined or predetermined by general economic or social developments to fall into the nazi maw and analyses instead the

political arena where the traditional parties alienated important groups of constituents, enabling the nazis to win this outcast electorate.³⁹ Such approaches have the virtue of dissolving the rigid connection between economic development, class and political effect that uncritically underlies the least sophisticated of social interpretations. They rightly advocate a more modified approach to class, a sensitivity to the ambiguities of the transition from social group to politics.⁴⁰

The most sophisticated recent analyses do not fall into the overly stark dichotomies between social and political explanations proposed by studies like Hamilton's. They have moved away from a static rendition of Germany's inter-war dilemmas, the impact of the crises of the 1920s and 1930s, and towards a political account of the means by which the nazis mobilized support within the general framework defined by long-term, structural factors.⁴¹ More specifically, in the hands of Thomas Childers, they turn to the gradual process by which the parties politically of the centre and socially of the middle class were undermined throughout the republic, leaving the nazis in the electorally enviable position of being able to rally disenfranchised voters from a wide spectrum of backgrounds.⁴² But while examining the immediate political causes of National Socialist success, these recent accounts do not abandon a social analysis: the traditional parties lost their constituents not simply due to the inter-war crises, but as the result of broader structural problems by which Germany had long been beset: the continued power of agrarian élites and their pretensions to speak for all rural groups, the economic displacement of the traditional middle classes by modern economic development, as but the most obvious of examples. Certain overarching dilemmas created and exacerbated by tradition, Wilhelminian developments and economic troubles faced Germany in the 1930s. Many groups, but especially the lower middle class, were politically available for reasons that can be given deep-rooted historical explanations. Against this background, the nazis' tactical finesse and the bourgeois parties' ineptitude allowed the radical right to swell, articulating a potpourri of complaints against the inherited system. Childers manages to balance two hitherto contradictory aspects of explanations of the nazis' support before 1933. On the one hand was the apparently special relationship cultivated with certain groups. On the other, were explanations of the nazis' wide social appeal based on one of two approaches: (1) a focus on the general causes of dissatisfaction with the republic (mass society, generational revolt), or (2) accounts

of the movement's broad attractiveness (the effect of propaganda, savvy tactics, Hitler's charisma). In both cases, the general nature of the cause undermined a particular tie to any one group. With Childers, the balance between the party's socially specific appeal and its political polymorphosity has been redressed. The appeal was broad, but not indiscriminate. The groups won over turned to the nazis for reasons explicable in larger historical terms, not just in the immediately political terms of a Hamilton.

So far, the focus has been on the support the party won for itself, the backing it garnered through promises, appeals, tactics, however opportunistic, before it began to approach power, before the spoils of office, the aphrodisiac of influence became factors in their own right. Once the National Socialists closed in on government, new elements began to cloud further the possibility of a social explanation already muddied by their political promiscuity. Most obviously, tactical considerations among groups that would not otherwise have backed them began playing a role. The direct interest factor, diffused as it already was by opportunism, became even less limpid, as those who did not necessarily favour the party nonetheless supported it in hopes of restraining it, of redirecting its ambitions, of furthering their own goals.

A novel theoretical problem is introduced: how to analyse the nature of tactically inspired backing. Where the early followers, each group in its own way, had come to the party because it directly promised them fulfilment of their particular hopes, others were drawn by tactical considerations, a different sort of interest factor. For them, it was the National Socialists' power, or potential power, that was the lure, less the content of the party's intentions, although obviously there had to be sufficient overlap between these two groups' goals to make a common effort possible. Given the problem of analysing such contingently motivated support, much of the debate has concerned these new groups' affiliation: was it indeed tactical or, in fact, of a similarly immediate sort as that of the early supporters?

Many traditional élites, those who as a whole had no reason to be attracted by the nazis' immediate appeal, eventually gave their support to the party because it was able to serve a function that they — given their preferences — would have assigned others. For churchmen, civil servants, military officers, the party's appeal was primarily tactical. Rearmament, anti-communism, law and order, a

supposed reaffirmation of traditional values — such were the considerations that made the nazis palatable, despite misgivings.⁴³ They would have preferred effective leaders of their own ilk, but in their absence were willing to strike a deal with Hitler. For economic leaders, on the other hand, motivated less by conceptions of caste and status and more inclined to follow even an outsider whose goals dovetailed with theirs, things were more complicated. Marxists have tended to offer some variation on immediate relations between the party and élites, especially economic ones. The petty bourgeois fascism of the pre-power phase was gradually conquered by the fascism of big capital as the party now began to fulfil its true function: taming the unions, promoting rearmament and expansion and generally serving the interests of capital whose hegemony was threatened. Coming close to power on the backs of the lower middle class, German fascism changed gear and revealed its true nature at the moment it began negotiating with economic élites for support. The social base necessary to approach power was exchanged for a social function on behalf of élites that was not deducible from the party's earlier support. Relations between capital and nazism were in this sense immediate, although there is, of course, a spectrum of opinion on the proximity of the ties: were fascists the direct agents of big capital, did they merely share overlapping interests, how autonomous was the party from its backing?⁴⁴

On the other side, the argument moderates the necessity or immediacy of the connection between economic élites and the party in favour of tactical considerations. Either the tie is downplayed or its strategic element is emphasized: fascism and capitalism were not inherently related. Business contributed (variously for various groups) to the party's coffers, but no more and probably less than to the usual republican groups of the centre and right.⁴⁵ The traditional élites thought they could use the nazis for their own ends. Like Bullock's limerical young lady from Riga, they mistakenly regarded the tiger as a means of transportation. The party was to be their tool, not the representative of choice. However unforgivably opportunistic it may have been to enlist the nazis for their dirty work, they were mistaken in thinking that leader and led would remain as expected. By analysing the pecuniary connections between the party and business and eschewing broader and less empirically testable questions of the relationship between fascism and capitalism as a system, such scholars have sought to undermine the necessity of the tie between the nazis and economic élites.⁴⁶

Although for the traditional élites, especially business, the debate is far from resolved, the trend of scholarship belies the notion that the relationship between movement and backing was of the comparatively simple sort between interest and its representation commonly assumed for other parties of the Weimar parliament. The nazis were deliberately opportunistic, courting whatever groups could be won in their bid for power. A social reading of nazism before 1933 presents special problems. The very nature of a tactically adept protest party, led by a charismatic leader in circumstances of widespread political anomie, significantly altered the usual relation between social base and political representation. If the party was willing to make appeals for support wherever forthcoming, then even to the extent that its following was disproportionately petty bourgeois, the relation between party and base must have been coincidental, in the sense that the lower middle class happened to be that group available rather than in any inherent sense the nazis' social foundation. To the extent that the party's backing was multifarious, a social interpretation is undermined in any but the weakest sense: that the 'disaffected', whatever their origins in more conventional class terms, were its base. An explanation can be given of why the lower middle class was especially available for mobilization and hence why the party tilted this rather than other fields. But it does not follow that the nazis spoke for the lower middle class, that they came to power as a petty bourgeois party, as the socialists were a working-class party. That the same must be said of the tactically motivated groups, although the situation is more complicated, is clear.

Up to 1933, analysis of nazism's social bases sheds light only on the movement's climb to power: initial mass appeal, horsetrading with the élites to overcome the last hurdle just as its electoral advantage was evaporating, and finally into office.⁴⁷ Accounts of nazism's social base before Hitler became Chancellor, although able to account for the attraction that eventually made it Weimar's strongest party, have less to say concerning its actions once in power. At worst, the movement seems to have spoken for the interests of any one particular group as little after 1933 as before. At best, the nature of its class backing changed significantly over the gulf of 1933. Certainly, the party could no longer be described as the spokesman of the petty bourgeoisie. Hopes among the lower middle classes that nazism would now return Germany to the green-grocers' paradise of their

nostalgic vision were dashed by the alliances Hitler struck with the traditional élites, by the party's need to keep the working class propitiated if not satisfied, by the ambition to rearm the military and reinvigorate the economy.⁴⁸ With the exception of matters agrarian, where the party did partially live up to its promises, the petty bourgeoisie was cruelly disappointed by the accession to power of these supposed extremists of the middle.⁴⁹ Only with the contorted argument that Hitler's ultimate plans, his vision of Teutonic peasant communities tilling the Eastern plains, served the interests of the lower middle classes and that in the very long run (subject to Keynes's maxim and therefore hard to reduce to the concerns of self-interested mortals) he was pursuing the spirit of his original promises through all the short-term vacillations, could one portray the regime as in any sense petty bourgeois.

Social readings of the post-power phase have therefore been taken up primarily by various varieties of Marxist analysis. Their major advance has been to recognize that a new constituency must be identified after 1933. For the simplest theories, the comparatively transparent logic of interest and representation, that had earlier applied to relations between the disaffected petty bourgeoisie and the party, was continued after 1933, but now for a new group: fascism as the agent of big capital. Others allow for a relationship less securely lashed down, analysing the overlap of interests between business and party, distinguishing between social base and social function. While the party's immediate social base had been significantly petty bourgeois and anti-capitalist, the function that the regime served for business, capital, industry and the military after 1933 gave it at least an indirect form of social support, if not base, among these new groups.

Although very persuasive in the short term as an explanation for the willingness of élites, scared by the left and unable to mobilize coherent political backing on their own, to ally themselves with the nazis, such accounts face the same sort of problems as the fascism-as-petty-bourgeois-revenge thesis. If the party, once in power, turned out to have treated the lower middle class tactically, to have used it only to achieve its own goals, then what was there about the new phase that made its relationship with other groups any less manipulative or motivated by practical necessity? The problem faced by Marxists has been to demonstrate that, and then how, the nazis acted on behalf of the traditional élites in any but a tactical sense. While they claim that the overlap of interests between party and social élites was stable and

significant enough to bear their analysis, others have doubted the essentiality of the connection. Although the traditional élites struck a Faustian deal with Hitler, many of them lost. The military, unable to resist the temptation of rearmament, allowed the National Socialists to turn the tables, take control of the armed forces by 1938 and eventually dilute the old officer caste with more democratic recruitment.⁵⁰ Bought off by the Concordat and even less pleasant forms of cohabitation for the Protestants, the churches had to suffer an increasingly pagan regime. For industry and business leaders, on the other hand, matters were more complicated. Divisions among various types of industry undermined the economic élites' unity and allowed the National Socialists to take decisions that would not otherwise have been entrusted to them. German predominance in an autarkic *Mitteleuropa* was a lowest common denominator on which the nazis and much of the economic community agreed and business happily fulfilled the important war production functions assigned it up to the bitter end.⁵¹ Nevertheless, co-operation and a coincidence of interests did not necessarily indicate which was cart and which horse. For other parts of industry, it was the refusal to follow Hitler's insistence that the logic of autarky and war preparation take precedence over the usual calculations of economic profitability that led to the Four Year Plan and the diminution of business's influence on the regime's political decision-making.⁵² Even those firms with much to gain in an immediate sense from the preparations for war did so in exchange for any overall say in matters. 'National Socialist economic policy corresponds to the technical age', the *Völkische Beobachter* boasted in 1936. 'It lets capitalism run as the motor, uses its dynamic energies, but shifts the gears.'⁵³

Most convincing for its early years, Marxist social analyses that equate capitalism and fascism falter when applied to those aspects of the nazi regime that clamour loudest for explanation. The conclusions that can be derived from the alliances forged between businessmen and nazis are ultimately tepid compared to what they are called on to account for. In a weak sense, nazism did the bidding of various élites. Promising rearmament, order, economic rejuvenation, revanchism was obviously to their liking. Had Hitler not ventured beyond the usual authoritarian ambitions, a simple Marxist analysis of the regime as based on and representing these circles would be eminently plausible. To the extent that a satisfactory account must deal with events that broke this mould, however, such equations between the nazis' backing and their ambitions are hard to

balance. At some point, elisions between capitalist support and the regime no longer explain what they must. Just as the fascism-as-petty-bourgeois-revenge theorists could only get the nazis into power, as the interest-outcome logic turned against the lower middle class thereafter, so the least sophisticated Marxists close up shop once the National Socialists began asserting their claims against the dominant interests they supposedly represented, whether the Four Year Plan, the war, the Final Solution or Stalingrad. Only rare students of the subject, equipped with a heroic capacity for reductionism, are willing to explain Barbarossa or the Holocaust in terms of the economic interests they served.⁵⁴

A simple social reading of the post-1933 regime thus begins with several handicaps: the nazis were significantly a catch-all party, many things to many people, who at first conducted tactical negotiations with the traditional élites necessary to ensure their power. It is therefore unclear what determining force the regime's social bases and alliances had on its policies, except insofar as these were prudent manoeuvres designed to placate important groups for the moment. A social explanation, based on a relation of interest and representation, of the regime's most extraordinary actions is possible, but only in a weak sense. Expansionism, national chauvinism and anti-semitism were causes with some appeal to many Germans, especially among the classes that seem to have been particularly attracted to the party. But even this very tenuous connection has not stood up to the results of recent research, which maintains that between the regime and German society, there was a gap, a cushion of indifference and apathy that allowed the nazis free rein in many respects. Anti-semitism is an example. Earlier accounts explained the Holocaust in terms of a hatred of the Jews shared by Hitler and most Germans, nourished by venerably virulent traditions of anti-semitism and given only its most exaggerated expression by the nazis.⁵⁵ More recent accounts discount the influence of anti-semitic traditions and grant the regime greater autonomy in anti-Jewish matters, uncovering only a weak mandate for persecution, none for mass murder. Attacking the Jews was neither a popular cause nor a source of negative integration for the party. Anti-Jewish measures were undertaken in the absence of mass support, contingent on widespread indifference.⁵⁶ Such studies impede explanations of what took place by reference back to the wishes, ambitions and desires of important social groups and instead focus attention on the regime itself, somewhat in isolation from society in a larger sense.

Generally, most approaches to the regime after 1933 (the more so the later the moment) have recognized the futility of a social interpretation of the sort that once seemed possible for an earlier period. For theories of totalitarianism, for example, analysis of nazism's social bases lost its significance after Hitler became Chancellor. It was important to determine how Hitler had come to power and what groups he had won over to become leader of the largest party. After the *Gleichschaltung*, however, his popular backing mattered less. A totalitarian regime did not really need a social base. Once assured of power, causality was reversed and the regime now dictated conditions to its subordinate population.

Even Marxists, who offered the closest approximation to a *cui bono* interpretation of the post-1933 regime, have made significant concessions to this tendency to cut the tie between populace and party, interest and representation in any direct sense. The Marxist view has never been uniform.⁵⁷ Most simple are the direct equations that regarded fascism as a tool resorted to by some parts of capital in its last crisis-fraught phase, and therefore a necessary step in bourgeois society's development.⁵⁸ The general tendency of recent Marxist analysis, in contrast, has been to loosen the coupling fascism-capitalism, recognize the only partially overlapping interests between party and regime and acknowledge the autonomy of the movement vis-à-vis its social backing. Inspired by Marx's vestigial concept of Bonapartism, unorthodox early analyses, at variance with the Comintern line, have prompted neo-Marxist accounts strengthening this tendency to cut the tie between party and élites.⁵⁹

Social explanations have worked partially for limited periods in nazism's development: in terms of petty bourgeois interests up to 1933 and in terms of the interests of élites from then up until the moment when simple reductionism ceases to convince. At the point when the nazis' actions are no longer explicable according to their backing in some particular group's interests, a social explanation of the usual sort fails. 'Bourgeois interests' become insufficient to bear the burden assigned them; in fact, if anything, the breakdown of bourgeois interests was more pertinent. Examining the regime's social background in pursuit of issues like the Holocaust or the war against the Soviets rather than more normal ones like the suppression of the trade unions or the negotiation of the Concordat, the question could not be, for whom were the nazis speaking or even ultimately acting, but rather, what were the circumstances that paralysed routine processes of interest representation, permitting a band of

fanatics to seize and keep power? The answer seemed to be that internal disputes among the usual economic, social and political actors, first in the republic and then during the regime itself — disputes which were but the most recent and extreme examples of longstanding conflicts in German history — brought normal politics to the impasse that gave the National Socialists their chance.⁶⁰ A social interpretation of the regime's later phases has come, in the most recent and sophisticated analyses, to mean not the social base of representational politics, but the breakdown thereof that allowed a new form of autonomous, ideological politics to grow out of the wreckage of the old. Social explanations now accounted for the conditions in which political autonomy was possible. They analysed the constraints and pressures other than simple interest representation that hemmed, shaped and determined the party's actions — a negative, as it were, rather than a positive social interpretation. The dispute over whether the regime was characterized by clear lines of authority or internal chaos, over whether Hitler the person or the regime's lack of a structural centre was a crucial factor, is an example of such new forms of social explanation.⁶¹ The question whether domestic chaos was translated into expansionist dynamism abroad or whether foreign policy was formed and guided by its own autonomous considerations is a more specific development.⁶² Whatever its problems, Tim Mason's account of the outbreak of war in terms of Hitler's need for a *Flucht nach vorn*, caused negatively rather than positively by the regime's contradictory pressures, is a variant.⁶³ So is the analysis of the war that ties the kind of engagement the nazis fought to the regime's social circumstances.⁶⁴

Certain recent debates have continued the development of such new forms of social interpretation, breaking the old *cui bono* logic, yet re-introducing more of a conscious reference back to specific social groups, sometimes in a surprisingly old-fashioned manner. The so-called functionalist interpretation of the Holocaust and the unprecedentedly barbaric war against the Soviet Union tends to drive a wedge between popular base and the regime's intentions.⁶⁵ Such couplings assume a functioning process of transmission from below to above, and, in totalitarian circumstances, in reverse as well. If the regime was not constructed in this way, if it was, in fact, polycentric, made up of confused and overlapping, multiplying and jumbled centres of power, competing with each other for Hitler's imprimatur,

then a new and potentially independent factor is injected into the correspondence between its popular backing and its aims. Various internal characteristics may have produced results with no clear origin in its social base or even among its leaders' intentions.

Intentionalists, whether of the left or right, assume an obvious, conscious and premeditated connection between aim and outcome in one of two ways: either the nazis were doing the bidding of the Germans who brought them to power, in which case a simple social explanation holds. Alternatively, they freed themselves from the constraints of normal politics, achieving a degree of autonomy, in which case a social interpretation is valuable only up to the *Gleichschaltung*, the beginning of the war, or whatever point the regime broke loose from its moorings, diminishing in force thereafter except to the extent that the party itself as a band of cadres can be given a social reading. The functionalists, on the other hand, place less emphasis on the tie between popular backing and the nazi regime's most extraordinary aspects. At the same time, however, they reintroduce a social explanation of a different calibre. Functionalists downplay the importance of a link between intention and outcome, analysing instead a bureaucratic process of ad hoc problem-solving whose endpoint was largely unpremeditated.⁶⁶ However much the nazis hated Jews, attacks on them before the war were not the simple implementation of an incipient intent to annihilate, but an impromptu response to demands from the party's petty bourgeois radicals, the ones who, ignored in the process of forging tactical alliances with the traditional élites, were paid off in the coin of anti-semitism.⁶⁷ In the end, the shift from anti-semitic persecution to genocide occurred, according to this analysis, not as a deliberate escalation of the various steps preceding it, but as an ad hoc response to the practical problem of dealing with deported Jews in the *Generalgouvernement* who could no longer be displaced to the East once the advance into the Soviet Union became bogged down.⁶⁸

The functionalist argument involves at least two distinct elements: (1) the bureaucratic logic by which the regime's polycentric construction magnified and exaggerated initial impulses that pointed vaguely in the direction of genocidal war, but that, by themselves, would not have led to this outcome, and (2) the reasons why these initial impulses existed at all and why they became too pressing to ignore. These have not yet been integrated harmoniously in a consistent explanation. Some attend to one, some the other. In Tim Mason's first formulation of the distinction between intentionalism

and functionalism, there is little mention of popular backing or social pressure. Mason focuses not on how annihilatory ambitions first arose, but on the polycentric administrative structure's role in magnifying initially reprehensible but not necessarily murderous instincts to the point of genocide.⁶⁹

Other functionalists, however, have tied the very existence of eventually genocidal intentions and the process of their radicalization more closely together.⁷⁰ Martin Broszat, for example, sees the regime's peculiar focus on hatreds as a modernization and extension of Bismarck's *Reichsfeinde* technique of defining community negatively. The party appealed to members of the dispossessed lower middle classes by promising them a new order. When Hitler compromised with the traditional élites, friction was generated between the party radicals, intent on change, and the élites, equally determined to defeat threats to their position. A unity of exclusion and hatred was all these antagonistic groups could agree on. The regime's concentration on such negative passions was a means of preventing the lower middle-class radicals from pressing further demands. The pressure that was eventually vented as genocide is thus given a social explanation, but of a novel kind. Anti-semitism and anti-bolshevism were mainstays of the petty bourgeoisie's ideology in only a weak sense, in that such declining, hard-pressed or frustrated groups stood to gain most in social-psychological terms from racially and nationally based definitions of status and prestige. Nevertheless, the fixation on such hatreds, the social pressure behind the Holocaust and Barbarossa, was generated by the particular circumstances the regime found itself in vis-à-vis the petty bourgeoisie. Having come close to power by promising the lower middle classes satisfaction, the nazis turned coats to achieve and consolidate power. The SA was suppressed, but the social demands whose expression Röhm had institutionalized were not eliminated by the murder of its leaders. How these two elements of such functionalist accounts (lower middle-class hatreds, the bureaucratic escalation process that allowed them to spiral out of control) fit together is still unclear. The petty bourgeois impetus tends to play a greater role in the period up to *Kristallnacht*, the bureaucratic ad hoc problem-solving to account for decisions taken after the beginning of the war and especially in the months preceding the start of mass murder.

In its extremist expression, the pressure behind genocide is linked to social groups frustrated by the obstruction of the old élites in a very direct and conscious way.⁷¹ Ronald Smelser, for example, traces a

conjunction between the social source of nazi 'dynamism' and the party radicals' ambitions to erect a new structure of social hierarchy and prestige of a kind not possible in Germany or Western Europe. Such a re-cast society could be constructed only in what the SS and others of the nazi élite regarded as the 'social tabula rasa' of Eastern Europe, populated by a new Germanic aristocracy and led by the SS.⁷² The war against the Soviets and the Holocaust in this way became the result of pressures generated by the party radicals to replace the inherited social order in a manner that could take place only to the east, a sort of demonic version of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis.⁷³

The regime's polycentric structure mirrored antagonisms and divergences in its social base, of which the petty bourgeois radicals' disaffection with the compromises of power was but one example. The reasons given for the existence of this polycentric structure vary. If Hitler deliberately created such cross-cutting in order to divide and rule, or if it arose from his failure to exercise strong leadership, then explanations that push back before the immediate nazi years are impeded.⁷⁴ But to the extent that the regime's jumbled, a- and eccentric structure was the result of the nazis' need to balance antagonistic and ill-reconcilable groups (petty bourgeoisie, traditional élites, SA, army, labour, business and so forth), because, in other words, of the social tensions it had inherited from the republic, which in turn inherited them from the empire, then there is a consistent and long-term social explanation of a new sort here.⁷⁵ Pressures that eventually escalated into genocide originated with the frustrated petty bourgeoisie and were magnified by the regime's peculiar structure, created in turn by festering social contradictions and tensions that, having brought down the republic, did not disappear after 1933, however insistent the nazis' claim to have achieved a *Volksgemeinschaft*.

This is a social explanation because it refers back to socio-economic factors as causes and does not rest content with purely political, much less cultural or ideological, explanations. But it is a new form of social explanation in that the regime is not viewed as the simple expression of the interests held by any one group or coalition. Rather, it was determined by a matrix of social forces defining the limits of its *Spielraum* without being reduced to the outcome of any one vector. At the same time, there is a willingness here to locate the content of the regime's otherwise most inexplicable aims in a particular group and its ambitions, an attempt to extend a modified

version of the *cui bono* logic of the petty bourgeoisie's attraction to National Socialism post 1933.

Such accounts of the social pressure behind nazi expansionism and genocide dovetail with recent work on nazism's early core, the *alte Kämpfer*, especially the SA. Much of this has modified the received view of the party's particular appeal to the declining petty bourgeoisie.⁷⁶ Closer probing reveals that many of those attracted to the party had been successful through their own efforts, were upwardly mobile and motivated less by resentment towards the modern world as such than by frustration at blocked avenues of advancement (military, civil service, white-collar careers) and by antagonism against the traditional élites with their disproportionate power.⁷⁷ They were pursuing what Martin Broszat has called 'a kind of delayed bourgeois revolution, fuelled by a backward-looking ideology'.⁷⁸ The anti-élitism of parts of the SA's membership tallies well with the functionalist search for social causes of the dissatisfaction provoked among the nazis' original constituency by the compromises of power. These groups were the most bitterly disenchanting among the National Socialists' base and their strident ambitions were rechannelled in anti-semitic and geopolitically expansionary directions as the regime proved unable to offer them sufficient reforms at home. The problem here concerns the way in which such frustration was actually brought to bear in a consistently radical fashion. Many of the SA's adherents were satisfied with the spoils of victory.⁷⁹ Approximately as many seem to have profited from the seizure of power as were disappointed. The latter, in turn, tended to withdraw from the organization, leaving it unclear how their resentment made itself felt.⁸⁰ Alternatively, recent work portrays the SA as an amorphous and undisciplined group of rabble-rousers with few ambitions beyond raising Cain. The SA leadership, a deracinated assembly of political trouble-makers from a wide range of social backgrounds, were political careerists with their own autonomous trajectories, not exponents of the interests of a particular class.⁸¹ If the organization had a nebulous social base and little clear aim, whether and how it could exert the sort of pressure required by the functionalist argument remains to be decided by future research.

Ultimately, such new social explanations of the pressure behind genocide hinge on the contradiction, peculiar to fascism, between the

party as movement and the party in power, between the 'movement phase' and the 'system phase', between the dynamic force of a political phenomenon that refused to accept the limitations of a rationally and bureaucratically formalized organization and the inherent requirements of exercising power in a modern state.⁸² The more it is true that National Socialism had no obviously identifiable social base, that it was forced to seek support where it could and rally groups whose interests it did not in this sense set out to caretake, the greater the distance between the identity and ambitions of the original converts, cadres and members and the mass of hangers-on, supporters and voters. The more the nazis were forced to make tactical appeals for support, the greater the difference between the party's original intentions, those of its core, and those of its broad (and in the case of the traditional élites, powerful) support. National Socialism as a sect may have been internally consistent; as a party in power, faced with the need to compromise, it straddled a contradiction between its radical adherents and its tactical allies.

The movement's momentum, according to these recent accounts, was generated by the radicals for whom the party spoke in its early years, the ones who expected it to sweep traditional élites, racial enemies and economic competitors from power, who hoped for change that would fulfil their vision either of a petty bourgeois paradise in the modern world or of *carrières ouvertes aux talents*. Once in power, once faced with the need to form a state party, to compromise at first with the traditional élites, the movement had to purge its most radical factions. But although moderated for the moment, the contradiction between movement and party and between party and state did not disappear. Short of becoming a normal authoritarian regime and suppressing the radicals fully, the party still needed, indeed wanted, to take account of their demands. More precisely, the party's internal contradictions from the pre-power phase, one of the most important of which pitted the petty bourgeois radicals against more conservative groups, persisted through the short-term tactical concessions made to traditional élites during the early years and helped foster the regime's peculiarly polycentric and competitive style of rule. Nazism's erraticism and lack of centralization were caused by the need to tack among the divergent interests it had inherited from the republic. Nazism's 'dynamism', its inability and unwillingness to become a normal political party in power, was caused by its need to respond to the demands of its most radical members, its ability to contain but not

suppress the second revolution, the second wave. The radical cadres, the militant followers, were the ultimate guarantee of the party's power: they were the counterweight to the traditional élites and to the public's inertia and longing for stability. The peculiarly blind striving that explains why nazism was so incomparably grotesque, in the end so irrationally self-destructive, was the outcome of this inherent contradiction between movement and regime.⁸³

Ultimately, the aspect of National Socialism to be explained is precisely this dynamism, its boundless ability to pursue destruction and especially self-destruction, regardless of other considerations, its irrationality.⁸⁴ Studies of nazism are often informed by an implicit assumption that political systems in the West in the twentieth century must be at least residually rational in the sense that, while regimes may aim at very different goals, taking great risks to achieve them, they cannot consciously, and therefore only by miscalculation, place any aim higher than self-preservation. Individuals can short-circuit and pursue self-obliteration for irrational reasons or have good cause to seek death for what, on an internal calculation, is perfectly consistent reasoning: an emotional or existential cost/benefit analysis that leaves suicide as a reasonable option.⁸⁵ Only simple social constructions, lemmings or Jonestown, each member of which has identical goals, can be unifiedly self-destructive. Complex systems cannot follow suit. They are inherently contradictory; their various members pursue differing aims, are unlikely to agree on much, least of all on the need for self-immolation. There is a bottom-line Smithian sense in which an invisible hand ensures a minimum of self-preservation. The more contradictions and differences are expressed within a political system, the less likely it is to take risks, extreme ones especially.⁸⁶ Live free or die, better dead than red: these are unrealizable democratic conceits, the braggadocio of fanatics reduced to the ideological swaggering of the suburban classes.

This is the problem that any study of the Third Reich must confront. Up to a certain point, the regime can be accounted for in much the same terms as others. But at some time, whether that be 1936, 1939, 1941/2 or 1942/3, National Socialism becomes hard to analyse in the usual way precisely because this ultimately irrational moment, while always there, took over as the regime's dominant motive force. Anti-semitism, Slavophobia and Bolshevik-bashing

were facts of German political life explicable in commonplace if not pleasant terms; the Holocaust and Barbarossa exceeded their limits. The simplest resolution of the problem is to blur the conceptual lines between Hitler or a small band of fanatic nazis and the larger political and social system. Control becomes the key explanatory factor. The system pursued its goals even to the point of self-destruction because men with an agenda more pressing than their lives dictated its aims. Hitler's scorched-earth policy was the culmination of this logic. Any form of intentionalism relies on some equation that solves the larger problem of nazi Germany's boundless dynamism in terms of the easier one of a small group's willingness to pursue certain ambitions regardless of the consequences. The system became irrational because in totalitarian circumstances it was no longer a system, with its inherently complex motivations, but in fact a large yet simple organism. Similarly, the straightforward *cui bono* logic of the crudest Marxist explanations reduces the regime's most extraordinary actions only unsatisfactorily to the interests of certain groups.

Such solutions no longer suffice. No wholly consistent alternative yet exists, but various trails have been marked. One of the most promising leads through the sorts of efforts devoted by functionalists to the Holocaust that could and presumably will be broadened to a wider account of the regime as a whole. Such interpretations combine a form of social account with what might be called a functionalist explanation in the narrow sense: the bureaucratic logic of ad hoc escalation. Their social components are not, of course, of the sort that has generally been abandoned. Social explanations in a simple sense, relying on the *cui bono* logic of interest and representation, no longer carry much weight in accounts of the Nazi Party before 1933. The movement's opportunism and heterogeneity combined to prevent any fruitful social reading of its class base beyond the initial appeal to its own cadres. The Marxist variant, applied to the period in power, is in better shape, but has made concessions significant enough to weaken its force. The regime's autonomy has attracted increasing attention, although this autonomy is not the uncomplicated version of the totalitarian theorists. The new accounts analyse the breakdown of normal politics that permitted the nazis independence of the usual causal forces. They are, at the same time, intent on demonstrating the extent to which such autonomy was limited, hemmed in and determined by structural constraints and problems that had plagued the Weimar parties, and which the nazis were equally unable to slough off entirely. Finally, in certain cases, they give a social reading

of these relatively autonomous political actors in a way that partially returns to the old *cui bono* logic: an explanation in social terms of why the party pursued its most radical goals.

At the same time, the functionalists realize that a social reading, too, must confront the regime's most bizarre aspects and cannot explain these merely by reference back to the wishes and ambitions of various groups. Their answer is the bureaucratic ad hoc escalation process that accounts for how the usual processes of interest representation went awry, how certain demands and ambitions that, by themselves, would not have gone beyond unpleasant forms of nationalism and persecution, ran amok.⁸⁷ The system's dynamism was in an immediate sense the result of contingency, but one that rested on long historical preparation. In fact, a striking aspect of these new accounts is the extent to which they rest on and update venerable analyses of long-term developments in German history. The petty bourgeois followers fuelled nazism's dynamism either because of their frustrations with the modern world (Germany's lopsided economic development) or with the overly dominant role assumed by traditional élites (the absence of a bourgeois revolution, at least in the negative sense of sweeping these groups away).⁸⁸ The petty bourgeois agenda, gradually escalated to its extreme, was at base the cause of the nazi crimes.

Social interpretations of National Socialism, as of other movements, have tried to define the essence of their subject in terms of the groups for which it spoke. Most simply, fascism was either petty bourgeois and an anti-capitalist striving among modernization's losers, or it did the bidding of big business and preserved capitalism despite its travails. At this level, social interpretations, besides being mutually contradictory (or, at best, applicable to different phases of nazism's trajectory), are unsatisfactory when it comes to explaining so heterogeneous, opportunistic and, ultimately, self-destructive a movement. Focusing instead on nazism's autonomy from any social base avoids many problems but, if pressed too far, leaves behind a vacuum in which regime and society exist independently of each other, connected only by bonds of totalitarian control that do not seem to have existed in fact. The new varieties of social interpretations are an attempt to avoid either extreme. They seek to locate the nazis' autonomy socially and in this sense partially salvage a *cui bono* interpretation, that has been declining for the pre-power and 'partially fascist' phase, for the otherwise most inexplicable aspects of the regime itself.

Historians of all periods and nations are forced to confront the crisis of the historical actor that is the profession's current methodological challenge. The decline, fragmentation and reformulation of social interpretations is only one, if perhaps the major, instance of this broader issue. Inherited versions, based on class analysis, have been challenged by explanations nominating new groups, that were ephemeral in the old accounts, to bear the brunt of historical causality. Sex, race and status are among the criteria that now identify actors differently from the old socio-economic categories. But even such reformulations of social interpretations have been questioned in studies that soar to what, in the older framework, seem more rarefied realms of myth, symbol, ritual and ideology. The main testing ground for novel explanations that leave behind the inherited causal paradigms is the French Revolution.⁸⁹ Studies of National Socialism have not yet become equally refined. Examinations of fascism's intellectual and ideological origins still largely correspond to traditional work on the Enlightenment pre-conditions of the Revolution and have not yet returned for a second and more sophisticated passage à la Furet.⁹⁰ As for ritual, drama and the like, although it is undoubtedly only a question of time, Leni Riefenstahl and Albert Speer still await their Mona Ozouf.⁹¹ Out to pasture (perhaps already in the glue bottle) in other fields, class-based social explanations remain the workhorse of the analysis of fascism. The reason for this methodological discrepancy is not only that the Revolution drags a longer historiographical train, but also (although clearly the two are connected) that the nazi regime remains an important subject for those other than scholars, not yet reduced to conferences and proceedings, something for which it would still be a travesty to give an account phrased in terms of competing discourses and the like.⁹² Visceral importance and interpretative subtlety are, sadly, inversely proportional. That, of course, is the great frustration of history as an intellectual pursuit: the further the event recedes and fades, the more refined our understanding, the less anyone cares.

Notes

1. This was part of a broader forthcoming study, entitled 'From Bourgeois Revolution to Welfare Bourgeoisie: Social Explanations in History', that hypertrophied and had to be amputated. For criticism and discussion, I am grateful to Charles Maier, Aron Rodrigue and Jane Caplan.

2. Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (Cambridge 1964).

3. Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London 1985) and *Class, Crisis and the State* (London 1978); Jean L. Cohen, *Class and Civil Society: The Limits of Marxian Critical Theory* (Amherst 1982) as exemplars of a vast literature.

4. Trygve R. Tholfsen, *Ideology and Revolution in Modern Europe: An Essay on the Role of Ideas in History* (New York 1984); Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles* (New York 1987).

5. In this case of the French Revolution: François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge 1981); Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA 1988).

6. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge 1979); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago 1982); Robert R. Alford and Roger Friedland, *Powers of Theory* (Cambridge 1985).

7. Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley 1984), 13.

8. Summarized in William Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution* (2nd edn, Oxford 1988).

9. William Reddy is certainly correct in stating that the class concept is in trouble, however unconvincing his own substitutions. *Money and Liberty in Europe: A Critique of Historical Understanding* (Cambridge 1987), chap. 1.

10. David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford 1984); Richard J. Evans, *Rethinking German History: Nineteenth-Century Germany and the Origins of the Third Reich* (London 1987), part 1; Helga Grebing, *Der 'deutsche Sonderweg' in Europa, 1805–1945: Eine Kritik* (Stuttgart 1986); Jürgen Kocka, 'German History Before Hitler: The Debate about the German "Sonderweg"', *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, 1 (January 1988).

11. Hence Reinhard Rürup's book, which made no such claims in its German version, can be translated as *The Bourgeois Revolution in Germany* (Cambridge, MA 1988).

12. Conveniently detailed, although with somewhat lack-lustre conclusions, in Peter D. Stachura, 'Who Were the Nazis? A Socio-Political Analysis of the National Socialist *Machtübernahme*', *European Studies Review* 11, 3 (July 1981).

13. This involves the sort of work done by Theodor Abel, *Why Hitler Came Into Power* (New York 1938); Peter Merkl, *Political Violence Under the Swastika: 581 Early Nazis* (Princeton 1975) and *The Making of a Stormtrooper* (Princeton 1980).

14. Dietrich Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party, 1919–1933* (Pittsburgh 1969), I, 76–127; Peter Stachura, *Gregor Strasser and the Rise of Nazism* (London 1983).

15. A clear overview in Peter D. Stachura, 'The Political Strategy of the Nazi Party, 1919–1933', *German Studies Review* 3, 2 (May 1980), and 'Der Kritische Wendepunkt? Die NSDAP und die Reichstagswahlen vom 20 Mai 1928', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 26, 1 (January 1978).

16. An overall mapping-out in Michael H. Kater, *The Nazi Party: A Social Profile of Members and Leaders, 1919–1945* (Cambridge, MA 1983).

17. Heinrich August Winkler, *Mittelstand, Demokratie und Nationalsozialismus: Die politische Entwicklung von Handwerk und Kleinhandel in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne 1972).

18. Rudolf Heberle, *From Democracy to Nazism: A Regional Case Study of Political Parties in Germany* (Baton Rouge 1945); Timothy Tilton, *Nazism, Neo-Nazism and the*

Peasantry (Bloomington 1975); Hans-Jürgen Puhle, *Politische Agrarbewegungen in kapitalistischen Industriegesellschaften: Deutschland, USA und Frankreich im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 1975).

19. Hans Speier, *German White-Collar Workers and the Rise of Hitler* (New Haven 1986).

20. Thomas Childers, 'National Socialism and the New Middle Class', in Reinhard Mann (ed.), *Die Nationalsozialisten* (Stuttgart 1980).

21. Lawrence D. Stokes, 'Professionals and National Socialism: The Case Histories of a Small-Town Lawyer and Physician, 1918–1945', *German Studies Review* 8 (1985); Konrad H. Jarausch, 'The Crisis of German Professions 1918–33', *Journal of Contemporary History* 20, 3 (July 1985).

22. Max H. Kele, *Nazis and Workers: National Socialist Appeals to German Labor, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill 1972); Martin Broszat, 'Die Anfänge der NSDAP in Berlin 1926/27', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 8 (1960); Tim Mason, 'National Socialism and the Working Class, 1925–May 1933', *New German Critique* 11 (Spring 1977); Detlev Mühlberger, 'The Sociology of the NSDAP: The Question of Working-Class Membership', *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, 3 (July 1980).

23. Michael H. Kater, *Studentenschaft und Rechtsradikalismus in Deutschland 1918–1933* (Hamburg 1975); Michael S. Steinberg, *Sabers and Brownshirts: The German Students' Path to National Socialism, 1918–1935* (Chicago 1977).

24. Alastair Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism: A Study of Intellectuals and Fascism, 1919–1945* (New York 1971).

25. Peter D. Stachura, *The German Youth Movement 1900–1945* (London 1981); Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge, MA 1979); Peter Loewenberg, 'The Psycho-historical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort', *American Historical Review* 76, 5 (December 1971); Michael H. Kater, 'Generationskonflikt als Entwicklungsfaktor in der NS-Bewegung vor 1933', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 11 (1985).

26. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (expanded edn, Baltimore 1981), 127–52, in turn based on older work, including Theodore Geiger, *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes* (Stuttgart 1932); Harold Lasswell, 'The Psychology of Hitlerism as a Response of the Lower Middle Class to Continuing Insecurity', in his *The Analysis of Political Behavior* (London 1949) and D.J. Saposs, 'The Role of the Middle Class in Social Development', in *Economic Essays in Honor of Wesley C. Mitchell* (New York 1935).

27. A dichotomy now taken to its logical extreme by Ernst Nolte, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg 1917–1945: Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus* (Frankfurt 1987).

28. Also Heinrich August Winkler, 'From Social Protectionism to National Socialism: The German Small-Business Movement in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of Modern History* 48 (March 1976), 15.

29. An overview in Bernt Hagtvet, 'The Theory of Mass Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic: A Re-Examination', in Stein Ugelvik Larsen et al. (eds), *Who Were the Fascists? Social Roots of European Fascism* (Bergen 1980).

30. Reinhard Bendix, 'Social Stratification and Political Power', *American Political Science Review* 46, 2 (June 1952), 370–3. Criticism in Jürgen W. Falter, 'Radikalisierung des Mittelstandes oder Mobilisierung der Unpolitischen? Die Theorien von Seymour Martin Lipset und Reinhard Bendix über die Wählerschaft der NSDAP im Lichte neuerer Forschungsergebnisse', in Peter Steinbach (ed.), *Probleme politischer Partizipation im Modernisierungsprozess* (Stuttgart 1982).

31. Joseph Nyomarkay, *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party* (Minneapolis

1967); Lothar Kettenacker, 'Social and Psychological Aspects of the *Führer's* Rule', in H. W. Koch (ed.), *Aspects of the Third Reich* (London 1985); J. P. Stern, *Hitler: The Führer and the People* (Berkeley 1975); Rudolf Binion, *Hitler Among the Germans* (New York 1976); Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford 1987).

32. James M. Rhodes, *The Hitler Movement: A Modern Millenarian Revolution* (Stanford 1980); Robert Pois, *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature* (London 1986), 141–2. This approach, formulated in terms of a 'political religion', is what Saul Friedländer has advocated as a possibly fruitful avenue of exploration. 'From Anti-Semitism to Extermination: A Historiographical Study of Nazi Policies Towards the Jews and an Essay in Interpretation', in François Furet (ed.), *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews* (New York 1989), 30–1.

33. Fred Weinstein, *The Dynamics of Nazism: Leadership, Ideology and the Holocaust* (New York 1980); Milan Hauner, 'A German Racial Revolution?', *Journal of Contemporary History* 19, 4 (October 1984); Barrington Moore, Jr, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (White Plains 1978), chap. 12, especially 417.

34. Although others are extensions of class-specific explanations, giving psychological reasons for why certain groups fall most readily for fascism.

35. The essays in Rudy Koshar (ed.), *Splintered Classes: The European Lower Middle Classes in The Age of Fascism* (forthcoming, Holmes and Meier), present a varied bouquet of petty bourgeois responses.

36. Jürgen Kocka, *White Collar Workers in America, 1890–1940: A Social-Political History in International Perspective* (London 1980). Similarly for Germany: Michael Prinz, *Vom neuen Mittelstand zum Volksgenossen: Die Entwicklung des sozialen Status der Angestellten von der Weimarer Republik bis zum Ende der NS-Zeit* (Munich 1986), 77–85.

37. Juan J. Linz, 'Some Notes Toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective', in Walter Laqueur (ed.), *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (Berkeley 1976) and 'Political Space and Fascism as a Late-comer', in Larsen et al., *Who Were the Fascists?*

38. On the first, Detlev Mühlberger, 'Germany', in Mühlberger (ed.), *The Social Basis of European Fascist Movements* (London 1987).

39. Richard F. Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton 1982).

40. Although Hamilton clearly goes too far in the other direction. The problem with his argument is its weakness when it comes to explaining why the nazi vote fluctuated according to variables other than organizational and tactical prowess. The comparative imperviousness of the working class or Catholics to the nazi siren song must have rested on underlying 'structural' factors that elude Hamilton's overly narrow focus on the purely political.

41. Michaela W. Richter, 'Resource Mobilisation and Legal Revolution: National Socialist Tactics in Franconia', in Thomas Childers (ed.), *The Formation of the Nazi Constituency* (London 1986).

42. Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill 1983).

43. Jost Dülffer, 'Die Machtergreifung und die Rolle der alten Elite im Dritten Reich', in Wolfgang Michalka (ed.), *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung* (Paderborn 1984), 183–5.

44. A good sampling of opinion from the Left in David Beetham (ed.), *Marxists in Face of Fascism* (Manchester 1983).

45. Thomas Trumm, 'Zur Finanzierung der NSDAP durch die deutsche Gross-industrie: Versuch einer Bilanz', in Karl Dietrich Bracher et al. (eds), *Nationalsozialistische Diktatur 1933–1945: Eine Bilanz* (Bonn 1983); Dick Geary, 'The Industrial Elite and the Nazis in the Weimar Republic', in Peter D. Stachura (ed.), *The Nazi Machtergreifung* (London 1983), 85–8.

46. Although with significant limits. By his own account, Henry Turner's argument, for example, holds only for big business narrowly defined. Many smaller businessmen, not from the ranks of Germany's mega-capitalists, were in fact attracted by the party's promises of economic reform and belonged to the group immediately attracted by the party. Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (New York 1985), 343–4.

47. Thomas Childers, 'The Limits of National Socialist Mobilisation: The Election of 6 November 1932 and the Fragmentation of the Nazi Constituency', in Childers, *The Formation of the Nazi Constituency*.

48. An overview in Alan S. Milward, 'Towards a Political Economy of Fascism', in Larsen et al., *Who Were the Fascists? Also Heinrich August Winkler, 'Mittelstandsbewegung oder Volkspartei? Zur sozialen Basis der NSDAP'*, in Wolfgang Schieder (ed.), *Faschismus als soziale Bewegung* (Hamburg 1976).

49. David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution* (New York 1966). Also Heinrich August Winkler, 'Der entbehrliche Stand: Zur Mittelstandspolitik im "Dritten Reich"', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 17 (1977). Qualified in Adelheid von Saldern, *Mittelstand im 'Dritten Reich': Handwerker, Einzelhändler, Bauern* (Frankfurt 1979). On agrarian policy: J.E. Farquharson, 'The Agrarian Policy of National Socialist Germany', in Robert G. Moeller (ed.), *Peasants and Lords in Modern Germany* (Boston 1986) and Farquharson, *The Plough and the Swastika: The NSDAP and Agriculture in Germany 1928–45* (London 1976).

50. Michael Geyer, 'Traditional Elites and National Socialist Leadership', in Charles S. Maier et al. (eds), *The Rise of the Nazi Regime: Historical Reassessments* (Boulder 1986); Bernhard R. Kroener, 'Auf dem Weg zu einer "nationalsozialistischen Volksarmee": Die soziale Öffnung des Heeresoffizierkorps im Zweiten Weltkrieg', in Martin Broszat et al. (eds), *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland* (Munich 1988); Reinhard Stumpf, *Die Wehrmacht-Elite: Rang- und Herkunftsstruktur der deutschen Generale und Admirale 1933–1945* (Boppard am Rhein 1982). Although it must be emphasized that significant elements of the armed forces (insistent after the war that they had been repelled by the extremes Hitler was willing to go to against the Soviets and the Jews) participated willingly at the time. Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945* (Stuttgart 1978); Gerhard Hirschfeld (ed.), *The Policies of Genocide: Jews and Prisoners of War in Nazi Germany* (London 1986), articles by Streit and Förster; Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941–45, German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (London 1985).

51. Hans-Erich Volkmann, 'Zum Verhältnis von Grosswirtschaft und NS-Regime im Zweiten Weltkrieg', in Bracher et al., *Nationalsozialistische Diktatur*.

52. Timothy W. Mason, 'The Primacy of Politics: Politics and Economics in National Socialist Germany', in Henry A. Turner, Jr. (ed.), *Nazism and the Third Reich* (New York 1972); William Carr, *Arms, Autarky and Aggression: A Study in German Foreign Policy, 1933–1939* (New York 1973), chap. 3; Dietmar Petzina, *Autarkiepolitik im Dritten Reich: Der nationalsozialistische Vierjahresplan* (Stuttgart 1968).

53. Quoted in Peter Hayes, *Industry and Ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi Era*

(Cambridge 1987), 79. At the opposite end of the spectrum of co-operation with nazi goals from IG Farben was the Ruhr coal industry, at best a grudging partner in the war. John Gillingham, *Industry and Politics in the Third Reich: Ruhr Coal, Hitler and Europe* (New York 1985).

54. For example, in the mechanistic argument that tries to reduce the Holocaust to the purpose of economic modernization: Susanne Heim and Götz Aly, 'Die Ökonomie der "Endlösung": Menschenvernichtung und wirtschaftliche Neuordnung', in *Sozialpolitik und Judenvernichtung: Gibt es eine Ökonomie der Endlösung?* (Beiträge zur nationalsozialistischen Gesundheits- und Sozialpolitik vol. 5 [1983]). A corrective tonic in Ulrich Hebert, 'Arbeit und Vernichtung: Ökonomisches Interesse und Primat der "Weltanschauung" im Nationalsozialismus', in Dan Diner (ed.), *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte? Zu Historisierung und Historikerstreit* (Frankfurt 1987).

55. Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews* (New York 1975), chap. 2.

56. Ian Kershaw, 'The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 26 (1981); Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933–1945* (Oxford 1983), chaps 6, 9. Further considerations and references in Otto Dov Kulka and Aron Rodrigue, 'The German Population and the Jews of the Third Reich', *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984) and Kershaw, 'German Popular Opinion and the "Jewish Question", 1939–1943: Some further Reflections', in Arnold Paucker (ed.), *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland: The Jews in Nazi Germany 1933–1943* (Tübingen 1986).

57. The latest and most empirically based account of this school in the narrowest sense is Leonid Luks, *Entstehung der kommunistischen Faschismustheorie: Die Auseinandersetzung der Komintern mit Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus 1921–1935* (Munich 1985).

58. Dimitroff. Extended to absurdity in the doctrine of social fascism. Siegfried Bahne, "'Sozialfaschismus" in Deutschland: Zur Geschichte eines politischen Begriffs', *International Review of Social History* 10, 2 (1965).

59. The essays by Thalheimer, Bauer, Tasca in Otto Bauer et al., *Faschismus und Kapitalismus: Theorien über die sozialen Ursprünge und die Funktion des Faschismus* (Frankfurt 1967); Reinhard Kühnl, *Formen bürgerlicher Herrschaft: Liberalismus-Faschismus* (Reinbek 1971), esp. 102–4; Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship: The Third International and the Problem of Fascism* (London 1970); Anson G. Rabinbach, 'Towards a Marxist Theory of Fascism and National Socialism: A Report on Developments in West Germany', *New German Critique* 3 (Fall 1974); Jost Dülffer, 'Bonapartism, Fascism and National Socialism', *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, 4 (October 1976); criticism and further elaboration in Hans-Gerd Jaschke, *Soziale Basis und soziale Funktion des Nationalsozialismus: Studien zur Bonpartismustheorie* (Opladen 1982).

60. David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic: Political Economy and Crisis* (2nd edn, New York 1986); M. Rainer Lepsius, 'From Fragmented Party Democracy to Government by Emergency Decree and National Socialist Takeover: Germany', in Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stephan (eds), *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe* (Baltimore 1978); Michael Geyer, 'The State in National Socialist Germany', in Charles Bright and Susan Harding (eds), *Statemaking and Social Movements* (Ann Arbor 1984). Pierre Birnbaum also offers a fragmented view of the nazi state, or anti-state as he portrays it, but gives little indication why this should have been its character. 'The Nazi Collective Movement Against the Prussian State', in his *States and Collective Action: The European Experience* (Cambridge 1988).

61. An overview in Klaus Hildebrand, *The Third Reich* (London 1984), 136–40.

62. Critically viewed in Klaus Hildebrand, 'Innenpolitische Antriebskräfte der nationalsozialistischen Aussenpolitik', in Manfred Funke (ed.), *Hitler, Deutschland und die Mächte* (Düsseldorf 1976).

63. Timothy W. Mason, 'Innere Krise und Angriffskrieg 1938/1939', in Friedrich Forstmeier and Hans-Erich Volkmann (eds), *Wirtschaft und Rüstung am Vorabend des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Düsseldorf 1975); Mason, 'Some Origins of the Second World War', *Past and Present* 29 (1964); Mason, 'The Legacy of 1918 for National Socialism', in Anthony Nicholls and Erich Matthias (eds), *German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler* (London 1971); Mason, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich: Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft* (Opladen 1977), chap. 6; Alan Milward, *War, Economy and Society 1939–1945* (Berkeley 1977), 27–8. Criticism in Jost Düllfer, 'Der Beginn des Krieges 1939: Hitler, die innere Krise und das Mächtesystem', in Bracher et al., *Nationalsozialistische Diktatur*.

64. Blitzkrieg as a way of avoiding putting its legitimacy with the working class to the test: argued in Alan S. Milward, *The German Economy at War* (London 1965), challenged in R. J. Overy, 'Hitler's War and the German Economy: A Reinterpretation', *Economic History Review* 2nd series, 35, 2 (1982), and Overy, *The Nazi Economic Recovery 1932–38* (New York 1982), and discussed in Charles S. Maier, 'The Economics of Fascism and Nazism', in his *In Search of Stability* (Cambridge 1987).

65. Surveys in Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London 1985), chaps 5, 6 and Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Toronto 1987), chap. 3. An excellent sampling of the various positions in Furet, *Unanswered Questions*.

66. Although one should never lose sight of the consideration that only in a regime willing to consider the possibility of annihilation and genocide could such an end-point be reached. Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA 1988), 97.

67. Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933–1939* (Urbana, Ill. 1970); Uwe Dietrich Adam, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf 1979).

68. Martin Broszat, 'Hitler and the Genesis of the "Final Solution": An Assessment of David Irving's Theses', *Yad Vashem Studies* 13 (1979). Criticism in Christopher R. Browning, 'Zur Genesis der "Endlösung": Eine Antwort an Martin Broszat', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 29, 1 (1981). Hans Mommsen, 'The Realization of the Unthinkable: The "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" in the Third Reich', in Hirschfeld, *The Policies of Genocide*, 108–11. A similar but more subtle and refined version of the interplay between intention and ad hoc problem-solving behind the Final Solution in Christopher Browning, 'The Decision Concerning the Final Solution', in his *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution* (New York 1985). Arno Mayer has now attempted to expand a modified functionalist account into a general examination of the couplet between the war and the Holocaust. *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The 'Final Solution' in History* (New York 1988).

69. Tim Mason, 'Intention and Explanation: A Current Controversy about the Interpretation of National Socialism', in Gerhard Hirschfeld and Lothar Kettenacker (eds), *Der 'Führerstaat': Mythos und Realität* (Stuttgart 1981), 24–7. A similar concentration on the second factor in Hans Mommsen, 'National Socialism: Continuity and Change', in Laqueur, *Fascism*, 199–201.

70. Martin Broszat, 'Soziale Motivation und Führer-Bindung des Nationalsozialismus', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 18, 4 (October 1970); Broszat, *The Hitler State* (London 1981), chap. 11; Mommsen, 'Realization of the Unthinkable', 102, 106–7, 114.

71. The positive role of the petty bourgeoisie in this form of extreme ideology is reminiscent of Geoff Eley's account of the radical nationalist and imperialist leagues during the Empire: autonomous mobilization from below. Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (New Haven 1980) and Eley, 'Some Thoughts on the Nationalist Pressure Groups in Imperial Germany', in Paul Kennedy and Anthony Nicholls (eds), *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914* (London 1981). This seems, however, to be a largely unpursued avenue of inquiry; see note 88. An example of the influence of Eley's work on relations between petty bourgeoisie and anti-semitism in Peter Pulzer's introduction to the new edition of his classic work, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (Cambridge, MA 1988).

72. Also Bernd Wegner, *Hitlers Politische Soldaten: Die Waffen-SS 1933–1945* (Paderborn 1982), part 1; Wegner, 'The "Aristocracy of National Socialism": The Role of the SS in National Socialist Germany', in Koch, *Aspects*.

73. Ronald M. Smelser, 'Nazi Dynamics, German Foreign Policy and Appeasement', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Lothar Kettenacker (eds), *The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement* (London 1983). Such attempts to seek a social explanation for the most extreme aspects of the nazi regime update Hannah Arendt's idea that the carriers of both colonial imperialism and expansionary pressures within Europe, in those nations for which colonial acquisition did not play as large a role as Britain, were deracinated social groups that ran amok on the ruleless anomic frontier. Colonialism and Lebensraum in the East are therefore alternatives. Also, S. L. Andreski, 'Some Sociological Considerations on Fascism and Class', in S. J. Woolf (ed.), *The Nature of Fascism* (New York 1968), 101.

74. First alternative: Sebastian Haffner, *The Meaning of Hitler* (Cambridge, MA 1979); Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship* (New York 1970). Second: Hans Mommsen, 'Nationalsozialismus', in C.D. Hernig (ed.), *Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft: Eine vergleichende Enzyklopädie* (Freiburg 1966–72), vol. 4 (1971), col. 702–3; Edward N. Peterson, *The Limits of Hitler's Power* (Princeton 1969).

75. Peter Hüttenberger, 'Nationalsozialistische Polykratie', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 2, 4 (1976). The needs of charismatic leadership to hold itself above the sordid details of political infighting that helped shape polycracy could easily, of course, be analysed as an outcome of the problems thrown up by the cobbling together of only uneasily symbiotic interests in the regime.

76. Who longed for a form of petty bourgeois socialism that Arthur Schweitzer ties to the SA's predominantly lower-middle-class membership in his *Big Business in the Third Reich* (Bloomington 1964), 4–5, 75–6, 113–17. Also Wolfgang Sauer, 'National Socialism: Totalitarianism or Fascism?', *American Historical Review* 73, 2 (December 1967).

77. Merkl, *Political Violence*, part I, chap. 2; Ronald Rogowski, 'The Gauleiter and the Social Origins of Fascism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 19, 4 (October 1977); Martin Broszat, 'Zur Struktur der NS-Massenbewegung', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31, 1 (1983); Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven 1987), 93–6; most

extremely, William Jannen, Jr, 'National Socialists and Social Mobility', *Journal of Social History* (Spring 1976). Now also Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler: Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (New York 1987). Similar arguments for Italy in David Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism* (Chapel Hill 1979). This is related to, but only part of, the broader question of fascism and modernization and is a German variation on the controversy unleashed by Renzo De Felice's claim that Italian fascism should be seen as a member of the family of the revolutionary tradition, however black a sheep. An overview in Michael A. Ledeen, 'Renzo De Felice and the Controversy over Italian Fascism', *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, 4 (October 1976).

78. Broszat, 'Plea for a Historicization of National Socialism', in Peter Baldwin (ed.), *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians' Debate* (Boston 1990).

79. Desperadoes in search of a pension, in Joachim Fest's phrase, *The Face of the Third Reich* (New York 1970), 147.

80. Christoph Schmidt, 'Zu den Motiven "alter Kämpfer" in der NSDAP', in Detlev Peukert and Jürgen Reulecke (eds), *Die Reihen fast geschlossen: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags unterm Nationalsozialismus* (Wuppertal 1981), 37–43.

81. Richard Bessel, *Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism: The Storm Troopers in Eastern Germany 1925–1934* (New Haven 1984), 42–5; Mathilde Jamin, *Zwischen den Klassen: Zur Sozialstruktur der SA-Führerschaft* (Wuppertal 1984), 374; Conan Fischer, *Stormtroopers: A Social, Economic and Ideological Analysis, 1929–35* (London 1983), 145, 159. Eric G. Reiche, *The Development of the SA in Nürnberg, 1922–1934* (Cambridge 1986) also emphasizes the socially contradictory backgrounds of SA members and therefore focuses on other factors, political, geographic and personal, to explain its actions.

82. Mommsen, 'National Socialism: Continuity and Change', in Laqueur, *Fascism*, 182–3.

83. As Adrian Lyttleton has pointed out in a similar way for the Italian case, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy 1919–1929* (new edn, Princeton 1988), 429–30.

84. The problem Hannah Arendt described as 'our bewilderment about the anti-utilitarian character of the totalitarian state structure'. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York 1973), 411.

85. Jean Améry, *Hand an sich legen: Diskurs über den Freitod* (Stuttgart 1978).

86. This is, of course, the logic that fills conservatives with despair at the prospects the democracies (inherently inert and inclined to take the easy way out) face vis-à-vis the totalitarian dictatorships with their supposedly unified wills. Jean-François Revel, *How Democracies Perish* (New York 1983).

87. An early adumbration: Heinrich August Winkler, 'German Society, Hitler and the Illusion of Restoration 1930–33', *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, 4 (October 1976), 13.

88. Hence Geoff Eley provides a perfect example of David Hackett Fischer's false dichotomies in the title to his 'What Produces Fascism: Pre-Industrial Elites or a Crisis of the Capitalist State?', although less in the text itself: *From Unification to Nazism: Reinterpreting the German Past* (Boston 1986). Eley's attack on the argument concerning pre-industrial mentalities, whether directly of the traditional élites or indirectly adopted by white-collar employees, seems slightly misplaced. The interesting argument is that, by being so powerful, these 'pre-industrial' groups managed to broaden the spectrum of Weimar politics to the point where no workable consensus was possible, thus giving the nazis the chance that, as Zeev Sternhell has shown, they

never had across the Rhine where the traditional right remained sufficiently coherent to assure its own interests. (Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right Nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France* [Berkeley 1986].) 'Pre-industrial' groups, if not traditions, were therefore a major cause, along with the inter-war crises, of Weimar's political breakdown. In general, revisionist accounts of the Empire, of the sort spearheaded by Eley, and those of the nazi regime are far from being harmonious parts of a broader re-interpretation of German history and in many respects are at odds. See the attempt at a consensus in Jürgen Kocka, 'German Identity and Historical Comparison: After the *Historikerstreit*', in Baldwin (ed.), *Reworking the Past*.

89. Jack R. Censer, 'The Coming of a New Interpretation of the French Revolution?', *Journal of Social History* (Winter 1987).

90. Although there is a new kind of ideological probing of a promising sort in works like Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. I (Minneapolis 1987), Rainer Stollmann, *Ästhetisierung der Politik: Literaturstudien zum subjektiven Faschismus* (Stuttgart 1978) and, of course, Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (New York 1984).

91. Although there is work like Klaus Vondung, *Magie und Manipulation: Ideologischer Kult und politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen 1971) and the work on political religion cited in note 32.

92. See also Maier, *Unmasterable Past*, 168–72.

Peter Baldwin

is Assistant Professor of History at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State, 1875–1975* (Cambridge 1990) and editor of *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians' Debate* (Boston 1990).