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Lectures
P. J. Marshall (ed.)

This series features distinguished works in the humanities and social sciences. This volume of the Proceedings of the British Academy contains fifteen lectures delivered at the British Academy in 2006. Subjects covered range from consideration of Einstein, to discussions of coercion and consent in Nazi Germany, and judicial independence.

What Hitler Knew
Zachary Shore

This is a fascinating study of how the climate of fear in Nazi Germany affected Hitler's advisers, and shaped the decision-making process. It explores the key foreign policy decisions from the Nazi seizure of power up to the hours before the outbreak of World War II. The author argues persuasively that the tense environment led the diplomats to a nearly obsessive control over the "information arsenal" in a desperate battle to defend their positions and to safeguard their lives. Unlike previous studies, this book draws the reader into the diplomats' darker world, and illustrates how Hitler's power to make informed decisions was limited by the very system he created. The result, the author concludes, was a chaotic flow of information between Hitler and his advisers that may have accelerated the march toward war.
This book connects two central problems encountered by the Federal Republic of Germany prior to reunification in 1990, both of them rooted in the Second World War. Domestically, the country had to integrate eight million expellees forced out of their homes in Central and Eastern Europe as a result of the lost war. Externally, it had to reestablish relations with Eastern Europe, despite the burdens of the Nazi past, the expulsions, and the ongoing East-West struggle during the Cold War. This book shows how the long-term consequences of the expellee problem significantly hindered West German efforts to develop normal ties with the East European states. In particular, it emphasizes a point largely overlooked in the existing literature: the way in which the political integration of the expellees into the Federal Republic had unanticipated negative consequences for the country's Ostpolitik.

Introduction: The Darker World

Zachary Shore

This introductory chapter begins with a brief description of the ominous situation faced by Hitler's diplomats in Nazi Germany. It then discusses the purpose of the book, which is to examine how governmental officials reached decisions on foreign policy under the stresses and strains of a violent dictatorship. It considers both the regime's domestic political environment, and its control of information. The book shows how the control of knowledge—or information—affected decision-making in Nazi Germany, and is a portrait of how a dictator's seeming strength can actually be his weakest link.
Fritz: Nazi Propagandist
Kristen Renwick Monroe

This chapter showcases a Dutch collaborator named Fritz. Fritz shared many of Tony's prewar conservative opinions in favor of the monarchy and traditional Dutch values, although he was of working-class origins, unlike Tony and Beatrix, who were Dutch bourgeoisie. But unlike Beatrix or Tony, Fritz joined the Nazi Party, wrote propaganda for the Nazi cause, and married the daughter of a German Nazi. When he was interviewed in 1992, Fritz indicated he was appalled at what he later learned about Nazi treatment of Jews but that he still believed in many of the goals of the National Socialist movement and felt that Hitler had betrayed the movement. Fritz is thus classified as a disillusioned Nazi supporter who retains his faith in much of National Socialism, and this chapter is presented as illustrative of the psychology of those who once supported the Nazi regime but who were disillusioned after the war.

Suicide in Nazi Germany
Christian Goeschel

The Third Reich met its end in the spring of 1945 in an unparalleled wave of suicides. Hitler, Goebbels, Bormann, Himmler and later Göring all killed themselves. These deaths represent only the tip of an iceberg of a massive wave of suicides that also touched upon ordinary lives. As this suicide epidemic has no historical precedent or parallel, it can tell us much about the Third Reich's peculiar self-destructiveness and the depths of Nazi fanaticism. The book looks at the suicides of both Nazis and ordinary people in Germany between 1918 and 1945, from the end of World War I until the end of World War II, including the mass suicides of German Jews during the Holocaust. It shows how suicides among different population groups, including supporters, opponents, and victims of the regime, responded to the social, cultural, economic and, political context of the time. The book also analyses changes and continuities in individual and societal responses to suicide over time, especially with regard to the Weimar Republic and the post-1945 era.
Leadership Principle and Criminal Responsibility
Otto Kircheimer

John Herz (ed.)
in Secret Reports on Nazi Germany: The Frankfurt School Contribution to the War Effort

This chapter discusses the leadership principle and criminal responsibility underlying the Nazi hierarchical organization. The report explains that according to Nazi theory, Nazi Germany's political community—built upon three basic pillars consisting of the Nazi Party, the state machine, and the military—is organized as an “order of leadership.” At the top of the structure was Adolf Hitler as Führer, but a great range of discretionary power was exercised by regional “sub-leaders” who were considered collaborators in the Nazi scheme. By drawing an analogy to the Nazi theory of leadership, a theory of incrimination in connection with war crimes might be developed which could be applied to fit the special circumstances arising under the Nazi hierarchy, and which might be much more comprehensible to an incriminated member of the Nazi Party or state than any technical established rule of law which might otherwise be followed.

Hitler's Army
Omer Bartov

This study shows that the Wehrmacht was systematically involved in atrocities against the civilian population on the Eastern Front. Including quotes from letters, diaries, and military reports, this book aims to challenge the notion that the German army during World War II was apolitical and to reveal how thoroughly permeated it was by Nazi ideology. Focusing on ordinary German soldiers on the Eastern front, the book shows how government propaganda and indoctrination motivated the troops not only to fight well but to commit unprecedented crimes against humanity. This institutionalized brainwashing revolved around two interrelated elements: the radical demonization of the Soviet enemy and the deification of the führer. Consequently, most of the troops
believed the war in the Eastern theater was a struggle to dam the Jewish/
Bolshevik/Asiatic flood that threatened Western civilization. This book
demonstrates how Germany’s soldiers were transformed into brutal
instruments of a barbarous policy.

Florentine: Unrepentant Political Nazi
Kristen Renwick Monroe

in Ethics in an Age of Terror and Genocide: Identity and Moral Choice
Published in print: 2011 Published Online: October 2017
Publisher: Princeton University Press DOI: 10.23943/princeton/9780691151373.003.0007

This chapter tells the story of Florentine, widow of Meinoud Rost van
Tonningen, one of the two top Dutch Nazis during the Hitler period.
Florentine's husband served as the Dutch plenipotentiary to the League
of Nations during the 1930s and as head of the Dutch National Bank
during World War II. Offered the chance to be secreted to South America
after the war by the Nazi leadership, Florentine and her husband elected
to stay in Holland to “tell people the truth” about the war. Florentine
remained an unrepentant Nazi until her death in 2007, traveling as much
as her health permitted to speak in favor of the Nazi cause. She was
extremely proud of her job as former leader of the Dutch Nazi Youth
Movement for Women and was devoted to the memory of her husband.

Movement Development and Organizational Networks: The
Role of ‘Single Members’ In the German Nazi Party, 1925–30
Helmut Anheier

in Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action
Published in print: 2003 Published Online: November 2003
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/0199251789.003.0003
Item type: chapter

Explores the role of individual activists in promoting the growth of
political organizations. His findings on single members (i.e. members
who operated in areas where there were no chapters and therefore acted
as individual political entrepreneurs) of the Nazi party in Germany in
the 1920s and early 1930s qualify some of the propositions of mass
society theory regarding the mobilization of extremist politics. Early
Nazi activists were not marginal, socially isolated persons but came
from ordinary middle class backgrounds, and were embedded in
organizational activities: the stronger their social networks, the higher
their chances of establishing a local chapter of NSDAP. On the other hand, their linkages were all within the extreme right subculture and totally separated from mainstream politics. This is actually consistent with the claim that concentric social circles (i.e. densely knit clusters of ties with little outside ramifications) rather than intersecting ones generate a fragmented society and are therefore an obstacle to democratic politics.

Marx's Theory of Revolution and the Revolutions of the Twentieth Century
Vladimir Mau and Irina Starodubrovskaya

This chapter explores the debate over whether and how far the collapse of communism, far from signifying the defeat of Marxism, actually proved the correctness of the diagnosis of the revolutionary process that Marx advanced in Das Kapital. The debate essentially involves a conflict between different interpretations of what Marx was saying, and a useful case study of such conflict can be found in analysis of developments in Germany in the inter-war period—in the collapse of the Weimar republic and the inception of the Nazi era. Applying the Marxist model to the case of post-communist Russia, it becomes clear that his methodological approach retains much of its relevance—not in respect of his theory of class struggle, but in his conception of the effects of the inability of a society to adapt itself to a changing social, political, and economic environment, and the characteristics of the ideological crisis to which such incapacity gives rise.

Journalists between Hitler and Adenauer
Volker R. Berghahn

This book takes an in-depth look at German journalism from the late Weimar period through the postwar decades. Illuminating the roles played by journalists in the media metropolis of Hamburg, the book focuses on the lives and work of three remarkable individuals: Marion Countess Dönhoff, distinguished editor of Die Zeit; Paul Sethe, “the grand
old man of West German journalism”; and Hans Zehrer, editor in chief of Die Welt. All born before 1914, Dönhoff, Sethe, and Zehrer witnessed the Weimar Republic’s end and opposed Hitler. When the latter seized power in 1933, they were, like their fellow Germans, confronted with the difficult choice of entering exile, becoming part of the active resistance, or joining the Nazi Party. Instead, they followed a fourth path—“inner emigration”—psychologically distancing themselves from the regime, their writing falling into a gray zone between grudging collaboration and active resistance. During the war, Dönhoff and Sethe had links to the 1944 conspiracy to kill Hitler, while Zehrer remained out of sight on a North Sea island. In the decades after 1945, all three became major figures in the West German media. The book considers how these journalists and those who chose inner emigration interpreted Germany's horrific past and how they helped to morally and politically shape the reconstruction of the country. With fresh archival materials, the book sheds essential light on the influential position of the German media in the mid-twentieth century and raises questions about modern journalism that remain topical today.

Backing Hitler
Robert Gellately

The Nazis never won a majority in free elections, but soon after Hitler took power most Germans turned away from democracy and backed the Nazi regime. Hitler was able to win growing support even as he established the Gestapo and the concentration camps. Yet for over fifty years historians have disputed what the German people knew about these camps and in what ways they were involved in the persecution of ‘race enemies’, slave workers, and social outsiders. This book looks at these issues. The book aims to expose once and for all the subsequent consent and active participation of large numbers of ordinary Germans in the terror. It shows that rather than hide their racist and repressive campaigns from the German people the Nazis trumpeted them in the national papers and on the streets. It reveals how they drew on popular images, cherished German ideals, and long-held phobias to win converts to their cause.
This chapter discusses Nazi Germany's comprehensive plan for aggression, conquest, and domination in Europe and beyond. It first explains the role of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), or Nazi Party, in the Nazi plan for domination before analyzing the stages in which the plan would be executed: to overthrow the Weimar Republic, which was founded on parliamentary democracy, and to fight for the establishment of a Nazi dictatorship led by Adolf Hitler; to eliminate all opposition and establish totalitarian control over Germany; rearmament and preparation for the war of aggression. The chapter also considers the concepts of Lebensraum and Grossraumordnung on which the Nazi occupation policy was based and concludes with an assessment of the unlawful elements of the policy.

Police Justice
Robert Gellately

This chapter discusses the activities of the Nazi police. By the end of the pre-war era, if not before, the Nazi police (especially the Gestapo and Kripo) began to take very seriously their new mission to cleanse the body politic of ‘harmful’, or ‘degenerative elements’ in society. In that sense they took on wholly unprecedented, racist-informed, preventive tasks as they moved into the field of social biology. The vision the police adopted was of a conflict-free society from which would be eliminated all social and biological carriers of ‘harmful’ behaviour. These changing missions were not merely worked out behind the scenes, and put into practice in secret, but by and large they were explained in the German press to win support for the dictatorship.
The history of Krupp is the history of modern Germany. No company symbolized the best and worst of that history more than the famous steel and arms maker. This book tells the story of the Krupp family and its industrial empire between the early nineteenth century and the present, and analyzes its transition from a family business to one owned by a nonprofit foundation. Krupp founded a small steel mill in 1811, which established the basis for one of the largest and most important companies in the world by the end of the century. Famously loyal to its highly paid workers, it rejected an exclusive focus on profit, but the company also played a central role in the armament of Nazi Germany and the firm's head was convicted as a war criminal at Nuremberg. Yet after the war Krupp managed to rebuild itself and become a symbol of Germany once again—this time open, economically successful, and socially responsible. This book presents a balanced account, showing that the owners felt ambivalent about the company's military connection even while becoming more and more entangled in Germany's aggressive politics during the imperial era and the Third Reich. By placing the story of Krupp and its owners in a wide context, this book also provides new insights into the political, social, and economic history of modern Germany.

In August 1934 Adolf Hitler attended the world-famous Oberammergau Passion Play, falsely branding the villagers as Nazi ideologues. In fact, the drama reflected traditional interpretations of the biblical narrative, pitting Jewish leaders and crowds against Jesus and his loyal followers. Yet elite Europeans and Americans flocked to Oberammergau each decade after 1850 to witness the play because actors and audience shared the anti-Semitic messages they read into the Gospel story. Oberammergau’s population was split between Hitler’s supporters and opponents because some villagers were true believers and others tolerated the Nazi regime’s extreme cultural restructuring, while Catholic loyalists resisted efforts
to replace their customary practices with Nazified alternatives. All sides united in defending their centuries-old tradition of dramatizing the Passion. Villagers appeared on stage as children and grew up hoping to perform major roles as adults, so their entire lives revolved around the play seasons. This commitment nurtured a powerful communal identity in Oberammergau, carving out maneuvering room for dissent at the margins of Nazi tyranny even by party members who defied superiors threatening Oberammergau’s special interests. Their actions represented an extreme example of the maxim: “All politics is local.” Drawing on a huge array of records, the book tells the up-close and personal story of a community in crisis, illuminating heart-wrenching decisions made by villagers alternatively wooed and threatened by their Nazi leaders. Biographies bring these everyday Germans to life as complex human beings struggling with the extreme challenges of the Nazi Era.

In Defence of Learning
Shula Marks, Paul Weindling, and Laura Wintour (eds)

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Item type: book

Established in the 1930s to rescue scientists and scholars from Nazi Europe, the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL, founded in 1933 as the Academic Assistance Council and now known as the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics) has had an illustrious career. No fewer than eighteen of its early grantees became Nobel Laureates and 120 were elected Fellows of the British Academy and Royal Society in the UK. While a good deal has been written on the SPSL in the 1930s and 1940s, and especially on the achievements of the outstanding scientists rescued, much less attention has been devoted to the scholars who contributed to the social sciences and humanities, and there has been virtually no research on the Society after the Second World War. The archive-based essays in this book, written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the organisation, attempt to fill this gap. The essays include revisionist accounts of the founder of the SPSL and some of its early grantees. They examine the SPSL's relationship with associates and allies, the experiences of women academics and those of the post-war academic refugees from Communist Europe, apartheid South Africa, and Pinochet's Chile. In addition to scholarly contributions, the book includes moving essays by the children of early grantees. At a time of increasing international concern with refugees and immigration, it is a reminder of the enormous contribution generations of academic refugees have made — and continue to make — to learning the world over.
Chapter Two introduces Oberammergau’s increasingly complex political culture by describing the Corpus Christi procession in which youths carry banners, costumed girls display a Marian statue, and priests surround the Host under a baldachin. Political Catholics dominated elections before 1914, although a Liberal challenger paved the way for Catholics to join non-denominational parties. Defeat in World War I brought Oberammergau both a Soviet-style council that competed briefly with traditional political structures and armed revolutionaries in Bavaria’s capital whom local paramilitary forces helped to defeat. Villagers became passionately anti-Communist, often laced with anti-Semitism because of the Munich uprising’s Jewish leaders. In the 1920s, political Catholicism (BVP) declined as the electorate fragmented, although voters participated extensively in local politics, including Passion Play management. The Nazis performed surprisingly well in the 1930 election, which took place during the Passion season; newcomers, including temporary workers, helped them succeed in Oberammergau.

Chapter Three looks around Munich at the spot where Hitler celebrated war in 1914, at the defile where his 1923 Putsch ended in bloodshed, and at the ruined temples built to honor the Putsch’s martyrs. In 1929 Oberammergau’s Nazi chapter was launched primarily by outsiders, but gradually insiders joined, including the architect who became the Nazi mayor, Raimund Lang. These Nazis clashed with a strong Catholic opposition, including Raimund’s cousin Anton Lang, who led charitable efforts to assist desperate villagers during the Depression.
The local curate clashed dramatically with Lang in the repeated 1932 election campaigns. The July 1932 election brought the Nazis’ top vote of more than 37%, making them by far the largest party in Germany. Eventually, in January 1933 Hitler became chancellor, and although the Nazi seizure of power passed without much drama in the village, Nazi-Catholic tensions soon emerged, setting up years of confrontation in Oberammergau.