

# Politicizing Education: German Teachers face National Socialism, 1930-1932

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## Abstract

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Socialism, 1930-1932

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This thesis examines and compares German primary and secondary school teachers in the late Weimar Republic, their reactions to the economic crises of the early 1930s, and the effects that these reactions had on their political views. It argues that the shock of the Great Depression helped to politicize a teaching profession that had previously embraced a tradition of overt apolitically. Through an examination of the primary, national professional publication of each group it identifies key social and economic differences between their constituent members and explores the ways that these influenced their approaches to National Socialism.

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## List of Abbreviations

ADL - Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung

DLV - Deutsche Lehrerverein

DPV - Deutsche Philologenverband

NSLB - Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund

*Erst Kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral*  
-Bertolt Brecht, *Die Dreigroschenoper*, act II, sc. lii

## **Introduction**

The world economic crisis precipitated by the October 1929 crash of the New York stock exchange was an unmitigated disaster for Germany's young Weimar Republic. As economies across the world contracted, demand for German goods plummeted, and foreign credit became unavailable the German government faced not only the problems of growing unemployment and nationwide discontent, but a deep budgetary crisis brought about by plummeting tax revenues and the disappearance of international loans upon which it depended. For German educators, already traumatized by deep cuts in pay and benefits incurred during the inflationary crises of the early 1920s, the reaction was immediate and strongly negative.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed cuts in the salaries of state employees, including primary and secondary school teachers, were seen by teachers as a direct attack on the profession as a whole. One anonymous submitter to the national journal of the left-leaning Deutsche Lehrerverein (DLV) voiced this view when he claimed that,

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of this crisis and its effects on German teachers see Andreas Kunz, *Civil Servants and the Politics of Inflation in Germany, 1914-1924*, (New York: De Gruyter, 1986)

“already today it is incontrovertible [*steht wohl unumstößlich fest*] that the civil service must brace itself in the coming weeks and months for heavy battles. Reductions in civil servants [*Beamtenabbau*], budget and pension cuts, salary reduction laws, all these tell the informed man enough.<sup>2</sup>” A similar, albeit more subdued, view was expressed in a slightly earlier edition of the conservative Deutsche Philologenverband’s (DPV) journal by a professor who wrote that, “it has been so far rightfully accepted as a credit to a business when it granted as many workers as possible work and bread. No one kept in mind that he, with the price of a good, paid the workers of a specific factory. The civil servant is also paid for his work.<sup>3</sup>”

These reactions represent the dominant responses from these two organizations to the economic crisis gripping Germany and the government’s response to it. That the responses were so unified in their condemnation of the state’s measures to alleviate the crisis is at the same time atypical yet fully understandable. It is atypical in that the DLV and DPV had, for the past thirty years, fought an ongoing battle between each other over nearly every aspect of the German educational system and the shape it would take in the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> This sudden agreement becomes understandable in light of the fact

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<sup>2</sup> “Der Abbau muß kommen!” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, May 15, 1930: 387-388

<sup>3</sup> Grebe, “Berufsbeamtentum und Republik,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 8, 1930: 32

<sup>4</sup> For more on the history of antagonism between these two organizations see Charles E. McClelland, *The German Experience of Professionalization: Modern learned professions and their organizations from the early nineteenth century to the Hitler era*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 205-214 and

that the cost-cutting measures proposed by the national government threatened the livelihoods of all state employees, including teachers, regardless of their personal politics or views. This issue was one that even the most politically, confessionally, and pedagogically opposed educators could find common ground on.

More importantly, however, these responses forced the teaching profession to become more and more politicized. This politicization drove members of the DPV and the DLV in diametrically opposed directions, with the former returning to its nationalistic, conservative roots and the latter drifting to the left while becoming ever more vocally critical of all forms of right-wing agitation.<sup>5</sup> The consequences of this growing political awareness within the German teaching community has its roots in the divergent backgrounds shared by members of the DLV and the DPV and the ways in which this shaped their understanding of their roles and positions within the German educational system and the German professional hierarchy as a whole.

Members of both groups cultivated an understanding of themselves as *Beamte*, employees of the state bureaucracy who were part of a tradition of professionalism, proficiency, and social respectability stretching back to the civil

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Marjorie Lamberti, *The Politics of Education: Teachers and school reform in Weimar Germany*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002)

<sup>5</sup> Hans Mommsen, *Beamtentum im Dritten Reich: mit ausgewählten Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Beamtenpolitik* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1966): 26

service reforms of Frederick the Great.<sup>6</sup> However, within this category there was a clearly defined hierarchy based around differing levels of education. Primary school teachers, generally educated not in the university system but in *Lehrerseminare*, special schools designed to train only those teachers who would work in the lower tiers of the educational system, formed the rank and file of the DLV. While still *Beamte* and employees of the German state they were accorded a level of institutional respect closer to a post office employee than a state judge.

In contrast, members of the DPV were university educated secondary school teachers, referred to professionally as *Philologen*. They also identified as *höhere Beamte*, highly educated, degree-holding professionals distinguished from less- or un-educated state and federal employees such as postmen, train conductors, and primary school teachers.<sup>7</sup> Their responses to the ongoing attempts by members of the DLV to define a professionally respectable middle ground between state professionals with higher degrees and the ranks of the truly blue collar *Beamte* provided a constant source of tension throughout this period.

Both the DPV and the DLV cultivated an air of political neutrality before the 1930s. For the *Philologen* a central component of their identity was their

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the professionalization of Prussian higher education in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the effects it had on separating academic from religious instruction see Anthony J. La Vopa, *Grace, talent, and Merit: Poor students, clerical careers, and professional ideology in eighteenth-century Germany*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 287-325

<sup>7</sup> Franz Hamburger, *Lehrer Zwischen Kaiser und Führer: Der Deutsche Philologenverband in der Weimarer Republik: Eine Untersuchung zur Sozialgeschichte der Lehrerorganisationen*, (Heidelberg: Ruprecht-Karl-Universität, 1974): 88-92



conception of themselves as selfless servants of the state who, due to their responsibilities to the nation and people, were required to place themselves above political considerations or conflicts in able to better carry out their duties in a professional manner.<sup>8</sup> The experiences of Weimar-era democracy initially strengthened these views, as the development of political parties with effective governmental power made the existence of a politically neutral bureaucracy even more imperative. Wilhelm Bolle, frequent contributor to the DPV's main publication, the *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, a *Gymnasium* teacher of English, noted for his essays on Shakespearean drama, and a future chairman of the Prussian Philologenverband, articulated this belief in 1927 when he wrote of the potential result of political influence on the civil service: "It would become impossible to look after all levels of the population in an equally just manner."<sup>9</sup> This view of *Beamte* as necessarily aloof from the political fray was shared by the DLV, an organization that had a long standing tradition of political neutrality and a history of accepting the direction of the national government in questions of cultural politics going back to the earliest days of the Imperial Era.<sup>10</sup>

There did, of course, exist a group of educators who rejected traditional political neutrality very early on, namely those who openly supported National Socialism before 1933 because they strongly agreed with its politics, goals, and

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*: 88-92 and Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik: Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie*, (Villingen: Ring-Verlag, 1955): 157-172

<sup>9</sup> Wilhelm Bolle, "Der Beamte als Treuhändler der Allgemeinheit," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, April 6, 1927: 211

<sup>10</sup> Lamberti: 204-206

beliefs. These early supporters came from both ends of the political spectrum and had representatives in both the DLV and DPV. For example, Hans Schemm, founder of the Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund (NSLB), a Nazi Party organization for professional teachers that operated in parallel with the DLV and DPV, was a primary school teacher drawn to Nazi politics in the early 1920s through his anti-Semitic, anti-democratic, anti-communist, and highly populist political beliefs. Overt party membership was quite rare for members of the DPV, with only 5.1% joining before 1933. In the ranks of the DLV it was significantly more common but remained a minority, with 31.6% attaining membership before the Nazi take over.<sup>11</sup> In both cases the writings of Nazi party loyalists were not reproduced within the journals. The subject of this paper is not, however, the motivations of early Party loyalists, but the reactions of the majority of the teaching community that was either undecided or hostile to Nazi political aspirations before 1933.

By 1933 both the DLV and DPV had shed all trappings of neutrality. Political discussions and articles praising or condemning contemporary politicians and leaders could be found both within the pages of the *Philologen-Blatt* as well as the *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung (ADL)*, the primary national publication of the DLV. For the *Philologen-Blatt* this change reflected a general rightward drift into active participation in right wing and specifically National Socialist politics, while the *ADL* became first vehemently anti-fascist and then moved towards appeasement as a path to survival when the political

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<sup>11</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German lawyer, teachers, and engineers 1900-1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990): 255

situation worsened for the German left throughout early 1933. In both cases, however, the trappings of political neutrality central to educators' self-image were set aside during the financial and governmental crises of 1930. This paper will examine the pressures that moved the members of both the DPV and the DLV from official political neutrality to a vocal engagement with contemporary politics. It will also seek to explain why the ultimate responses to this growing political awareness were so markedly different and how this informed the ways that they interpreted the growing popularity of National Socialism. In doing so, it is necessary to examine not only the immediate economic and professional concerns that caused them to perceive a need to engage with the political system, but also the cultural and political considerations that helped to determine which end of the political spectrum they ultimately identified with.

The key forum in which these discussions took place was the journal published by each professional association. The *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt* was the primary national-level publication for university-trained educators. During the period being examined, it published weekly. It primarily printed articles and reviews submitted by fellow *Philologen*; however, it also included a small section dedicated to re-printing articles of interest to the teaching community that originally ran in other publications. The *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung* was the comparable organ for primary school teachers and served as a general periodical for the DLV on the national level. It too was primarily dedicated to articles and reviews submitted by, and of interest to, members of its parent organization, as well as reprints from other publications. Authorship was much

less transparent in the *ADL*, with many articles printed without a name attached to them. A close reading of these journals can improve our understanding of the political dialogues during the final years of the Weimar Republic and with it achieve a better sense of what the teachers themselves understood as the key issues influencing their decisions.

Previous work in this field has concentrated on establishing the political and social backgrounds of German educators in the years before the Nazi rise to power in an attempt to draw a connection between preexisting conditions and their behavior under National Socialism. While there is a general agreement within this literature about the tendency of the *Philologen* to support, or at the very acquiesce to, Nazi policies and of the members of the DLV to generally oppose them, the causes for these decisions are still contested. Sebastian F. Müller concentrated on opposition to state-level educational reforms and the influences of the conservative, nationalistic politics of the Deutschen Volkspartei upon the members of the DPV.<sup>12</sup> Marjorie Lamberti examined the influence of liberal school reform upon the members of the DLV and the ways in which this related to their political views.<sup>13</sup> Barbara Schneider took an opposing view, describing the process by which the DPV aligned itself with Nazi policies and goals in the mid-30s and took advantage of the Nazi revolution to bring about a reorganization and conservative reform in the higher levels of German

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<sup>12</sup> Sebastian F. Müller, *Die Höhere Schule Preußens in der Weimarer Republik: Zum Einfluß von Parteien, Verbänden und Verwaltung auf die Schul- und Lehrplanreform 1919-1925*, (Weinheim: Beltz Verlag, 1977)

<sup>13</sup> Marjorie Lamberti, *The Politics of Education: Teachers and school reform in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002)

education.<sup>14</sup> Denis Shirley approached the issue from a more narrow perspective, examining the life and career of one particularly prominent reformer to examine the ways in which his social and educational background as well as major personal experiences in his life shaped his highly liberal, pacifistic world view.<sup>15</sup> Franz Hamburger demonstrated the influence of traditionally conservative, nationalistic and völkish strains of thought on the conception of the *Philologen* as a professional class and the ways that this shaped their relationships to the state, other *Beamte*, and other educators.<sup>16</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch made use of extensive statistical data to trace some of the social and economic causes for the break of German professionals as a whole with 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal traditions and their embracing of conservative, right wing, and eventually National Socialistic politics.<sup>17</sup> The contribution of this paper will be to compare these two groups in order to determine what factors in their politicization were common to all educators of the late Weimar period, and which were unique to each group as well as to examine how these influenced their approaches to National Socialism.

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<sup>14</sup> Barbara Schneider: *Die Höhere Schule im Nationalsozialismus: Zur Ideologisierung von Bildung und Erziehung*, (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2000)

<sup>15</sup> Denis Shirley, *The Politics of Progressive Education: The Odenwaldschule in Nazi Germany*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992)

<sup>16</sup> Franz Hamburger, *Lehrer Zwischen Kaiser und Führer: Der Detusche Philologenverband in der Weimarer Republik: Eine Untersuchung zur Sozialgeschichte der Lehrerorganisationen*, (Heidelberg: Ruprecht-Karl-Universität, 1974)

<sup>17</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German lawyer, teachers, and engineers 1900-1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

## The Impact of Economic Turmoil

One of the key factors in stimulating the shift away from avowed political neutrality and towards activism was the hotly contested debate over state educational spending and responses to the deepening economic crisis. The onset of the Great Depression in late 1929 plunged Germany into economic chaos and had the immediate effect of drastically reducing tax income, precipitating a budgetary crisis that brought down the coalition government of Chancellor Herman Müller, the last majority coalition that would exist under the Weimar Constitution. Shortly thereafter, Heinrich Brüning was appointed Chancellor.

Well known within the Reichstag for his financial acumen and fiscal conservatism, Brüning was a vocal supporter of a tight federal budget and opponent of what he perceived as civil service salaries that were increasing far too quickly. He perceived the key to untangling Germany's financial crisis as unburdening the German economy of remaining reparations due to the victors of World War I through a deflationary policy of tight credit, a constrained federal budget, and rollbacks in wage increases from the previous decade. Most troubling for the *Beamten*, these measures included deep cuts in salaries, reductions in pensions, forced retirement for older workers, decreases in the total number of positions, and drastic reductions in unemployment benefits. Similar measures were encouraged in state budgets, particularly in Prussia, which encompassed almost half of the nation. Throughout the educational press, the

“Savings Plan” (*Sparplan*) soon came to be referred to as the “Emergency Sacrifice Plan” (*Notopferplan*) and eventually simply the “Emergency Sacrifice” (*Notopfer*). The clear implication in the academic press was that the “sacrifice” being referred to was the German civil service as a whole, and particularly its teachers.<sup>18</sup>

Brüning’s program proved highly unpopular in the *Reichstag*, particularly among the parties on the left and center. His inability to generate any kind of multi-party consensus was viewed by President Hindenburg as a parliamentary failure and the measure was issued by presidential decree under Article 48 of the Constitution which granted rights to rule by decree during a state emergency. In response, the *Reichstag* voted and narrowly repudiated the measure by the required fifty percent majority. Rather than accept this as a rejection of rule by decree and his economic measures, Brüning convinced Hindenburg to dissolve the *Reichstag* and call for a new set of elections to establish a firm coalition. The resulting election on September 14, 1930 saw even more parliamentary splintering as the Nazi and Communist parties made major electoral gains at the expense of moderate and centrist parties. This resulted in an extended period of rule by decree that effectively ended parliamentary democracy in Germany and generated the political chaos that ushered the National Socialists into power.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Adolf Bohlen, “Die Antwort auf den Notopferplan: Unmöglich!” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, June 18, 1930: 369-371

<sup>19</sup> For more on the economic crisis, Brüning’s reaction, and the sequence of events which followed see Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur: Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1969): 175- 190

Among German teachers, both *Philologen* and the members of the DLV, the *Notopfer* decrees caused endless dismay and consternation. Within the pages of the *ADL*, the reactions to the proposed cutbacks and cost-saving measures were immediately and almost uniformly negative. The submitters to the journal claimed that the government took the easy way out when it decided to cut the salaries of *Beamte* by dealing with the budgetary shortfalls through salary cuts rather than addressing larger, more difficult issues such as decreasing tax revenue or cutting other areas of government spending. The *ADL* went so far as to describe the cuts as akin to a special tax on government employees and admonished: “The financial emergency is a general state emergency and all citizens, especially the financially well-off, should be responsible for resolving it.”<sup>20</sup> It insisted that the very wealthy and corporations should be targeted first and the responsibility of bridging any remaining shortcomings should then fall equally on all portions of society rather than a single group. Within the journal, the general dissatisfaction with the way that the economic crisis was being handled stimulated the perception that *Beamte* were being singled out for unfair treatment, and it went so far as to describe them as becoming “second class citizens.”<sup>21</sup>

As the German banking system deteriorated, this feeling of abandonment was compounded by institutional failures and governmental responses which

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<sup>20</sup> “Kommt eine Sondersteuer für Beamte?” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, February 6, 1930: 121

<sup>21</sup> Wilhelm Muhr, “Beamte als Staatsbürger zweiter Klasse,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, July 31, 1930: 595-596



submitters to the *ADL* perceived as insufficient. Writing in the wake of the collapse of the Bank für Deutsche Beamte, a national bank and credit institution specifically for state employees, the journal strongly criticized bank officers who it claimed were still receiving generous pay while the savings of state workers were disappearing. Particularly damning in its view was the apparently unchecked spending habits of these officers, who the *ADL* accused of spending the bank's money on expensive paintings that were traded between branch offices in a so-called "painting exchange."<sup>22</sup>

This sense that civil servants were literally being robbed in a time of economic crisis to line the pockets of the privileged extended to the state governments as well. In an article examining the effects of state budgets, the *ADL* lamented that the school system was seemingly the primary target of every budget cut and the first place politicians looked to when they needed money for other projects. Citing the example of Thüringen, the journal claimed that they were making "reductions of 8 million in a budget of 170 million. Of these 8 million that are to be saved 5 million fall upon the schools, and from that over four [million] come from the primary school [*Volksschule*]"<sup>23</sup> It went on to quote a priest in Stuttgart who railed: "It is a crime, when one reflects that the teachers are already burdened with classes that are too large . . . [and that] the basic point of departure for every reform of the school system is the reducing of class sizes!"

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<sup>22</sup> "Zur Beamtengewirtschaft," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, January 30, 1930: 90

<sup>23</sup> "Die Schule als Sparobjekt", *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, February 20, 1930: 147

Inefficient government was compounding the economic crisis: “In Hesse as well they desire to further increase class sizes in fifty primary schools in order to save a hundred thousand Marks. It would be much easier and surer to save more when the states started by reducing their own administrative apparatuses, paying ministers and advisors less, and either decreasing the sizes of state parliaments or sending them home entirely.<sup>24</sup>”

Direct attacks against organizations and individuals identified as acting against *Beamte* also became ever more common at this time. These attacks were very narrowly focused upon the issue at hand, and at times extended to authors of similar political backgrounds. In one notable example Leo Raepfel, the liberal editor of the DLV, wrote an editorial criticizing Leopold Schwarzschild, the Jewish editor of the liberal weekly *Das Tagebuch*. Schwarzschild claimed that civil servants represented a “protected class” in German government and criticized the protests against pay and pension cuts on the grounds that others in Germany not fortunate enough to have a government job were suffering much worse. Raepfel condemned this view, claiming: “it is not for the first time today that [he] is an open enemy of the German professional civil service.” The article not only highlighted the views which Raepfel considered incorrect or inappropriate, but also took the time to further emphasize the central role of the civil service in German life and the ways in which they were being singled out for privation by the economic crisis and the governmental response.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*: 147

<sup>25</sup> Leo Raepfel, ““Die Gesicherte Klasse Deutschlands”, ” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, July 17, 1930: 560-561

This accusatory tone and insinuations that powers beyond their control were exacerbating the effects of the financial crisis for educators and other state employees continued unabated in the pages of the *ADL* throughout 1931 and into the closing days of 1932. Additional cutbacks in educational hiring, further erosions into wages and benefits, and the reduction of the age at which state employees had to retire combined to instill a siege mentality.<sup>26</sup> While the impact of these issues upon older educators certainly seemed important, the plight of the younger generation of teachers was considered especially grave. Ruminations about the continued economic problems, rumors about school construction projects and the jobs they could provide, and the general issues surrounding young teachers looking for their first employment in the midst of educational cuts or hiring freezes were featured prominently.<sup>27</sup>

Within the *Philologen-Blatt*, issues surrounding the economic crisis and the impact of wage cuts and other legislation upon *Beamte* as a group and educators in particular were also prominent. Throughout the period from 1930 to 1932, they became ever more prevalent and discussion of economic issues increasingly grew overtly political. Initial reactions, however, were more guarded and cautiously optimistic than within the pages of the *ADL*. In early January, before Müller's government collapsed but after the effects of the widening

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<sup>26</sup> "Wirtschaft und Schule" *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, October 22, 1932: 793

<sup>27</sup> "Oldenburg," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, February 4, 1933: 80, "Die wirtschaftliche Lage der deutschen Junglehrerschaft," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, February 11, 1933: 89, "Der stellenlose Junglehrer im freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, February 11, 1933: 102.

depression were clearly visible in the next year's proposed state budgets, the *Philologen-Blatt* dedicated almost a quarter of an issue to examining Prussia's spending proposal. Because Prussia was the single largest state in the Weimar Republic, the greatest percentage of readers were employees of its school system. The tightened spending by the state, as evidenced by a decrease in the creation of new positions and a freeze in the wages of civil servants, was noted in the journal but described as "expected and not too severe". In this early stage, direct comparisons were drawn to the last major economic crisis, the hyperinflation of the early 20s, and the feeling of gratitude and relief that the "cold hearted reduction of the civil service sector" seen during the last crisis had so far been avoided.<sup>28</sup>

Other assessments were more problematic. Foreshadowing arguments that would become much more common in following months, the *Philologen-Blatt* reproduced an article originally written by a Professor Grebe for the civil servant publication *Der Beamtenbund* in December 1929. The author complained that the release of the Prussian budget for the coming year had "condemned her civil servants to great hunger" and was unjustly hurting their economic status.<sup>29</sup>

Drawing upon evidence of the increasing cost of living and the decreasing purchasing power of the Mark, Grebe claimed that government employees now were at a far lower economic status than Prussian state employees in 1866 and

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<sup>28</sup> "Der preußische Staatshaushalt 1930," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 8, 1930: 17-20.

<sup>29</sup> Grebe, "Berufsbeamtentum und Republik," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 8, 1930: 32

that this trend was endangering the financially independent status of its civil service sector, much to its potential peril. These criticisms were still framed in a traditionally apolitical manner, however, and argued that a decline in their financial status would imperil the neutrality of the German civil service.

A more pessimistic tone emerged within the *Philologen-Blatt* as 1930 wore on. Adolf Bohlen, a well-respected linguist and frequent contributor to the journal, became particularly notable for his highly impassioned editorials on the *Notopfer*, the budgetary crisis, and the parliamentary debates surrounding them. Averaging a little more than one article every other issue, mostly featured on the front page, Bohlen described the proposed budgetary cuts as placing “90% of the burden on *Beamte*,<sup>30</sup>” fundamentally flawed by “inner falsehoods,<sup>31</sup>” and as the product of “propaganda [directed] against the *Beamte*.<sup>32</sup>” Bohlen was not the only one to adopt a siege mentality with regards to the *Notopfer* and its impact on government employees. In an editorial decrying the general acceptance of these measures, an unnamed writer in the *ADL* claimed that people were happy “to have found a scapegoat upon whom they can unload everything uncomfortable

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<sup>30</sup> Adolf Bohlen, “Im Abwehrkampf gegen ein Ausnahmegesetz,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, July 9, 1930: 418

<sup>31</sup> Adolf Bohlen, “Vor der Entscheidung über das Notopfer,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, July 16, 1930: 433

<sup>32</sup> Adolf Bohlen, “Deutschlands Finanzlage und Wirtschaftsnot.” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, October 15. 1930: 633

and everything that disturbs their own wealth.” Public officials were a “popular” target, because cutting their pay was “convenient.”<sup>33</sup>

The feelings of political betrayal and its association with the government of the Republic increased throughout 1931 within the pages of the *Philologen-Blatt*. Writing in September 1931, one submitter voiced the fear that the well-being of the civil service would be sacrificed at every turn and without support or defense.<sup>34</sup> Describing the previous year’s situation in January 1932, the journal noted that “the years since 1918 have not been pleasant for the higher schools of Prussia, but the year 1931 stands out from all of them as the most dreary in their history.”<sup>35</sup> Bohlen’s economic writings became increasingly aggressive throughout this period. In his eyes, these cost-savings measures not only threatened professional dignity and integrity of the civil service, but, through degree inflation and a decrease in available jobs, imperiled the well-being of young graduates and raised the possibility of a “battle between the different age cohorts of the *Volk*.”<sup>36</sup>

The economic crisis did not fall on all teachers equally. In addition to the increased difficulties for young teachers, educators in the primary schools were

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<sup>33</sup> “Das “populäre” Notopfer der Festbesoldeten,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, March 13, 1930: 207

<sup>34</sup> Adolf Schlothauer, “Vor schweren Eingriffen”, *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, September 2, 1931: 529

<sup>35</sup> Wilhelm Bolle, “Eine erschütternde Jahresbilanz,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 6, 1932: 5

<sup>36</sup> Adolf Bohlen, “Schafft Lebensraum der Jugend!” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, November 25, 1931: 681

more adversely affected by the decreases in pay than the *Philologen*. While both primary and secondary school teachers suffered salary cuts between 19.5 and 28.8 percent of their monthly income, the base pay for secondary teachers was much higher than for their colleagues in the primary schools.<sup>37</sup> For example, the average pay of a secondary school teacher in 1932, after the worst of the cuts had already taken place, was 530.5 RM per month, while the starting pay for a new teacher was 400 RM.<sup>38</sup> At the other end of the scale, a substitute teacher or teacher's aid in a primary school in the same year earned between 130 RM and 160 RM per month.<sup>39</sup> For a secondary teacher with an established career, such cuts were certainly discomfoting and led perhaps to a lowered standard of living. For a primary teacher, these reductions in salary represented a much greater proportion of their purchasing power and imposed a much greater financial burden.

The general tone in the *Philologen-Blatt* at this time can best be summed up as one of despair and professional uncertainty for both educators and the students that they continued to graduate every year.<sup>40</sup> Concerns were constantly

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<sup>37</sup> Lamberti: 198

<sup>38</sup> Jaraus: 249

<sup>39</sup> Johannes Erger, "Lehrer und Schulpolitik in der Finanz- und Staatskrise der Weimarer Republik 1929-1933" in *Soziale Bewegung und Politische Verfassung: Beiträge zur Geschichte der modernen Welt*, Ulrich Engelhardt, Volker Sellin, and Horst Stuke eds, (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1976): 245

<sup>40</sup> Typical examples of this attitude within the journal's editorials can be found in: "Hinter jedem festangestellten Philologen steht 1 Antwärter auf den Beruf! Hinter jeder festangestellten Philologin stehen 4 Antwättrer auf den Beruf!" *Deutsches Philologen-Blat*, December 2, 1931: 693 and E. Pannewiz, "Jugend Ohne Hoffnung?" *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, September 2, 1931:538.

raised about the lack of available jobs, cuts to the salaries of *Beamte*, the decreasing age of mandatory retirement,<sup>41</sup> the tendency of young people to crowd into the universities to escape the economic downturn,<sup>42</sup> and calls to discourage new professional students or regulate the number accepted to study each year.<sup>43</sup> The tempo of political discussion and the willingness to attack the actions of the ministers running the government increased during this time as well, with the tone towards the sitting government and left-of-center political parties becoming progressively more confrontational and hostile.

These issues pushed both professional journals to politicize heavily, writing with a frankness on contemporary issues of state that would have been deemed unseemly at best just a few years earlier. However, these same pressures moved the journals in opposite directions: The *ADL* adopted an ever more anti-Fascist, left-leaning stance throughout 1930-1932, while the *Philologen-Blatt* grew ever more critical of the democratic process and closer to political parties on the right. Many of the reasons were related to their diverging responses to the economic crisis, but other factors played a significant role as well.

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<sup>41</sup> Wilhelm Bolle, "Eine erschütternde Jahresbilanz," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 6, 1932: 3

<sup>42</sup> Wilhelm Dibelius, "Die Überfüllung der Universität," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, April 30, 1930: 265-272

<sup>43</sup> "Warnung vor dem Hochschulstudium." *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, March 12, 1930: 176; "Leitsätze für die Hochschulreform" *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, July 2, 1930: 415; "Reform des Juristischen Studiums," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, July 2, 1930: 415; "17000 Studienrende wollen in Preußen Studienrat werden" *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, December 10, 1930: 773



## Differing Responses to Socio-Political Chaos

Having accepted the need for political activism to influence parliamentary and ministerial decisions about their livelihood and professional well-being, the submitters to the *ADL* fell back upon liberal beliefs that directed them towards the political left. At the same time, after making a similar assessment of the need for increased involvement, the educators featured in the *Philologen-Blatt* made a similar shift to the right, falling back on older nationalistic and conservative traditions. In both cases, these were not new political directions, but political beliefs and social concerns that had always been of great importance but tempered by conventions of political aloofness. Many of these were grounded in the socio-economic background of the educators that they represented and the political affinities that had traditionally been adopted by them. The DLV, for example, had a high proportion of members who identified with various strains of Socialism and Democrats, and its members viewed the change of government following World War I as a prime opportunity to enact reforms that they had labored for decades to introduce Imperial educational system with limited success.<sup>44</sup>

The generally conservative nature of the DPV, and by extension the *Philologen-Blatt*, was equally well known at this time. In 1926 the *Philologen-*

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<sup>44</sup> Lamberti: 44

*Blatt* conducted a survey of the political affiliations of 500 *Philologen*. This revealed 152 who associated themselves with the German People's Party, 139 members of the German National People's Party, 93 members of the Center Party, 55 members of the German Democratic Party, 19 members of the Social Democratic Party, and 25 members of other parties.<sup>45</sup> This pattern revealed a preference for conservative, nationalistic parties and disinclination towards those which lay to the left-of-center. If the majority of the members of the Center Party are assumed to be Catholics participating for confessional reasons, these trends appear even stronger. Within the writings of the *Philologen-Blatt*, these socially and politically conservative leanings come across through commentaries on current political events outside Germany, issues surrounding the legacy of Germany's defeat in the First World War, and attitudes towards German education in foreign countries. Within many articles a sense of nostalgia for the ways and customs of an older, lost German way of life can be detected. For instance, Professor Grebe lamented: "the old Prussia truly appreciated the political meaning of the civil service [*die staatspolitische Bedeutung des Berufsbeamtentums*]. Next to the Army it was the civil service that created a unified, Prussian sense of identity [*Staatsbewußtsein*]."<sup>46</sup>

These political tendencies were partially rooted in the socio-economic backgrounds of the teachers who made up the two groups. German education was a highly "tracked" system in which children were divided after their primary

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<sup>45</sup> "Entpolitisierung?" *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, August 18, 1926: 487

<sup>46</sup> Grebe, "Berufsbeamtentum und Republik," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 8, 1930: 32

education into groups bound for the *Gymnasium*, an academic preparatory school, and those destined for vocational training leading to an apprenticeship. In practice, this division often occurred much earlier, with attendance at socially exclusive public preparatory schools (*Vorschulen*) virtually guaranteeing admittance to the *Gymnasium*. In the *Gymnasium*, students studied a more rigorous curriculum than in the parallel institutions in order to prepare them for the *Abitur*, an exit exam that awarded the necessary certification for entrance into both the universities and most white-collar professions. There was a strong class component to the ultimate educational track pursued by the students. Those from the upper classes or with parents who held advanced degrees were generally accepted into the *Gymnasium* and had the opportunity available to continue on to the university. In contrast, most children from the working and lower middle classes were generally denied these opportunities.

*Lehrerseminare*, however, required no *Abitur* for admittance. Lacking this barrier, they became an attractive opportunity for further education and social mobility for intelligent children from the working and lower middle classes, as well as the sons of low level *Beamte* or the less ambitious daughters of professionals and higher-level civil servants. This social division between the two major levels of German educational system and the differing economic backgrounds common to them helps to partially explain the generally more conservative nature of the *Philologen* and the general trend towards more left-leaning politics, particularly

the desire for reforms to further secularize and democratize German schools, visible among the membership of the DLV.<sup>47</sup>

As their treatment of current governmental issues became more overtly political, the submitters to the *ADL* distinguished themselves not only by their vocal defense of democratic principles and traditions, but also through their increasingly strident attacks on right-wing politics and Nazism in particular. Earlier articles in the *ADL* presented much of this opposition as critique of the current state of events in Fascist Italy. One article in it argued that Fascism was having a corrosive affect on the youth of Italy, who were being raised to have a disdain for spiritual and mental pursuits to the detriment not only of Italian education, but Italian culture as well.<sup>48</sup> Another attacked the impact that Italian Fascism had on that nation's working classes. Titled "The Social-Political Bankruptcy of Fascism," it used the excesses and failures of the policies in Mussolini's Italy to attack not only Fascist political ideologies but policies that favored large corporations during the economic downturn at the expense of individual workers and citizens.<sup>49</sup> These criticisms were not always internally consistent and changed over time, since an earlier article attacked Italian Fascism on opposite grounds, claiming that Mussolini was a "patron of the Catholic Church" who was allowing Church authorities far too much leeway in

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<sup>47</sup> McClelland: 98-99

<sup>48</sup> M. Th. E, "Italiens Hochschulen in Not" *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, October 23, 1930: 806-807

<sup>49</sup> "Sozialpolitischer Bankrott des Faschismus," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, January 9, 1930: 37

dictating national cultural and educational policies.<sup>50</sup> This polemic reflected the anti-clerical tradition within the DLV and echoed conflicts over the role of confessional schooling in the German school system.<sup>51</sup>

For the *ADL*, this willingness to deal with political topics had been developing throughout the late 20s but intensified as a result of the attitude of its chief editor. Leo Raepfel showed no qualms about permitting politically charged, and specifically anti-fascist, opinions and editorials into its pages, a trend that accelerated throughout 1930. Under his tenure, editorials appeared which attacked not only fascism and right wing politics in general, but also specific parties within Germany, most notably the Nazis. While contemporary politics remained a secondary concern for the journal, Raepfel nonetheless managed to provide a forum where politically-minded members of the DLV could voice concerns about the growing instability and violence of German politics. Since Raepfel's anti-fascist stance was well known, the Nazi press began to attack him for the growing politicization of the *ADL* and claiming that he did so because he was Jewish. Raepfel's response was characteristically dismissive of both the substance and form of the attack. He pointed out that there would be nothing wrong with a Jew holding his position, that, because he was the son of Catholic parents, the "attack" was utterly unfounded in reality, and concluded by asserting

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<sup>50</sup> F.W. "Faschismus und Klerikalismus," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, March 13, 1930: 203

<sup>51</sup> Lamberti: 22-23, 69-88, 132

that such crass anti-Semitism would find neither purchase with nor a favorable response from the ranks of the German teaching community.<sup>52</sup>

The journal leveled direct criticisms at the Nazi party for its lack of a clear, officially articulated policy towards schools or education. Put simply, no one really knew what the National Socialist stance on the major educational issues of the day was. In light of their growing influence on German politics, the editors of the *ADL* viewed this confusion as unacceptable. As late as November 1930, they published open letters from the editorial staff and individual teachers to prominent Nazis, including Adolf Hitler and Josef Goebbels, which asked what, precisely, the NSDAP's stances on key educational issues were. These included the civil rights of schoolteachers, the ongoing debate over how much sway religious authorities should have over educational policy, the plight of young, chronically un- and underemployed teachers, and the future development of the educational system.<sup>53</sup>

Other articles began to address the concrete threats to the welfare of the teaching profession and German democracy as a whole that contemporary politics presented. These threats were frequently described as attacks on democratic freedoms that the submitters identified as requirements for effective teaching. As early as the summer of 1931, an article warned of the dangers of National Socialist ideologies for the democratic state, which it identified as a key prerequisite for quality education. The author claimed that, under a totalitarian

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<sup>52</sup> "Die 'Rotte Korah,'" *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, March 6, 1930: 182.

<sup>53</sup> "Der Schulprogramm der Nationalsozialismus," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, November 27, 1930: 917.

system, all of the freedoms currently enjoyed by German educators – freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of teaching as well as the rights of civil servants – would disappear due to its “inner logic.” These ideologies were depicted as running directly contrary to the interests of the teaching community as a whole: “It is unimaginable to us how a civil servant can be prepared to exchange the legal safeties of a constitutional state for the blank check of an arbitrary dictatorship.<sup>54</sup>” Other, more controversial liberal values would be endangered, should the NSDAP enjoy wide-spread success. A short column published in the journal in the Spring of 1932 criticized Nazi attitudes towards women and described them as running counter to the progressive trends and ideals of the German republic, ideals which it maintained were key foundations of education in the German primary schools.<sup>55</sup>

Such criticisms intensified throughout the governmental crises and elections of mid-1932. A heavy emphasis was placed upon the need for educators to get out and vote in what was portrayed as the “final battle” for democracy.<sup>56</sup> Descriptions of the failed policies of Italy’s Fascist regime, both in and out of the educational system, continued in this period,<sup>57</sup> as did attacks on

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<sup>54</sup> “Wohlerworbene Rechte gibt es nicht.” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, August 13, 1931: 648.

<sup>55</sup> “Die Stellung des Nationalsozialismus zur Frau,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, May 7, 1932: 351

<sup>56</sup> A. Söhring, “Reichtagswahl, Lehrerschaft und Deutscher Lehrerverein,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, July 23, 1932: 549-550

<sup>57</sup> “Schule und Lehrerstand unter fastischer Diktatur,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, July 30, 1932: 561-563.

what little could be discovered about the educational policies espoused by the NSDAP within the Nazi press and the ways in which that press depicted primary school educators.<sup>58</sup>

As the drama of the Weimar Republic's crises reached its climax in late 1932, the *ADL* concentrated increasingly on specific policies and actions of prominent Nazis, as well as the implications that this would have for educators in particular. It attacked the economist Hjalmar Schacht as having no concrete plans to pull the German economy out of its ongoing crisis and described him instead as a "new prophet [who] wants to build a new German economy out of irrationality and the 'myth of the blood.'"<sup>59</sup> It also analyzed the situation in states where the Nazis had already taken over control of the local governments, particularly Thuringia and Oldenburg, and outlined local failures and abuses of power.<sup>60</sup> The aptly titled piece on "Civil servants, this is your fate," listed Nazi excess with regards to government workers in such states and claimed that they were not only the natural result of the politics and philosophies of National Socialism but the inevitable fate of teachers across Germany should a national government be formed under the NSDAP.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Der 'Völkische Beobachter' und die Lehrer," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, August 27, 1932: 634.

<sup>59</sup> "Hjalmar Schacht, der neue Prophet." *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, October 1, 1932: 732.

<sup>60</sup> "'Nationalsozialistische Regierung' Oldenburg und Koalitionsfreiheit," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, October 8, 1932: 752.

<sup>61</sup> "Beampter, das ist dein Schicksal," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, October 8, 1932: 752.



While it did not remain aloof of politics, the *Philologen-Blatt* never developed the strident tone that characterized the *ADL* at this time. The political motivations of the contributors to the journal can be glimpsed, however, in the traditional, conservative, nationalistic, and völkish ways that they wrote on other subjects. Addressing the impact of the crises of the last year on youth in the schools, Wilhelm Bolle wrote that it was doubly important to give youths a sense of grounding in society through a form of “healthy nationalism.”<sup>62</sup> Another contributor within the same issue wrote a defense of the necessity of German language and grammar lessons not only on the grounds of ensuring a proper grasp of High German for university education and governmental work or as a means of instilling the fine points of style and diction for government or business jobs, but also as a means of community-building, to reaffirm their Germanness and German cultural identity.<sup>63</sup>

Late in 1931, as part of a debate over the utility of newspapers in classroom instruction that had been going on for over a year, one teacher wrote that “the *volksdeutsch*-attuned teacher – and every teacher must think *volksdeutsch* today” should use at least one newspaper published by a German minority in a foreign country to help students think in a more *volk*-oriented way and raise their awareness of themselves as Germans.<sup>64</sup> A similarly-toned article

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<sup>62</sup> Wilhelm Bolle, “Enttäuschungen und Hoffnungen,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 7, 1931: 1-2

<sup>63</sup> Hans Lebede, “Von der Notwendigkeit der Sprecherziehung in unseren Schulen,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 7, 1931: 5-6

<sup>64</sup> Karl Bell, “Auslanddeutsche Zeitungen im Unterricht,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, October 21, 1931: 629

a few months later called for the foundation of a “Institute for Völkish-pedagogy” in Mainz to make better use of the fortress vacated by the French the previous year and establish an institution which would strengthen German culture both inside its borders and abroad.<sup>65</sup>

The description of the French occupation of the Rhineland was typical of another trend in the articles published by the *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt* at this time: they consistently maintained a conservative and nationalist approach to the repercussions of World War I and the legacy of the Treaty of Versailles. Nothing exemplifies this trend as well as the front page article for July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1930.

Published in the immediate aftermath of the last Allied troops withdrawing from their occupation zones in the Rhineland, the headline read simply: “Freed German Land!” Quite unique among the years examined here, the *Philologen-Blatt’s* front page was printed in two colors, with decorative blue borders emphasizing the celebratory note of that edition. The accompanying article described the withdrawal of the soldiers as a day of national celebration, a new beginning, and the dawn of a “new strength and self-awareness.”<sup>66</sup> The journal interpreted this early withdrawal as the first step in rolling back the Treaty of Versailles. It also struck a somber note, drawing the attention of the reader to other German brothers and German lands that were still under foreign rule and were denied the free decision to return to their former national homeland

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<sup>65</sup> Rudolf Block, “Das Institut für Völkerpädagogik auf der Zitadelle in Mainz,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, January 20, 1932: 33

<sup>66</sup> “Befreites deutsches Land!” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, July 2, 1930: 401

Though subsequent editions never waxed as enthusiastic, the *Philologen-Blatt* consistently showed support for German minorities in other countries. Any project that could be interpreted as protecting German culture abroad or integrating the “lost territories” into a larger German cultural union was lauded within its pages. In early 1932, for example, the journal published a copy of a telegram it sent to the Memel Society [*Memellandbund*] expressing its dismay at the region’s incorporation into Lithuania and standing behind the defense of German culture in the area.<sup>67</sup> Similar expressions of solidarity can be found – either in editorials or submitted articles – directed towards German ethnic groups in Romania, Poland, and Danzig.<sup>68</sup> Teachers were encouraged to enroll their students in the Bund für die Deutschen Auslandsschulen (BDA), an organization for the support of German schools in foreign countries. This activity was expressed as a way of gaining support and funding for important educational work abroad, and as a method of increasing awareness of the issues surrounding ethnic Germans abroad so as to tie those ethnic minorities into the German cultural sphere.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> “Für Freiheit des Memellandes!” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, February 17, 1932: 73

<sup>68</sup> B. Capesius, “Die Not der Deutschen Abiturienten in Rumänien.” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, September 3, 1930: 537; “Deutsche Minderheitsschulen in Polen,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, December 21, 1932: 601; “11. Deutschkundliche Woche in Danzig,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, September 9, 1931: 556

<sup>69</sup> “Die höhere Schule und die Philologen im Dienste des BDA,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, December 21, 1932: 601

As criticisms of the handling of the economic crisis in the country intensified these conservative, nationalistic, and *völkish* beliefs translated into increasing hostility to perceived enemies and praise of parties that the *Philologen-Blatt* saw as representing its interests. Adolf Bohlen, for instance, began in March of 1930 to identify certain politicians and political parties with proposals that he highlighted as working against education, secondary school teachers, or *Beamte* in general. The Social Democrats and the left wing of the Center Party were specially singled out in this manner, while the nationalist German People's Party was given credit for opposing them. In addition, he made the observation that civil servants "must now look to themselves" and work to ensure that their interests were properly represented.<sup>70</sup> By the middle of the year he was describing the situation as critical and exhorting readers that they were facing a "serious fight, in which we must not become observers, but active participants!"<sup>71</sup>

Amid the turbulent September elections that yielded the Nazi Party its electoral breakthrough, Bohlen largely gave up the guise of enlightened political neutrality that was previously central to the image of the German *Beamte*: "From the evening of September 14 on matters may once again be spoken of that could not be addressed in the two months behind us without becoming entangled in the

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<sup>70</sup> Adolf Bohlen, "Under dem Druck der Finanznot," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, March 5, 1930: 145-147

<sup>71</sup> Adolf Bohlen, "Der neue Vorstoß gegen das Beamtengehalt," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, July 4, 1930: 362

fight between the parties.”<sup>72</sup> Despite his profession of aloofness, he went on to make it clear that the recent election had shown the political strength of a civil service sector that had successfully rallied to defend its interests and “played a role as never before.” He recounted the parties – most notably those on the left or with strong religious or agricultural ties – that had been “unfriendly” to the interests of the *Beamte*. He described their previous political passivity in the face of decreasing social and financial standing as one of the core failures as a group and emphatically stated that in the future they would have to work so that heads of state and national government would not be able to call for measures like the *Notopfer* and the equally controversial Law for the Reduction of Pensions without expecting strong resistance from those whose livelihoods they would affect. He therefore described *Beamte* as victims who would not quietly acquiesce to further acts against them.<sup>73</sup>

It is necessary to remember that the patterns of nationalistic and völkish beliefs outlined in this section were not necessarily the same for every university-trained educator and that they did not imply a direct affinity for Nazi politics. Among the older, professionally established educators who were accepted as contributors to the *Philologen-Blatt*; however, they do indicate at the very least an inclination towards the conservative, nationalistic politics of the pre-Weimar era and a strong identification with Imperial Germany, both in terms of its geographical extent and conception of a traditional, centralized, standardized

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<sup>72</sup> Adolf Bohlen, “Nach den Wahlen,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, September 17, 1930: 562

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*: 562-563

German culture. This does not directly suggest that *Philologen* flocked to the National Socialist banner once open political activity was considered not only permissible but also highly desirable. It does, however, imply that they were likely to embrace nationalistic and conservative parties that became integral to Nazi coalition politics of late 1932 and early 1933.

This rightist orientation stands in marked contrast to the highly activist nature of the contemporary writings in the *ADL*. While the writers in the *Philologen-Blatt* reacted to the crises of the early 30s by rallying to an older conservative tradition that predated the Republic, the editorials in the *ADL* came out very strongly in defense of the Democratic ideals that were becoming suspect in other circles. They generally saw a solution to the problem not in a return to the traditional, more conservative values of the past, but in a redoubled effort to preserve recently established liberties and rights.

### **Clashing Visions of Pedagogy**

Even during the deepening economic crisis and increasing politicization of professional life, the main subject of the two journals remained educational concerns. Though it frequently featured political arguments, the *ADL* remained primarily a forum for the discussion of the professional concerns of educators, and issues of pedagogical technique and classroom reality continued to loom large within its pages. The situation for the *Philologen-Blatt* was much the same.

Alongside the politically charged discussions the deepening financial crisis and paeans to völkisch ideals, contributors discussed academic topics such as approaches to foreign language instruction, reviewed recent publications on a variety of topics, and wrote essays commemorating the birthdays or retirements of prominent members of the educational community. While many of the pedagogical discussions in these journals remained fairly innocuous, some did display the same tendencies discussed earlier, reacting to the growing awareness of politics or the political ideologies that they were coming to champion.

Typically, the *ADL* tended to focus on the ongoing jurisdictional conflict with confessional schools and on the need to defend and expand the reforms to the school system that had taken place since the collapse of the Empire. This was a component of a conflict over the role of the church and religious instruction in German schools which went back to the Concordat signed by Bismarck. The general view of the *ADL* and its contributors was that the church needed to be finally, and fully, separated from German education.<sup>74</sup> The role of the church was typified as invasive, meddling, and, above all, obstructive to the kinds of reforms necessary to give children the type of modern education envisioned by many in the DLV.<sup>75</sup> This is unsurprising, as the idea of secular education based on current scientific and pedagogical principles was key to many of the reform-

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<sup>74</sup> Frank-Michael Kuhlemann, "Schulen, Hochschulen, Lehrer: I. Schulsystem: Niedere Schulen" in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte: Band IV: 1870-1918*, Christa Berg, ed. (München: Verlag C.H. Beck: 1991): 180-183.

<sup>75</sup> "Die Konkordate und das Reichsschulgesetz," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, December 17, 1932: 936

oriented members of the DLV. Church influences were seen as a serious problem in more rural districts, particularly in the Catholic south, where school inspectors were frequently recruited from among the clergy and this “Catholicism hostile to education” had its greatest influence.<sup>76</sup>

With relations between the religious groups and the schools uneasy at best, the reviewer of one book written by a protestant bishop felt compelled to note that, even though the average teacher “could expect nothing good” from such a book, this bishop in particular was possibly the ecclesiastical authority with “the most understanding for the position of the teacher.”<sup>77</sup> It says much about the current state of affairs that the writer of that particular review felt compelled to spend its first three paragraphs discussing not the book, but the unique background and sympathies of the author that placed him outside the normal church-school relationship.

The other major pedagogical issue addressed in the *ADL* at this time was the growth of National Socialism, an issue tied closely to the growing political awareness of the journal. Throughout its pages, it identified the NSDAP as not only a threat to the continued wellbeing of the German state and a challenge to the continued existence of an independent, competent teaching corps, but also as a major pedagogical danger. It described issues such as truancy due to Nazi youth group meetings, politically charged topics in the classroom, and how to

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<sup>76</sup> “Krypto-Katholizismus” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, December 24, 1932: 954

<sup>77</sup> D. Wilh. Schubring, “Ein evangelischer Bischof zur Schulpolitik,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, September 11, 1930: 692-693.



deal with political pressures coming from superiors and colleagues. However, the articles were invariably declamatory in tone. The issues were aired and examined, but very little in the way of concrete suggestions for overcoming them was offered.

In an article about the issue of “authority and freedom in education,” the necessity of instilling unspecified “good values” in children was greatly emphasized, and it closed with a discussion of instilling “inner freedom” in children, referencing a quote often cited by Nazi pedagogues: “He who has the children, has the future.<sup>78</sup>” Another article in the same issue contemplated the problems put to educators by the increasing popularity of right-wing politics and youth groups among students. Without overtly criticizing either the youth groups or the politics that motivated them, the journal managed to investigate day-to-day issues surrounding absenteeism for party and youth group events, politically charged classroom discussions, and the general distraction introduced to the classroom by such turbulent political proceedings.<sup>79</sup>

Once the NSDAP finally articulated an educational platform, the journal was quick to criticize the role that it proposed for the school system in the coming years and to attack its overtly anti-intellectual bent. Latching onto a recent speech made in the Prussian Landtag where a National Socialist politician described the old school system as a “school for learning” and the new one that

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<sup>78</sup> “Autorität und Freiheit in der Erziehung,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, March 11, 1933: 181-183

<sup>79</sup> “Krise in die Erziehung,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, March 11, 1933: 183-184

the Nazis would construct as a “school of character”, the journal objected strenuously to the idea that the educational mission of teachers was to instill a specific and desired moral character rather than academic lessons.<sup>80</sup> Only two pages later, in order to draw further attention to what they saw as an untenable argument, the editors of the journal published a short column, titled “What is character?” that examined the nature of moral “character,” what the term meant, and questioned if there was anyone left in Germany, particularly among the political elite, who could truly claim to possess it, much less instruct others in it.<sup>81</sup> In this rejection of “character” based education the contributors to the *ADL* reflected a distinction between “education” and “socialization” which had long been a component of German education. One article in the *Philologen-Blatt*, written to commemorate the life and work of the prominent pedagogue Otto Willmann, made precisely this distinction. As part of describing Willmann’s work the submitter made a clear delineation between educational methods that concentrated on “care, breeding, [and] teachings” and others that emphasized “development, living communities, and spiritual commodities [*geistige Güter*].” While he praised Willmann for finding a “golden middle” between the two approaches, he clearly valued the former more in a comment criticizing “many newer theorists” for falling into a “fatal lopsidedness [*verhängnisvollen*

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<sup>80</sup> “Nationalsozialismus und Schule,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, October 8, 1932: 745

<sup>81</sup> “Was ist Charakter?” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, October 8, 1932: 747

*Einseitigkeiten]*” and selected out “reform and revolutionarily minded pedagogues” for special censure.<sup>82</sup>

The level to which the editors and submitters to the *ADL* objected to Nazi educational policies can perhaps be best seen in a controversy sparked by the Nazi-published educational journal *Nationale Erziehung*. Describing an article, he had recently read which directly attacked protestant confessional schooling, a submitter to the *ADL* criticized the Nazis for “considering children to be the object of a pre-determined world-view” and only desiring “as the final result of education a well-formed party member.”<sup>83</sup> In this case, the threat of the NSDAP appears to have clearly superseded the more traditional conflicts with confessional schooling that the DLV was embroiled in. As a long time advocate of a unified national school system and reduced influence from religious organizations within the state educational apparatus, the DLV had opposed confessional schooling from the nineteenth century on.<sup>84</sup> *Nationale Erziehung*, on the surface at least, sided with the DLV in this long standing debate, arguing that there should be one unified system under the authority of the federal government. Rather than accept the National Socialists as allies in a fight which had raged for years, the editorship of

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<sup>82</sup> Joseph Jansen, “Otto Willman und seine Bedeutung für die heutige Pädagogik” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, July 23, 1930: 451-453

<sup>83</sup> “Evangelischer Elternbund und nationalsozialistisches Erziehungsideal,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, May 7, 1932: 350

<sup>84</sup> Frank-Michael Kuhlemann, “Schulen, Hochschulen, Lehrer: I. Schulsystem: Niedere Schulen” in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte: Band IV: 1870-1918*, Christa Berg, ed. (München: Verlag C.H. Beck: 1991): 180-183.

the *ADL* sided with traditional opponents in the face of this new threat, defending protestant confessional institutions against the criticisms of the Nazi press.

In contrast to the anti-fascism of primary teachers, the *Philologen-Blatt* yielded to neo-conservative tendencies in the discussion over the place of discipline and authority in the classroom. Those writing in favor of relaxed standards of discipline – at least in comparison to the Imperial era’s “schools of obedience” lampooned by liberal reformers – were quick to note it was clearly understood that a minimum of discipline must be maintained for the proper functioning of the classroom. They made the point, however, that each instructor could vary the strictness of his rules as he saw fit. The participants in this discussion framed it as a key pedagogical issue, impacting every layer of classroom instruction. Many of the themes addressed in it rephrased earlier debates over liberalizing German education and the need for sweeping reform in the way education was carried out.<sup>85</sup> These debates also showcased some of the divisions taking place within the ranks of the *Philologen* in specific and German conservatism in particular, divisions that had a generational component to them. Older educators tended to fall back on a traditionally authoritarian, elitist conservatism that harkened back to the legacy of the Imperial period and emphasized the need for tradition, structure, community, and authority. Younger educators, those raised during the war and educated under the Weimar Republic, tended to recognize the need for at least limited change and at times advocated some of the reforms in classroom practice championed by the most

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<sup>85</sup> For more on these debates, see Marjorie Lamberti, *The Politics of Education: Teachers and School Reform in Weimar Germany*

radical primary school teachers while rejecting the politically liberal associations attached to many of them.<sup>86</sup> They tended towards more *völkisch* and populist views, something reflected in their educational priorities and the reforms that they supported. Unfortunately, these younger teachers are the most difficult group to identify within the journal. This becomes especially pronounced with the very youngest who were just beginning their careers, were most affected by the economic chaos of the time, and were most likely to be actively supportive of National Socialism or other extreme forms of populist politics. As junior members of the teaching profession, they were far less likely to be published within the *Philologen-Blatt*, while well respected, well established submitters and editorials written by senior staff of the journal dominated its pages. What is visible, however, are the myriad ways in which less radical, more traditionally conservative educators reacted and the differing concepts of “traditional conservatism” that existed alongside one another late in the Weimar Republic.

Writing in late 1930, a teacher named Arnold Bork claimed that in order to cultivate an attentive, positive learning environment it was equally vital not to be seen as an overbearing disciplinarian as it was to maintain proper order. Additionally, he observed that it was necessary to accept that different teachers could have different standards of discipline within the same school and not to

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<sup>86</sup> For another examination of a similar break in German conservatism during a slightly earlier period, see Peter Fritzsche’s discussion of conservative reactions to the November 1918 revolution in “Breakdown or Breakthrough? Conservatives and the November Revolution,” in *Between Reform, Reaction, and Resistance: Studies in the History of German Conservatism from 1789 to 1945*, Larry Eugene Jones and James N. Retallack, eds., (Providence: Berg Publishers, Inc., 1993): 299-328

waste all of one's time – and alienate colleagues – by constantly fighting other methods “at any cost.”<sup>87</sup> He expressed a clear disdain for the heavy-handed and inflexible policies of the past and a need to bring the current system more into line with progressive thinking and policies. While not explicitly attacking conservative social values he painted a picture of the He also revealed a surprising affinity to the republican forms of the current government by suggesting that a more open dialogue in the classroom could prepare students for the rigors and expectations of a democratic society.

A colleague writing in response to these sentiments took a much more traditional line, claiming that what had been proposed was not only a recipe for chaos in the classroom, but that the role of the teacher was to lead and guide instruction and discussion, not to merely direct it like a parliamentary chair. He claimed that, organized in such a chaotic manner, the discourse within the classroom would sink to the “lowest possible level, that of the factory floor.” In the final paragraph of this conservative defense of scholastic tradition, however, he made a strange political comparison, arguing that those youths who were inculcated with the ideas of National Socialism would find such teaching styles particularly to their liking, as there they could gain the freedom and independence that they desired and find common ground with the republican schools in avoiding all forms of authority, especially that which the schools of the pre-war era had embodied. However conservative he was and however dim a view he took of liberal classroom practices, it is clear that this educator was

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<sup>87</sup> Arnold Bork, “Moderne Pädagogik und Disziplin,” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, October 1, 1930: 598-600

equally unimpressed by the rowdy behavior and motivations of early Nazi youth members.<sup>88</sup> In this, he was typical of many university trained teachers who were pushed towards the political right by their traditional conservatism, but who were at the same time very dismayed with the populist manifestations of Nazi politics, especially the changes to German education advocated by some of the most radical members.<sup>89</sup>

A contributor published in the following year offered a third approach that eschewed both extremes of tradition and reform. Reacting to Bork's initial letter, the protestant religious educator Konrad Jarausch expressed sympathy with his criticisms of "empty forms and ossified authority" and opined that every reader who had once been a student in the Imperial school system must have recognized the needlessly strict rules and arbitrary authority that he described and that "we must all thank this new spirit when it causes this condition of unworthy hypocrisy to disappear from our schools."<sup>90</sup> Though he agreed with Bork in all his fundamentals, his was a naive stance that did not take the reality of teaching into account. He questioned if the system was ready to support the far-reaching reforms that Bork was advocating, and that a "deep and real humanism" was a prerequisite for their successful implementation. He called for a turning away from the old, authoritarian systems of instruction, but a measured one that

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<sup>88</sup> Walter Schönbrunn, "Disziplin und moderne Pädagogik," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, November 26, 1930: 745-747

<sup>89</sup> Jarausch: 108

<sup>90</sup> Konrad Jarausch, "Moderne Pädagogik und Disziplin", *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, June 10, 1931: 356

would not leave chaos in its wake or be open to abuse. Given the political nature of the letters that he was responding to and the clear ways in which they made comparisons between relaxed classroom discipline and political structures in Germany, it is hard not to read a political motive into his contribution as well. Since neither the imperial authoritarianism nor Weimar's relaxation of classroom discipline worked well in practice, he looked for a new volkish sense of order that would recognize youthful desire for independence yet demand voluntary subordination under competent leadership.

The debates within the *Philologen-Blatt* reflected the pedagogical uncertainty of the post-war era, which was searching for neo-conservative solutions to the crisis of Weimar modernity. This longing for a volkish alternative made younger high-school teachers particularly vulnerable to Nazi appeals of national renewal while their older colleagues could be pleased about the promise to restore authority in the class-room, despite the misgivings that others might have about the more radical of the proposed Nazi educational reforms. For the members of the DLV, on the other hand, pedagogical issues were not reflections of the political turmoil that surrounded them, but were directly implicated in their political beliefs and how they reacted to the contemporary situation. The high hopes for reform and the successes that they had enjoyed under the Republic encouraged them towards overt anti-fascism and an inevitable clash with National Socialism.

There did, of course, exist a third group of educators, namely those who openly supported National Socialism because they strongly agreed with its



politics, goals, and beliefs. These early supporters, those who joined with the party before 1933, came from both ends of the political spectrum and had representatives in both the DLV and DPV. Hans Schemm, founder of the NSLB, was a primary school teacher drawn to Nazi politics in the early 1920s through his anti-Semitic, anti-democratic, anti-communist, and highly populist political beliefs. Overt party membership was quite rare for members of the DPV, with only 5.1% joining before 1933. In the ranks of the DLV it was significantly more common but remained a minority, with 31.6% attaining membership before the Nazi take over.<sup>91</sup> In both cases the writings of Nazi party loyalists were not reproduced within the journals. The subject of this paper is not, however, the motivations of early Party loyalists, but the reactions of the majority of the teaching community that was either undecided or hostile to Nazi political aspirations before 1933.

### **Conclusion: 1933 and its aftermath**

Following the passing on March 23, 1933 of the Enabling Act, many professional organizations in Germany were forcibly merged with overtly National Socialist counterparts as part of the *Gleichschaltung*, or ideological coordination, of German society. The German educational community was among the first directly affected by these measures. In early June, the educational press

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<sup>91</sup> Jaraus: 255

announced the planned absorption of the DLV into the new Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund, a new, Nazi Party-organized professional organization for teachers of all levels.<sup>92</sup> For months afterward, no official announcement was made about the ultimate institutional fate of the DPV.

In mid-October, a decision was finally reached: Dr. Wilhelm Frick, Minister of the Interior and long-standing Nazi announced that the DPV would continue to exist in its current form. The reaction of the *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt* was immediate and clear. On October 25, it published a recent telegram to Adolf Hitler accompanied by the headline “In faith with the Führer!” This telegram, sent under the signature of the head DPV, thanked him in name of its 50,000 members for the “decision of October 14<sup>th</sup>” and pledged on their behalf to educate the youth of Germany in order to “recover German honor and German standing in the world.”<sup>93</sup> An accompanying editorial, aptly titled “The maintenance of the Deutschen Philologenverband does not contravene national-socialistic totality philosophy [*Totalitätsgedanken*]” made clear their willingness to work with the new regime, both in educational and political matters.

Part of the rationale behind the different decisions regarding the DLV and the DPV was due to the perceived political loyalty of the DPV, and the divergent ways that the two organizations had expressed their growing political awareness throughout 1930-1932 was certainly part of that. The politicization of the German teaching profession through the economic and budgetary crises of the early 30s

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<sup>92</sup> *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, June 3, 1933: 392

<sup>93</sup> “In Treue zum Führer!” *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, October 25, 1933: 485

wrought two very different results upon primary and secondary school educators. In the case of the primary school teachers and other members of the Deutsche Lehrerverein, it encouraged further engagement with left wing politics and attacks on totalitarian values and Nazi political goals. Throughout 1930-1932, they grew more and more aggressive in their political denunciations of National Socialism and other forms of extreme right wing politics, culminating in the November 1932 election cycle following the collapse of the von Papen government. They identified with the liberal values of the Weimar constitution and valued the changes that had been made to German education since 1918. They perceived democratic ideals and the freedoms afforded to teachers by them as utterly necessary for a quality education and aspects of German society that must be defended to the utmost. While they were certainly dismayed by the ever-increasing financial burdens being laid upon teachers and the unfortunate educational policies of successive governments after 1930, they saw the alternatives being offered by the political right as being wholly unacceptable. Without the social and cultural affinity for traditional and völkish values which were attractive to members of the DPV, they found very little of value in the ideologies and proposed policies of the NSDAP.

For the *Philologen*, the early 1930s instilled in them a lasting mistrust and fear of the Republic. Rather than being drawn slowly away from the autocratic, conservative traditions of the late Imperial era through continued interaction and familiarity with democratic institutions, the economic catastrophes and political infighting that they first observed and then participated in gave a very short, sharp

lesson: the Republic was not working on their behalf, it was not representing their interests, and any professional loyalty to the state would be repaid only with further privation and professional injury. There were, of course, individual exceptions to this pattern, but on the whole the political discussions visible in the journal throughout this period grew more conservative, more traditional, and more anti-republican than they had been before.

At the same time, growing National Socialist influence in German politics as a whole led to greater opportunities for participation in extremist politics. By the middle of 1932 the NSDAP had succeeded in overturning earlier bans on membership in its ranks for state employees, precisely at the moment when they were also directly speaking in the Prussian Parliament on behalf of *Beamte* in general and *Philologen* in particular.<sup>94</sup> While older, more established professionals looked down on the populist aspirations of certain portions of the Nazi Party, for many of the young professionals most impacted by the economic turmoil of the early 1930s, some kind of reform and social change was not unwelcome. This produced a generational cleavage within the ranks of the *Philologen* between nationalistically conservative and volkisch members who were acculturated under the Empire and younger, more radically right teachers who came of age during the war years and the early stages of the Republic. Both groups were drawn to right-wing politics, however their underlying

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<sup>94</sup> "Die Zugehörigkeit von Beamten zur NSDAP," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, August 3, 1932: 350; "Wieder die preußischen Notverordnungen," *Deutsches Philologen-Blatt*, July 6, 1932: 306

motivations brought them to differing parties and influenced the ways they approached the growth of National Socialism.

There were, of course, individual exceptions to this pattern, but, on the whole, the political discussions in the *Philologen-Blatt* throughout this period grew more conservative, more traditional, and more anti-republican than they had been before. At the same time, growing National Socialist influence in German politics as a whole led to greater opportunities for participation in extremist politics for those teachers who, either through personal political convictions or frustration with the current system and the traditional parties, sought it. These factors encouraged the eventual adoption of a policy of coalition politics in an attempt to steer the course of events in a way that benefitted them politically and protected them professionally.

As 1933 opened, these divergent policies began to have very real repercussions for the two organizations. The ascendancy of the Nazis throughout the first half of that year and the accompanying regime of political violence and repression made it ever more profitable for organizations to come out in favor of National Socialism, while the penalties for opposing it grew more dire every day. In the case of the DLV, its past opposition proved disastrous. With the ascendancy of the NSDAP to political power, they immediately began a policy of political appeasement and backpedaling on previous issues in an attempt to minimize the negative effects of its previous actions. Leo Raepfel, who had guided the *ADL* through some of the most turbulent years of the Weimar Republic and who, almost until the end, maintained a staunch editorial opposition

to Nazism, resigned his post with the journal within days of the signing of the Enabling Act. During the tenure of his successor, the journal would adopt a conciliatory approach, writing favorably about the party, nationalistic philosophies, and Nazi educational measures, all while vocally emphasizing their willingness to work with the new regime as they had every political regime since the foundation of the German Empire.<sup>95</sup> This policy of rapprochement proved completely unsuccessful. By the middle of 1933 the Party announced its intention to merge the DLV with the NSLB. The remaining six months before the *ADL* was shut down were spent as an overtly National Socialist publication, indiscernible in both content and quality from journals such as *Nationale Erziehung*, the NSDAP's official publication for primary school teachers.

In the case of the *Philologen*, there is no indication that they rushed in large numbers to gain membership in the Nazi Party;<sup>96</sup> however, they continued to emphasize it as one of the few organizations that was vocally working on their behalf. While they continued to stick to their nationalist, völkisch, middle class political parties, within their journals the *Philologen* slowly came to view and represent the Nazis as political allies in the struggle to maintain a sufficient wage and what they saw as their professional dignity. This willingness to work with the NSDAP and engage with it in order to shape its policies was successful in the short term, ensuring the continued independence of the DPV well after the DLV

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<sup>95</sup> *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, March 25, 1933: 213-216; "Das Reich," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, April 1, 1933: 233-236; "Gleichschaltung," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, April 8, 1933: 255; "Fragen der Schulpolitik," *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, May 13, 1933: 333-335

<sup>96</sup> McClelland: 218-222 and Jarausch: 119-122

had ceased to exist. In the long run, this tactic proved just as futile and it was absorbed into the NSLB on January 1, 1937.

While the eventual fate of these two organizations proved the same despite the divergent tactics adopted by them, they provide a highly useful window into the priorities and concerns that helped politicize German educators at the end of the Weimar Republic. This politicization, driving members of the two main organizations in generally divergent directions, had ongoing consequences for the German teaching community. The divergent tactics used in approaching and anticipating National Socialism and the demands that it placed upon German education cast further light on the pressures faced by German educators at this time and the root causes for their eventual decisions to comply, collaborate, or resist.

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