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# Nazi Ideology: Some Unfinished Business

BARBARA MILLER LANE

**D**URING the last ten years historians have begun to reinterpret nearly every aspect of Nazi history. Many of their conclusions are very fruitful indeed. But there has as yet appeared no satisfactory reinterpretation of Nazi ideology. The study of Nazi ideology presents some apparently intractable problems; many scholars believe, moreover, that political thought played a relatively unimportant part in the rise (and fall) of the Third Reich. For these and other reasons, some of the most important source material for the study of Nazi ideology has been almost totally neglected. This is the large quantity of writings and programs published by the various Nazi leaders before 1933.

Before 1933 the Nazi party published three major programs—the “Twenty-Five Points,” the agricultural program of 1930, the full-employment program of 1932—and many minor programs for the party’s suborganizations. The party publishing houses—Eher and the Kampf-Verlag—issued dozens of books and pamphlets, some by Hitler, but most by other party leaders. Of these other leaders, the most prolific were Dietrich Eckart, Gottfried Feder, Alfred Rosenberg, Gregor and Otto Strasser, and Richard Walther Darré. The many party newspapers and journals, which included the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the *NS-Briefe*, the Strasser newspapers, *Der Angriff*, and the *NS-Monatshefte*, published the programs, together with many theoretical writings. In addition to the papers and magazines published by the party itself, Eckart, Feder, Rosenberg, and Darré edited journals for nonparty publishers; these journals must, because of the political position of their editors, have seemed to contemporaries to express a Nazi party “line.” The speeches, of Hitler and of the other party leaders, are far less accessible; few were published before 1933, and the collections published after 1933 are not always trustworthy.<sup>1</sup> But even without the speeches,

1. Before 1933, Hitler permitted only one small group of speeches to be published: *Adolf Hitlers Reden* (Munich: Deutscher Volksverlag—Dr. Ernst Boepple, 1925). After 1933, he made no move, as did most of the other party leaders, to compile these earlier

the books and articles published by the Nazi leaders before 1933 constitute one of the largest bodies of political thought ever set forth by a political group over a comparable time period. By studying them chronologically, by comparing each to the other and to the programs, it ought to have been possible long ago accurately to assess what political goals the party sought before 1933, and what promises it made to its followers before it came to power. And by setting Hitler's thought in this context, it ought to have been possible to decide what his personal contribution to Nazi ideology really was.

That this task has never been attempted in any systematic way is one of the more peculiar omissions in Nazi historiography. There is of course an enormous literature on Hitler, but those studies which credit him with "ideas" (and most do not) tend to concentrate either on *Mein Kampf*, on the so-called "Secret Book," or on his writings and speeches after 1933.<sup>2</sup> The context of his thought is usually sought outside the

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speeches (the collection *Adolf Hitler in Franken: Reden aus der Kampfzeit*, gesammelt und herausgegeben von Heinz Preiss im Auftrage von Julius Streicher, n.p., n.d. [ca. 1939], was published without his endorsement). As a result, very little indeed is known about the majority of his early speeches; their content must be sought either in the pages of the *Völkischer Beobachter* or in police reports, and this has never been done in a thorough way, though Reginald Phelps has made a beginning. See his "Hitler als Parteiredner im Jahre 1920," *Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte* (hereafter *Vierteljahrshäfte*), vol. 11 (1963), pp. 274–88; "Hitler and the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei," *American Historical Review*, vol. 68 (1963), pp. 983–86; and "Hitlers 'grundlegende' Rede über den Antisemitismus," *Vierteljahrshäfte*, vol. 16 (1968), pp. 390–420. Of the other leading Nazis, only Gregor Strasser published his speeches before 1933 (see, for example, *Arbeit und Brot: Reichstagsrede*, Munich: Eher, 1932; others are cited below).

2. Except for the work of Phelps, n. 1., above, and W. Jochmann, ed., *Im Kampf um die Macht: Hitlers Rede vor dem Hamburger Nationalklub von 1919* (Frankfurt am Main, 1960). See, for example, H. Hammer, "Die deutschen Ausgaben von *Mein Kampf*," *Vierteljahrshäfte*, vol. 4 (1956), pp. 171ff.; Wilfried Daim, *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab* (Munich, 1958); Gerhard L. Weinberg, ed., *Hitlers Zweites Buch* (Stuttgart, 1961); Telford Taylor, ed., *Hitler's Secret Book* (New York, 1961); Ernst Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (Munich, 1963), trans. *Three Faces of Fascism* (New York, 1966); Werner Maser, *Hitlers "Mein Kampf"* (Munich, 1966); Friedrich Heer, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler* (Munich, 1968); Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1968); and Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitlers Weltanschauung: Entwurf einer Herrschaft* (Tübingen, 1969), trans. *Hitler's Weltanschauung: A Blueprint for Power* (Middletown, Conn., 1972). Alan Bullock's tendency to stress Hitler's demagoguery and deemphasize his ideas (*Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, New York, 1953, rev. ed. 1960, 2nd rev. ed. 1962) has been echoed in most subsequent biographies and in many studies of the Third Reich. See especially Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die Deutsche Diktatur: Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne, 1969), trans. *The German Dictatorship* (New York, 1970); and Helmut Krausnick, Hans Buchheim, Martin Broszat, and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Anatomie des SS-Staates* (Freiburg i.Br., 1965), trans. *Anatomy of the S. S. State* (New York, 1968).

party, in Vienna, or in the *völkisch* movement, or even in the broadest patterns of German intellectual development.<sup>3</sup> It is true that the history of the Nazi party before 1933 has begun to be reconstructed, but this effort has concentrated upon political organization, without reference to political thought.<sup>4</sup> Since there is now some doubt that Hitler was as powerful a dictator as was once assumed, scholars have begun to study the lives of those of his lieutenants who shared his power: Himmler, Goebbels, Goering, Rosenberg, Bormann, Speer, and many others.<sup>5</sup>

3. Daim, *Der Mann*; Bullock, *Hitler*; William A. Jenks, *Vienna and the Young Hitler* (New York, 1960); Bradley F. Smith, *Adolf Hitler: His Family, Childhood and Youth* (Stanford, 1967), on Hitler's youth. On the *völkisch* movement and broader intellectual patterns, see, for example, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, *Utopien der Menschenzüchtung* (Munich, 1955); George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology* (New York, 1964); Uwe Lohalm, *Völkischer Radikalismus* (Hamburg, 1969); Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler* (New York, 1941, rev. ed. New York, 1961); Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1962); Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (Berkeley, 1961); Walter Laqueur, *Young Germany* (London, 1962); Daniel Gasman, *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism* (New York, 1971).

4. Martin Broszat, "Die Anfänge der Berliner NSDAP, 1926/27," *Vierteljahrshefte*, vol. 7 (Jan. 1960), pp. 85–118; Georg Franz-Willing, *Die Hitlerbewegung* (Hamburg, 1962); Horst Gies, "NSDAP und landwirtschaftliche Organisationen in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik," *Vierteljahrshefte*, vol. 15 (1967), pp. 341–76; Werner Jochmann, *Nationalsozialismus und Revolution: Ursprung und Geschichte der NSDAP in Hamburg 1922–1933* (Frankfurt am Main, 1963); Werner Maser, *Die Frühgeschichte der NSDAP: Hitlers Weg bis 1924* (Frankfurt am Main, 1965); Jeremy Noakes, "Conflict and Development in the NSDAP, 1924–1927," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 1 (Oct. 1966), pp. 3–36; Dietrich Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party 1919 to 1933* (Pittsburgh, 1969); Wolfgang Schäfer, *NSDAP* (Hanover, 1956). Three recent works depart somewhat from the organizational emphasis: Reinhard Kühnl, *Die nationalsozialistische Linke 1925 bis 1930* (Meisenheim, 1966), discusses some of the writers in the Strasser circle, but misunderstands their relation to the rest of the party. Max H. Kele, *Nazis and Workers: National Socialist Appeals to German Labor 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1972), catalogues working-class appeals in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, but does not relate these appeals systematically to the thought of the party leaders. Joseph Nyomarkay, *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party* (Minneapolis, 1967), recognizes the diversity of ideas expressed by party leaders before 1933, but does not analyse them in detail.

5. Edward N. Peterson, *The Limits of Hitler's Power* (Princeton, N.J., 1969), suggests that in many areas of government, Hitler was unable to exert power. This argument has not been well received by scholars; somewhat more prevalent is Martin Broszat's view that, except in certain areas of foreign policy, Hitler chose not to exercise his power (*Der Staat Hitlers*, Munich, 1969). The most important special studies are: Werner T. Angress and Bradley F. Smith, "Diaries of Heinrich Himmler's Early Years," *Journal of Modern History* (hereafter *JMH*), vol. 31 (1959), pp. 206–224; Heinz Höhne, *Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf* (Hamburg, 1966), trans. *The Order of the Death's Head* (London, 1969); J. Ackermann, *Himmler als Ideolog* (Göttingen, 1970); Bradley F. Smith, *Heinrich Himmler: A Nazi in the Making, 1900–1926* (Stanford, 1971); Peter Loewenberg, "The Adolescence of Heinrich Himmler," *American Historical Review*, vol. 76 (1971), pp. 612–41; Ernest K.

But this study, with some exceptions, leaves out of account the major ideologues of the period before 1933.<sup>6</sup> Insofar as the party newspapers before 1933 have been discussed, they have been analyzed for the evolution of propaganda techniques, without reference to content.<sup>7</sup>

The reasons for scholarly neglect of the programs and publications of the period before 1933 should probably be sought in the enduring impact of some of the earliest studies of the Nazis, those for example of Frederick Schuman, Konrad Heiden, or Erich Fromm.<sup>8</sup> Their almost exclusive concern with Hitler led logically to their rejection of formal political thought as an important motive force in Nazi history. *Mein*

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Bramsted, *Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda 1925–1945* (E. Lansing, Mich., 1965); Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner: Studien zum Machtkampf im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem* (Stuttgart, 1970); Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (New York, 1972); James McGovern, *Martin Bormann* (London, 1968). Biographical vignettes appear in Eugene Davidson, *The Trial of the Germans* (New York, 1966); and Joachim Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1963), trans. *The Face of the Third Reich* (London, 1970).

6. In addition to Cecil's work on Rosenberg (n. 5, above), Margarete Plewnia has written a scholarly biography of Dietrich Eckart: *Auf dem Weg zu Hitler: Der "völkische" Publizist Dietrich Eckart* (Bremen, 1970). Some studies of specific tendencies in German and European thought analyse and comment on some of the writings of a few of the Nazi ideologues. For example, Walter Laqueur, *Russia and Germany* (London, 1965), and Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (London, 1967) are illuminating on Rosenberg's early writings; Gerhard Kroll, *Von der Weltwirtschaftskrise zur Staatskonjunktur* (Berlin, 1958), provides some useful discussion of Feder's economic ideas; and Wolfgang Hock, *Deutscher Anti-Kapitalismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1960), helps to put Feder and Gregor Strasser in focus. Such works, of course, do not treat the Nazi writers as a group.

7. Oron J. Hale, *The Captive Press in the Third Reich* (Princeton, N.J., 1964); Carin Kessemeier, *Der Leitartikeln Goebbels in den NS-Organen Der Angriff und Das Reich* (Münster, 1967); Z. A. B. Zeman, *Nazi Propaganda* (London, 1964). Some information on content is given in Kele (n. 4, above); Roland V. Layton, Jr., "The *Völkischer Beobachter*, 1925–1933" (unpub. diss., University of Virginia, 1965); and Larry Dean Wilcox, "The National Socialist Party Press in the Kampfzeit, 1919–1933" (unpub. diss., University of Virginia, 1970). See also Layton, "The *Völkischer Beobachter*, 1920–1933," *Central European History*, vol. 3 (1970), pp. 353–82.

8. Frederick L. Schuman, "The Political Theory of German Fascism," *American Political Science Review*, April 1934, pp. 210–32; Schuman, *The Nazi Dictatorship* (New York, 1935; rev. ed., 1936); Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York, 1941). The most influential of Konrad Heiden's earliest works (both Schuman and Fromm relied on them) were: *Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1933); *Geburt des Dritten Reiches* (Zurich, 1934); *Adolf Hitler: Eine Biographie*, vol. 1: *Das Zeitalter der Verantwortungslosigkeit* (Zurich, 1936); vol. 2: *Ein Mann gegen Europa* (Zurich, 1937). The first two were combined and condensed in a single English translation: *History of National Socialism* (New York, 1935); translations of the two-volume biography appeared in 1936 and 1939 respectively, but were superseded in the 1940's by a one-volume edition, *Der Fuehrer* (New York, 1944).

*Kampf*, in which they were most interested, stubbornly resisted analysis as a work of political theory, lending credence to their view that Hitler was a ruthless demagogue, interested in power, not programs. Moreover, these early writers were attempting to discover what "led to" the institutions and policies of the Third Reich; since most of the leading publicists of the earlier period were powerless after 1933, their thought seemed to be irrelevant. And finally, the earliest students of Nazi history employed a very broad definition of ideology, often accepting Hitler's own insistence that they look for a "Weltanschauung." Since the relatively modest programmatic publications of the period before 1933 seemed unrelated to any claim to a "cosmology," the early writers on Nazism often discounted both the claim and the publications as cynical propaganda.<sup>9</sup> The ways in which such early studies of Nazi history have influenced later scholars are far too complex to analyze here.<sup>10</sup> It is evident, however, that the pattern of interpretation has remained much the same for forty years.

It is, I think, the proper time to begin again; to study Nazi ideology comprehensively and without the preconceptions which have dominated earlier scholarship. This paper will survey the publications of the major ideologues before 1933, in an attempt to suggest the methods appropriate to such a study and to identify the kinds of source materials which most urgently require attention. My discussion will concentrate upon Eckart, Rosenberg, Feder, Gregor and Otto Strasser, and Darré. These were the most prolific writers before 1933, the ones who most frequently set down statements with clear theoretical content, and the ones who, either through their personal prestige or through their editorial positions, exercised the most influence on the rest of the party.<sup>11</sup>

9. See especially Konrad Heiden, *History of National Socialism*, pp. 3–82, and *Der Fuehrer*, pp. 36–77, 90–124, and Fromm, *passim*. Bracher's view of the Twenty-Five Points as "an innate lie" (*The German Dictatorship*, p. 147) can thus be traced back, via many intermediaries, to Heiden.

10. I will deal with this subject at appropriate length in an anthology of translations of Nazi political writings which I am preparing.

11. A larger study might consider Esser, whose publications always took the form of topical articles; Dinter, although his period of influence was very brief; and Streicher, who before 1923 was more than an anti-Semitic pornographer. Despite the careful scholarship of Smith and Angress, Ackermann, and to a lesser extent Heinz Höhne, it has not been possible so far to identify the political ideas of Heinrich Himmler before 1933. These analyses have had to depend not on published works but upon an unpublished and undated manuscript ("Völkische Bauernpolitik," NSDAP Hauptarchiv, microfilm roll 98), and upon Himmler's rather enigmatic diaries. Goebbels has already been studied very extensively as a propagandist; my discussion will refer to him in those cases where he contributed something new or significant to ideological debate.

Where possible I will attempt to relate their thought to what is known of Hitler's, but I will not offer any sizeable reinterpretation of Hitler's ideas. Hitler's few published works from this period have already been studied enough; a realistic appraisal of his thought must await the thorough examination of those hundreds of his speeches which he apparently chose not to publish. It is important to realize, however, that anything published by the party presses before 1933 either had Hitler's tacit approval or appeared to have it.

If one approaches the study of Nazi ideology without preconceptions, some useful observations can be made at the outset. Most of the Nazi leaders set forth a great deal of political theory in the period before 1933. The major ideas of each are quite distinctive, but there were significant shifts of emphasis and even of opinion for each throughout the period before 1933. Sometimes these shifts resulted from external political circumstances, sometimes they represented a response to the emergence of a new idea or writer in official publications. To a great extent the Nazi leaders wrote in competition with one another. While it may not always be clear whose favor they were courting (Hitler, a party following, the general public?), they clearly thought it necessary to publish in quantity, as a means to personal power within the party, or as a means of increasing the power of the party within the nation. Thus Nazi ideology, before 1933 at least, was obviously not a consistent whole, but a doctrine in the process of rapid development, into which new ideas were continually introduced. To trace this development it is necessary to study the writings, in every kind of publication, of the major political theorists within the party; and it is just as important to trace the interaction of these men and their ideas.

Among all of the Nazi writers, interaction and mutual influence is clearest and most clearly significant in the case of Eckart, Feder, and Rosenberg. Even before Hitler arrived back in Munich for the second time and became the fifty-fifth member of the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, these three had come to be close associates, and together had developed a distinctive set of political ideas.

Since recent rewriting of Nazi party history has tended to concentrate on the early years in Munich,<sup>12</sup> the lives of the first party leaders

12. In addition to the works cited in n. 4, above, the following are helpful on the beginnings of the party and on its early leaders: Ernst Deuerlein, "Hitlers Eintritt in die NSDAP und die Reichswehr," *Vierteljahrshefte*, vol. 7 (1959), pp. 177ff.; Ernst Deuerlein, *Der Hitler-Putsch: Bayerische Dokumente zum 8/9. November 1923* (Stuttgart, 1962); D. M.

have begun to be reexamined. Of the three original ideologues, only Feder still lacks a biography.<sup>13</sup> Powerless after 1934, treated with contempt by Hitler, he has been discounted ever since. Feder was widely disliked within the party for his arrogance and inflexibility, but his early writings had a pervasive influence on the party's approach to economic issues. In 1919 he published his *Manifesto for Breaking the Bondage of Interest* and, in Eckart's *Auf Gut Deutsch*, an essay called "The Social State."<sup>14</sup> These writings contain the core of his thought, though he expanded on them in other works between 1919 and 1923.<sup>15</sup> They include his well-known demands for the abrogation of the national debt and the nationalization of credit; they also contain his much less well known theories of corporatism.

"Breaking the bondage of interest" is an uncouth and meaningless-sounding slogan; it is easy to dismiss it as the utterance of an "economic crank." But if one reads the writings rather than the slogan, it becomes clear that Feder had some concrete proposals in mind. He wanted to na-

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Douglas, "The Early Ortsgruppen: the Development of National Socialist Local Groups 1919-1923" (unpub. diss., University of Kansas, 1968); Hans Fenske, *Konservatismus und Rechtsradikalismus in Bayern nach 1918* (Bad Homburg, 1969); Georg Franz, "Munich: Birthplace and Center of the National Socialist German Workers' Party," *JMH*, vol. 29 (1957), pp. 319-34; Hans Hubert Hofmann, *Der Hitlerputsch: Krisenjahre deutscher Geschichte 1920-24* (Munich, 1961); Walter Pese, "Hitler und Italien 1920-1926," *Vierteljahrshäfte*, vol. 3 (1955), pp. 113-26; Reginald Phelps, "Anton Drexler, der Gründer der NSDAP," *Deutsche Rundschau*, vol. 87 (1961), pp. 1134-43; Phelps, "'Before Hitler Came': Thule Society and Germanenorden," *JMH*, vol. 25 (1963), pp. 245-61; Paul Pörtner, "The Writers' Revolution, Munich, 1918-1919," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 3 (1968), pp. 137-51.

13. Arthur R. Hermann, *Gottfried Feder: Der Mann und sein Werk* (Leipzig, 1933), is reliable only on events before 1918.

14. "Das Manifest zur Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft des Geldes." The original date of the "Manifest" is unclear. In "Innere Geschichte der Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft," *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 72, Aug. 12, 1920, Feder said he first circulated the text during the latter half of November 1918. The first published version, however, appeared in the left-wing *Kritische Rundschau*, ed. L. Held, Munich, vol. 2 (Summer 1919), pp. 14-15. An expanded version—the original with extensive commentary—appeared later in 1919 as no. 1 of the pamphlet series *An Alle, Alle!* (Diessen: Huber). This latter version was republished without alteration by Huber, 1923, and by Eher, Munich, 1926, 1932. "Der soziale Staat," *Auf Gut Deutsch*, no. 14/15 (May 24, 1919), pp. 218-27.

15. *Der Staatsbankerott die Rettung* (Diessen: Huber, 1919), no. 2 of *An Alle, Alle!*; with August Buckley, *Der kommende Steuerstreik: Seine Gefahr, seine Unvermeidlichkeit, seine Wirkung* (Diessen: Huber, 1921); *Der deutsche Staat auf nationaler und sozialer Grundlage—Neue Wege in Staat, Finanz und Wirtschaft* (Munich: Eher, 1923; new printings 1932, 1933, 1935).



tionalize and centralize the German banking system.<sup>16</sup> He wanted a new “national socialist” state to play a major part (though he was imprecise about the means) in the management and ownership of public utilities, transportation systems, and natural resources.<sup>17</sup> The revenues the state obtained from these would, he thought, permit retirement of the public debt and eliminate most direct taxation.<sup>18</sup> He also envisioned large-scale interference by the state in private enterprise: through its control of credit it would gain some control over prices and wages; it would confiscate excess profit and use it for social welfare purposes; it would participate in urban landownership on a large scale, thus regulating rents and diminishing, or in some cases abolishing, mortgages.<sup>19</sup> Feder’s writings, then, called for a thoroughgoing state socialism.

In the same writings he also said quite a lot about the form of the new state. It would be corporatist in structure, and highly representative.<sup>20</sup> Never did Feder, or any major Nazi writer before 1933, prophesy a dictatorship.<sup>21</sup> Like many later Nazi theorists, Feder spoke both of the community of the folk and of the rise of a new elite, and it was never clear whether he thought the two were the same or not. But it is significant that Feder was the first of the Nazi writers to set forth a comprehensive theory of corporatism; it is not necessary to look to the

16. “Manifest,” *Kritische Rundschau*, secs. 4, 5, p. 15.

17. *Manifest* (Diessen: Huber, 1919), pp. 6–7, 26, 36. He also proposed a comprehensive public works program, *ibid.*, p. 47.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27, and *passim*.

19. “Manifest,” *Kritische Rundschau*, secs. 3, 5, 6, 8, p. 15. Feder’s defense of industrial capitalism (*ibid.*) has misled historians into thinking that he wished to give industrial capital complete freedom. Instead, however, he expected a deceleration of the profit motive to be enforced by restricted credit; he called for the abolition of luxury industries; and he wished forcibly to redirect industrial production toward the home market and toward utilitarian goods. His complaint against wholesale socialization of industry was that it would curtail productivity (*Manifest*, pp. 6–10); on the other hand he wanted the state to decentralize industry and to guard against the growth of large-scale enterprise (*Manifest*, pp. 29–30, 56, 59–61). “Profits” were to be restricted by lowered prices and were to be shared with the workers (*Manifest*, sec. 6, p. 8, and p. 44).

20. In “Der soziale Staat,” he even proposed that the vote be extended to children.

21. Like any negative statement, this one is impossible to prove. But it is noteworthy, given historians’ assumptions about the importance of the “Führerprinzip” in early Nazi history (see, for example, Orlow, pp. 25, 74, 86), that none of the writings surveyed in this article even hints at a future dictatorship. Nor do they glorify Hitler as *Führer*—even Gregor Strasser’s *Das Hitler-Büchlein* (Berlin: Kampf-Verlag, n.d. [ca. 1927]) merely says, in effect, “if you think Hitler is unimportant, read what he has written” (pp. 3–7). Strasser also wrote: “studiere auch die Idee, die er [Hitler], der Trommler, durch die Lande verkündet . . .” (*ibid.*, p. 12).

Strassers for this idea, as Reinhard Kühnl has done, and certainly corporatism was widely accepted within the Nazi party long before the influence of the depression made German industrialists enthusiastic about it.<sup>22</sup>

Although there is as yet no direct evidence, Feder could well have been the writer of the anticapitalist sections of the Twenty-Five Points, which promised expropriation of big business and of some urban landholding.<sup>23</sup> He did not, apparently, extend his theories to encompass rural land use before 1923, although he may have done so in speeches to the radical farmers of the north in the later twenties.<sup>24</sup> It is also possible to see him as the author of the references to corporatism in the early program. But I think he did not write the anti-Semitic portions of this document. Hitler's assertions to the contrary, there is no evidence that Feder had strong anti-Semitic leanings.<sup>25</sup> In fact he described anti-

22. Reinhard Kühnl, "Zur Programmatik der nationalsozialistischen Linken," *Vierteljahrshäfte*, vol. 14 (1966), pp. 317-33; Dieter Petzina, "Hauptprobleme der deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik 1932/33," *Vierteljahrshäfte*, vol. 15 (1967), pp. 18-55. Joseph Haag, "Othmar Spann and the Politics of 'Totality': Corporatism in Theory and Practice," (unpub. diss., Rice University, 1969), claims for Spann a major influence on Nazi ideology after 1930. Feder praised Spann but emphasized his own originality in introducing corporatism into Nazi ideology in "Othmar Spann, zu seinem 50. Geburtstag," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Oct. 3, 1928. See also Henry Ashby Turner, "Hitler's Secret Pamphlet for Industrialists, 1927," *JMH*, vol. 40 (1968), pp. 348-74, and "Big Business and the Rise of Hitler," *American Historical Review*, vol. 75 (1969/70), pp. 56-70.

23. Feder, in *Das Programm der NSDAP und seine weltanschaulichen Grundgedanken* (Munich: Eher, 1927), pp. 17-20, refers repeatedly to his early works as the basis of the economic portions of the program.

24. *Manifest* (Diessen: Huber, 1919), p. 36, makes only brief mention of the benefits for the small farmers of "breaking the bondage of interest." Feder did not begin to write about them at length until 1926 (see "Aus der Bewegung," *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 35, Feb. 12, 1926). According to Albert Krebs, *Tendenzen und Gestalten der NSDAP: Erinnerungen an die Frühzeit der Partei* (Stuttgart, 1959), p. 204, Feder was one of the party's most popular speakers in northern rural districts.

25. In *Mein Kampf* (Boston and New York, 1939), pp. 287-89, Hitler says that Feder made it clear to him that the true political enemy was "Jewish" financial capitalism, rather than capitalism in general. While it is true that Feder concentrated his invective above all on financial capitalism, this was not his only target, nor did he call it "Jewish." There are a few veiled anti-Semitic remarks in the *Manifest* (Diessen: Huber), pp. 15-16, 33-34, 62, but Feder explicitly denies that financial capitalism can be identified with any one segment of the population (*ibid.*, pp. 34-35). The equation between Jews, bankers, and bolsheviks, which appears in *Mein Kampf*, stems from the combined influence upon Hitler of Feder, Eckart, and Rosenberg; see below, p. 15.

Semitism in disparaging tones as “purely negative” and did not write a systematically anti-Semitic tract until 1933.<sup>26</sup>

For early anti-Semitic doctrine it is necessary to turn to Eckart and Rosenberg. Here too there has been considerable confusion. Since the publication of the earliest histories of national socialism, Eckart has been regarded as the most sadistic and vulgar of the early anti-Semites within the party—as a precursor of Streicher.<sup>27</sup> Yet the works which conform most closely to this stereotype, *Grave-Diggers of Russia, In the New Germany*, and *Reports from a Suffering Hungary*, were in fact compilations of vicious cartoons drawn by a friend of Rosenberg’s from Reval, with introductions by Rosenberg and a few bits of anti-Semitic doggerel as Eckart’s only contributions.<sup>28</sup> Actually, Eckart’s anti-Semitism was entirely different from Streicher’s, which conforms most closely to our stereotype of Nazi anti-Semitism, and different from Rosenberg’s views as well. Rosenberg’s anti-Semitism was overwhelmingly biological. He held that the Jews were a distinct race, from whose racial characteristics religious, political, and cultural consequences could be deduced.<sup>29</sup> But for Eckart “Jewishness” was not a racial condition but a spiritual one. In part, “Jewishness” was defined by religion; the Jews are those, Eckart said, who do not believe in a life after death; they therefore have no “soul” themselves and seek to deny it in others.<sup>30</sup> And from this he derived a much broader definition.

In some of his early writings “Jewishness” represents concentration on this-worldly things and forms the fundamental basis of all philosoph-

26. *Das Programm* (1927), p. 17. For systematic anti-Semitic tracts see Feder, *Die Juden* (Munich: Eher, 1933); and, with Ferdinand Werner and Ernst Graf zu Reventlow, *Das neue Deutschland und die Judenfrage* (Leipzig: Rüdiger, 1933). There are occasional anti-Semitic statements in Feder’s earlier speeches and articles, but they tend to be perfunctory. See, for example, “Wirtschaftsgrundsätze des Nationalsozialismus,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 30, Mar. 2, 1923; “Handel-, Finanz- und Wirtschaftspolitik—Zinsknechtschaft,” *ibid.*, no. 174, Aug. 29, 1923; “Feder in Parchim,” *ibid.*, no. 9, Jan. 13, 1927; “Gegen die Negerkultur,” *ibid.*, no. 25, Jan. 31, 1930.

27. Margarete Plewnia, pp. 7–8, traces this view from Heiden through Bullock, Maser, Bracher, and Mosse.

28. *Totengräber Russlands* (Munich: Deutscher Volksverlag, Dr. E. Boepple, 1921); “Im neuen Deutschland,” Sonderheft, *Auf Gut Deutsch* (Munich: Hoheneichen Verlag), Jan.–Mar. 1920; “Aus Ungarns Schreckenstagen,” Sonderheft, *Auf Gut Deutsch*, May 1920. The cartoons were by Otto von Kursell.

29. See especially Alfred Rosenberg, *Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten* (Munich: Boepple, 1920).

30. Eckart, “Das Judentum in und ausser uns,” *Auf Gut Deutsch*, serially, nos. 1–7, Jan.–Apr. 1919, especially pp. 28–31, 79–80, 95–96, 109–12.

ical materialism.<sup>31</sup> Using this concept of “Jewishness,” Eckart argued that each man is at least a little bit “Jewish”: that men must seek to overcome “Jewishness” not only around them but also within themselves. Eckart decked out these theories with a wealth of philosophical trappings, invoking Ibsen and Schopenhauer, among others, but the most interesting of his conclusions was a kind of pervasive dualism. Not only the individual but also the nation is wracked by the battle between the spiritual and the material, between Jew and non-Jew; yet “life” depends on the perpetuation of the struggle, so that when the individual or the nation overcomes “the Jew within,” death ensues (though, presumably, so does immortality).<sup>32</sup> This strange notion may help to explain Eckart’s hatred of the Zionist movement, against which he raged in *Auf Gut Deutsch*. He may also have inspired Rosenberg’s early anti-Zionist tracts. But clearly the implications of Eckart’s and Rosenberg’s anti-Semitism were very different, since for Eckart Germany must retain some “Jewishness” to stay “alive,” while for Rosenberg the revivification of the *Volk* depended utterly upon the purging of all Jews.<sup>33</sup>

Scholars have generally noticed only Eckart’s anti-Semitism. But the subject matter of his publications was much broader. The extent of his influence is still not wholly understood, despite Margarete Plewnia’s careful work.<sup>34</sup> Between 1919 and 1921 Eckart’s *Auf Gut Deutsch* offered a forum for many political writers, not least for Rosenberg and

31. “Das Judentum in und ausser uns,” pp. 28–31, 109–12; “Der grosse Krumme,” *Auf Gut Deutsch*, vol. 1 (1918–20), no. 1 (Dec. 1918), pp. 3–8. See also Plewnia, p. 29.

32. “Das Judentum in und ausser uns,” pp. 109–12. See also “Zwiesprache,” *Auf Gut Deutsch*, vol. 1 (1918–20), no. 2, pp. 18ff; “Der Herr Rabbiner aus Bremen,” *ibid.*, no. 37/38 (Sonderheft); “Das ist der Jude! Laien predigt über Juden- und Christentum,” *ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 30/34 (Sonderheft).

33. Plewnia, p. 95, believes Eckart to be the author of the anti-Semitic portions of the Twenty-Five Points, because of the presence of the phrase “Das Judentum in und ausser uns.” But the restrictions of Jewish civil rights in the Twenty-Five Points are much closer to Rosenberg’s thinking. See especially *Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten*, ch. 20, in which Rosenberg proposes that all civil rights and state employment be forbidden to Jews (whom he defines according to blood and marriage ties, explicitly rejecting religious affiliation as a criterion). He also proposes that they be excluded from all cultural activities, though he thinks they should be permitted to practice a profession. For Hitler’s use of the phrase “Das Judentum in und ausser uns,” see Phelps, *Vierteljahrshefte*, vol. 16 (1968), pp. 390–420.

34. Plewnia is primarily interested in Eckart’s probable influence on Hitler; she does not consider in detail the relations between Eckart and Rosenberg or between Eckart and Feder. The culmination of her argument, that Eckart laid the basis for the *Führer* cult, is the least convincing part of her study: see pp. 61–93.

Feder.<sup>35</sup> While writing for *Auf Gut Deutsch*, Rosenberg and Feder may have adopted some of Eckart's ideas, or the influence may have been predominantly in the other direction.<sup>36</sup> It is clear, however, that Eckart considered himself a political radical; he was probably the first of the Nazi writers to call for a "second revolution" because the "first revolution"—that is, the November revolution of 1918—had not been radical or thoroughgoing enough. The November revolution was a sham, he argued, because it merely cloaked the return of the old leaders under a false socialism. A genuine revolution would bring forth new leaders and introduce true socialism.<sup>37</sup>

In April 1919 Eckart tried to challenge the newly established Soviet Republic in Bavaria by issuing his own call to revolution. He composed a leaflet, *To All Working People!* which he and Rosenberg hand-distributed on April 5, 1919.<sup>38</sup> *To All Working People!* called for a new government which would bring about the "nationalization of credit" and free the common people from the yoke of the Entente powers. It also included the term "the golden international" (here identified with the Entente powers), a phrase which, in Rosenberg's formulation, would acquire a long history of its own in Nazi writing. As Rosenberg later described the incident, they were a timorous pair of revolutionaries indeed, alone on the streets without a following.<sup>39</sup> But both the handbill, which later found its way into official Nazi publications, and the revolu-

35. *Auf Gut Deutsch: Wochenschrift für Ordnung und Recht*, Hoheneichen Verlag. Dec. 1918–July 1920, Wolfratshausen and Munich; Aug. 1920–May 1921, Munich.

36. For example, Eckart began to identify Judaism and bolshevism in the same issue of *Auf Gut Deutsch* in which Rosenberg discussed this theme for the first time. See Eckart, vol. 1 (1918–20), no. 8, p. 114; Rosenberg, *ibid.*, pp. 120–23.

37. Eckart, "Der grosse Krumme," *Auf Gut Deutsch*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1918), pp. 3–8; "Männer," *ibid.*, pp. 1–3; "Bürger . . . Wir fordern den wahren Sozialismus," vol. 1, no. 13 (May 17, 1919), p. 196; and "Deutscher und jüdischer Bolschewismus," vol. 1, no. 25 (August 22, 1919). The arguments of the last are carried forward in *Der Bolschewismus von Moses bis Lenin: Zwiegespräch zwischen Adolf Hitler und mir* (Munich: Hoheneichen, 1924; 2nd ed., Munich: Eher, 1925; *Der Bolschewismus von seinem Anfängen bis Lenin*). Plewnia's discussion (pp. 101–9) of the relationship of this work to Hitler's thought is authoritative.

38. "An alle Werktätigen!" April 5, 1919. Reprinted as a pamphlet (Halle an der Saale: Walter Kersten, 1924), and used as election campaign literature by the *Völkischsozialen Block*; and in Feder, *Kampf gegen die Hochfinanz* (Munich: Eher, 1933), pp. 97–103, where Feder claims coauthorship. See also Eckart, "Männer," and "Bürger," *loc. cit.*, and Rosenberg, ed., *Dietrich Eckart: Ein Vermächtnis* (Munich: Eher, 1928), introduction.

39. Rosenberg, *Letzte Aufzeichnungen* (Göttingen, 1955), p. 77. See also Eckart's romanticized reminiscences of his revolutionary activities in "Sturmtag," *Auf Gut Deutsch*, vol. 1 (1918–20), serially in nos. 14–21.

tionary effort, acquired considerable fame within the party. Some of the phrases in the handbill sound like Feder, but his participation is not certain. What is clear, however, is that by the spring of 1919, Feder, Eckart, and Rosenberg were working very closely together.

Rosenberg's distinctive contribution to this early development was his view of the Bolshevik revolution. Almost immediately after he came to Munich from the Baltic region, Rosenberg was taken under Eckart's wing. He launched his career as a political pamphleteer with an article called "The Russian-Jewish Revolution" in *Auf Gut Deutsch*.<sup>40</sup> In this and many subsequent articles and books he "revealed" the dominance of the Jews in the Bolshevik revolution, and claimed that this revolution was part of a larger Zionist conspiracy which included the plundering of Germany by international banking circles as well.<sup>41</sup> By adding the Bolsheviks to Feder's "international monetary powers" and to Eckart's international Jewish conspiracy, Rosenberg created one of the most persistent images in Nazi thought and writing. After Rosenberg, the "golden international" represented a conspiracy of Jewish Bolsheviks and Jewish bankers closing in on Germany.<sup>42</sup> There is no doubt that many Nazi leaders, including Himmler and probably Hitler as well, adopted this idea with the utmost sincerity.

From 1919 to 1923, in essays in *Auf Gut Deutsch*, editorials in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, and in a long series of books, including his very popular commentary on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*,<sup>43</sup> Rosenberg es-

40. Rosenberg, "Die russisch-jüdische Revolution," *Auf Gut Deutsch*, vol. 1 (1918–20), no. 8 (Feb. 21, 1919), pp. 120–23. Rosenberg so valued this essay that he reprinted it often. See *Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten*, pp. 20–32; "Der jüdische Bolschewismus in Russland," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Nov. 26, 1921; "Der jüdische Bolschewismus," *Tötengräber Russlands*; and the introduction in *Pest in Russland! Der Bolschewismus, seine Häupter, Handlanger und Opfer* (Munich: Boepple, 1922).

41. See, in addition to works mentioned in n. 40, *Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus auf Grund jüdischer Quellen erläutert* (Hamburg: Deutschvölkische Verlagsanstalt, 1922); *Der völkische Staatsgedanke, Untergang und Neugeburt* (Munich: Eher, 1924); *Die internationale Hochfinanz als Herrin der Arbeiterbewegung in allen Ländern* (Munich: Boepple, 1925). In *Das Verbrechen des Freimaurerei: Judentum, Jesuitismus, deutsches Christentum* (Munich: Lehmann, 1921), Rosenberg assimilated Jesuits and freemasons into his conspiratorial theory.

42. The identification of Jews and bolsheviks appears first in "Die russische-jüdische Revolution." References to the role of banking circles begin in *Die Spur des Juden*, ch. 20; to Zionism *ibid.*, ch. 13. See also "Hochverrat der deutschen Zionisten," *Auf Gut Deutsch*, vol. 2 (1920–21), no. 11/12, pp. 153–72.

43. *Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion und die jüdische Weltpolitik* (Munich: Boepple, 1923): not a new edition of the *Protocols* but a commentary on them, with some quotations from them. Rosenberg did not, of course, bring the *Protocols* to Germany, and although Robert Cecil argues that he read them in 1917, Cecil's only evidence for this is an

tablished an enduring reputation within the party as an expert on both the Bolsheviks and the Jews. He remained a fervent anti-Bolshevik all his life, but the emphasis on anti-Semitism diminished greatly in his later official publications, and its role in his thought remains somewhat ambiguous. Rosenberg's earliest essays, written before he came to Germany and unpublished until 1943, contain little anti-Semitism.<sup>44</sup> Rather they show great, if amateur, enthusiasms for painting, archaeology, and aesthetics. And they display Rosenberg's professional interests as an architect. These interests reappeared in Rosenberg's editorial writings in the *Völkischer Beobachter* in the middle twenties, dominated his work with the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*, and appear to have absorbed most of his intellectual energies from 1928 on.<sup>45</sup> During this later period, however, Rosenberg edited an independent anti-Semitic journal, *Der Weltkampf, Halbmonatschrift für den Judenfrage aller Länder*.<sup>46</sup> It is not clear, therefore, whether Rosenberg's anti-Semitism was sincere and consistent, but was at least partially suppressed after 1923 by some kind of official pressure, or whether it was a cynical concoction used whenever he found a favorable market. There is considerable evidence for the latter view.<sup>47</sup>

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unsupported statement by Heiden (Cecil, p. 17; Heiden, *Der Fuehrer*, p. 9). The first hint of familiarity with the *Protocols* in Rosenberg's work comes in *Die Spur des Juden* (1920), in which Rosenberg's references to Tolstoy echo the writings of Fyodor Vinberg, one of the purveyors of the *Protocols*. (For German editions of the *Protocols* see Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, New York, 1966, pp. 129–35.) It is noteworthy that Rosenberg did not review the *Protocols* until February 1921; see "Bücherschau," *Auf Gut Deutsch*, vol. 2 (1920–21), no. 5/6.

44. *Schriften und Reden*, 2 vols., (Munich, 1943), contains one rather ambiguous reference to Jews from 1917 ("Gedanken über Persönlichkeit," vol. 1, pp. 15–16) and three anti-Semitic essays from the summer of 1918 ("Eine ernste Frage," pp. 75–79; "Über Religions-Unterricht," pp. 79–88; "Der Jude," pp. 88–115) among a wide variety of essays on art, architecture, archaeology, and aesthetics. While such editions after the fact are not necessarily reliable, there was no reason, in 1943, for Rosenberg to hide his early anti-Semitism.

45. "Um eine Weltanschauung," *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 48, May 24/25, 1925; "Nationalsozialismus im Weltkampf," *ibid.*, no. 258, Nov. 7/8, 1926; "Auseinandersetzung über Wundts 'Deutsche Weltanschauung,'" *ibid.*, no. 40, Feb. 18, 1927. See also Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 148–53, 155–67.

46. Munich: Boepple, 1924–44.

47. According to *Letzte Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 69–71, Rosenberg's first impulse on arriving in Germany was to attempt to sell some paintings and/or a previously written tract on aesthetics (perhaps the same as "Objektiver und individueller Stil," *Schriften und Reden*, vol. 1, pp. 46–54, or "Von Form und Formung im Kunstwerk," *ibid.*, pp. 27–45,

In any case, after 1923, Rosenberg's political writings for the *Völkischer Beobachter* and for the Eher Verlag concentrated increasingly upon foreign policy, art, and culture.<sup>48</sup> His glorification of the "Aryans," which appears first in articles for the *Völkischer Beobachter* and later in *Houston Stewart Chamberlain* and *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, seems to have been one of his earliest passions. If one can believe Rosenberg's memoirs, it developed long before he read Chamberlain, as a result of his enthusiasm for those archaeologists who taught that the Baltic must have been the birthplace of the original Indo-European people.<sup>49</sup> There exists therefore a definite possibility that it was Rosenberg who introduced Hitler to the Aryans, rather than the other way around, as is commonly assumed.

The changes in Rosenberg's thought and writing which occurred around 1923 were paralleled by a more general change in the way in which Nazi ideology developed. Eckart died at the end of 1923 and Feder became rather rigid: although his early works were reissued by Eher several times between 1923 and 1933, they appeared without sig-

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both dated May 1918). Although he was a trained architect, by his own account he does not seem to have tried very hard to find a job in this field, although, of course, in Germany in 1918 and 1919 there was scarcely any work for architects (or for engineers, which may have some bearing on Feder's political activities). Thus, jobless, it is quite likely that Eckart's patronage would have swayed him toward anti-Semitic journalism. "Die russisch-jüdische Revolution" shows that Rosenberg kept himself very well informed about events in Russia after he left, presumably through Russian newspapers. He must therefore have known that he was distorting the facts; there is thus a real possibility that he did so intentionally and perhaps cynically, to please Eckart. Eckart's death at the end of 1923 may have released Rosenberg from some sense of obligation and permitted him to return to an emphasis on his own earliest interests.

48. On foreign policy, *Der völkische Staatsgedanke* (Munich: Eher, 1924); *Der Zukunftsweg einer deutschen Aussenpolitik* (Munich: Eher, 1927). Rosenberg's influence on Nazi foreign policy is assessed in H. A. Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik 1933-38* (Frankfurt am Main, 1968), and in G. Schubert, *Anfänge der Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik* (Cologne, 1963). On art and culture see, in addition to works cited in n. 45, *Houston Stewart Chamberlain als Verkünder und Begründer einer deutschen Zukunft* (Munich: Eher, 1927); *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Hoheneichen Verlag, 1930).

49. According to *Letzte Aufzeichnungen*, Rosenberg developed an early enthusiasm for the works of the then distinguished (though controversial) archaeologist Gustav Kossina, who in 1906 and 1912 set forth the idea that the Indo-European, or "Aryan," "homeland" was to be found along the Baltic. See also Rosenberg, "Einzelne Gedanken," dated 1917, *Schriften und Reden*, vol. 1, pp. 12-13, 16, 24-26. It is important to realize that, in equating "Aryans" and "Indo-Europeans," Rosenberg was following established and respectable current usage: not only did Kossina confound the two, but so did V. Gordon Childé (*The Aryans*, New York, 1926).



nificant changes, and he did not attempt many new publications.<sup>50</sup> Thus, although “breaking the bondage of interest,” throwing off the yoke of the “golden international,” and establishing “German socialism” became the typical slogans of Nazi propaganda, they were not developed further by the original Munich ideologues. Meanwhile Rosenberg, exploring new themes, and the Strassers and their circle (including for a brief time both Goebbels and Himmler) became the leading influences in the development of party doctrine. Unlike the original Munich group, Rosenberg and the Strassers were not closely allied, and after 1923 Nazi political writing displays many tensions. The two schools competed directly through the press, so that, for example, no less a work than the *Myth of the Twentieth Century* was almost certainly written—and very hastily written—in response to Gregor and Otto Strasser’s *National Socialism, the Weltanschauung of the Twentieth Century*.<sup>51</sup> It is also probable that Rosenberg was encouraged to return to his earlier interest in the arts during this period by a series of essays on the arts in the Strassers’ *NS-Briefe*.<sup>52</sup> All the Nazi writers attempted to preserve a façade of mutual respect in print, but on at least one occasion Gregor Strasser’s views provoked Rosenberg to harsh words in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, while Otto carried on an acrimonious debate with the inflexible Feder on the question of profit sharing.<sup>53</sup>

But if the Strassers and their circle helped to stimulate debate and widen the focus of ideological writing, this was not, as has usually been assumed, because they represented a dissident or radical faction within

50. Feder, *Der Dawespakt* (Munich: Eher, 1928); *Das Programm der NSDAP . . .* (Munich: Eher, 1927); *Die Wohnungsnot und die soziale Bau- und Wirtschaftsbank . . .* (Munich: Eher, 1929), and nn. 14 and 15, above.

51. In January 1929, the *NS Briefe* announced that a major treatise by Gregor and Otto Strasser, Ernst Graf zu Reventlow, Herbert Blank, and Reinhold Muchow, “National Socialism as the Weltanschauung of the Twentieth Century,” was forthcoming. (The book appeared as no. 1 of the *Grünen Hefte der NS-Briefe* series, 5 vols., Berlin: Kampf-Verlag, 1929.) Very soon after this announcement, Rosenberg began to refer to the need for national socialism to provide a new, twentieth-century “myth.” See “Die Kulturkrise der Gegenwart,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Feb. 27, 1929.

52. See, for example, Winfried Wendland, “Kulturbolschewismus,” *NS-Briefe*, 1928–29, no. 18 (Mar. 15, 1929), pp. 292–97; Wendland, “Vom Sinn der Kunst,” *ibid.*, 1929–30, no. 8 (Oct. 15, 1929), pp. 123–26; and Wendland, *Nationalsozialismus und Kunst*, no. 4 of the *Grünen Hefte*, Nov. 1929.

53. Alfred Rosenberg, “Nationaler Sozialismus?” *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 25, Feb. 1, 1927; Gregor answered in “Nationaler Sozialismus,” *NS-Briefe*, 1926–27, no. 34 (Feb. 15, 1927). Otto Strasser, “Gewinnbeteiligung!” *NS-Briefe*, Jan. 15, 1929; Gottfried Feder, “Gewinnbeteiligung,” *Volk und Gemeinde* (Troppau, 1929), Folge 8.

the party. Certainly it is true that neither Otto, who resigned from the party in 1930, nor Gregor, who resigned his post as *Reichsorganisationsleiter* in 1932 (though not his party membership), held office in Hitler's government. But whatever the reasons for their resignations were (they are not entirely clear as yet), up to the dates of their sudden departures they were widely influential publicists, and Gregor, between 1926 and the end of 1932, was one of the most powerful men in the party.<sup>54</sup>

To understand the Strassers' role it is necessary to separate the thought of the two brothers, and this, primarily because of the impact of Otto Strasser's apologias, has not been done. In his several memoirs, Otto sought to dissociate himself, and in retrospect his brother too, from the Nazi party, by stressing the radical, revolutionary, and socialist nature of their thought.<sup>55</sup> To the extent that the Strassers' ideas have been studied at all, therefore, interest has focussed on Gregor's unpublished draft program of 1925-26 and upon the radical views which supposedly led Otto to break with the party in 1930. Gregor has tended to be seen as Otto's disciple, and many scholars assume, all evidence to the contrary, that it must have been his socialist ideas which led Gregor in turn to break with Hitler in 1932. If their writings are looked at as a whole, however, it would appear that Otto, not Gregor, was the disciple, and that far from being a disappointed dissident, Gregor successfully introduced more new ideas into the mainstream of Nazi thought than anyone

54. On the Strassers as dissidents, see Kühnl, Nyomarkay, Bullock, Mosse, Bracher, and many others. Otto Strasser wrote for the *NS-Briefe* and the Strasser newspapers (which included the *Berliner Arbeiter-Zeitung*, *Sächsischer Beobachter*, *Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, *Märkischer Beobachter*, and six editions of *Der nationale Sozialist*); he also edited the *Berliner Arbeiter-Zeitung* for a brief period. Gregor edited the *NS-Briefe* from Oct. 1, 1926, to July 1930 (taking over from Goebbels, who was editor from Nov. 1, 1925, to Sept. 1926), and wrote an extraordinary volume of short essays for these and other Nazi publications. The Kampf-Verlag itself owed most of its direction to Gregor; it was closed down in 1930 not by party fiat, but by letting Otto take it over and run it into bankruptcy. Gregor's organizational activities (he was *Propagandaleiter* and then *Reichsorganisationsleiter*) are treated by Orlow and Kele; his career as a Reichstag member is not yet well understood.

55. See, for example, Michael Geismaier [pseud.], *Gregor Strasser* (Leipzig, 1933); Otto Strasser, *Juni Sonnabend 30: Vorgeschichte, Verlauf, Folgen* (Prague, 1934); *Die deutsche Bartholomäusnacht* (Zurich, 1935); *Wohin treibt Hitler?* (Prague, 1936); *Europa von Morgen* (Zurich, 1939); *Hitler und Ich* (Buenos Aires, 1940; trans.: *Hitler and I*, Boston, 1940); *L'aigle prussien sur l'Allemagne* (Montreal, 1941); *The Gangsters around Hitler* (London, 1942); *Germany in a Disunited World* (Eastbourne, England, 1947); *Exil* (Munich, 1958). These writings should be used only with extreme caution, and this is also true for the memoirs, polemics, and apologias of other former members of the Strasser circle: Krebs, Blank, Niekisch, Hierl.

else. Gregor wrote more than any other Nazi leader except Rosenberg, and had one of the most fertile minds of all the Nazi writers. Nor was he a radical; he was, if anything, more conservative than Feder.

Apart from the complications which Otto's memoirs have created in the interpretation of Gregor Strasser's thought, there are several other reasons why he has often been regarded as a dissident and disappointed radical. The first of these is Hitler's rejection in February 1926 of the draft program written by Goebbels and Strasser. Goebbels' descriptions in his diaries of this event are highly emotional and portray it as a major defeat.<sup>56</sup> The second reason is Gregor's organizational role in the party—his efforts to strengthen the party in the northern cities, and his proposals to form Nazi trade unions.<sup>57</sup> Finally, as *Propagandaleiter*, Strasser is known to have laid great stress on the frequent use of the term "socialism" in Nazi propaganda.

Hitler's rejection of the draft program at the Bamberg conference has often been misinterpreted. He did not explicitly reject the content of the Strasser-Goebbels draft; instead he convinced the assembled party leaders that it was inappropriate to formulate a new major program at that time.<sup>58</sup> In fact it was Goebbels who was disappointed, not Strasser. Gregor went on to write many more programs, major and minor; at least one of the major ones—the full employment program of 1932<sup>59</sup>—was wholly endorsed by the party, and it is quite probable that he also had a significant part in drafting the agricultural program of 1930. The Nazi trade-union proposal and its failure have also been misconstrued. Gregor developed many successful organizational innovations to aid party expansion in the north; there is no evidence that he was particu-

56. Helmut Heiber, ed., *Das Tagebuch von Joseph Goebbels 1925–26* (Stuttgart, 1961), pp. 59–62.

57. Stressed by Kühnl, Bullock, Orlow, and Kele.

58. Nyomarkay, pp. 82–89.

59. G. Kroll, *Von der Weltwirtschaftskrise zur Staatskonjunktur*, argues that Gregor Strasser could not have written such a bold program for public works and deficit spending. But on the contrary the bases for such a program were laid by Feder, and many of Gregor's speeches and articles contain its major outlines. See, for example, Gregor Strasser, "In-stinktlose Geschäftemacher," *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 172, Oct. 20, 1925; "Es lebe die Revolution!," *ibid.*, no. 259, Nov. 9, 1926; "Bürger oder Proletarier," *ibid.*, no. 280, Dec. 3, 1926; "Freiheit und Brot für den deutschen Mann," *ibid.*, no. 66, Mar. 19–20, 1929; "Für den Staat der Arbeiter und Soldaten," *ibid.*, no. 67, Mar. 21, 1929; "Gregor Strassers Abrechnung mit den Young-Parteien," *ibid.*, no. 250, Oct. 21, 1930; "Heerschau im Gau Düsseldorf," *ibid.*, no. 316, Nov. 12, 1931. Some of these are reports of speeches. The most complete version of the full employment program is Gregor Strasser, *Arbeit und Brot!* (Munich: Eher, 1932).

larly devoted to the trade-union scheme or particularly unhappy when Hitler refused to endorse it.<sup>60</sup>

If we turn to his writings it becomes clear that Gregor's views on "socialism" have also been misunderstood, as a result of a semantic confusion which he himself created. When Gregor Strasser wrote about socialism he was not advocating social justice, nor was he urging the economic betterment of a single class. Instead, like Feder, and as in the 1926 draft program itself, Strasser advocated a corporate organization of society, according to economic function, and, like Feder, he thought that the new state should have a parliament of corporations. Such a parliament had been promised in the Twenty-Five Points; Strasser's draft program of 1926 described such an arrangement in more detail than the earlier program, and although Hitler repudiated the draft program as an official document, Strasser continued to write about corporatism, as did Feder.

In general, Gregor appears to have built very extensively on Feder's work, unsystematic as Feder was. When Strasser condemned modern capitalism it was in terms of the danger of "mammonism" on the one hand and the conspiracy of international bankers on the other.<sup>61</sup> He did add a number of variations on Feder's themes. In *Fifty-Eight Years of the Young Plan* (Kampf-Verlag, 1929), for example, he brought the early "conspiracy" theory of Rosenberg, Eckart, and Feder up to date. Not only had the defeat of Germany been engineered by international finance capital, but reparations in general represented a continuation of a state of war, maintained in the Dawes and Young plans.<sup>62</sup>

Gregor based his strong pleas for autarchy on this kind of argument. Again and again he stressed that it was the economic dependency of Germany on the rest of the world which had permitted the Versailles treaty and the Dawes and Young plans. Rearmament must go hand in

60. Hitler did endorse a modified version, the NSBO. There is, however, considerable disagreement as to whether the NSBO was an effective organization: Orlow, pp. 196-97, thinks not; Kele, pp. 149-56, thinks it was.

61. "Die Götzendämmerung des Marxismus," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Apr. 8, 1925; "Die Herrschaft des Kapitalismus," *ibid.*, Feb. 17, 1926; "Die Versklavung der Eisenbahner," *ibid.*, Feb. 26, 1926; "Triumph der Börse," *ibid.*, Oct. 29, 1926; and many others.

62. *58 Jahre Young-Plan!* (Berlin: Kampf-Verlag, 1929). See also: "Immer wieder: Fort mit Locarno," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Nov. 18, 1925; "Der Betrug der Abrüstung," *ibid.*, June 12, 1926; "Gedanken über Aufgaben der Zukunft," *NS-Briefe*, June 15, 1926; "Versailles—Dawes—Bauernnot," *Berliner Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Feb. 28, 1928, Sondernummer; "Gregor Strassers Abrechnung mit den Young-Parteien," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Oct. 21, 1930; "Deutschland nur Deutschland!" *ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1932.

hand with autarchy; only when both were accomplished could Germany resume its rightful role among nations.<sup>63</sup> Some of this was implied by Feder, but never spelled out by him, and there is not much about autarchy in *Mein Kampf*. Gregor was primarily responsible for introducing this theme into Nazi thought; he therefore inspired if he did not help draft the agricultural program of 1930, with its great stress on autarchy.<sup>64</sup>

Strasser's relationship to the agricultural program becomes even more apparent when we observe that he regarded an improvement of the condition of the small farmer as the essential precondition of autarchy. This emphasis appears not only in the draft program of 1926 and in the abortive resolution in favor of dissolving the princely estates, but also in a long series of articles in the Strasser newspapers and in the *Völkischer Beobachter*; it is perhaps the most consistent theme in Gregor Strasser's writing.<sup>65</sup> None of the other Nazi theorists before 1930 were much concerned with this class, and Darré, as we shall see, probably entered the party too late to do more than change the direction of this line of thinking. The party's decision to mount a systematic appeal to German small farmers, which is reflected in official publications and speeches from 1925 on, may also have been inspired by Gregor.<sup>66</sup>

63. Works cited in n. 62.

64. "Nationalsozialismus und Landwirtschaft," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Mar. 7, 1930, dated Mar. 6, 1930, over Hitler's signature.

65. Section IV.A. of the draft program as published by Reinhard Kühnl in *Vierteljahrshäfte*, vol. 14 (1966), 317–33; Gregor Strasser and Josef Goebbels, "Resolution der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Nordwest der NSDAP zur Frage der Fürstenabfindung," *NS-Briefe*, Feb. 1, 1926. Gregor Strasser, "Nationale Wirtschaft," in *Kampf um Deutschland* (Munich: Eher, 1932), no page numbers, dated June 13, 1925; "Wir und die Agrarzölle," *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 62, June 11, 1925; "Nochmals: Wir und die Agrarzölle," *ibid.*, no. 76, June 28/29, 1925; "Der Weg in die deutsche Not—Der Weg aus der deutschen Not," *ibid.*, no. 162, Oct. 8, 1925; and works cited in n. 62.

66. Orlow, pp. 128–84, sees the appeal to the farmers as a result of the May 1928 elections, in which the party lost votes in urban areas, gained them in rural ones. Certainly the election returns confirmed the importance of agriculture to the Nazi cause, but appeals to the small farmer loom very large in the *Völkischer Beobachter* from 1925 on, and dominated the pages of the *NS-Briefe* between 1925 and 1927. The *NS-Briefe*, during these years, helped to bring into the party a number of lesser ideologues whose exclusive interest was the plight of the small farmers. See especially Erich Rosikat, articles of Nov. 15, 1925, Apr. 14/15, 1926, and May 15, 1927; Hans Seibert, Aug. 15, 1926; Herbert Backe, Oct. 15, 1926; Gross, Oct. 1, 1926; Böttcher, Jan. 15, 1926. In view of Ackermann's belief (*Heinrich Himmler*, p. 205) that Himmler was already influenced by "Blut und Boden" ideas at this time, it is worth noting that Himmler's writings for the Strasser publications use Feder's and Strasser's terminology. See "Die Lage der Landwirtschaft," *NS-Briefe*, Apr. 1, 1926; and "Bauer, wach auf!" *Der Nationale Sozialist für Sachsen*, Aug. 1, 1926.

Ernst Nolte argued that Ernst Roehm embodied for the party the ideal of the front soldier.<sup>67</sup> This may well be, but it was Gregor Strasser, Roehm's friend, who exalted the front soldier in print. It is very striking that when Gregor wrote about the necessity of selecting a new elite for the future society, he never said that this elite would be working class. Occasionally he implied that it would be made up of farmers, but more frequently he promised leadership to the front soldier.<sup>68</sup> Like his friend and close associate, Manfred von Killinger, he also wrote in glowing terms of "front socialism," the comradeship before death.<sup>69</sup> His view of women's role in the new society was closely related to this military ideal.<sup>70</sup>

Gregor Strasser also helped to reintroduce the concept of the "second revolution" into Nazi writing after 1925. The "second revolution" would complete the work of the "first," which, Gregor said, had made a good beginning by overcoming the old empire and by combining the revolutionary efforts of workers and soldiers, before it was perverted and stunted by the Weimar Republic.<sup>71</sup> It is important, in view of the grudging admiration for the Second Empire which Hitler expressed in *Mein Kampf*,<sup>72</sup> that Gregor so often stressed that there could be no return

67. Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism*, p. 327.

68. "Gedanken," *loc. cit.*; "Frontsoldaten," *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 93, Apr. 24-25, 1927; "Quo vadis Reichswehr," *ibid.*, no. 64, Mar. 16, 1928; "Ziele und Wege . . .," *NS-Briefe*, July 1927; with Otto and others, "Der Nationalsozialismus—die Weltanschauung des 20. Jahrhunderts," *ibid.*; "Das letzte Abwehrkampf des Systems," *Kampf um Deutschland*, pp. 317-35; also published as a book by Eher, 1932.

69. "Gedanken," *loc. cit.*, and "Eine sehr notwendige Feststellung," *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 43, Feb. 12, 1932.

70. Women's place was in the home, as wives and mothers of German soldiers. Strasser stressed the perils of childbirth and compared them to the dangers faced by the front soldier. Nazi women were urged to take a soldierly attitude to motherhood. "Gedanken," *loc. cit.*, and "Die Frau und das Nationalsozialismus," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Apr. 6, 1932.

71. "Lüge der Demokratie," *Der nationale Sozialist für Sachsen*, May 23, 1926; "Es lebe die Revolution!" *Der nationale Sozialist für Sachsen*, Nov. 7, 1926, reprinted *Völkischer Beobachter*, Nov. 9, 1926; "Von der Revolt zur Revolution!" *Berliner Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Nov. 6, 1927; "Nationalsozialismus und Geschichte," *NS Jahrbuch*, 1928; "Macht Platz, Ihr Alte!" *Berliner Arbeiter-Zeitung*, July 13, 1930 (reprinted in *Kampf um Deutschland*, which gives original date as May 8, 1927). Goebbels, at first, was also energetic in calling for the "second revolution"; see "Die Revolution als Ding an sich," *NS-Briefe*, Sept. 1, 1926, and *Die zweite Revolution: 15 Briefe an Zeitgenossen* (Berlin: Kampf-Verlag, 1926). Kele sees Goebbels as the most radical of the Nazi leaders, but his most radical-sounding writings are singularly lacking in content. See, for an example of empty rhetoric, "Die Radikalisierung des Sozialismus," *NS-Briefe*, Oct. 15, 1925.

72. *Mein Kampf* (New York and Boston, 1939), pp. 323-27.

to any of the empire's institutions. Those few writers who have noticed his references to the "second revolution" have assumed that he was here at his most dissident; that he was proposing immediate and violent revolution in the face of Hitler's determination to use legal means. But as *Reichsorganisationsleiter*, Gregor was Hitler's principal agent in negotiating coalitions. Actually, Gregor Strasser was not writing about either a violent revolution or an immediate one, for he said, "it is not enough to change a system . . . necessary most of all is a change of spirit."<sup>73</sup> The real essence of the "second revolution" for him was a "spiritual revolution," which would bring about an ethos of "work and bread," "honor and merit." A "revolution of the soul" could easily wait for legal means. In the overall perspective of Nazi writing Dietrich Eckart was more impatient and more inclined to violence than Gregor Strasser.

When Otto Strasser's thought is examined against this background, it appears almost wholly derivative and still less radical than his brother's. On every issue, Otto followed his brother's lead, sometimes expanding on a given theme, but never originating an idea. Like Gregor and Feder, Otto was anticapitalist rather than socialist, and like them he defined the enemy as financial capitalism.<sup>74</sup> Like Gregor, and again like Feder, Otto proposed a corporatist organization of the economy and of the future state.<sup>75</sup> He seems to have been even less interested in the condition of the working class than Gregor was, but he echoed Gregor's concern for the small farmer and for autarchy.<sup>76</sup> Otto also wrote at some length about the importance of military service as a proving ground for a new elite; in addition, it was the war itself which for Otto had constituted the "first" revolution.<sup>77</sup>

Otto's best-known writing on the "second revolution" is the *Fourteen*

73. "Gedanken," *loc. cit.*; see also "Nationalsozialismus und Geschichte."

74. "Vom Wesen des Kapitalismus," *NS-Briefe*, mid-July 1927; *Berliner Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Aug. 10, 1930, after Otto's break with the party.

75. Works cited in n. 74, and *Der Nationalsozialismus—die Weltanschauung des 20. Jahrhunderts*.

76. "Völkische Bauernschaft," *Der nationale Sozialist für Sachsen*, Aug. 15, 1926. Otto affected pseudonyms drawn from past leaders of peasant revolution: Ulrich von Hutten, Michael Geismeyer. Unlike Gregor and Feder, Otto did not write very often for the journal of the NSBO, *Das Arbeitertum*.

77. With Ernst Jünger, Herbert Blank, and Franz Schauwecker, *Vom Sinn des Krieges: Eine Antwort an Remarque* (Berlin: Kampf-Verlag, 1929), no. 3 of the *Grüne Hefte*. See also "Pazifismus und Sozialismus," *Der nationale Sozialist für Sachsen*, Jan. 30, 1927.

*Theses of the German Revolution* of 1929.<sup>78</sup> Since he republished this document after his break with the party, as the manifesto of the *Kampfge-meinschaft revolutionären Nationalsozialisten*, it has been assumed by Mosse and others that this document, at least, called for immediate and violent revolution. But on the contrary, the *Theses*, windy and vague in style, propose no immediate political changes. They prophesy the coming of the “German revolution,” but do not say when; they “welcome the corporative economic system of socialism”; they condemn materialism; they promise “the full development of the unique racial character.”<sup>79</sup> Certainly they cannot have been regarded as particularly objectionable by the party, since Goebbels publicly congratulated Otto on them, and since Otto remained within the party for another year after their first publication.<sup>80</sup>

In fact there was only one issue on which Otto clearly differed from his brother. Inspired perhaps by an early essay by Goebbels, Otto argued that, since the ascendancy of Stalin, Russia was no longer Bolshevik, but rather “national socialist,” and as such should be seen by the party not as an enemy, but rather as a potential ally.<sup>81</sup> This idea must have been wholly unacceptable to Rosenberg, and almost certainly to Hitler as well. Gregor, like Goebbels, flirted briefly with the “national bolshevist” idea, but Otto wrote about it repeatedly and consistently.<sup>82</sup> It is possible that it was his intractable stance on this issue which led Otto to resign in the early summer of 1930.

It would be fruitful to reexamine Otto’s break with the party in the light of an analysis of his published writings. Otto himself claimed after the fact that he could not accept Nazi participation in the coalition in

78. “14 Thesen der deutschen Revolution,” *NS-Briefe*, July 1, 1929, pp. 22–24; *Berliner Arbeiter-Zeitung*, July 28, 1929. Kele, p. 158n., says that Herbert Blank probably wrote the *Theses*, and cites the July 1, 1929, issue of *NS Briefe*. I can find no evidence there to support his view.

79. *NS-Briefe*, July 1, 1929, pp. 22–24.

80. Goebbels, “Vom Chaos zur Form,” *NS-Briefe*, Aug. 1, 1929.

81. Goebbels, “Nationalsozialismus oder Bolschewismus,” *NS-Briefe*, Oct. 15, 1925. For Goebbels’ and Gregor’s proposal to the Hanover Conference for a Russian entente, see Kele, pp. 96–97.

82. Gregor Strasser, “Russland und wir,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Oct. 22, 1925. Otto Strasser, “Trotzskis Ende,” *NS-Briefe*, Oct. 15, 1927; “Die Krise des Kommunismus,” *ibid.*, Feb. 1, 1929; and especially “Der Sowjetstern geht unter,” *ibid.*, Dec. 15, 1927, re-published as no. 2 of the *Grüne Hefte* (Berlin: Kampf-Verlag, 1929). See also “10 Jahre Sowjet Union,” *NS-Briefe*, Apr. 15, 1929, and *Internationale Marxismus oder nationaler Sozialismus: Eine Grundlegende Diskussion zwischen Otto Strasser und Bruno Frei* (Berlin: Verlag der nationale Sozialist, 1930), published after Otto’s break with the party.



Thuringia; that he left the party under the banner “revolution now!”<sup>83</sup> But there is little in Otto’s earlier writings that is prophetic of this position.<sup>84</sup> I think that something quite different may have happened: that Otto was always seen, by both Hitler and Gregor, as useful in wooing the intellectuals of the radical right; that by 1930 many of these had already been accommodated within the party structure, and that those who had not been so accommodated were sticking on the “national bolshevist” issue. At the same time, Rosenberg’s *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* was proving very successful in gaining the backing of distinguished, but ultimately more malleable, academics.<sup>85</sup> And some of these men, as employees of the coalition government in Thuringia, were making the party famous to an extent that neither Otto nor the Strasser circle in general could hope to emulate.<sup>86</sup> It is possible, therefore, that by 1930 the Strasser “circle,” and above all Otto Strasser, had served their purpose, and Otto, at least, did not know how to, or did not wish to, adapt.

These observations on the Strasser circle make the role of Richard Walther Darré even more problematical that it has hitherto appeared. References to Darré’s best-known works, *The Peasantry as the Life-Source of the Nordic Race* (Lehmann, 1929) and *A New Aristocracy out of Blood and Soil* (Lehmann, 1930), were rather frequent in the early studies of Nazi ideology, probably because Darré, unlike the other writers so far considered, achieved a position of great and lasting power under the Third Reich.<sup>87</sup> These works went through at least a dozen new editions after 1933, and seemed therefore to explain the policies both of the *Reichsbauernführer* and, to some people, of the SS as well.<sup>88</sup> Certainly these books did provide the terminology and the frame of reference for a great deal of writing, both systematic and propagandistic, about “blood

83. For example, in “Ministersessel oder Revolution?” *Berliner Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Aug. 10, 1930; published as a pamphlet by the Kampf-Verlag, 1930.

84. Only one early article, “Wahlbeteiligung oder nicht?” *NS-Briefe*, Dec. 1, 1925, is at all suggestive of this position.

85. Lane, pp. 148–52, 156–60.

86. *Ibid.*

87. See the biographical note by Heinz Haushofer in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (Berlin, 1957), vol. 3, p. 517.

88. *Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der Nordischen Rasse* (Munich: J. F. Lehmann Verlag, 1928, new editions 1929, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1937, 1938, 1940, 1942). *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden* (Munich: Lehmann, 1930, new editions 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1943). Schuman, Heiden, and other early writers on the Nazis often pointed to these works as a source of the policies of the SS.

and soil" after 1933. It was therefore quite natural, for those who noticed the agricultural program of 1930 at all, to assume that Darré wrote it. And this assumption has persisted up to the present, in the work of Bullock, Reitlinger, Frischauer, Höhne, and Ackermann, in the face of rather persuasive evidence that Darré did not become a formal party member until a month or more after the agricultural program was published.<sup>89</sup> In fact it has recently been established that even the sketch for the organization of the *Agrarpolitisches Apparat*, presented to Hitler in August 1930 and always attributed to Darré, was instead the work of Georg Kenstler, Artamanen leader and member of the Strasser circle.<sup>90</sup> The truth about the authorship of the program, as well as about Darré's entrance into the party, will probably eventually emerge from the quantities of manuscript evidence in Koblenz.<sup>91</sup> But the problem will remain of assessing Darré's role in Nazi ideology, and this can be attempted on the basis of published sources.

Even if Darré's major works were written before his entrance into the party, from the spring of 1931 they were regularly quoted and paraphrased in party publications; their central arguments therefore found their way into the mainstream of Nazi ideology well before 1933. In these works of 1929 and 1930, Darré emerges less as an agricultural expert than as a mystical glorifier of the peasant way of life. He argued that the remnants of the Aryan or Nordic race, the original Germans, could still be found on the soil among those German small farmers who had handed down their holdings from father to son from time immemorial. In the future, these—rather few—farmers should therefore have

89. Alan Bullock (New York, 1961), p. 110; Gerald Reitlinger, *The SS: Alibi of a Nation* (London, 1956), p. 29; and Willi Frischauer, *Himmler: The Evil Genius of the Third Reich* (London, 1953), pp. 28–29, say that Darré joined the party in 1928. Höhne and Ackermann show some uncertainty on this point, but Orlow, p. 180, has him entering the party in time to set up the *Agrarpolitisches Apparat* and write the agricultural program in March. Yet there is as yet no documentary evidence which places Darré in the party before November 1930 (Hauptarchiv, roll 46, folder 951, cited by Orlow). Darré himself claimed that he had no association with the party or with Hitler before April 1930: *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal* (Nuremberg, 1949), vol. 42, pp. 405–7. Michael Kater's excellent essay, "Die Artamanen—Völkische Jugend in der Weimarer Republik," *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 213 (1971), pp. 577–638, assembles conflicting evidence on Darré's relations with the party, but comes to no firm conclusion as to when he joined. See especially pp. 623–28, nn. 295–96 and 320–22.

90. Horst Gies, "NSDAP und Landwirtschaftliche Organisationen in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik," *Vierteljahrshefte*, *loc. cit.*

91. On the basis of the evidence cited in Lane, p. 156, it seems to me most likely that Darré was introduced to the party by Paul Schultze-Naumburg, not by Himmler.

a pivotal political and social role as a new leadership elite. This ancient peasantry should also provide the basis for a eugenics program which would purge the Nordic race of degenerate accretions.<sup>92</sup>

Anti-Semitism was never the main theme of Darré's writings, but where it does appear it gains authority from its apparently "scientific" context. For Darré the Jews, descended from the ancient Semitic tribesmen, represented the reverse of all the virtues of "Nordic" history. The Nordic was rooted in the soil, attuned to nature, religious, courageous, and creative. The Semite was nomadic, rational, irreligious, cowardly, uncreative, and, in recent times, highly urbanized.<sup>93</sup> Out of these arguments Darré created a far more coherent doctrine of biological determinism for the Nazis than they had had before; both culture and society, for him, depended upon race; any kind of broad social and cultural revolution must therefore involve a eugenics program. Darré was never a "popular" writer; his books were scholarly or pseudoscholarly, studded with footnotes and learned references—primarily to biological and anthropological sources.<sup>94</sup> A professional agronomist, Darré also brought his not inconsiderable knowledge of animal husbandry to bear upon his arguments, so that, vicious as he was, he appeared to be the most authoritative of the Nazi racists. This mixture of ideas must have had a most profound effect on Himmler's thought;<sup>95</sup> the extent to which it influenced Hitler still needs to be explored.

While paraphrases and quotations of his longer works began to appear regularly in party publications early in 1931, Darré also began to write extensively for Nazi journals and newspapers, and to draw some practical conclusions from his ideas. In such essentially programmatic statements as "The Farmers and the State" and *The Farmers in Crisis. Their Salvation by Adolf Hitler*, he promised the establishment of entail and primogeniture for "racially fit" peasant proprietors, and an extensive program of resettlement in the east for "Nordics" who had left the

92. Lane, pp. 153–56.

93. *Ibid.*

94. *Ibid.*

95. The influence is clear by 1931, uncertain before that date. Ackermann and Höhne, in the process of trying to show the roots of these ideas in the *Artamanenbewegung*, concoct a fictional meeting between Himmler and Darré in that movement. See also nn. 66 and 89, above.

land.<sup>96</sup> At the same time, he continued to publish other less official writings with the Lehmann publishing house; *Eugenics for the German People*, for example, developed a series of propositions about racial selection which formed the basis of Himmler's marriage laws for the SS.<sup>97</sup>

Because of his influence upon Himmler and because he held major offices in the Nazi state, Darré played a more obvious role in putting ideology into practice than any of the other major Nazi writers. It is tempting to conclude that Darré somehow displaced the other party ideologues, either in the affections of Hitler or in the struggle for power within the party hierarchy. But whatever the realities of Darré's influence after 1933 actually were, I think it would be wrong to assume a necessary relation between personal political power and the implementation of ideology in the Third Reich. Although most of the leading party ideologues were either executed, ousted from office, or kicked upstairs into purely honorific posts after 1933, there is no clear evidence that it was their political thought which barred them from power. And after 1933, the "new men" who rose to political power were men who had received their political education not only from Darré, but also from Eckart, Rosenberg, Feder, and the Strassers. They may well have attempted to put into practice the ideas of their mentors.

I have not attempted to assert that Nazi ideology as it developed before 1933 exerted a decisive influence over state or society in the Third Reich. But I do think that a fresh look at Nazi institutions against the background of a thorough study of Nazi thought before 1933 might furnish some surprises. As Nolte has remarked: "did not the subsequent control of international payments through a central government foreign-exchange body correspond to one of Feder's early proposals?"<sup>98</sup> Moving to a broader interpretation of Feder, one might also assert that the structure of the Labor Front and the *Reichskulturkammer* approximated Feder's corporatism. *Gleichschaltung* itself implemented the centralism of Feder and Strasser. The *Arbeitsdienst* grew directly out of Gregor Strasser's proposals to the Reichstag in 1930; Nazi public works in

96. "Landstand und Staat," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Apr. 19–20, 1931, Apr. 21, 1931; *Landvolk in Not und seine Rettung durch Adolf Hitler* (Munich: Eher, 1932). See also "Auf den Weg," *Nationalsozialistische Landpost*, Sept. 1931; and "Ostraumgedanke oder Rückforderung unserer Kolonien?" *Völkischer Beobachter*, May 9, 1931.

97. *Das Zuchtziel des deutschen Volkes* (Munich: Lehmann, 1931), originally in *Volk und Rasse*.

98. Nolte, p. 325.

general may have been inspired by his full employment program of 1932. The artistic policies of the Third Reich were closely related, though in a complex manner, to Rosenberg's ideas.<sup>99</sup> If such an investigation showed only partial, conflicting relationships between institutions and the early ideology, these findings would still be illuminating. Like other political movements in other times and places, the Nazi party probably broke some of its promises, and kept some.

99. Lane, pp. 169–84.