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Mentality of the German Middle Class and Nazism: The Activation and Transformation of Existing Antisemitic and Anti-Liberal Tendencies by Rapid Social Changes

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I hope readers will find this research worthwhile.

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INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Topic

An interlude in German history, the Weimar Republic lasted only fourteen years. As a transitional phase between the two world wars, it was a landmark symbol well worth attention and study by historians. In examining the Weimar Republic's history, one tends to focus on its weaknesses and ultimate overthrow by the Nazis. The list of academic works analyzing the failure of Weimar Germany and the rise of the Nazis is endless. When exploring the relationship between the demise of Weimar Germany and the rise of the Nazis, scholars usually focus on politics, the economy, and the military. However, Weimar's fall, the rise of the Nazis, and the links between them deserve an investigation of the mentality of all classes of German society. While it would be impractical to examine the entire German population, a suitable alternative would be to focus on Germany's middle class, where participation in the Nazi Party was most prominent.[1]

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "mentality" or "mindset" refers to "the particular attitude or way of thinking of a person or group." Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology and a pioneer in psychological research, believed in the power of "mentality." He claimed that psychic energy is the most powerful energy on earth.[2] Although his further comments linking this energy to the divinities has been widely criticized as "obsolete," one can see that "mentality" is both powerful and influential, which necessitates studying history from a mentality perspective.

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[1] Eike Hennig, *Burgerliche Gesellschaft und Faschismus in Deutschland* [Civil society and fascism in Germany] (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 144

[2] Paul Bishop, *Jung in Contexts: A Reader* (CITY: Routledge, 1999), 14.

The Second World War was disastrous for humanity, and its severity forced people to examine its root causes. The shift from a focus on military, political, economic, and cultural to psychological factors is the inevitable result of the deepening of people's understanding as well as a significant and often overlooked perspective in history. Psychoanalysis, with its well-established methodology for understanding biography and individual motivations, enables historians and anthropologists to study individuals' characteristics and human nature. It also provides insights into authoritarian groups' racial hatred based on popular fantasies and how these drove their movements. The psychology of the public is more representative of the condensation and trends of social mentality. Therefore, applying group psychological analysis to history is conducive to interpreting historical development, expanding the scope of historical knowledge, and providing a new perspective in understanding human historical activities.

Organization

This paper will first define its research direction and methods through the evaluation of the existing theory of the history of mentalities and the authoritative research on the psychology of Nazi Germany, ensuring the academic value and uniqueness of this study. Then, the paper will explore the causes of the extreme change in the mentality of the German middle class from an overall perspective before focusing specifically on various occupational categories within the middle class and the roots of their negative reaction to the social unrest in Germany before the Nazi regime. Together, these perspectives will reveal the collective mentality of this social class from macro to micro.

The national mentality during the Weimar Republic was quite complicated and contradictory. The formation and changes of this phenomenon have profound historical roots and social background. Analyzing the relationship between Weimar's national mentality and the Nazis' rise to power will provide a deeper understanding of this period in history.

Most historians use broad terms to generalize about the national mentality of Weimar Germany, such as the distortion of mentality and the mindset of revenge. Currently, a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the German mentality by social class is lacking. This paper seeks to fill this gap. I examine previous research on the national psyche of the German people and the evolution of the group mentality of the middle class to answer the following questions: Based on the national character formed by historical origins and the German historical reality before the Nazi era, what was the Germans' collective mentality? What kind of group mentality did the middle class develop? Why did these mindsets arise? What outward manifestations and common characteristics do the national and middle-class mentalities share? How did widespread cultural Antisemitism suddenly turn into an extreme political tendency? What is the relationship between the national mentality of Weimar Germany and the rise of Nazis? What questions remain?

This study contains three chapters. The first chapter introduces and evaluates several existing influential theories on the paper's main topic to illustrate the process by which the thesis was formed and to support its uniqueness. Specifically, this chapter will assess the contributions and limitations of the theories of Daniel Goldhagen, Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, Theodor W. Adorno, and Peter Loewenberg based on the ideas and historical facts provided by William Sheridan Allen in his study of Nazism among the inhabitants of a small German town, Northeim.

Chapter 2 will explore the origins of the transformation of the German mentality from long-standing intolerance and hatred of Jews to the extreme political demand for their extermination and from supporting and embracing Western liberalism and democratic values to opposing liberalism and embracing collectivism and even totalitarianism. This chapter will be composed of two parts. The first will explore the transformation of German Antisemitism from its traditional, relatively mild state, which was not different from that of other European countries, to its later extreme and brutal stages. Subsequently, the second part will explain the anti-liberal and anti-democratic consciousness of the "people's community" developed by the Germans due to their dissatisfaction with the status quo and how the Nazi Party used this consciousness to confuse the public. Taken together, these two parts explain the logic of the development of the Nazi group mentality of the German middle class as a whole.

Finally, Chapter 3 will apply the perspectives of economics and sociology to analyze the psychological response of various occupational categories of the German middle class to the social changes that preceded the Nazi era, for the German middle class is most representative of the population as a whole, both in terms of its share of the population and in terms of its representation of the dramatic change in mentality. This class will be divided into several categories to analyze why the group mentality of them became anti-liberal, Antisemitic, and xenophobic.

Research Background

Studying the relationship between Weimar Germany's national mentality and the rise of the Nazis began as early as the 1930s. At that time, western Marxists, especially the Frankfurt School, made significant achievements in this field. They believed that it was impossible to

explain the cause of fascism only from the political system, economic structure, and class relations, mostly why so many middle and lower class working people supported the fascist regime. Inheriting the tradition of predecessors' emphasis on subjective consciousness and using Freud's psychoanalysis method, they made an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of fascism based on social psychology. They formed the theory of social psychology and the social consciousness off "Western Marxism."

There are many representative works in this regard, including *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933) by Wilhelm Reich. The book argues that authoritarian personality structures' widespread existence originated from sex repression among the lower middle classes and was the psychological root of fascism and success. Ernst Bloch's *Heritage of Our Time*s (1935) analysed the social psychology of the middle class, the class basis of fascism, and how fascism exploited this psychology. Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (or *The Fear of Freedom*) pushed the study of the mass's mentality to a new stage. His contribution mainly put forward the inconsistency, contradiction, and even conflict between "group psychology" and "social consciousness." Fromm believed that in the first half of the 20th century, even though human consciousness continues to advocate "freedom" and "democracy," that people's subconscious tends to go in the opposite direction, and human behavior has chosen to "escape from freedom." This psychological trend, he argues, ultimately led to the rise of German fascism and the ruling of Hitler.[3]

Since the Second World War, some American scholars began studying German social culture as a social psychology issue. They believed in using psychological theories to explore the potential deep and unique personality structure of Germans, and German collective and

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[3] Erich Fromm. "Chapter II." *The Fear of Freedom*. London: Routledge, 2001. Print.

individual political phenomena, mass media, propaganda methods, collective norms, and so on. American psychological historian Peter Loewenberg summarized American scholars' research status on modern German history, including the history of Nazis in the *Psychohistorical Perspectives on Modern German History*. In my study, I use the psychological historical research method to explain the Third Reich's irrational phenomenon.[4] Loewenberg also used psychoanalysis theories to explore the psychological and historical origins of the brutal and senseless behavior of the young Nazi followers.

Later, with the development of western psychological history, behavioral and cognitive psychology expanded the research scope of psychological history. Psychoanalytic psychohistory often asserts that the Nazis were in power because the German masses were unconsciously "tempted" by psychopathic demonic Nazi leaders under the influence of authoritarian tradition. However, American non-psychoanalyst Harvey Asher put forward the opposite view. He believed that many Germans followed the Nazis as actions taken on a conscious level to make a "rational analysis" of their behavior. The method is non-psychoanalytic social psychology.

BASIC THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

1. *Mentality.* In the investigation of the origin of the word "mentality," Le Goff explained in detail in *Mentalité: A History of Ambiguities* that the term "mentalité" in French derives from the English "mentality." "Mentality" is the product of British philosophy in the 17th century and refers to the collective psychology and unique thinking and perception of people, a particular

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4 Loewenberg, Peter. "Psychohistorical Perspectives on Modern German History." *The Journal of Modern History* 47.2 (1975): 229-79.

group of people, and so on.[5] In the opinion of sociologist Theodor Geiger, "mentality" is the direct attribute of a person formed through their social living environment, including their life experience influenced by such an environment. In terms of its denotation, "mentality"—referring to the same attitudes that people exhibit at a particular time in history and in a specific society—is a concept different from psychology, embracing all the human minds' phenomena.

From a group behavior perspective, group mentality dominates the whole development process of group behavior and dominates and controls the behavioral tendency after group dispersal. Many human behaviors, especially group behaviors, are closely related to group mentality. Therefore, democratic political behaviors dominated and influenced by group mentality are often constrained and dominated by this mechanism. The group mentality makes originally rational behaviors enter into a state of "irrationalization." History relays that in the development and deepening process of democratic politics, if we do not pay enough attention to group behavior and group mentality and study and adjust countermeasures, democratic politics often turn opposite its original nature. The French Revolution, the Cultural Revolution in China, and the end of the Weimar Republic, which this paper discusses, are examples of such conditions. Suppose we do not solve the negative and destructive effects caused by the uncontrolled group mentality. In that case, society's political development is greatly restricted and, in certain circumstances, moved toward the opposite side of democracy.

In Freudian psychologists' views, the common state of mind in a group is a part of the individual mind or an expansion of the individual mind. In other words, to grasp this collective state of mind requires a detailed psychological analysis of the individual's original motivations,

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[5] Le Goff, Jacques. "Mentalite: A History of Ambiguities." *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology.* 169.

including attitudes, beliefs, hopes, fears, and interests. Because these scholars believe that all rational and irrational actions relate to survival, they can ultimately seek the truth through rational methods.[6] On the other hand, social psychology theory holds that the collective psychological state comprises individual universal experiences. These universal or common experiences create a common "mentality." This theory is generally popular. The American historian William Langer proposed that

> [In] any given situation individuals will react in widely diverse ways, depending on their constitution, their family background, their early experiences, and other factors. But these varying responses are apt to be reflected chiefly in the immediate effects of the catastrophe. Over the long term it seems likely that the group would react in a manner most nearly corresponding to the underlying requirements of the majority of its members, in other words, that despite great variations as between individuals there would be a dominant attitudinal pattern." [7]

To sum up, as a product of a specific social environment, mentality needs to be explored through sociology-related research methods. It is worth mentioning that Philippe Ariès, one of the historians of the third generation of the Annales school, believes that in the early days of the school, the concept of "mentality" has not been separated yet from the socio-economic field.[8]

2. Significance of History of Mentalities Apart from History of Psychology. In 1938, Lucien Febvre, a first-generation scholar of the French Annales School, explored combining history and "la notion d'outillage mental et celle de sensibilité" (the notion of mental tools and that of

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[6] Horney, Karen. *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1947.

[7] Langer, William L. "The Next Assignment." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 63, no. 2, 1958, p. 291.

[8] Ariès, Philippe. "L' Histoire Des Mentalités." *La Nouvelle Histoire*. Ed. Jacques Le Goff. Brussels: Editions Complexe, 2006. 170.

sensitivity).[9] Since then, a unique historical model, History of Mentalities, gradually arose under the Annalist group's advocacy. In French, the subject is a broad and vague concept. Jacque Le Goff, a third-generation representative of the Annales school, claims that the history of mentalities' primary attraction lies in its ambiguity.[10] "This vague, ambiguous, and sometimes disturbing notion of mentality, like many vague terms, in recent years has moved the field of history the most and brought, to economic history in particular, a long-for counterweight. Mentalities have breathed fresh air into history."[11] Le Goff made this assessment after summarizing the works of Lucien Febvre, Marc Bloch, Alberto Tenenti, Michel Vovelle, Pierre Aries, Georges Duby, Robert Mandrou, and himself, the first four generations of Annales historians.

Since this school accepted the History of Mentalities' vagueness from the beginning, several relatively famous historians also had different opinions on the subject. According to Le Goff, the history of mentalities studies people's automatic behaviors in daily life. Its research objects are contents that individuals share with others in their thoughts and are unaware that they are sharing. As Le Goff points out:

> The level of the history of mentalities . . . is what escapes the particular subjects of histo-
> ry, because it reveals the impersonal content of his thought, it is what Cesar and the least

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[9] Le Goff, Jacques. "L'histoire Nouvelle." *La Nouvelle Histoire*. Ed. Jacques Le Goff. Brussels: Editions Complexe, 2006. 58.

[10] Le Goff, Jacques. "Mentalite: A History of Ambiguities." *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology*. Ed. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985. 166.

[11] *"cette notion vague, ambigue, et parfois inquiétante de mentalité, comme beaucoup de termes vagues, est une de celles qui ont le plus fait bouger dans ces dernières années le domaine de I'histoire et apporté, à l'histoire économique notamment, un contrepoids désiré. Les mentalités ont donné des bouffées d'air à l'histoire."* Goff L'histoire nouvelle 58

soldier of his legions, what Christopher Columbus and the sailor in his caravel have in common.[12]

Georges Duby believes that the history of mentalities is the history of values. At the same time,e Robert Mandrou argues that it is a history of people's views of the world, and prefers the neutral term "worldview" to cover the realm of intelligence,—"l'intelligible" as well as the realm of the affections—"l'affective".[13] Michel Vovelle finds the former explanation fascinating and compelling, but he also acknowledges the definition's ambiguity.[14] Philippe Ariès, included in the works of *La Nouvelle Histoire*, left out how to explicitly define mentalities' history.[15]

Based on the extensive works of scholars claiming to be historians of mentalities or those listed by others as historians on this topics, their subjects are mainly common concepts and consciousness of groups in social life during specific historical periods, such as the concept of the devil, the concept of time, the concept of money, the attitude towards sex, the attitude towards death and so on.[16] These ideas and perspectives are closely related yet distinct from ideologies as we understand them. Ideology generally assumes an official character, represents the will of a particular class (mainly the dominant class), is manufactured by a group of intellectuals who share that class's interests, and is usually visibly coercive. However, the history of mentalities' interest includes ideas and attitudes almost imperceptibly accepted and inherited by a particular social group from time to time. Compared with ideology, mentalities tend to be non-conceptual

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[12] Le Goff et al. Mentalite: A History of Ambiguities 169.

[13] Casanova, Antoine, and François Hincker. *Aujourd-hui L'histoire*. Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1974. 211.

[14] Vovelle, Michel, et Christian-Marc Bosséno. « Des mentalités aux représentations », *Sociétés & Représentations*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2001, p. 15.

[15] Ariès, "L' histoire des mentalités." 167-90.

[16] Revel, Jacques. «Mentalités», Dictionnaire des sciences historiques, París, 1986, p. 456.

and non-systematic. Through historical evolution, government transfer, and economic development, the change of these ideas and consciousness is the slowest, often with obvious hysteresis.

Many mentalities experts realized that the concept of "mentality" is not ideal for scientificity because its meaning is broad and vague. Many still believe that such a vague defect has the benefit of convenience and that the history of mentality does not require a clear definition. In the later period of the Annales School, the growth of the history of mentalities research, especially the tendency of the confluence of history of mentalities and historical anthropology, made it more difficult to define. I define the history of mentalities by paraphrasing the word mentality and applying the main content of the history of mentalities. "History of mentalities" is a branch of history that studies people's mentality structure in history, especially of a certain group or collection, together with its evolution process and trend. The main object researched under this subject is the mentality structure of various forms, including the common notions and ideas that people share and the relationship between these concepts and the specific time's realistic physical environment.

The central representation of the history of mentalities is the state and evolution of human group psychology. However, in the practice of psychological historiography, more attention is paid to the individual psychology of great figures. The group political mentality of the lower people—accounting for most of the population and plays a considerable role in historical development—is ignored. The group psychology of the lower people is rarely involved. For example, we find more studies on Hitler's personality psychology, Goering, and others than on the psychological activities of various social classes in Weimar Germany. This paper makes up for this shortcoming by studying the group psychology of Weimar Germany from the perspective of the

History of Mentalities. Although the history of mentalities and psychology are two different concepts, they overlap when using psychological theories to study history. The history of mentalities does not exclude the history of psychology in its methods; the former is a subset of the latter. The two correlate closely because of their interest in posture, behavior, and ideas, so researchers should apply both subjects' theories cooperatively.

According to the broad, repeated, yet vague definitions of the Annales scholars, group psychology is the main branch of the history of Mentalities. French psychologist and sociologist Gustave Le Bon first proposed the concept of "*Psychologie des Foules*." Sigmund Freud pointed out in his later book *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* that:

> Group psychology is therefore concerned with the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of an institution, or as a component part of a crowd of people who have been organized into a group at some particular time for some definite purpose. When once natural continuity has been severed in this way, it is easy to regard the phenomena that appear under these special conditions as being expressions of a special instinct that is not further reducible, the social instinct, which does not come to light in any other situations.[17]

As understood by Freud in his later years, the meaning of group psychology overlaps with the definition of mentality vaguely defined by Annales School.

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[17] Freud, Sigmund. "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XVIII (1920-1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works, 69.

CHAPTER 1: SELECTED THEORISTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSES OF FASCIST GROUPS

Psychologists have put forward several theories and explanations for the relationship between fascist factors of the group psychology in Weimar Germany and the rise of Nazism. This chapter is based on William Sheridan Allen's in-depth study of the inhabitants of the German town of Northeim, which is used to assess the contributions and limitations of the ideas presented by Daniel Goldhagen, Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, Theodor W. Adorno, and Peter Loewenberg.

William Sheridan Allen's Study of the Inhabitants of Northeim

Fundamentally, the study of Hitler and the Nazis raises the question, "How did they psychologically control the citizens of such a highly civilized and industrialized country?" While many scholarly works have tried to provide an answer, most of this research uses a top-down political approach or a generalized national viewpoint. Less attention has been paid to how ordinary Germans have received Nazi ideas. After all, the last truly free election in November 1932[18], in which the Nazis ran demonstrated that the party was not overwhelmingly popular, and in some areas, their support was consistently low; indeed, Hitler and Goebbels complained that Berliners were "cold" toward them.[19] Consequently, aside from the intrigue among the top politicians, Nazi activities at the grassroots level, including what classes they attracted, how they rallied support, and, once in power, how they dominated the grassroots, are the primary issues.

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[18] Nohlen, Dieter, and Stöver Philip. *Elections in Europe: a Data Handbook*. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010). 762

[19] Russel Lemmons, .*Goebbels und Der Angriff* [Goebbels and XXXX] (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1994). 85

American scholar William Sheridan Allen's *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922-1945* provides an outstanding attempt to answer these questions.

Written in the 1960s, Allen's book focuses on Northeim, a small town in central Germany. Drawing on archival documents, interviews with local residents, and fieldwork, it presents a grassroots account of how the town came under Nazi control. This technique may seem quite common today, but it was so "advanced" at the time that the book enjoyed a good reputation and a high status in the academic world.

Allen makes a central point: "The actual [Nazi] rise to power in the spring of 1933 was largely from the bottom up, with the Führer rising to the top because his followers were successful at the lowest, most grass-roots levels… The local measures of the Nazis were the key to the establishment of the Third Reich. Before coming to power, Hitler's skill and adaptability in organizing local parties had given him enormous support."[20] In short, Allen argues that the popular belief that Hitler was in power at the national level was a misconception and that the Third Reich would never have emerged without Hitler's fervent local supporters. This work shows how the Nazis used sharp,d sophisticated propaganda to exploit the weaknesses of the masses; as such, it is as much a study of human nature as it is of history.

To support this argument, Allen chooses the ordinary town of Northeim to understand how the Nazis worked at the local level, providing a biographical account of an obscure and remote town. It is precisely because Northeim is just a small town, like those that "can be found everywhere in Germany,"[21] that its change from democracy to dictatorship is significant. Instead

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[20] William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town* (London: Penguin, 1995), vii.

[21] Allen, vii.

of focusing on power struggles at the top, Allen focuses on the ways in which local Nazi organizations adapted to public opinion to gain support and how people became involved and made choices throughout the process. From a micro perspective, it describes the process through which the German mentality was gradually subsumed by the Nazis.

The amount of data that had to be collected and accessed to achieve this analysis is staggering. Indeed, Allen notes that, "The destructive consequences of revolution, terror, war and aggression severely limited the amount and type of source material available for this research."[22] He continues, "The actual documents I really needed on the Northeim Nazi Party had been burned during the collapse of the Third Reich."[23] With the disadvantages of this lack of official information, Allen's descriptions of events came primarily from the documents still available in major archives and several mainstream Northeim newspapers from that period. With the cooperation of the locals, the author collected both public and private documents, directly interviewed several of the primary figures of the time, and compared their memories and impressions with the documents and newspapers.

Allen divides the growth of Nazi power into two periods using Hitler's January 1933 appointment as Chancellor by President Hindenburg: the first period demonstrates how democracy was destroyed in Northeim, while the second details how dictatorship was established and maintained after the Nazis seized power.[24] In the pre-1933 period, Allen describes the process by which the Nazi Party overran all other parties to gain the support of urban residents through propaganda.

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[22] Allen, viii.

[23] Allen, ii.

[24] Allen, iv.

Average Northeim residents once thought of themselves as "tiny citizens, calm, blind to major problems, content with life, well fed, moderate in desire, and favoring a simple sense of order."[25] , Northeim was a town of distinct social class and political orientation: its workers traditionally supported the republican left-wings—Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democrats) and Deutsche Zentrumspartei (Germany's Central Party)—while the middle class, dominated by civil servants, supported Deutsche Volkspartei (the German People's Party), Deutschnationale Volkspartei (the German National People's Party), and other middle-class right-wing parties.[26] Life in Northeim as a whole was comfortable, with a balanced and independent economy, culture, and government structure. Although there was a clear divide between social classes and clear boundaries between communities and friendship circles, there was little conflict on a daily basis. Extremism had no market in Northeim, and the main political tendencies were expressed through local newspapers supported by various parties.[27]

However, as the German economy worsened, politics became radicalized, and Northeim's divisive elements exacerbated the split, leading to bloody riots and a deterioration of the democratic atmosphere. After 1929, the Great Depression intensified class divisions. After analyzing the economic structure of Northeim, Allen concludes that, though the impact of the international economic depression on Northeim was limited in substance, the fear of the lasting impact of the Great Depression caused the city's radicalization. This fear was widespread among the middle class, creating the curious spectacle of unemployed workers supporting the status quo while a middle class that had been less affected by the economic downturn was committed to revolution.

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[25] Allen, 25.

[26] Allen, 27.

[27] Allen, 24.

"In this situation, people started to listen to the Nazis," Allen observes.[28] Previously, the Nazi

Party's presence in Northeim had been insignificant, but it began to grow after 1929.

The Nazis' ability to exploit the weaknesses of the masses with sharp, sophisticated

propaganda was on full display in subsequent Nazi election campaigns. As Joseph Goebbels said

when formulating Nazi propaganda policy, "The first iron law of propaganda is not to become

boring."[29] The Nazi Party line actively catered to the needs of the publics, using speeches as its

main propaganda tool, and often arranged gatherings, street parades, artistic entertainment, and

film screenings to attract an audience. When arranging speeches, the region would provide a

group of potential speakers, each with a series of specific topics, and local leaders would choose

the topics that they believed would attract people.[30] Gains or losses as a result of these

campaigns were how they measure their success.[31] Themes were often chosen to promote Nazi

ideology, such as "Why do we call ourselves the National Socialist Workers' Party" and

"Nazism, Liberalism and Marxism,"[32] as well as to attack and discredit opponents—"We have

made a big step towards a great victory! Red Scare!"[33] Additionally, the embodiment of the

actual local situation was the most significant aspect in the choice of theme. For example,

Northeim had such a large number of Lutherans that the Nazis would invite pro-Nazi preachers

to speak.[34] The Party would also cater to the town's patriotism and militarism by inviting the

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[28] Allen, 26.

[29] Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Penguin Press, 2005), 94

[30] Evans, 95.

[31] Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power,* 33.

[32] Allen, 34.

[33] Allen, 90.

[34] Allen, 54.

Field Marshal[35] and the Navy Submarine Captain[36] to host events that would attract large audiences.

The Nazi street movement became a social problem in the big cities. Although, historically, Northeim was historically relatively peaceful, the town saw more confrontations as the Nazis gained momentum, driven by shifts in the general climate of the town. As the Nazis and rival parties became more aggressive and the number of violent incidents increased, "Northeim became more accustomed to violent ways of resolving political differences. Ordered people are disgusted by the constant fighting, but eventually get used to it."[37] This demonstrates the influence on the characteristics of the town's grassroots residents by the Nazi policy.

The Nazis also used clever, high-frequency election campaigns to project an image of themselves as "efficient, youthful and resolute in their cause." Many conservative centermen, driven by the unease of the Great Depression, became politically engaged and voted for the Nazis, and Nazi activity intensified in the run-up to important election years. One newspaper indicated that rival parties such as the Social Democrats, battered by the Nazis, "have been questioning their ability to control the situation since the summer. The leader of the flag team kept warning against hasty action. They are eager to fight, but they have little hope of winning."[38] The weakness of other political parties also led to the failure to prevent the Nazis from gaining power in 1933.

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[35] Allen, 42.

[36] Allen, 59.

[37] Allen, 186.

[38] Allen, 183.

Allen's explanation of the demise of the democratic system in Northeim and throughout the German nation before 1933 and the success of the Nazis' eventual seizure of power was simple: An outlying town like Northeim was itself a base for nationalist and conservative forces. The Nazis became representatives of the middle class through their "strong nationalism, their manipulation of religious beliefs, and the conservative support they received."[39] At the same time,f the Great Depression politicized ideological thought: "The desires and needs, class rivalries, and resurgent nationalism created by the Great Depression all seemed to be politically resolved. Constant elections mean constant campaigning, and every campaign fuels hatred and radicalism."[40] Eventually, a passion for politics permeated every corner of the town. In the process, the Nazis constructed an efficient propaganda system; as Allen notes, "propaganda and mass mobilization mechanisms developed through trial and error are simple, self-correcting and self-reinforcing," and ultimately "achieve the simplest goal with the least effort."[41] The energy and sophistication of the Nazis' propaganda, which made the most of popular enthusiasm, combined with a keen sense that was particularly suited to Northeim and every element of the town, made Nazi claims and practices pervasive and convinced the public that they were revolutionaries who would change the status quo in Germany. The Nazis' rise to power became unstoppable when the parties of the left and right, which were the last to challenge them, lacked the confidence and courage to mount an effective opposition.

Allen's work is a "biography" of a small town that served as a microcosm of German society in the 1930s. With detailed materials and evaluation, Allen effectively explained the Nazis'

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[39] Allen, 178.

[40] Allen, 179.

[41] Allen, 182.

rise to power, pioneering a method of historical research that shows the macro from the micro. The historical facts provided in this book will serve as the basis of this paper's evaluation of several well-known and authoritative works on the psychological roots of the Nazis to explore their value, shortcomings, and implications for the research direction and methods of this paper.

<div align="center">Wilhelm Reich and the Mass Psychology of Fascism</div>

Wilhelm Reich is one of the representatives of "Freudian Marxism." Born to a Jewish family in Austria, he immigrated to Germany and then escaped to the United States due to Nazi persecution. Reich devoted himself to studying fascism in 1930, reading Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and all other publications and materials propagating Nazism and observing fascism from its emergence to successful implementation. In 1933, Reich provided his unique perspective on fascist political ideology in his book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, which combined psychoanalytic theories with Marxist social and class analysis methods to propose the "character structures" theory. Reich believed that character structure is the internalized paradigm of behavior that everyone exhibits through their organizational habits in daily life and work. It represents a particular way in which a person exists and is a manifestation of his general past.[42] Character structures originated as a narcissistic protective device against external pressures and threats, with avoidance attitudes.[43] In both form and energy, character structures reflect individual depression

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[42] Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971).y, xxix.

[43] Robert S. Corrington, *Wilhelm Reich: Psychoanalyst and Radical Naturalist* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 133-134.

encountered during childhood and adolescence. The motivation for the formation and development of character structures is the conscious or unconscious fear of punishment.[44]

According to Reich, historical materialistic economic analysis cannot explain the phenomenon of fascism. Based on Marx's theory, the economic premise of social revolution was already available in Europe in the late 1920s and early 1930s. However, the social revolution did not happen "as scheduled." Additionally, according to Marx's class consciousness theory, the fascist regime represented the interests of the middle class and the Junker——the landlords; as such, the working class should not and could not support the fascist regime:

> Rationally considered, one would expect economically wretched masses of workers to develop a keen consciousness of their social situation; one would further expect this consciousness to harden into a determination to rid themselves of their social misery. In short, one would expect the socially wretched working man to revolt against the abuses to which he was subjected and to say: "After all, I perform responsible social work. It is upon me and those like me that the weal and ill of society rests. I myself assume the responsibility for the work that must be done." In such a case, the thinking ("consciousness") of the worker would be in keeping with the social situation.[45]

However, the majority of supporters of Nazi Germany were middle- and lower-class, including a large proportion of industrial workers.

Reich believed that ideology reflects society's economic processes and is also deeply rooted in people's psychology. If the psychological structure of society changes, this is a reaction

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[44] James Edgar Strick, *Wilhelm Reich, Biologist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2015), 18.

[45] Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, 10.

to an economic process. In general, psychological structures lag behind the rapid changes in social events from which they arise, resulting in irrational thoughts and behaviors that are not consistent with economic conditions.[46] Under the fascist regime, economic reasons cannot explain the workers' economic status and political attitudes toward societal inconsistencies. Because the workers play a key role in the psychological structure of society, Reich emphasized the phenomenon of fascism in analyzing the lower-middle class's character structure.

Reich contacted many fascist followers and supporters and found a contradiction: on one hand, they had a strong and rational resistance to the dire social conditions; on the other hand, they admired the irrational ideology of Nazism. Reich referred to these people's unique characteristics as an "Authoritarian Personality" based on the internalization of external necessity or totalitarian ideology. In this process, people subordinate themselves to an external, physical, and inflexible authority by making it an element of their inner authority as they become afraid of freedom and independence.[47] This tendency is an irrational, mysterious, and destructive force in human nature. A man of this character is subject to authority but takes an authoritarian attitude toward those below him. Ultimately, Reich believed that this authoritarianism is the psychological basis for the emergence and success of fascism.

Reich argued that fascism is not the formation or action of a person's, nation's, or political group's consciousness, but the manifestation of thousands of years of repressed basic biological needs and sexual impulses through the irrational personality structure of ordinary people.[48]

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[46] Reich, 53.

[47] Reich, 54.

[48] Reich, 88.

Drawing on sexual morality and private property ethics, Reich concluded that sexual repression and private ownership interacted to prevent the release of human desires. Therefore, he blamed sex for unequal power relations at the social level.[49] Analogizing the relationship between the family and the state, ,Reich asserted that the head of the family and the head of the state hold similar power. He also discussed the similarity between the father's control of his children and the state's oppression of the people. According to Reich, "far-reaching sexual suppression and repression"[50] is accomplished by national imperialism. He explained the Nazis' use of mysticism to shape national identity and pointed out patriarchy's evilness. However, Reich argued that pre-paternal history, in a sense, "matriarchy," is an effective way to eliminate sexual repression. He also believed that the opposite of sexual repression is liberation. That is, people need to break out of their father's control and release their repressed sexual desires.

In addition to advocating for the release of sexual repression to eliminate fascism, Reich supported the radical transformation and remodeling of human nature to replace "authoritarian character" with "democratic character."[51] Ultimately, Reich's theory places too much emphasis on the role of sex and fails to understand the subjective tendencies of social groups in their psychological structures. His analysis of fascism was extremely one-sided, ignoring its class and economic aspects and failing to propose an effective way to eliminate it. After all, history is rife with the sexual repression of regimes and civilizations. Reich attributed fascism to the manifestation of the masses' authoritarian character structures and made the masses and families, especial-

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[49] Reich, 45.

[50] Reich, 48.

[51] Reich, 50.

ly patriarchal families, bear the responsibility for fascism, thereby erasing its class-based nature. However, despite these shortcomings, Reich quickly and keenly captured the social-psychological factors that led to the rise of fascism in the 1930s.

In the case of Northeim from Allen's book, Reich's theory explains the logical chain of events that led the German townspeople from disillusionment with the status quo to trust and obedience to the Nazis. However, Reich's framework is far from the truth in assigning blame and proposing solutions to the popular drift toward the Nazis. In Northeim, "the fear of the lasting effects of the economic recession was what radicalized them. This fear pervades the middle class, creating the curious image of unemployed workers supporting the status quo, while the middle class, which has been little hit by the economy, is committed to revolution."[52] This shows that various classes can react in completely different ways to the same social situation. Thus, class is a factor that cannot be ignored, and Reich's study fails to acknowledge this, emphasizing instead the importance of character-building for the nation as a whole. Ultimately, Reich's approach demonstrates the importance of closely reflecting upon the social status quo of the time and considering class as a key variable.

Erich Fromm's Nazism Psychology

In response to the fascist phenomenon in Weimar Germany, Erich Fromm stated:

We are dealing with a political system which, essentially, does not appeal to rational forces of self-interest, but which arouses and mobilizes diabolical forces in man which we had believed to be non-existent, or at least to have died out long ago. The familiar pic-

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[52] Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 26.

ture of man in the last centuries was one of a rational being whose actions were determined by his self-interest and the ability to act according to it.[53]

Fromm sees this unusual loss of rationality as a manifestation of another activated human psychological mechanism: avoiding freedom. This psychological mechanism hinders the healthy development of individual personality, causes great social malpractices under certain historical conditions, and even becomes the psychological basis for human tragedies such as fascism.

According to Fromm, there are three psychological mechanisms for escaping freedom: authoritarianism, in which masochism and sadism form "symbiosis;" aggressiveness and destructiveness[54]; and compliance[55]. These are the central psychological mechanisms behind the rise of fascism.[56]

The typical modern escape from freedom is "authoritarianism," manifested in two extremes—the desire to be subservient to others or the effort to control others. The former is masochism, and the latter is sadism. Masochism shows a sense of inferiority, incompetence, and insignificance that leads to a strong dependence. Sadism, on the other hand, presents a person's dominant desire to manipulate, control, and torture others. These tendencies are often interwoven and present at the same time, creating the authoritative character of sadomasochistic "symbiosis."[57]   s

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[53] Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2001), 4-5.

[54] Fromm, 108

[55] Fromm, 108

[56] Fromm, 113.

[57] Fromm, 122.

"Feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, and individual insignificance" are the psychological characteristics of masochistic people.[58] Their subconscious drives them to feel inferior, obey and rely on other influential individuals or forces, and even hurt themselves. Sadism is the opposite of masochism, but Fromm argues that sadism also exhibits a dependence on an authority.[59] Using a sadistic husband as an example, Fromm suggests that the sadist also relies on the object of their abuse for satisfaction[60].

Furthermore, Fromm states that the sadomasochist "admires authority and tends to submit to it, but at the same time, he wants to be an authority himself and have others submit to him."[61] Fromm also claims that this psychological trait resonates with that of "the lower strata of the middle class,"[62] the backbone of Nazi support, because this group of "small shopkeepers, artisans, and white-collar workers" had been hit worst by the recession, emphasizing their competitiveness, pettiness, jealousy, and resent of the strong.[63] These traits became a lust for power and a desire for subservience, creating a psychological preoccupation with sadism and masochism. This tendency then makes it easy for individuals to accept the ideology of fascism and become fanatics. Thus, fascism flourished because of the universalization of authoritarianism.

The second psychological mechanism of fascism is aggression and destructiveness. To eliminate the loneliness and anxiety caused by freedom and uncertainty, the destructive or ag-

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[58] Fromm, 122.

[59] Fromm, 124.

[60] Fromm, 125.

[61] Fromm, 141.

[62] Fromm, 182.

[63] Frederick L. Schuman, *Hitler and the Nazi Dictatorship* (London: Hale, 1936), 104.

gressive escape mechanism destroys all external forces that threaten one's existence to alleviate their inner loneliness and sense of powerlessness. Fromm argues that a significant number of people in Germany were destructive and aggressive and that "Nazism appealed to these destructive impulses and used them to wage war against its enemies."[64]

Third, Fromm argues that many ordinary working people "submit" to fascist authorities because they also have an authoritarian personality and a psychological mechanism of "dynamic adaptation."[65] In contrast to extreme destructive psychological mechanisms to avoid freedom, many people are likely to adopt a more moderate psychological mechanism—voluntarily giving up their individuality and subjectivity. Such individuals deferred to the fascist regime because fascism appeared as a "new authority" and took advantage of their "dynamic adaptation."[66]

Having identified the root causes of fascism's rise, Fromm proposed a solution or prevention—"the state of positive freedom."[67] "Positive freedom" means the realization of self; that is, the development of human personality and potential. In this transformative process, the organic combination of "love and work"[68] overcome alienation and thus eliminate the psychological basis of fascism.

Fromm's psychology of Nazism dominated by authoritarianism was reasonable, but his theory's emphasis on psychological factors is rather one-sided. Because he regarded psychologi-

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[64] Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, 136.

[65] Fromm,, 219.

[66] Fromm, 220.

[67] Fromm, 233.

[68] Fromm, 225.

cal revolution and transformation of life as the only effective way to eliminate fascism, his solution is somewhat unrealistic.

Fromm's work is part of his lifelong study of the structure of modern man's personality and the interplay between psychological and social factors. This study, in essence, is an advanced version of Reich's theory that still emphasizes the factors of human psychological nature and focuses on proper cultivation and psychological adjustment as the solution to the problem of fascism.

However, Fromm's emphasis on the role of social circumstances in the human failings of individuals explains why Germany's vast population embraced the anti-liberal, anti-human rights, racist Nazi Party. This is consistent with William Allen's conclusion that the majority of the German population was dissatisfied with their social situation and correspondingly demanded improvement.

In general, however, Fromm's theory is still a "top-down" logical relationship, in which people are either forced into the extreme psychological state of masochism/sadism or give up their individuality to be controlled and guided by the collective and the Nazi Party. This does not reflect the importance of "bottom-up" grassroots support for the Nazis that Allen observed in Northeim and much of the rest of Germany.

Theodor W. Adorno and the Authoritarian Personality

Born into a Jewish family in Frankfurt, Germany, Theodor Adorno fled to the United States in the late 1940s and became one of the Frankfurt School's representatives. After the Second World War, he returned to Frankfurt, where he studied personality and prejudice, contribut-

ing to *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). "Prejudice" refers to an individual's understanding

and attitude toward others, especially members of other nationalities or groups, without sufficient

factual basis. Prejudice is complex and stubborn, interwoven with political, economic, cultural,

and other factors. According to Adorno, prejudice may reflect an individual's insecurities as they

project their discontent and hostility onto others, use them as scapegoats, and blame them for any

setbacks in their lives.[69]

Adorno et al. attached importance to exploring the origins of personality from early

childhood experiences and interpreting bias as germinating in the dynamic processes of family

interactions. Specifically, parents' excessive anxiety about their status leads to authoritative

parental behavior: they are cruel, severe, and rigid toward their children. In such cases, the chil-

dren can only project their dissatisfaction onto other individuals or groups. Thus, to deal with a

dissatisfactory home environment, people generate prejudices in their interactions with others:

> It must be emphasized that these feelings of resentment against the parents, especially
> when they appear in the records of high-scoring subjects, are usually not ego-accepted.
> Thus […one subject] states that her mother was "terribly strict with me about learning to
> keep house . . . I am glad now, but I resented it then. The feelings of resentment are 'bad'
> and therefore projected onto childhood and not accepted as present feelings."[70]

The adolescent mentality of Weimar Germany reflected this resentment by targeting and venting

frustrations on groups such as Jews. Adorno examined a wide range of negative perceptions of

Jews and hostility toward them, using careful psychological measurement and research to de-

scribe the "authoritarian personality." He concluded that this personality relies on "conventional-

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[69] Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and Nevitt R. Stanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950),. 13.

[70] Adorno et al., 348.

ity, submission to authority, the encroachment of authoritarianism, superstition and prejudice, strength and toughness, cynicism, and the tendency to projection."[71]

Although Adorno's authoritative personality theory is similar to those of Reich and Fromm, Adorno holds that "why fascist propaganda succeeded" and "why fascism came into being" cannot be confused: the former is mainly a psychological problem, while the latter is primarily a social, political, and economic problem. The primary reason for fascist propaganda's success is that it conforms to Freud's psychological mechanism. However, concluding that a fascist system is based on mass psychology is not possible. Adorno asserts that "since it would be impossible for fascism to win the masses through rational arguments, its propaganda must necessarily be deflected from discursive thinking; it must be oriented psychologically, and has to mobilize irrational, unconscious, regressive processes."[72] Ultimately, he asserted that the real root of fascism did not lie in human psychology but in real social and economic relations.[73] This view is more realistic than that of Reich or Fromm. Adorno's emphasis on practical considerations also brings the subject a step closer to the reality of Germany, including the small town of Northeim, and farther away from the fanciful theories of human psychology and speculations of mental illness.

According to Allen, despite the psychological flaws of racism (derived from traditional, anti-Jewish sentiment) and apathy toward events, the German residents of Northeim generally

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[71] Adorno et al., 246.

[72] Theodor W. Adorno and J. Bernstein, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," (2020), 134.

[73] Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality,* 252.

maintained a calm way of doing things,[74] which indicated that they were far from turning to the Nazis. Adorno's consideration of such topics as the change of mentality and the "sudden release of hostility" inspired the direction of this paper.

<div align="center">Peter Loewenberg's Psychoanalysis of Nazi Youth</div>

Peter Loewenberg thought that Hitler's rise to power was closely tied to the support of German youth. He defined the young yet cruel and irrational followers of Hitler as "the Nazi Youth Cohort," publishing "The Psychohistorical Origins of The Nazi Youth Cohort" in 1971. The most prominent feature of his paper is that it adopts a method of comprehensive multidisciplinary research. In addition to psychoanalysis, Loewenberg applies demographic theories and literature materials to deeply and carefully analyze German teenagers' mentality during and after the First World War.

Psychoanalysis asserts that the most critical period in a person's life is childhood, when individuals are malleable and receptive. The shared experiences of German adolescents who grew up during World War I led to similar consolidations and distortions of their adult characters. In Loewenberg's opinion,

> The psychological symptoms of regression were "fixed" to ego functioning. The childhood in war included responding to internal aspects of personal stress with externalized violence, projecting all negative anti-national or anti-social qualities onto foreign and ethnic individuals and groups, and meeting frustrations that would otherwise be tolerated with patience and rationally approached for solutions with a necessity for immediate gratification. The political expression of weakened egos and superegos that fostered regression was manifest not only in turning to violence but most especially in the longing for a glorified and idealized but distant father who is all-knowing and all-powerful, who

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[74] Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 25.

preaches the military virtues and permits his sons and daughters to identify with him by wearing a uniform and joining combat in a national cause.[75]

 In other words, a division exists in the psychology of the suffering teenager. They yearn for safety and protection, and many of them worship violence and authority, hoping to release long-suppressed emotions. "Their thoughts are disguised impulses; in their discussion, private ideas parade as Weltanschauung[world view]. Without heroes, they feel nothing. They resign. They take off. They have never grasped the difficulties, the dangers, and the harsh laws of reality."[76]

Loewenberg argued that young people traumatized in childhood yearn to return to earlier

periods of personality development. They seek a lost childhood, a fantasy of warmth, safety, and

love. One aspect of this is reflected in their desire for a glorious, ideal father who is both omni-

scient and omnipotent. Such a figure could trumpet military victories and allow his sons and

daughters to fight for their country.[77] On the other hand, these teenagers respond to internal

pressure with superficial violence, projecting all negative anti-state or anti-social feelings onto

the people of other countries and nations.[78] In short, they cannot endure discouragement with pa-

tience and reason but seek psychological satisfaction with fanatical behavior.[79] Thus, Loewen-

berg perceived a direct link between the losses suffered by German children in the First World

War and the reaction of these children and adolescents to the anxiety caused by the Great De-

pression in the early 1930s.

Although Loewenberg's research on the Weimar Republic period is only one article and

cannot provide a more comprehensive analysis, it reflects a positive trend in research hon this

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[75] Peter Loewenberg, "The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort," *The American Historical Review* 76, no. 5 (1971), 1463.

[76] Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture the Outsider as Insider* (New York: Norton, 2001), 143.

[77] Loewenberg, "The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort," 1466.

[78] Loewenberg, 1481.

[79] Loewenberg, 1498.

period. In addition to reliable historical data and psychoanalytic theory as the main theoretical basis, Loewenberg also applied demographic research results and theoretical concepts while drawing on literary materials. For example, the concept of "crowd" in the article is entirely demographic[80]. Simultaneously, the mentality perspective (especially of children) during the First World War through the accepted literary works is a reference to literary achievements[81]. This multidisciplinary approach is a significant phenomenon and a promising trend in Western psychohistory, especially in studying human groups' historical phenomena.

Unlike Reich, Fromm, and Adorno, who focused on the whole German population, Loewenberg (probably due to length constraints) chose a specific group in Weimar Germany for analysis and achieved positive results by examining this psychosocial problem from multiple subjects and perspectives. This method is similar to Allen's approach. Although Allen studied only one small town in Germany, he had the opportunity to approach the truth from multiple perspectives over a long period of time through detailed descriptions. The acknowledged success of Loewenberg's and Allen's research provides a framework for this paper: in addition to being closely tied to economic and social reality, the paper should avoid choosing exceedingly broad research targets and instead focus on a specific group for analysis.

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen—The German People Voluntarily Committed Antisemitic Slaughters

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* features the heinous crimes committed by Hitler and his Nazi Party during World

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[80] Loewenberg, 1482.

[81] Loewenberg, 1485.

War II, the most horrendous of which was the massacre of Jews. Millions of Jews died in the gas

chambers of German fascist concentration camps, at the gunpoint of the *SS* (Die Schutzstaffel—

—Protection Squadron for the Nazis), and under the whips of Nazi supporters. Goldhagen's

novel analysis of a large number of historical facts and survivors' recollections and

retrospections led him to conclude that the Germans voluntarily and fanatically maimed and

massacred Jews, which he argued was the inevitable result of the development of Antisemitism

in Germany.[82]

This book deals with three aspects of the killing of Jews: the Police Battalions, the "labor

camps" built and used for the purpose of killing rather than producing, and the "Death Marches"

where the Nazis killed and mutilated Jews who were about to perish. Among them, the Police

Battalions best demonstrate the relationship between "ordinary Germans and the Holocaust" (the

book's subtitle). Drawing on Police Battalion logs, field operation reports, interviews, pho-

tographs, and other materials, Goldhagen concluded that ordinary, low-level police officers ac-

tively engaged in the killing and maiming of Jews. These individuals were not coerced into doing

so; on the contrary, they committed this violence consciously and willingly out of hatred of the

Jews.[83]

In Nazi-era Germany, Police Battalions were part of the *Ordnungspolizei* (the Order Po-

lice), which consisted of men who did not meet the standards for regular army service because of

their age or other characteristics. The Police Battalions were a very low-level organization in

which no one with Nazi connections would be happy to serve. Goldhagen's direct research object

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[82] Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996), vi

[83] Goldhagen, 245.

was the Reserve Police Battalion 101. Like other Police Battalions, the 101st was tasked with rounding up, detaining, and sometimes killing Polish Jews. Goldhagen found from the 101st Battalion's paperwork and communication records that members of the Police Battalion could decide whether to join in the killing of civilians and that opting out did not result in any negative consequences for them—some of those who opted out were even promoted.[84]

However, despite this lack of negative consequences, many members of the Police Battalions participated in the killing. In the book, one German explains, "I must admit, we are happy whenever we catch a Jew we can kill. The criminal police did not need such orders to kill Jews; they often carried them out voluntarily. I have the impression that many of the policemen kill for pleasure."[85] In August 1941, after the Germans' slaughter in Latvia, the local German police and army got together and feasted.[86] Indeed, a member of the 105th Battalion wrote to his wife on August 7, 1941, about the Holocaust, "My dear, do not lose sleep over it. It has to be done." He was "proud" to be a German soldier because he "can take part in many adventures here."[87]— These "adventures" often consisted of unnecessary cruelty that went beyond slaughter, such as the ill-treatment of Jews before their execution. These men had no conscience or moral qualms about the killing of civilians; they acted as if they were going about their daily business. Significantly, members of the Police Battalions did not experience military life in extreme conditions: some of them took their wives on killing missions, and many went home for holidays during the

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[84] Goldhagen, 257.

[85] Goldhagen, 261.

[86] Goldhagen, 262.

[87] Goldhagen, 262.

killings[88]. In general, these men were not unsympathetic; they just instinctively saw the Jews as an alien species unworthy of human sympathy.

The most cynical forms of German mutilation were the "Death Marches" on which Jews were forced shortly before their demise from the winter of 1944 to the spring of 1945. At the time, the Nazis were moving Jewish prisoners from one concentration camp to another. Their route had no meaning, no purpose; it simply wound back and forth across the map. Goldhagen describes in particular detail one such transfer, from Helmbrechts Concentration Camp in Franconia across the Czech border to a location some 120 miles away, which took 20 days. The Death Marches were full of horror from beginning to end.[89] The enfeebled Jewish prisoners were starved, cold, beaten, and killed, even after Himmler, the head of the police, issued an order to stop the killing of Jews (for his own purposes). The custodians of the Jewish prisoners did not obey these verbal orders and continued to torture the Jewish prisoners at will. Interestingly, female custodians were particularly vicious during this period. Goldhagen emphasizes that, "to the very end, ordinary Germans who engaged in the slaughter of Jews willingly, loyally and enthusiastically murdered Jews, sometimes even at the risk of being captured by the Allied Forces."[90]

Goldhagen believed that the Police Battalions allowed people to see the extent of Antisemitism's infection of German society, allowing ordinary people to become executioners. The Death Marches showed how deeply perpetrators' desire to slaughter Jews had been buried within the German people, causing the dviolence to be carried out to the last moment against orders.[91]

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[88] Goldhagen, 260.

[89] Goldhagen, 365.

[90] Goldhagen, 371.

[91] Goldhagen, 403.

All in all, Goldhagen spends more than 600 pages arguing that Antisemitism was an important, primary, and even the only reason for the Nazis' policies. The book's greatest success lies in its unique psychological positioning of ordinary Germans during the massacre.

Goldhagen was not the first historian to observe and analyze the 101st Police Battalion. In 1992, historian Christopher R. Browning published *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. This book provides a detailed analysis of the 500 members of the battalion, including details of their families and professional backgrounds as well as their abuses and massacres of Jews, including women and children, in Poland. According to Browning, the battalion commander allowed members to opt out of the killings of mothers and babies without punishment. However, the vast majority of the Police Battalion volunteered to take part in the operation, and many of them even took pleasure in performing sadistic acts during the operation. Some members had come to Poland with their wives, who were fully aware of the appalling things their husbands had done.

Although Goldhagen and Browning study the same object, Goldhagen completely negates Browning's analysis of the evil motivation of Police Battalion members in a tone of response and refutation. Browning paid much attention to the brainwashing and delusion of ordinary Germans by Antisemitic Nazi propaganda in addition to other factors that influenced their behavior. These other factors exist in any society or group of people and can therefore be called "ordinary human factors." Browning refers to these as "situational factors,"[92] which include conformity under peer pressure, fear of bad luck due to discordance with group action, overcoming

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[92] Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 174.

shame by demonizing the victim, and seeking credit and honor at the expense of others.[93] How-ever, Goldhagen argues that ordinary Germans did not need extra motivation to kill and maim Jews: their hatred of the Jews was enough to convince them that their killing was justified.

Ultimately, Goldhagen's attempt to prove that all Germans believed that "the destruction of Jews was just" is logically unconvincing because it is based solely on the fact that some Germans had been active and enthusiastic in killing Jews. Goldhagen hopes to reveal a terrible situation of "personal evil/sin"[94]: because those Germans committed cruel, abusive, and murderous acts for pleasure, all Germans were sinners. However, to find out why people become "sinners," one must look beyond the "sinners" for reasons such as mental aberration, insanity, and fanaticism. The "national character" explanation offered by Goldhagen is no exception—the "sinners" were not inherently evil but were motivated by the extreme bigotry of Antisemitism.

However, Antisemitism has existed throughout history and in other countries, so why did the massacre of six million Jews happen in Nazi Germany? Goldhagen was unable to provide a convincing explanation for this. John Weiss, in his book *Ideology of Death: Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany,* studied German and Austrian society from the early nineteenth century to the Third Reich. His research found that the culture of Antisemitism and racism did indeed form a deep-rooted prejudice and hatred in German society even before Hitler came to power, which was one of the fundamental reasons why the Holocaust occurred.[95] However, the Antisemitism

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[93] Browning, 175.

[94] Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, vi.

[95] John Weiss, *Ideology of Death: Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany* (Chicago: Ivan R Dee, 1995), 9.

that Weiss observes is not limited to Germany; it also existed in Germany's neighbor, Austria, something Goldhagen avoided mentioningt.

Additionally, in the case of Northeim, Goldhagen is unable to explain the second of the two main reasons why the residents turned to extremism—their frustration with reality and the Nazi Party's clever propaganda campaign led them to believe that the Nazi Party was the best choice to change the status quo. The extreme, Germanic Antisemitism that Goldhagen describes cannot logically be connected with the rejection of democracy and the abuse of human rights. Therefore, the one-sidedness[96] of Goldhagen's argument becomes the biggest obvious flaw in this study, which leads to a lack of historical common sense and failure to address several key points.

As Goldhagen's excellent but controversial book shows, it is not advisable to approach this topic with preconceived prejudices. If a certain characteristic is arbitrarily attributed to the people of a certain nation or country, any theory based on such an attribution will be too simplistic, one-sided, or even exhibit common-sense errors. This kind of collective mentality research needs to take the object of study as the normal human being by default, with the subject's external environment and its various changes as the main variables. Comparing the works of Goldhagen and Weiss reveals that one of the important variables is the transformation of Antisemitism: Antisemitism was widespread throughout Europe, so its sudden radicalization in Germany is an unavoidable aspect of the situation. In this thesis, seeking a "turning point" for this transformation will be one of the key points of analysis.

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[96] The reason for this limitation may have been Daniel Goldhagen's personal hatred of the Germans. His father, Erich Goldhagen, was one of the survivors from the Romanian-Jewish ghetto in Czernowitz. His acknowledgements also show that his thinking was heavily influenced by his father. Thus, to some extent, Goldhagen's overemotional and repeated emphasis on German Antisemitism is understandable.

CHAPTER 2: THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE COLLECTIVE MENTALITY OF THE GERMANS

The existence of Antisemitism in Germany and other European countries, or at other times in German history, is common-sense historical knowledge. Also present in the form of common sense or stereotypes are the distinctive German national character and mentality, rooted in the nation's unique historical experiences. Therefore, it is of little significance to simply explore their distant origin. Instead, the specific causes of the transformation of this long-held mindset into extreme political movements and racial persecution must be examined through a more realistic lens, such as economic and sociological theories and statistics. This chapter explores the roots of this dramatic change in the mentality of middle-class Germans, given that this portion of the population made significant "contributions" to the rise of the Nazis. This paper asserts that this mentality is reflected in two aspects: the radicalization of Antisemitism and the activation of the consciousness of the "people's community" of the German people.

The Transformation of Antisemitism in Germany: Economic and Cultural Conflicts

There is a long-standing Antisemitism in German society. The Nazi bandits who massacred six million Jews in World War II are all too familiar. However, people still ask, "Why did the Nazis hate the Jews so much?" The simple truth is that Antisemitism in Nazi Germany was the result of a long history of Antisemitism in German society. During the German Empire (1871-1918), the Antisemitic movement changed from the traditional Antisemitism to a new, modern Antisemitism, which was directly related to Nazi Antisemitism.

The Improvement of the Economic, Cultural and Social Status of the German Jews

During the German Empire, the social living environment in Germany changed radically. The achievements of the Industrial Revolution and the capitalist market economy provided unprecedented opportunities for the development of German ideas, which greatly promoted the innovation of German technology, organization, and production. The pressure of such rapidly intensifying social change is a double-edged sword: while it can be very beneficial, it is also something that people have to endure. The Jews, with their historical tradition of business, are well versed in this contradiction. German Jews in particular have shown themselves to be most adaptable to such situations. Proportionally, they tend to outperform gentiles in both income and education.

Between 1871 and 1910, the number of Jews in the German Empire rose from 512,000 to 615,000, while their proportion of the total population fell from 1.25 percent to 0.95 percent.[97] Two-thirds of the Jews lived in Prussia, concentrated in the big cities: "In 1914, 60 percent of Jews were already metropolitan citizens, compared with 20 percent of non-Jews. In 1914 one out of every four Jews had a home in Berlin. Although Jews make up only 5 per cent of Berlin's population, they pay a third of the city's income tax. The same is true of other places. Thirty out of the 100 richest Prussians are Jews."[98] Thus, the proportion of Jews in the high-income population was substantially above average. In fact, "By 1871, about 60 percent of the Jews living in Germany had moved into the middle and upper tax brackets."[99] By 1900, four-fifths of German

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[97] Ismar Elbogen and Eleonore Sterling, *Die Geschichte Der Juden in Deutschland* [The History of Jews in Germany] (Frankfurt: Fournier Verlag, 1982), 249.

[98] Bernd Martin and Ernst Schulin, *Die Juden Als Minderheit in Der Geschichte* [The Jews As A Minority In History] (München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverl, 1985),. 251.

[99] Hermann Graml, *Reichskristallnacht: Antisemitismus Und Judenverfolgung Im Dritten Reich* [Antisemitism and the Persecution of the Jews in the Third Reich] (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998), 46

Jews belonged to the upper and middle classes, and more than 50 percent of them, twice as many as non-Jews, were self-employed (primarily as small-shop owners).[100]

Paralleling their rise in economic status, the Jews were also in a culturally superior position in Germany: "In the early 1890s, 25 percent of the students in some liberal arts schools in Berlin were Jewish. In higher education, Jews accounted for eight percent of the students. By 1895, that number had risen to ten percent. And in law, medicine, and natural sciences. Their percentage is much higher."[101] This German minority, only 1 percent of the population, had both a high degree of affluence and a high level of culture and education, producing many figures of worldwide influence[102]. This not only reflects their free-rising energy in the capitalist commodity economy society but also their great potential for wisdom and knowledge as well as their significant influence on social progress.

However, the improvement of the economic, cultural, and social status of the Jews in German society, where they have suffered religious persecution and social discrimination for generations, inevitably exacerbated the social tensions between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. Moreover, in a country that entered the industrial age not through a radical bourgeois democratic revolution but through a "top-down" reform of the Junker aristocracy and a dynastic unification war, the faster Jews were "liberated," the more acute their conflicts with non-Jews became.

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[100] Martin and Schulin, *Die Juden Als Minderheit*, 251.

[101] Konrad Schilling, and Hans Martin Klinkenberg, "Zwischen Liberalismus Und Nationalismus. Im Zweiten Kaiserreich (1870–1918)" [Between liberalism and nationalism. In the Second Empire],. in *Monumenta Judaica: 2000 Jahre Geschichte Und Kultur Der Juden Am Rhein; Handbuch* [Monumenta Judaica: 2000 years of history and culture of the Jews on the Rhine; manual] (Köln: J. Melzer-Verlag, 1963),. 381.

[102] Schilling et al., 383.

The Economic Basis of the Turn of the German Public Towards Radical Antisemitism

The stress of fierce competition has led some to victory in the capitalist market economy, but for most people, such stress has the opposite effect. The Jews' ability to adapt to a commodity economy was shaped by their struggles since the Middle Ages in "inferior" commerce, cash transactions, and the like. In this way, the Jews seemed to understand the road to victory better than others and thus acted as if they were the initiators of capitalism. This gave Antisemitism among Germany's gentile middle classes a modern economic basis.

Professionally, the non-Jewish middle class in early twentieth century Germany can be roughly divided into the old middle class, the new middle class, and the small peasant class. The gentile small craftsmen and merchants of the old middle class were both unfamiliar with and hostile to the rapid progress of industrial capitalism. Amidst the fierce competition, they felt their traditional position being strongly shaken. The fear of being "torn apart between the bourgeois and the proletarian" not only gave their traditional Antisemitic mentality a strong perception of competition but also a certain anti-capitalist, anti-socialist, and anti-liberal nature.[103] Because they ascribed much of their plight to the proliferation of stores, which, in their view, were "a typical Jewish invention,"[104] the attribution of their loss of position to the Jews was most in keeping with the Antisemitic views of their religious tradition. This promoted their "national consciousness" so much that they believed that "the Jews were the backstage manipulators of the Yellow International (international financial capital) and the Red International (communism)."[105]

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[103] Helmut Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland* [Modern Antisemitism in Germany] (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988),. 123.

[104] Berding, 124.

[105] Martin and Schulin, *Die Juden Als Minderheit*, 281.

The "new middle class" refers to those employed in commerce and money circulation, namely shop and bank clerks. As employees, they differ greatly from the industrial proles in that they are in a much more advantageous position in terms of working hours, income, and independence. Consequently, they move ideologically toward the middle class. This first determines their attitude to private possession, which differs from that of the industrial working class. Under the guidance of Marxism, there is no Antisemitism in the industrial proletariat anti-capitalist movement because Marxism does not draw a distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish capitalism. However, the greatest concentration of Jewish capital was in shops and banks,[106] which led to the emergence of economic Antisemitism among those employed by Jewish capitalists. Antisemitism mixed with nationalism could give these employees a unique consciousness that coincided with their growing desire to distinguish themselves from the international proletariat. As a result, they shifted their thoughts of economic anti-capitalist exploitation to racial hatred against the Jews, thus branding their Antisemitic feelings as anti-socialist and Great Germanic nationalism.

The outbreak of Antisemitism among the small peasant class is based on the structural crisis of German agriculture. Members of this traditionally antisemitic class were annoyed by the presence of Jewish bankers, pawnbrokers, grain traders, and livestock traders who they were often forced to rely on for loans or the sale of their produce. However, during rapid industrialization, the significance of agriculture in the whole economy declined, resulting in the fall of the price of agricultural products and the increase of credit and accumulation of interest.[107] This, in turn, exacerbated the farmers' plight, and they naturally saw the Jews as "culprits." Therefore,

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[106] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, 124.

[107] Vickery, Raymond E., and Paul T. Sant. "Agricultural Statistics in Germany." *Journal of Farm Economics* 28, no. 4 (1946): 1063. https://doi.org/10.2307/1232369.

the small peasant class's Antisemitic consciousness was defined by strong anti-liberalism and anti-industrial modernism as well as indistinct anti-capitalism.[108]

Ultimately, the rapid industrialization fostered Antisemitism, for various reasons, in each of the three groups that made up the German middle class.The famous critic Theodor Fontane expressed the Antisemitism of the entire gentile middle class when he wrote, "The Jews are so supercilious that I am not only glad to see them have a real defeat, but I hope they will have a real defeat. When they cease to suffer, and cease to be as they were in old times, I am sure that a great calamity will befall them!"[109]

The capitalist crisis and depression that began in 1873 not only ended the economic boom that dated back to the founding of the Empire but also laid the foundation for Antisemitism in the era of the Empire. The first Antisemitic treatise was written by Willem Marr, a Hamburg journalist. His 1873 book, *Der Sieg des Judenthums uber das Germanenthum* (The Victory of Judaism over Germanism), placed the blame for the economic crisis squarely on the Jews and coined the term "Antisemitismus(Antisemitism)." The book went through an astonishing twelve reprints in six years. Marr explicitly wrote about the "Jews who crucified the Christians" and referred to them as the "national exploiters."[110] Thus began a middle-class movement against the fraud and exploitation of the Jewish exchange. After 1873, various conservative or radical Antisemitic parties and organizations sprang up, including the infamous "Deutschnationale

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[108] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, 139.

[109] Theodor Fontane, *Briefe Theodor Fontanes*, ed. Paul Schlenther, (Berlin: Wentworth Press, 1969), 3:58.

[110] Elbogen and Sterling, *Die Geschichte Der Juden*, 255.

Volkspartei" and "Alldeutscher Verband,"[111] with the support of the impoverished sectors of

agriculture, handicraft, commerce, and small- and medium-sized enterprises.

The Radicalization of Antisemitism in Germany from the Ideological Aspect

The German Empire saw the growth of Antisemitism not only due to economic reasons

but also from the cultural and intellectual right. Economically, members of the cultural intelli-

gentsia also belonged to the middle class. However, members of this field may serve the interests

of any class, often depending on the influence of their birth, experience, and ideology. The most

extreme Antisemitism was found in the right wing of the academic field, whose members have a

particularly large number of Jewish colleagues and believe that they would undoubtedly be better

off without these competitors. Most importantly, the group's cultural traditions were challenged

by intellectual pioneers, including a significant number of Jews.

It should be noted here that Germany has a long history of division as well as a feudal

tradition. It was after the impact of the French Revolution and the occupation of Napoleon,

which represented a serious blow to Germany's national pride, that Germany began to complete

the task of national reunification: "The long-term political division and split formed a kind of

narrow-minded spirit and narrow vision in the mentality of the German nation. This kind of

narrow spirit and narrow vision easy produce an inferiority complex; when the environment

changes to their advantage, the German People are prone to arrogance and ethnocentrism. In the

case of defeat, it is easy to produce a national revenge mentality and even more extreme hyper-

nationalism."[112] Among right-wing thinkers in the cultural intelligentsia, however, the concept of

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[111] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, 232.

[112] Erich Kahler, *The Germans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 77.

"nation" has never been understood in a political sense but as a unique combination of language, culture, and tradition[113]. Using the German model of "natural union among Germans with the same way of life" to combat the French model of "political union among free men,"[114] right-wing thinkers pursued not freedom, equality, or fraternity, nor a thorough reform of political and social relations, but rather the unity, strength, influence, and power of the people and the restoration of the so-called "traditional virtues" of Germany[115].

In the eyes of the German intelligents, the rise of Jewish social status was seen as the result of the infiltration of hostile ethnic ideas from the French Revolution of 1789 into German society. Jewish success also became a symbol of everything the educated gentile right disliked, including modern urban culture such as modern drama, atonal music, modern architecture, expressionism in painting and literature, as well as Western individualism, liberal democracy, class struggle, and communism, all of which were identified with the Jews, who were then portrayed as hostile elements within society.[116]

The right can be divided into two groups: conservatives and radicals. Before 1890, the former dominated; most came from Junker(landlords)-class families and often had close connections with the royal family. These right-wing conservatives strongly advocated for the establishment of a "Christian nation-state consciousness" and thus were inextricably linked with medieval religious Antisemitism. For a decade after the founding of the German Empire, conservative

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[113] Kahler, 81.

[114] Kahler, 82.

[115] Kahler, 84.

[116] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, 143.

thinkers on the right were on the defensive as Chancellor Otto von Bismarck allied himself with

liberals and adopted anti-church policies to "separate church and state."[117] However, when the

sharpening of the economic crisis in the late 1870s led to the replacement of the imperial politi-

cal liberal program with a conservative one, right-wing conservatives' calls for a "Christian na-

tion-state consciousness"[118] was given a chance. The praise of the "German national character"

and a "civilized upbringing" propagated in this consciousness encourages the masses to forget

their oppression.[119] Specifically, the gentile middle class's Antisemitism served as a political cen-

ter for this consciousness. Thus, the importance of using Antisemitism to tame the workers'

movement and to consolidate the loyalty of the middle class to the royal family and the old tradi-

tions became evident. Given this background, in 1879, Heinrich Von Treitschke, the Junker

thinker and a renowned historian at the University of Berlin, became the first to publicly articu-

late conservative thought: "Die Juden sind unser Unglück! [The Jews are our misfortune!]"[120]

Treitschke did not question Jewish baptism and cultural "assimilation," but he declared,

"We do not want a 'German-Jewish mixed culture' after a thousand years of Germanic civiliza-

tion. Therefore, it must be stipulated that Jews must either be unconditionally Germanized or get

out!" He continued, "The conquest of the only sacred national culture must be accelerated."[121]

Here, the Jewish minority was no longer accused of being an economic "criminal cartel" but had

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[117] Gay, *Weimar Culture the Outsider as Insider*, 93.

[118] Kahler, *The Germans*, 77.

[119] Kahler, 77.

[120] Walter Boehlich, *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit* [The Berlin Antisemitism Dispute] (Frankfurt: Insel-Verlag, 1965),. 11.

[121] Martin and Schulin, *Die Juden Als Minderheit*, 255.

become a " cultural alien" and was thus viewed as a permanent threat to the young empire.[122] This idea resonated not only with the Junker/bourgeois conservatives but also with the Catholic parties, which had begun to leverage Antisemitic sentiment to win votes among the middle classes.

With the fall of Bismarck and the advent of the Wilhelm era (1890–1918), the social effects of the Industrial Revolution were on full display. Driven by a powerful modern economy, the pluralism of social forces and group interests began to enter the political arena.[123] The first beneficiaries of this change were bourgeois democracy and legal relations in society, which created more equal opportunities. However, these opportunities could also be exploited by right-wing radical intellectuals. Herbert Marcuse's later formula for the law of capitalist progress demonstrates this phenomenon: technological progress can be equated with an increase in the wealth of a society, which in turn is equated with the extension of the enslavement of the rich to the rest, becoming a defining characteristic for a kind of hegemony.[124] While this was not always true, Marcuse's theory was rewritten and exploited by the right-wing. Many "citizen initiatives" presented not only various criticisms of imperial rule but also proposals for the reform of national politics. Therefore, the challenge of open industrial society to the old farm society structure of the empire rose everywhere. Right-wing conservatives, who preached "Christian nationalism," were increasingly unable to meet this challenge.[125] At the same time, the diplomatic situation of

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[122] Martin and Schulin, 256.

[123] Martin and Schulin, 273.

[124] Herbert Marcuse, introduction to *One-dimensional Man: Studies in Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 2nd ed.. (London: Routledge, 1991), 3.

[125] Martin and Schulin, *Die Juden Als Minderheit*, 284.

the German Empire became more complicated as adventurism grew increasingly evident in the competition between imperialist powers to divide the earth. The effects of the fragmentation of the "Old World" in Europe and the threat of the "New World" in America were comprehensive, making the need to expand and prepare for war all the more urgent.[126] Because the Western powers belong to the same "white race" and share the same religious nature as German Christianity, "Christian national consciousness" seemed obsolete. On the other hand, technological and organizational advances and changes made it possible to adjust social trends, and the renewed economic boom and upsurge of the 1890s enabled bold experiments throughout German society. The combination of these circumstances allowed the ideology of "calling for more national unity" to gain offensive momentum and created conditions for the development of radical right-wing Antisemitism, which advocated the theory of Germanic racial superiority in cultural and intellectual circles[127].

Members of the radical right tend to come from specific social backgrounds: they are primarily liberal arts graduates from middle-class families.[128] The overproportion of Jewish university students created fierce competition with between Jewish and gentile literati, especially for employment, while the progressive role of Jews in the cultural and intellectual world was a serious setback to right-wing radicals' self-esteem. Thus, even as they built cultural careers, right-wing intellectuals often pursued political careers through radical Antisemitism.[129] As such, right-

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[126] Martin and Schulin, *Die Juden Als Minderheit*, 256.

[127] Martin and Schulin, 256.

[128] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, 112.

[129] Berding, 117.

wing radical intellectuals provided a steady stream of political and theoretical guidance to Anti-semitic parties and organizations.

Although both radical and conservative Antisemitism are anti-socialist, anti-liberal, and anti-modernist, among conservatives, Antisemitism was used only as a vote-capturing tool. However, for the radicals, "solving the Jewish problem" was always the real goal. In the radical view, a Jewish nation could not be proven to be "ethnically and genetically German."[130] Thus, the nationalism they preached politicized the standard "friend–enemy" ethnic divide.

In 1912, Heinrich Claß emerged as an "epoch-making figure" in this political apocalypse.[131] This Treitschke student and leader of the Alldeutscher Verband expressed outrage at the "tolerance" and "humanism" of the older generation. When an 82-year-old man from his village told Claß that he saw Jews as his equals, Claß responded, "We young people want to progress […]"We don't want to learn anything from tolerance when it treats the enemies of our nation and state. We will abandon humanism in every liberal sense of the word!"[132] Indeed, his party even declared that "everything that came out of the French Revolution, embodied and propagated by liberalism and social democracy, should be wiped out!"[133] Their Antisemitism no longer needed to be disguised by religious, cultural, or economic reasons; it was now directly rooted in ethnic arguments, the so-called "immutable nature of man and race." This combination with racism completed German Antisemitism's the epoch-making transition from its traditional

[130] Boehlich, *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit,* 134.

[131] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, 218.

[132] Heinrich Claß, *Wider Den Strom; Vom Werden Und Wachsen Der Nationalen Opposition Im Alten Reich* [Against the current; From becoming and growing the national opposition in the Old Reich] (Leipzig: K.F. Koehler, 1932),. 17.

[133] Martin and Schulin, *Die Juden Als Minderheit*, 258.

to modern form.[134] This anti-Enlightenment, anti-rationalist doctrine justified human inequality by completely denying the factors of environment and education, thus eliminating any possibility of the "assimilation," let alone "liberation," of the Jews, who were now seen as "enemies of the nation and state." The "spirit of reconciliation" of the assimilation movement, which had been at least somewhat influential in Treitschke's generation, died in Claß's time.

In 1881, a political rival of Marxism and an extra lecturer at the University of Berlin, Eugen Dühring, published a book entitled *Die Judenfrage Als Racen-, Sitten- Und Culturfrage Mit Einer Weltgeschichtlichen Antwort* (The Jewish Question As Race, Moral and Culture Question With A World History Answer), which provided a pseudoscientific basis for the modern Anti-semitic movement. "The uninspired, culturally worthless, Bohemian, self-interested Jews," he railed, "are at the bottom of the racial ladder, and their baseness is hardly shameful to mankind. The Jews are the enemy of virtually all peoples, and above all of Germany. The salvation of Germany lies in the persistent struggle of first and foremost Antisemitic assimilation and emancipation."[135] Meanwhile, similar "theorists" gave equal weight to the description of the so-called hierarchy and creative abilities of the "finest race of mankind"—the Aryan Germanic people. In his work *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century), Houston Stewart Chamberlain argued, "The Teutonic people are the true organizers and commanders of human destiny, the creators of new ideas and primitive art. All of our civi-

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[134] Martin and Schulin, 258.

[135] Eugen Dühring, *Die Judenfrage Als Racen-, Sitten- Und Culturfrage Mit Einer Weltgeschichtlichen Antwort.* [The Jewish Question As Race, Moral and Culture Question With A World History Answer] (Berlin, 1881), 32.

lization and culture today is the work of one specific race, the Germanic people."[136] Taken together, these works create a counter-thesis in which the Jewish nation appears only as a counterpoint to the ideal model of the Germanic nation. That is, these authors assert that the Jews have no roots because the Germans are native; the Jews were dependent on external law, whereas Germans were customarily independent; the Jews were mercurial/greedy while the Germans were empathetic; the Jews enjoy superficial idleness, whereas Germans have a historical fixity rooted in their homeland, which fosters creativity.[137]

With the spread of social Darwinism in Germany, the biological tendency of political thought became a powerful factor in modern Antisemitism. Not only were the barriers between Jews and gentiles insuperable in principle, these Antisemitic theorists believed, but a war between the absolutely superior and absolutely inferior races was inevitable. Therefore, they cried out, "this struggle for existence is the natural order of things between nations" and argued that "the dangerous Jewish element must first be removed."[138] Hermann Ahlwardt, who published *Der Verzweiflungskampf der arischen Völker mit dem Judentum (The Last Struggle Between the Aryan Nation and the Jews)*, became the first to refer to all Jews as "predatory beasts" and "cholera carriers" in a discussion of the Imperial Council in 1895.[139] Antisemitic articles of the time were filled with warnings of "Jewish attempts to rule the world" and, in particular, of "the conquest of Germany." At the same time, specific Antisemitic action plans were being devised.

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[136] Chamberlain, Houston Stewart, *Die Grundlagen Des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* [The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century] (München: Bruckmann, 1937),. 7.

[137] Chamberlain, 22.

[138] Graml, *Reichskristallnacht*, 77.

[139] Graml, 79.

For example, Claß's 1912 book *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär (If I Were the Emperor)* provided a list of measures to strip Jews of their property and rights and expel them from Germany. This was a clear precursor of the Antisemitic goals of Hitler's Nazi Germany after 1933.

In short, modern Antisemitism within the cultural and intellectual circle is a stubborn, reactionary ideology that not only expanded its social base through the economic crisis but even strengthened it through economic prosperity, allowing it to survive the drastic political changes in Germany and eventually become the core of the Nazi worldview.

The Completion of the Radical Transformation

The development of Antisemitism during the German Empire was directly related to the rapid improvement of the economic, cultural, and social status of the Jewish minority. This Antisemitic movement not only has its roots in religious superstition and traditional prejudice but also is one response to the pressures of extreme social change caused by the Industrial Revolution and the rapid development of the anti-capitalist commodity economy. Antisemitism, triggered by intense competition between the gentile middle classes and their Jewish counterparts, rose and fell with the economy. However, as a negative response to this pressure, radical Antisemitism from the right wing of the gentile intellectual community combined anti-Enlightenment racism and irrational nationalism, thus making an epochal transition from old-style Antisemitism to modern Antisemitism. Moreover, because this force of modern Antisemitism acted in the noble name of "defending the nation and the state," it could expand its base through the economic crisis and link German political and social development. Finally, this modern Antisemitism bears the hallmarks of nineteenth-century bourgeois respectability. These reactionary forces greatly influenced German history during the first half of the twentieth century.

Modern Antisemitism became part of the ideology of German nationalism in a very short period of time during World War I. With the prospect of the victory of the German Empire wavering, the "more unification within" thesis advocated by such nationalism created an inevitable social development trend: the more "German" the Germans were, the more "alien" the Jews would become. Although nationalism would become even more extreme during the Weimar Republic, the end of the "Weimar road" was the beginning of great disaster for Jews in Germany and throughout Europe.

The German Consciousness of "People's Community" (Volksgemeinschaft) and Nazism

Neither Hitler's political opponents at home nor abroad denied the fact that by January 1933, more than a third of the German population supported the Nazi Party and its Führer, Adolf Hitler. No other German politician of any political spectrum at the time had reached or come close to such a "high" level of support—especially for a party with strongly racist, anti-democracy, anti-human rights, and other extreme ideas.

When one notices that the followers of the Nazi movement included not only people from the "new" and "old" middle classes, but also individuals from other social classes and religious sects, it is not difficult to recognize the "authoritarian mass convergence" of the Nazi movement. In fact, Hitler's goals of seizing power in this era, establishing a fascist totalitarian dictatorship at home, and seizing living space (*Lebensraum*) abroad required not only the organization of the anti-democratic ranks of the middle class but also a more inclusive social union. This social union was the "people's community" (*die Volksgemeinschaft*) of Nazism.

The people's community was designed for people who, suffering from increasing loneliness in the course of modernization, longed for a "pleasant communal life."[140] This "sense of community" not only served the anti-Marxist function of denying the existence of classes and class struggle, but also obscured the reality of multiple conflicts of interests in industrialized society.[141] Therefore, this "community" was inherently anti-democracy, anti-liberalism, and anti-communism. However, during the great crisis years of 1929–1933, the need for this "sense of community" was so great that the Nazi Party was able to achieve its goals by emphasizing this sense and rallying large masses of people. This causal relationship is unique to the long course of German modernization and the development of the dominant ideology of this society.

1. The Origin of the Sense of Community

The origin of the "sense of community" is found in the rapidity of German modernization in the nineteenth century as well as the feelings of alienation brought about by industrialization. Modernization not only led to new relations of production in capitalist industry but also to the upending of traditional values and the collapse of old social ties.

During this great social fission, the objective world changed at a much faster rate than the behavior of the subjective imagination. Individuals who lost the traditional laws and regulations of the old society were unable to obtain a safe position in the new society. Along with the fruits of Germany's rapid industrialization came the aggravation of social polarization, the formation of modern class, and the birth of class struggle. The middle class faced the challenge of the workers' movement before it had time to politically defeat the Junker aristocracy. While the

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[140] Fritzsche, Peter. *Life and Death in the Third Reich*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009. 32.

[141] Fritzsche, 38.

powerful industrial working class stepped onto the political stage, the middle class experienced a fragmentation and acceleration of the process of disunity.[142] Consequently, the democratic progressive elements of the civil liberalism movement gradually evaporated after the revolutions of 1848 as a modernist republicanism emerged. Although a modern republic is understood as contrary to monarchy, this kind of republicanism was not formed by the middle class but in the German workers' movement and the growing strength of the Social Democratic Party, making the dominating classes uneasy.[143]

The economic growth of industrial capitalism sparked revulsion for laissez-faire capitalism and the fear of the labor movement, raising the problem of social control. In the mid-1870s, the *Kathedersozialismus [Catheder Socialism]* theorists advocated for the traditional monarchy of Wilhelm II by asserting that "strong state authorities are capable of harmonizing the ends pursued by individual profit."[144] Specifically, this so-called "State Socialism" promoted only the development of capitalism under the organizing of the state,[145] and it was against this background that the idea of a "cultural community" developed. Although this concept represented the origin of the modern welfare state and reflected part of the rational modernist ideological line, this ideology at that time was still primarily focused on maintaining the "top-down" control of Wilhelm's autocratic empire over the developing pluralistic society. It also contributed to a "class-harmony theory," which led to a "class-cooperativist line" within the workers' movement and

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[142] Manfred Hettling, *Was Ist Gesellschaftsgeschichte?: Positionen, Themen, Analysen* [What is social history?: Positions, topics, analyses] (München: Beck, 1991),. 294.

[143] Hettling, 292.

[144] Hettling, 296.

[145] Hettling, 304.

greatly influenced the political direction of the main Social Democratic Party in the late Empire

and the Weimar Republic.[146] However, under the influence of intellectual right-wing conser-

vatism, this "class harmony theory" became an anti-modernism "classless theory" and "anti-class

struggle theory." The most famous representative of this theory is the conservative sociologist

Ferdinand Tönnies.

In his 1887 book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Community and Society)*, Tönnies fo-

cused on the complaints of the German middle class, threatened by polarization and deprived of

a sense of social status, about modernization. Capitalist alienation stimulates to memories of the

past and its non-modern social characteristics. Unlike the Kathedersozialismus theorists, Tön-

nies explicitly juxtaposed the imagined past of "classless conflict," the "agricultural cultural

community," and the existing "industrial class society." He argued that modernization was de-

stroying the ideal life of the past:

> In this agricultural cultural community, the dominant one [feature] is the growing unity, the organized cooperation of the various parts, and thus the warm world of the human family. It is consolidated through harmony, custom and religion, and is based on the essential desires of man. This common way of life and order represents the inevitable eternity and progress, and it is only in this common way of life and order that the national character and its culture can be preserved. The class struggle destroys the country, and it degenerates the whole national culture in the social civilization. Therefore, the culture is dying in the ever-changing civilization.[147]

In fact, the "community" Tönnies glorifies never existed: even in that bygone era of agri-

culture-based economy, there had always been class exploitation, oppression, and class conflict,

as well as disease, early death, hunger, war, personal dependence, and humiliation. However,

Tönnies emphasized the antagonism between the "community" of the past, which was full of

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146 Hettling, 323.

147 Ralf Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft Und Demokratie in Deutschland* [Society and Democracy in Germany] (München: Piper, 1968),. 145,

emotion and infinite beauty, and the modern "contract society," which is cruel and unbearable. He even declared that "this natural human community is threatened by an unnatural class society. This development is unpleasant and must be stopped."[148]

It is the fear of this failure, which has proved to be ineffective in the course of history, that initially evoked various reactions within the ruling elite. The Junker aristocracy/middle class, with its emphasis on Prussian virtue and discipline, foresaw the threat to their hierarchical and privileged position in the prospect of a break with the traditional autocracy and the modernization of the political system.[149] Thus, by making use of this classless theory, they could also alleviate the vexing problem of class struggle. The ruling establishment, of course, also found support among the worried "old middle class," characterized by "independents" who found their survival possible only if they maintained the economic, social, and political status quo.[150] As such, with the assistance of the intellectual right-wing conservative group , an "antiquarian alliance"[151] was formed against modernism, liberal democracy, and Marxism. Although industrialization, urbanization, and the diversification of social interests constantly challenged the Union's dream, the Union still stubbornly emphasized "internal harmonization" as a reality, or at least as a benchmark and goal.

The Rise of German Nationalism

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[148] Dahrendorf, 146.

[149] Dahrendorf, 155.

[150] Dahrendorf, 156.

[151] Dahrendorf, 156.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the commercial competition between Wilhelm II's empire and the outside world became increasingly fierce. The imperial government actively promoted "world politics" and tried hard to get out of the "central European box" and seize "the land under the sun."[152] The external conflicts with other great powers over colonies raised stronger demands for "internal harmony." As the desire for more national unity gained an offensive momentum, one of its notable results was the spread of the "community" ideology throughout German society.

The spread of the irrationalism and romanticism of the community ideology is closely linked with the implementation of "welfare state" policies with a modern rational spirit. Indeed, this policy itself was an important part of the "road to national integration" during the imperial era.[153] As Max Weber wrote, "What we must bring to our children along this path is not the peace and happiness of all mankind, but the preservation and development of our national way. The purpose of our social welfare policy is to enable the nation to achieve social solidarity in the coming hard struggle, which will force open the door to modern economic development."[154] Thus, after the introduction of welfare insurance for industrial workers in 1883, this policy was further extended in 1911. The aim of the Employee Insurance Act was to bring a new and rising class of employees under the care of the state and to cultivate the self-awareness of the "new middle class" by giving this class benefits that were twice as good as those of industrial workers.

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[152] Gay, *Weimar Culture,* 245.

[153] Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft Und Demokratie in Deutschland,* 44.

[154] Dahrendorf, 48.

The aim was not just to divide the entire workforce, but to "bring this racially charged, internally aggressive social force under the baton of the conservative state authorities."[155]

Ultimately, the strategy of avoiding internal social conflicts created an atmosphere of internal harmony that fostered a consciousness of "community" not only for the new and old middle class but also for many workers, especially agricultural and Catholic workers. Consequently, this sense of community became part of German folklore and identity. In this kind of folklore, a series of juxtapositions emerged, namely, the opposition between "German culture" and "liberal and democratic civilization"; the opposition between "community" and "class society,"; and the opposition between "collectivism," "individualism," and "internationalism."[156] In these juxtapositions, the former appears as an ideal, the latter as something deeply loathed and resolutely opposed. The influence of such anti-modernist thought undoubtedly influenced the rise of German nationalism in the [157].

The German nationalist movement itself was initially triggered by Napoleon's invasion of Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The prevailing trend of cultural romanticism and irrationalism in German nationalism has always been a decisive rejection of the French Revolution ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity.[158] In this line of thought, the concept of a nation was never a political expression but was understood as "something of a particular nature in language, custom, and history." During the rapid industrialization of the second half of the nine-

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[155] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland,* 105.

[156] Gay, *Weimar Culture,* 297.

[157] Gay, 299.

[158] Gay, 304.

teenth century, as traditional social connections were lost in the real world, this prevailing trend of nationalist thought became more closely tied to the "community" ideology. Thus, the Germans, mythic and uncritical, emphatically understood the word "nation" as "a developing collective of destiny, which the individual serves unconditionally. When necessary, the individual must dedicate his life to the collective." The German historian Lothar Gall remarked, "It was here for the first time that the idea of nationalism could also be separated from its original relevance, become backward and serve reactionary goals."[159]

This trend of irrationalism gave rise to the "German national consciousness" of Wilhelm's time. Within two generations, it had developed into an integrated force that included any social or political organization, and the loyalty of the citizens followed the direction of imperial expansion almost exclusively.[160] For the social structure, "it had the effect of marginalizing the equality principle of the national movement by a hierarchical order based on command and obedience. Under the influence of Wilhelm Germany's wild pursuit of foreign goals, nationalism became national chauvinism, the political religion of an indefatigable generation with strange impulses and no purpose."[161]

Here, the ideology of "unity" within a society was deliberately translated by the ruler into a picture of a people under siege, in which all citizens must work together to form a "community" to which they are committed. It was here, too, that the law of internal unity, which must be

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[159] Lothar Gall, *Stadt Und Bürgertum Im 19. Jahrhundert* [City And Bourgeoisie In the 19th Century] (München: Oldenbourg, 1990), 31.

[160] Gruner, Wolf, *Deutsches Problem Ein europäisches historisches Problem seit 1800* [German problem A European Historical Problem since 1800] (München: Beck, 1985), 32.

[161] Gruner, 34.

enforced by external pressure, was abused by Wilhelm II's risky goal of world hegemony as a

combination of actual and rhetorical external pressure was used to divert attention away from the

"chaotic situation" within society.[162] The German "battle against the West" and the "thought of

1914"[163] against the "spirit of 1789"[164] exemplify this mentality. At the outbreak of World War I,

the German slogan of "using duty, justice and order to oppose liberty, equality and fraternity"

was the most prominent expression in the internal political practice of the Empire. This ideology

represents the *Burgfrieden,*[165] that was reached in August 1914 among the political groups of

German society "to overcome class antagonism emotionally," "to eliminate party strife," and "to

be united in foreign relations."[166]

The *Burgfrieden* marked the establishment of a nationalist "war community" in Germany.

This community did not initially adopt an openly hostile attitude toward the Jews internally; that

is, the "assimilated" German Jews were still included in this "united war community." However,

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[162] Gruner, 45.

[163] The "battle against the West" and the "thought of 1914" refer to a denial of Western freedom, democracy, and fraternity. This ideology further radicalized German nationalism and the Bismarck concept of the state. At the beginning of World War I, inspired by the patriotic fervor of Germany in general, especially the *Burgfrieden*, German intellectuals tried to develop a new social order that could solve the prewar problems of church establishment, religious discrimination, and party and labor struggles in the country. The idea involved political, economic, and social reforms and became known as "the thought of 1914."

[164] Christian von Krockow, *Die Deutschen in Ihrem Jahrhundert 1890-1990* [The Germans in Their Century 1890-1990] (Hamburg: PUBLSHER, 1997), 341.

[165] "*Burgfrieden*" refers to a medieval German phenomenon where, if a castle was jointly owned by several forces, they would enter into a "*Burgfriedensvertrage*," which forbade private fighting within the castle's inner confines. In section 8 of *Die Krise der Sozialdemokratie* (The Crisis in the German Social Democracy), Rosa Luxemburg uses the term to describe World War I-era views that advocated the unity of classes at home against foreign enemies. However, because Germany's SPD supported the war and stopped political fighting, the term is now more commonly used to refer to the cessation of internal conflict and temporary cooperation in the face of an external enemy. https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/junius/

[166] Krockow, 344.

this kind of German nationalism, with its strong flavor of cultural romanticism, always tries to prove the superiority of its own nation and ascribe that superiority to cultural origin or even race. As the prospects for imperial victory faltered, the nationalist mantra of "more integration within" stimulated this trend: the more "German" the Germans were, the more "alien" the Jews were. Only by blaming the unfavorable war situation on the destructive influence of the "hostile race" —the Jews—could the wounded pride of the nation be soothed, the morale of the nation reinvigorated, and the German nation itself proved invincible. Thus, this push for more internal integration reflected the increasingly diverse and heterogeneous society only in the war against the "alien enemy" in an effort to maintain "internal consistency" through a direct link with authoritarian political nationalism.[167] For Hitler, this was undoubtedly a very important development.

The "People's Community" of Nazism

Hitler's Nazi "national community" was inspired by the memory of the "thought of 1914" and the *Burgfrieden*. In essence, this "people's community" was a social alliance organized by the right-wing political radicals in the German middle class that was governed by Hitler's personal totalitarian dictatorship, absorbed all social classes and sects, and took militarization as its permanent direction. However, the Nazi Führer also added a more explicit and radical racist connotation to these ideas, leading to a transcendence of the *Burgfrieden* of 1918.[168] Through this transcendence, the traditional "cultural community" and the nationalist "war community" developed into a racist military community, which Hitler called a "national

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[167] Krockow, 354.

[168] Fest, Joachim. *Hitler: Eine Biographie* [Hitler: A Biography] (Frankfurt, 1973),. 276.

revolution."[169] Hitler declared, "In this community, the Germans, as pure Aryans, are healthy and strong men, and this is the ideal; They are honest, simple, industrious, loyal, without physical or mental handicap; In a pleasant relationship of national companionship, as dynamic agents, they will always heed the call of leaders to realize the ancient human dream; These are brave soldiers, and they will die for the whole without hesitation!"[170]

By elevating one's own nation to a transcendent height, one can acquire a national sense of self-worth, honor, and nobility, and by appealing to this sense of community, a leader can arouse and organize the nation, leading to not only extraordinary national achievements but also extraordinary national suffering. This had been proven by the German defeat in the First World War. However, such a radical, anti-modernist, racist ideal of the national community was becoming increasingly attractive to the new and old middle classes, the conservative traditional political elite, the Junker aristocracy and the middle class, and even a considerable number of workers.

This sense of community continued to grow due to Germany's defeat in the First World War and the difficult post-war Weimar years. Germany's defeat came as a "general surprise" to the masses who, ignorant of the military situation, had listened to the war propaganda of the highest military authorities and knew only that until the first half of 1918, the Germans had gained a great deal of territory on the Eastern Front.[171] Moreover, the defeat and the subsequent establishment of Weimar democracy, based on the French ideas of 1789, caused a people that had not lost a battle since the Napoleonic Wars, a people that had been closely associated with

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[169] Fest, 276.

[170] Fest, 278.

[171] Gay, *Weimar Culture*, 322.

monarchy for centuries, to suddenly and completely lose their central social and psychological

benchmarks. The sense of nationalism and the cultural values of "community" could not adapt to

this change, which led to the rise of the "backstabbing" theory, which spread rapidly from right-

wing circles.[172] This theory blames the Jews and the "Judaized" Social Democrats for the Ger-

man defeat.[173] Moreover, Germans' universal spiritual connection with the past naturally became

a potential threat to the democratic Weimar Republic.

If this first attempt at German democracy had guaranteed a long and stable economic

boom, the potential threat might have been gradually overcome. However, the hyperinflation of

1918–1923 and the Great Depression of 1929–1933 created nearly ten years of economic disaster

in just fourteen years of democracy.[174] The crisis-ridden economy of the Weimar Republic and

the rough development of the rationalization of production drove the developmental trend of

German society from pluralism to fragmentation. Even people in the same class or stratum were

often in vastly different circumstances. At the same time, the sluggish process of modernization

created a crisis in the social security system and a complete loss of security for the masses: times

of high unemployment, when the individual's social plight is the greatest, are also when they re-

ceive the least amount of help from society.[175]

Therefore, when democracy is pushed to the political margins and conservatism adhering

to the traditional outlook is no longer able to control the sharp contradictions of modern society,

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[172] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland,* 171.

[173] Detlev Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik Krisenjahre Der Klassischen Moderne* [The Weimar Republic Crisis Years Of Classical Modernism] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 212.

[174] Evans, Richard John. *The Coming of the Third Reich*. London: Penguin, 2005. iv.

[175] Evans, v.

the only political belief that can bridge the differences and contradictions between traditionality and modernity is nationalism. Nationalists come from every social group and all sides of the political spectrum.

Thus, when this psychosocial loss and economic disaster were associated with the "national humiliation of Versailles"[176] imposed by Western democracies, the discontented national mood was the only thing that developed effectively during the Republic, and it was doubly inflated during the great crisis.[177] Unsurprisingly, as nationalism grew, Germans' sense of community became increasingly stronger. It was against this background that Hitler's national revolution gained its appeal.

The need for "internal consistency" has a tendency to seek out chaos externally. Indeed, demonizing the outside world—that is, the Jews— was the most convenient and effective way for the Nazi Party. In the Nazi interpretation of racial doctrine, "Jews are both the inventors of the idea of class struggle, the creators of international cash capitalism, and the arch-enemy of German freedom."[178]

Certainly, the propaganda notion of a "people's community" targeted politically naive people who were outraged by the harsh realities of modernization and those who were spiritually disoriented, and it served as a means of establishing, consolidating, and strengthening the totalitarian dictatorship of the Nazis.[179]

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[176] Gay, *Weimar Culture*, 342.

[177] Gay, 343.

[178] Paul Joseph Goebbels, *Die Verfluchten Hakenkreuzen* [The Cursed Swastikas] (München, 1930),. 16.

[179] Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik Krisenjahre Der Klassischen Modern*e, 217.

The Nazi Party's official name, the National Socialist German Workers' Party, was not an impediment to the "national community" of the new and old middle classes, which were eager to distinguish themselves from the industrial working class of the "international proletarians." Instead, it became an attractive label for bringing together people from all walks of life in this "community." The point was not that the name of the Nazi Party appealed to different classes of people, but that the concepts of "socialism" and "workers" were, in Hitler's interpretation, completely synonymous with his national" consciousness, which emphasized only one thing: the "people's community" of Germany. Hitler explained the "socialist" label in the party's name as follows: "Anyone who knows our great national anthem, 'Deutschland uber alles, uber alles in der Welt', means: He no longer has anything in his mind that is higher than Germany, Germany and the people of Germany's land, and a man like that is a socialist!"[180] When asked why the word "worker" was included in the name of the Party, he responded, "Every fellow countryman should regard himself as a worker of his nation, whether he be a bourgeois or a proletarian!"[181] It is in this conscious blurring of class boundaries that the concepts of "socialism" and the "working class" were completely replaced by the consciousness of a "people's community."

As Robert Ley, a devotee of Hitler, noted of the so-called "national revolution,"

"This great revolution began in August 1914, for it was only in the trenches that this na
tion came together again. The bombs and the mines did not ask if you were born high or
low, whether you were rich or poor, what sect or caste you belonged to. Today, the only

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[180] Alan Bullock, *Hitler: Eine Studie über Tyrannei* [Hitler: A Study of Tyranny] (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1964), 60.

[181] Max Domarus, *Hitler, Reden Und Proklamationen 1932–1945* [Hitler, Speeches And Proclamations 1932-1945] (München: Süddt Verl, 1965),. 350.

way to test the will and spirit of this community is to follow the Fuehrer to fight, and to test the will and spirit of this community with violence!"[182]

Taking the national crisis as an opportunity, Hitler's Nazi Party succeeded in mobilizing a wide range of people throughout the nation through the greater inclusiveness and ambiguity of its consciousness of the "people's community" and the use of extra-parliamentary propaganda.

As Norbert Elias and Michael Schröter observed, "Hitler put more emphasis on the sense of a 'people's community' than any other right before him, and this 'membership of the Germanic race' certainly opened the door to 'hope' for more people than the so-called 'membership of the aristocratic society of good birth.'"[183]Although the party did not succeed in winning power through the voters, its success in the parliamentary election was undoubtedly a broad and fundamental precondition for its ultimate seizure of power, and this achievement itself was due to the party's provocative appeal to the German consciousness of a "people's community."

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[182] Krockow, *Die Deutschen in Ihrem Jahrhundert,* 205.

[183] Norbert Elias and Michael Schröter, *Studien über Die Deutschen: Machtkämpfe Und Habitusentwicklung Im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert* [Studies on the Germans: Power Struggles and Habitus Development in the 19th and 20th Centuries] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), 261.

CHAPTER 3: RADICAL RESPONSES OF THE GERMAN MIDDLE CLASS TO PRE-NAZI SOCIAL REALITIES IN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL TERMS

This chapter will use the methods of economics and sociology to analyze the psychological response of various occupational categories of the German middle class to social changes before Germany entered the Nazi era. Methodologically, this chapter divides the German middle class into four categories and analyzes the practical reasons for the change of their mentality to anti-liberalism, Antisemitism, and xenophobia as well as the root causes of the Nazi Party's great tolerance of this class.

The "German middle class" generally refers to the social class between the upper class, represented by the industrial capitalist, agricultural landowner, and aristocratic elite, and the lower class, represented by the workers.[184] During the world economic crisis of 1929 to 1933, the participation of various professional groups from the German middle class in the Nazi Party exceeded their respective proportions of the total German population. Before the general election in September 1930, for example, among the 398,000 Nazi Party members, independent operators (9 percent of the population) accounted for 21 percent of Party members; small farmers (10 percent of the total population) represented 14 percent of the Party; clerks (12 percent of the total population) comprised 26 percent of Party membership; and officials and faculty (5 percent of the total population) made up 8 percent of Party members. In total, these groups accounted for 69 percent of all the Nazi Party members.[185] Three years later, the party had swelled tenfold to 3.9 million

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[184] Wunderlich, Frieda. "Fascism and the German Middle Class." *The Antioch Review* 5, no. 1 (1945): https://doi.org/10.2307/4609060. 56.

[185] Grebing, Helga. *Der Deutsche Sonderweg in Europa,1806-1945* [The German Special Route in Europe] (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1986), 190.

people, and the super-percentage of members of the middle class remained more than 62 percent. Of these, 62.2 percent served as leaders of the Nazi Party at all levels.[186] Indeed, the most senior members of the Party all came from middle class families.[187] Therefore, it is not difficult conclude that the middle class was the "carrier class" and backbone of the Nazi Party.

What caused this affinity between the German middle class and Nazism? To answer this question, we must first understand the basic characteristics of the occupational groups of the German middle class, their common ground in the process of German modernization, and the connections between the tendency of consciousness and Nazism during a state of crisis.

The Independent Operators Group as the "Old Middle Class"

Between big capital and labor, the "old middle class," composed of small handicraftsmen, small businessmen, small business owners, and farmers, constituted a group of independent operators.[188] In Britain, these people were smoothly and rapidly integrated into the industrial society and became a striking decorative pattern in an urban society. In France and the United States, independent business has always been an underestimated political force. They not only form the basis of democracy, but also become a kind of professional ideal for workers. However, in Germany, these middle-of-the-road independents were never meant to be dynamic historical forerunners. They were most analogous to the early capitalist bourgeois, which never existed before in Germany.[189]

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[186] Hennig, Eike. *Burgerliche Gesellschaft und Faschismus in Deutschland* [Civil Society and Fascism in Germany] (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 165.

[187] Hennig, 172.

[188] Wunderlich, "Fascism and the German Middle Class," 56.

[189] Grebing, *Der Deutsche Sonderweg in Europa,1806-1945,* 145.

Since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the dream of a German civil society has been dashed by a series of historical factors. The Age of Discovery led to the westward shift of the economic center of Europe, the inability of the inland countries to participate in remote colonial trade, extreme political fragmentation, and tariff barriers, while the Thirty Years' War destroyed the industrial and commercial development of the old cities of Germany. All this repeatedly interrupted what should have been a continuous process of urbanization in Germany.[190] When urban independent operators prospered after the eighteenth century, it was thanks to the mercantilist policies of German monarchs' enlightened despotism. Their long dependence on the protective policies of the state never fostered a strong belief in democratic politics.[191]

The wave of German industrialization that began in the first half of the nineteenth century wiped out the cottage industry. Only those craftsmen whose services directly related to the needs of the people, such as tailors, shoemakers, cooks, barbers, and masons, survived.[192] Threatened by any change, wary of strangers, and facing severe overcrowding, handicraftsmen opposed industrialization, the freedom of commerce and industry, and the right of citizens to move freely. Economically timid and defensive, this conservative group became an obstruction to the process of modernization.[193]

Independent small business owners and businessmen were also part of this group. Amidst the fierce competition of industry and commerce, they also took a defensive, cold, wait-and-see

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[190] David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978),. 60.

[191] Calleo, 65.

[192] Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1800-1866* [German History, 1800–1866] (München: Beck, 1983), 214.

[193] Nipperdey, 250.

attitude toward economic development and industrial expansion. Each hoped to lead his own enterprise in a thriving community of independent operators of small businesses that would avoid the culturally destructive factory system.[194]

After the German Empire (1871–1918) entered an era of high industrialization in the second half of the nineteenth century, the urban old middle class was increasingly squeezed out by the process of modernization. The proportion of this former majority of urban residents in the total population declined from 44 percent in 1848 to 27 percent in 1882, and to just 9 percent in 1930.[195]

This precipitous decline was directly related to Germany's transition to "organized capitalism," which was among the earliest in the industrialized world. In the democratic United States, this phase began with the central organization of the war economy during World War I and ended with Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s. In Germany, on the other hand, this process began in the second half of the 1870s, and the transition was completed before World War I because the traditional elite of the Junker aristocracy thought that "Large business organisations are much more efficient than these small and medium-sized enterprises, and they are much more convenient to command. Conversely, even if the old middle class collapses economically, it will not have the far-reaching political, social, and economic consequences of the collapse of large-

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[194] James Sheehan, *Der Deutsche Liberalismus Von den Anfangen im 18. Jahrhundert Bis Zum Ersten Weltkrieg 1770-1914* [German Liberalism From the Beginnings of the 18th Century to the First World War] (München: Beck, 1983), 40.

[195] Grebing, *Der Deutsche Sonderweg in Europa*, 190.

scale industry."[196] Thus, the state recognized cartel agreements as legal by providing interest-free loans, tariff protection, and similar protective measures.[197]

Although this process met the economic development needs of the big industrial assets and brought about an economic leap forward, it also endangered the social security of the old middle class. No longer able to receive state support, only a fortunate few of them managed to ascend to the ranks of the industrial middle class, and the great majority of those who could not maintain a middle position were relegated to the ranks of the proletarians. During the rapid process of industrialization, the social status of smallholders declined, while the drop in agricultural product prices and the rise of agricultural loan interest led to a large-scale loss of smallholders. In 1871, 64 percent of the population lived in the country, but by 1910, the proportion of rural residents had dropped to only 35 percent. Among these, small peasants accounted for only about 15 percent, and in 1930, this figure too had decreased to only 10 percent.[198] The preferential treatment and aid of the state to the big estates of the aristocracy itself led to the neglect of and discrimination against smallholders. Therefore, like the urban old middle class, as an appendage of the petty middle class, smallholders' consciousness was oriented toward the social pursuit of the outdated pre-industrial era.

The sense of estrangement in the hierarchy, the fear of industrialization, and the demand for national protection characterized the psychology of the entire old middle class. The threat of losing their old independence, and the fear of falling into a process of social disintegration, led

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[196] Grebing, 169.

[197] Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered*, 64.

[198] Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1954), 228.

the unsuccessful among them to seek a repulsive anti-economic liberalism, anti-industrial capi-talism, anti-urbanism movement, or anti-modernist ideology.[199] Such people also habitually sought scapegoats in their Jewish competitors.

The Staff Group as the "New Middle Class"

The members of the "staff group," who were part of the "new middle class," were work-ers in the tertiary/service industries—waiters, salesmen, bank tellers, postmen, and reception-ists—and the managers involved in large enterprises, such as secretaries, accountants, supervi-sors, administrators, technicians, engineers and drivers.[200] In short, the new middle class consist-ed of "white collar" paid-employees. With the increasing development of the service sector as well as the continuous modernization of industrial technology and enterprise management, this white-collar class expanded steadily and had the largest growth rate in the total population. They rose from 1.9 percent of the German population in 1882 to 5.7 percent in 1907 and made up 12 percent of the population in 1930.[201]

The service-oriented staff group formed a unique new world of careers. Their work was characterized by dealing with people from a wide variety of social circles and from all walks of life, but the service-oriented staff group was not a true middle class. Economically, they were not independent operators, which sets them apart from the old middle class. Politically, they did not belong to the ruling class, which differentiated them from public servants. The difference be-tween these service workers and non-industrial workers, for example, between a saleswoman and

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[199] Veblen, 230.

[200] Wunderlich, "Fascism and the German Middle Class," 61.

[201] Hennig, *Burgerliche Gesellschaft und Faschismus,* 113.

a seamstress, or between a waiter and a mason, lies in a kind of self-consciousness. Service

workers' sense of being superior to the workers has no firm basis in reality, so much so that they

are also called the "false middle classes."[202] However, it is those whose social identities are most

in question who are most vocal in defending the ideas and privileges of the middle class.

Another section of the new middle class, the managerial clerks of large enterprises—es-

sentially the paid helpers of the big capitalists—appeared not as workers but as private officers in

the employ of their bosses. Though they were not employed by the state, they still exuded a

strong sense of bureaucracy in the small society of private enterprise.[203] Thus, this service level,

positioned slightly above industrial workers, provided technical management. Fundamentally,

managerial clerks were employees like industrial proles, but as employees, they enjoyed much

better position than industrial workers in terms of working hours, income, and independence,

which fostered a different worldview:

> Industrial workers view society from a dichotomy point of view, they see society as a di-
> vided world, a kind of people at the top, a kind of people at the bottom, and they them-
> selves are at the bottom. Employees look at society from the perspective of hierarchy.
> They recognize only the superiors above them and the subordinates among them and see
> themselves in the middle position, so that they have a sharp discrimination and sensitivity
> in the hierarchy. Such individuals always try to justify their own special status in order to
> disguise their wage-based reality.[204]

Members of the staff group bore a strong stamp of modernity. Differences in professional

qualifications and position distinguished technicians from managers and female secretaries from

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[202] Ralf Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft Und Demokratie in Deutschland*, 103.

[203] Karl Renner, *Wandlungen der Modernen Gesellschaft* [Changes in Modern Society] (Wien: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1953), 211.

[204] Heinrich Popitz, *Das Gesellschaftsbild des Arbeiters* [The social image of the worker] (Tübingen: Mohr, 1972), 242.

saleswomen, while mechanization, the loss of traditional work directions, and the mobility and namelessness of the labor market always favored more efficient, younger, and prettier successors.[205] This form of social distillation has a common direction, using propaganda to manipulate workers' spare time and meet the needs of a consuming world. As Siegfried Krakauer, a German sociologist, put it, "The rational, spiritually empty, consumption-based world of industrial modernism is a deadly symbol of the contradictory development of employees' ideology."[206]

The status of the staff group, somewhere between the proletariat and the middle class, thrust all its members into uncertain social and political status.[207] Their political fluctuations were most responsive to the ups and downs of the economy. During imperial Germany, their political choices were immeasurably diverse, and no party that propagated in the name of class could safely win their support.[208]

Modernity, the fiction of superiority to workers, the lure of upward mobility, and the fear of status decline created a volatile situation among employees of the new middle class. Once their hopes for a rational future were dashed by crisis, this group naturally developed a disproportionate political shift toward anti-rational right-wing radicalism. In particular, the indignation expressed by those who worked in the service sector, where Jewish capital prevailed, had historically been marked by anti-conservatism and radical Antisemitism, which only intensified in the face of the crises of the early twentieth century.

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[205] Popitz, 251.

[206] Siegfried Kracauer, *Die Angestellten* [The employees] (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), 97.

[207] Kracauer, 98.

[208] Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft Und Demokratie in Deutschland*, 103.

The Officials Group as the General Class

Under Prussian-German despotism, the Junkers' noble lineage, rather than individual abilities, placed them at the top of the country's political and military leadership . This tradition dated back to Frederick the Great's theory that only blood could ensure loyalty to the regime.[209] Therefore, it was not the Junker descendants who held high public office on the basis of blood, but the children of the citizens that they recruited on behalf of the country, that constituted the main body of the public servant group.[210]

The public servants group is composed of two broad categories of members: the "official class," which includes middle and junior officials, and the "scholar class," made up of teachers at all levels. The multiple complexities of modern management and the important role of education in society led to the growth of the number of these public servants as the population expanded. From 1907 to 1930, those on the state payroll, dependent on government grants, remained relatively stable at about 5 percent of the total population. Although middle and lower-level officials formed part of the new middle class, they felt themselves to be the "universal class"m as defined by Hegel: "It is the general class of a modern state which does not possess the means of production but has the function of linking the individual interests of the society to balanced state action."[211] As specialized managers employed by the regime, this "class of serving the state" held a powerful professional position in the bureaucracy. Their self-understanding of their role as pro-

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209 Peter Baumgart, *Erscheinungsformen des Preussischen Absolutismus* [Manifestations of Prussian Absolutism] (Germering: Stahlmann, 1966), 75.

210 Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft Und Demokratie in Deutschland*, 119.

211 Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Moderne Deutsche Sozialgeschichte* [Modern German Social History] (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1976), 55.

tector of the public interest of the state made them almost invariably nationalists with an authoritarian, bureaucratic temperament.[212]

Many non-aristocratic official experience a "momentary obscurity" and a sense of self "involved in the political execution." The German sociologist Theodor Geiger best described the state of mind of such officials;

> They find it delicious to chew dry bread made up of their poor wages, because they are so heavily involved in the exercise of state power. The more real power they have in their hands, the more they seek hierarchies that reflect social prestige; The smaller the management function they assume, the less likely their personality is to be effective and develop; The more they are commanded by their superiors, the more their initiative is suppressed; The more excited they are by the epaulets and swords, which are the solemn symbols of impersonal authority, the more they prove themselves wounded by their preservation.[213]

Compared with the powerful traditional aristocratic elite, middle and lower-level officials had a sense of inferiority. They could never reach the top of the power pyramid, and government layoffs during the recession made them shudder. All officials want to "climb the ladder," thus maintaining the organization and discipline of the bureaucracy and forming the premise of a competitive structure among individual officials. However, because this competition is carried out in a dependent relationship between upper and lower levels, and the end of the competition depends on the position of an elite class at the top, the middle and lower officials cannot represent themselves politically but must be represented by others. Consequently, they need the usurper most directly. Such usurpers are also often the first to use the officials' names to expand their base of legitimacy.

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[212] Wehler, 55.

[213] Theodor Geiger, *Die Soziale Schichtung des Deutschen Volkes* [The Social Stratification of the German People] (Stuttgart: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1932), 98.

In general, the officials who survived and were likely to rise espoused the authoritarian-ism of right-wing conservatism, while those who were fired sought to shatter the existing order and moved quickly toward the authoritarianism of right-wing radicalism. This peculiarity is es-pecially shared by the dismissed middle and junior officers of the army, who were not of noble birth, for such discontented men were often usurpers of power.

<div align="center">

The Scholar Class as Intellectuals

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The scholar class of teachers at all levels, another kind of public official, is most likely to cause misunderstanding. To the rulers, these individuals are part of the "governed," but to the governed in general, they belong to the ruling class. Socially, they also belong to the universal class, while spiritually, they are the nation's ideological elite. These servants of the state are in the societal middle class. Indeed, it is only by keeping a distance from politics through academic symbols that they truly distinguish themselves from all other social classes. As a result, they of-ten feel "right at the center of society."[214]

Germany's scholarly class has a proud history in politics. As the political voice of the middle class, it represented two-thirds of the Frankfurt Assembly during the revolution of 1848.[215] When the revolution was suppressed, academics retreated from politics to the "relative freedom"[216] of the campus. Instead of adapting to society, they sought a refuge where they could enjoy a kind of solitary freedom. People of this temperament can sometimes be of great historical significance, for they have the courage to oppose obedience, resist the temptations of the mass-

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[214] Seymourr Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (New York: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1960), 311.

[215] Lipset, 315.

[216] Lipset, 339.

es, engage in important scientific research, or produce ideas "that are ahead of, or dissatisfied with, or in contradiction with the authorities."[217]

Ideologically, German scholars can be roughly divided into four types: critical, pessimistic, romantic, and ancient typical.

The critical scholar or left-wing intellectual is represented by Theodore Mommsen, Max Weber, and others. They are independent-minded liberals but not Democrats. Instead of getting involved in the discipline of ruling and obeying, they bypass these rules with clever academic language and witty humor.[218] By using their intellectual membership to engage in social criticism, they became "disagreeable" but remain within the limits of the rulers' tolerance.[219]

In contrast, pessimistic scholars, also known as exiled intellectuals, includes Heinrich Heine, Friedrich Liszt, and others. Such figures often experienced the transition from liberals to Democrats but became pessimistic about Germany's political future. No other country throughout the nineteenth century had produced so many democratic-minded intellectual exiles as Germany, a sign that such scholars could no longer be tolerated in an autocracy. For these academics, anyone who begins to question the domination of society must consider destroying it.[220] Therefore, the German "democracy" of this era before the Third Reich is associated with "exile."

The romantic scholar or "inner exile intellectual," represented by Ferdinand Tönnies and others, most clearly expressed the attitude of withdrawal from politics. Their romanticism found

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[217] Bertrand Russell, *Power, A New Social Analysis* (London: Unwin Books, 1975), 19.

[218] Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft Und Demokratie in Deutschland*, 306.

[219] Dahrendorf, 307.

[220] Dahrendorf, 302.

its first expression in cultural pessimism, which propagated a strange dichotomy between agri-

cultural culture and industrial civilization, rural and urban, natural community and contractual

society. in each of these oppositions, romantic scholars admired the former and disliked the lat-

ter.[221] Using an "original" concept to oppose its "nonoriginal" counterpart as reflected in modern

reality, such theorists continuously belittle modern reality, thus hindering any serious evaluation

of it.

Finally, theorists like Heinrich von Treitschke, Adolf Wagner, and other older and more

prestigious scholars exemplify the ancient typical scholar, also known as the right-wing conserv-

ative intellectualy. Though they reached a reconciliation with the dominant power relationship of

the German Empire, such theorists still exerted an "error-correcting function" in society by using

academic symbols within the framework of the role of intellectuals.[222] Treitschke, for example,

urged that the German Empire must become "more Prussian," while Wagner was a staunch op-

ponent of laissez-faire capitalism and repeatedly urged Bismarck to adopt National Socialism.[223]

These scholars emerged as social correcting forces, always seeking out people in power who

could actually utilize their programs.[224]

The romantic and ancient typical scholars, who made up a large proportion of the nine-

teenth century German academic community, were connected by their firm consciousness of be-

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[221] Manfred Hettling, *Was ist Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 297.

[222] Hettling, 304.

[223] Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Weder Kommunismus noch Kapitalismus* [Neither Communism nor Capitalism] (München: Beck, 1985), 70.

[224] Bruch, 148.

ing the "representative of national cultural tradition."[225] Here, the concept of "nation" was never understood as an expression in a political sense, but as a combination of a language, culture, custom, and tradition that had a unique nature—— What they pursued was not the "freedom," "equality," or "fraternity" of the French revolution, but the unity, strength, influence, and power of the nation and the reconstruction of its "traditional virtues."[226] This pursuit led most of them to turn to Antisemitism; indeed, almost all the famous scholars in German history showed Antisemitic tendencies except Lessing, Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, and a few others. Because their values were often challenged by Jewish scholars, who belonged to the liberal camp and served as democratic pioneers of the intellectual world, they equated everything they disliked and hated with the Jews: modern urban culture, Western capitalism, individualism, liberal democracy, class struggle, and communism.[227] This trend explains not only the radicalized right-wing ideology of a large number of middle and primary school teachers but also the deep-rooted reasons for the minimal development of critical scholars and the exile of pessimistic scholars.

In short, the German scholar class has long been internally divided, constantly losing its political and cultural "superiority." The call of "defending the nation and the country" through their teaching and publications infected college students and social youth who were "eager for action."[228] Consequently, these young people exhibited not the cultural pessimism and conser-

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[225] Bruch, 265.

[226] Franz Neumann, *Behemoth, Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus*, *1933-1944*, [Behemoth, Structure and Practice of National Socialism] (Frankfurt: FISCHER Taschenbuch, 1977), 144.

[227] Neumann, 145.

[228] Hettling, *Was ist Gesellschaftsgeschichte,* 311.

vatism of their teachers but rather aggressive opposition to liberal democracy, radical racism, and Antisemitism.

<div align="center">The Common Characteristics of the German Middle Class</div>

Various occupational groups of the new and old middle classes shared common characteristics. In general, they not only have a desire to climb the ladder due to envy and resentment of the luxury of the Junker aristocracy and the big industrial assets, as well as a strong sense of pride emanating from their superior position to industrial workers, but they also fear falling into the ranks of the proles.[229] In this period of German history, the psychological tendencies of the whole middle class were contradictory and complex: on the one hand, in the modernization process toward organized capitalism carried out by the traditional elites, they themselves were discriminated against by the hierarchy, so they always showed antipathy or dissatisfaction towards the authoritative state; on the other hand, the authoritarian state played a significant role in the political stability on which their very survival depended. As such, they "crave obedience, and aspire to power."[230]

If their desire for obedience reflected the search for an authoritative government that would provide assurance for their interests, then their desire for power produced a new political line of radicalism. This political line, traditionally centrist, manifested itself in an aversion to two other clearly defined camps: the right-wing conservatism that served the interests of landowners

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[229] Wunderlich, "Fascism and the German Middle Class," 59.

[230] Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, 17.

and capitalists, and the social democratic left-wing republicanism of the interests of the industrial proletariat.[231]

This path gained its initial form through a series of radical Antisemitic organizations established by a group of young college graduates from middle class families. Early radical Antisemitic groups like the Bund der Landwirte and Alldeutscher Verband, though could not be absorbed by state institutions, "acted as political and theoretical guidance for their young members.[232] These organizations, by their very nature, represented the spontaneous social integration efforts of the German middle class in the face of professional competition from the Jewish minority. Beginning in 1890, this radicalism developed into a distinctly racist, Antisemitic, anti-modernist ideology that could be called "pre-Nazism."[233]

However, this anti-modernist radicalism struggled to form a truly powerful and unified social organization in the imperial era. There are two main reasons for this difficulty. First, the middle class as complex and divided, and their destinies and ideological tendencies in the imperial age greatly differed from each other. While the old middle class exhibited a strong "pre-modernization consciousness,"[234] employees in the new middle class tended to be more anti-conservative and anti-Marxist. Additionally, mid-level and small officials often reflected the traditional character of authoritarianism and nationalism; many scholars emphasized a conservative view of national culture. The better-off, especially the more stable members of the new middle class, of-

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[231] Geiger, *Die Soziale Schichtung des Deutschen Volkes*, 126.

[232] Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland,* 112.

[233] Berding, 114.

[234] Berding, 139.

ten chose a liberal party, or even the Social Democrats, as their political representatives. Only those who felt most deeply the threat of modernization identified themselves with the anti-modern radical line.[235]

In addition to this lack of unity, the empire's political stability created and fostered several conditions that supported the middle class, such as property; socially advantageous positions and privileges compared to industrial workers; the family, which served as a haven to avoid competition; and the national pride of being a member of the powerful empire. However, once the middle class is shaken, they will be more prone to flock to radical authoritarian solutions in the political arena.

The German Middle Class and Nazism

The disastrous experience of the Weimar years (1918–1933) unified the middle class. In less than fifteen years, the Republic underwent ten years of economic crisis and twenty cabinet changes. During this chaotic period, the complexity and separateness of the middle class were replaced by poverty and fragmented unity, and political stability was supplanted by social instability.

In the first five years of the Republic, the middle class experienced rapid economic decline. The hyperinflation of 1923, which reached an unprecedented peak of 4.2 trillion marks to the dollar, wiped out years of savings and left even the relatively detached academic class in poverty.[236] If the relative stability of 1924–29 provided a glimmer of hope for the middle class, then the great global economic crisis that swept through the United States in October 1929 put an

[235] Berding, 149.

[236] Erhard Schutz, *Romane der Weimarer Republik,Modellanalysen der Deutschen Literatur* [Novels of the Weimar Republic, Model Analyses of German Literature] (München: W. Fink, 1986), 159.

end to any such positive outlook. The rapid economic declines that forced small farmers to sell their land also caused small business failure and mass unemployment due in part to the Brüning government's austerity crisis, in which a large number of officials and faculty were fired. Consequently, various new and old middle class professional groups sunk into poverty and bankruptcy.[237]

The middle class's precipitous decline in economic status was accompanied by a loss of their social prestige and power, and even the scholarly class had "become a figure to be looked upon with half sympathy and half disgust."[238] This seriously affected fathers' position as the head of individual families;, the loss of their role as the primary financial provider for their children leads to the destruction of their last bastion of security.[239] Consequently, middle-class individuals were faced with difficulties in dealing with the multiplicity of social roles and role shifts, an inability to adjust their behavior without mature self-reflection, the struggle to maintain stability and consistency during times of change, and difficulties in finding interest and happiness in the family. These issues, while present at every level of society, were particularly acute for members of the middle level whose status was rapidly changing.

Furthermore, the German middle class in particular had reason to resent the Treaty of Versailles. After countries like Britain, France, and the United States entered the stage of industrialization, they usually experienced a long transition from free competition to monopoly.[240] The

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[237] Schultz, 166.

[238] Geiger, *Die Soziale Schichtung des Deutschen Volkes,* 100.

[239] Geiger, 100.

[240] Gay, *Weimar Culture*, 224.

vast overseas colonial market created ideal conditions for these countries to build a stable middle

class. However, in Germany, free competition lasted only around 50 years before the domestic

market was suddenly and completely monopolized. In the face of the harsh fact that the world

market was already divided up, the middle class, which had placed its hopes of "climbing the

ranks" on overseas expansion, became the social foundation of the national chauvinism ideology

in the era of the German Empire, making the powerful Alldeutscher Verband and Deutschna-

tionale Volkspartei into massive, warlike organizations of the middle class.[241] The nation's defeat

in the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles eliminated any possibility of middle-class ad-

vancement through outward expansion.

The Treaty of Versailles stripped Germany of one-seventh of its territory and all of its

overseas colonies, leaving the middle class less room to develop than it had in the past. The

Treaty also limited the size of the German army, which had shrunk from 8 million troops during

the war to 100,000,[242] leaving only the well-born descendants of the Junker aristocracy and

crushing the dreams of millions of young men from middle-class families who hoped to enlist in

the military and pursue a political career. In the post-war trend of returning to work, the children

of workers were quickly absorbed into lower-class jobs, while the children of the middle classes

neither wanted nor could adapt to the difficulties of post-war daily life. However, those who

break away from the social environment struggle to find their way back, so most of these youth

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[241] Martin and Schulin, *Die Juden als Minderheit in Der Geschichte*, 268.

[242] Geiger, *Die Soziale Schichtung des Deutschen Volkes,* 137.

lost all environment support and became unemployed and marginalized by society.[243] As such, when the harsh conditions imposed by the victors and all the ensuing economic disasters befell these middle-class youth, it was easy for them to associate their personal suffering with the national humiliation.

In their attitude toward democracy, the middle class differs historically from the industrial workers. Although industrial workers had also fought for the empire in World War I, they gained some political and economic rights in the defeat and collapse of the empire. The republicanism represented by the Social Democrats has been partially implemented, but their embrace of class cooperation still led to the continuation or even reinforcement of the policy of organized capitalism, which neglected the middle class. As a result, many members of the middle class were suspicious of democracy from the beginning. Even Thomas Mann, the great scholar with a liberal spirit, took an uninterested attitude toward democracy.[244]

Those members of the middle class who had held out a glimmer of hope for democracy lost all faith in the Weimar system in 1929, when the threat of impoverishment became acute. The liberal parties representing the middle class, the Deutsche Demokratische Partei and the Deutsche Volkspartei, got 20 percent of the vote in 1920, but only 2 percent in 1930.[245]

However, the proletarianization of the middle class did not lead them to embrace Marxism. On the one hand, any political propaganda based on class failed to appeal to the middle

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[243] Rainer Lepsius, *Extremer Nationalismus. Strukturbedingungen vor is der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung* [Extreme nationalism. Structural conditions before the Nazi seizure of power] (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1966), 87.

[244] Gordon A. Craig, *Deutsche Geschichte,1866-1945* [German History, 1866–1945] (München: Beck, 1989), 363.

[245] Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik,Krisenjahre der Klassischen Moderne*, 159.

class. Moreover, Marxism meant the abolition of private ownership and the communalization of the means of production, including the elimination of all the privileges of the middle class. As a result, the complex and fragmented middle class, fearful of being "crushed between organized capitalism and the millstone of organized workers, desperately sought a unified new political movement that would address their grievances."[246] This political movement needed only to match the political lines of right-wing radicalism in the imperial era to win over the vast majority of the professional classes that made up the German middle class.

By 1930, the declining middle class believed that only by emphasizing the idea of nationality could it avoid being confused with industrial workers (i.e., proletarians) because of the internationality of the Marxist philosophy that "the working class has no motherland."[247] Thus, in the "middle class panic" of the great crisis, when Hitler came out under the banner of "the nation," the middle class naturally became eager adherents to Nazi propaganda as Hitler catered to their nationalism: "This middle class threatened by proletarianization is the nation itself! This nation is threatened not only by the destructive influence of the liberal, democratic consciousness, but also by the destructive influence of the Marxist class struggle dynamic."[248] Thus, the path from the German middle class to the Nazi movement was finally charted. To realize the ideal of "social health in the pre-industrial era, this "national community" with "dictatorial virtues at finally released incredible aggressive energy against class struggle.[249] Ultimately, the sense of

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[246] Lepsius, *Extremer Nationalismus*, 12.

[247] Lepsius, *Extremer Nationalismus*, 12.

[248] Hans Speier, *Die Angestellten Vor dem Nationalsozialismus* [The employees Before National Socialism] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 120.

[249] Speier, 130.

nationality, which Hitler called the promotion of the normal state order, was the link between the

Führer and his followers.[250]

In the process of modernization, the acceptance of the old middle class into the industrial-

ized society and the promotion of the healthy development of the new middle class is closely re-

lated to the stability of the social order. Because the middle class is a ladder and a bridge be-

tween the highest and lowest levels of society, its healthy development can create a reasonable

social slope, thus enhancing social mobility and flexibility, and creating long-term societal stabil-

ity. Even in the face of a major crisis, such societies are often able to maintain the stability and

order of the existing system through internal adjustment.[251] This allowed Britain, France, the

United States, and other countries to preserve democratic politics in the face of the Great Depres-

sion. Therefore, in the industrial age, societies with a well-developed and healthy middle class

are the most stable.

However, in Germany, the interventionist state ruled by the traditional elite only focused

on the interests of big capital and big real estate, leaving the middle class in a semi-developed

state for a long time.[252] The politics of organized capitalism only intensified the middle class's

internal divisions, so the vast majority of them could not truly understand and adapt to industrial

society during the Weimar years, leading to the full crisis of modernization that followed the

First World War and the collapse of the monarchy. The anti-modernist values that were out of

proportion to the economic reality were marked by the cultural criticism of romantic and conser-

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[250] Lepsius, *Extremer Nationalismus,* 13.

[251] Geiger, *Die Soziale Schichtung des Deutschen Volkes*, 129.

[252] Geiger, 140.

vative scholars, by the despair of the bankrupt economic middle class, and by the hostility of rural residents to urban progress. The middle class opposed urbanization and industrialization, which they believed was responsible for all disasters, hated "democratization imposed by the victors,"[253] and believed, out of a desire for stability and harmony, that the Nazi movement was a political tool with which to control the forces of technological and structural change that were altering and destroying everything.

Ideologically, Nazism represented a mixture of indignation and ideas that had already spread widely throughout the German middle class. This radical nationalism combined many "anti-doctrines" including Antisemitism, anti-Enlightenment, anti-democracy, anti-economic liberalism, anti-foreign capitalism, anti-Marxism.[254] -In short, Nazism opposed the existing society.[255] It was precisely because Nazism was so inclusive that it brought under its banner first the middle class and then a growing number of people who were dissatisfied with the status quo.

In this sense, the Nazi movement, as a result of the long-term development of the anti-modernist movement in German society, embodied a radical new upsurge and a new popular movement. It reflected the middle class's radical rebellion against the consequences of a modernization crisis that was politically and socially unbearable. The German middle class served as the true social foundation of this movement, but this did not prevent it from spreading rapidly to the upper and lower ends of the social structure, eventually developing into a national fascist revolution. Nazism's disastrous attempt to "change the world" from the extreme right reminds future

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[253] Geiger, 142.

[254] Gay, *Weimar Culture*, 203.

[255] Craig, *Deutsche Geschichte,* 482.

generations of the importance of promoting the healthy development of the middle class as an

essential element of the stable development strategy of industrialized countries.

CONCLUSION

Was the genocide of the Jews in Nazi Germany simply a crime committed by Hitler's Nazi cabal, with ordinary Germans reacting to outside forces, executing orders, or being influenced and deluded? For a long time, historical arguments and public opinion on the Nazi war and genocide has often been based on such statements, rejecting claims of ignorance or limited knowledge of the extermination of the Jewish people and stating that banal evil is ultimately evil and cannot be tolerated.

However, this explanation is far-fetched and exaggerates the extent to which Nazi propaganda and oppression can distort human nature. In fact, discrimination, exclusion, and hatred against Jews, not only in Germany, but also throughout Europe, have long existed. Hitler was not a maker of hate, but a magnifier of it, helping many Germans liberate their violent tendencies, institutionalize evil behavior, and incentivize atrocities.

The Judeophobia of continental Europe has a long history, and its accumulation led it to be internalized as a common hatred of Jews among people of different nationalities, religions, and regions. This festering hatred was transformed by the rapid economic and social status quo changes during the German Empire and Weimar period, until it was ultimately ignited by Nazi Germany.

At the end of the eleventh century, as the Crusades started in Europe, the zealous Crusader knights showed their deep hatred for the Jews. This hatred, rampant in Europe at that time, was based on specific religious beliefs that violated other tenets of Christianity such as forgiveness. During this era, the Europeans invented the logical model of alienating the Jews, which allowed Crusaders to loot and even kill them without psychological burden.

The Jewish people had built up a very strict ethnic system, living according to standard-ized religious and cultural requirements, which made them alien in many European countries. Because they were different, many gentiles developed prejudice against them. As various secular and religious powers accentuated such prejudice for specific purposes, Jews became victims of collective anger. In the late Middle Ages, Jews were already treated as second-class citizens in many European countries, and were even openly identified as "disciples of the devil." Although relatively liberal monarchs such as Frederick the Great recognized the need to accommodate the Jewish community for stable rule, the power of communal prejudice and anger was far greater than secular kingship. In such cases, satisfying public opinion and fueling Judeophobia was clearly the more lucrative option for those in power.

The Renaissance and the Enlightenment ended the ignorance of the Middle Ages and witnessed the rapid development of commerce. To improve their social status, Jews competed in this sector. The Rothschilds are legendary symbols of wealth and power, and there are many wealthy Jewish families like them. During this period, a large number of Jews abandoned their traditional religious beliefs and thoroughly integrated into European society. However, these ef-forts did not offset Jewish phobia; on the contrary, capitalism brought about rapid urbanization, creating a gap between rich and poor that intensified hJudeophobia. In the nineteenth century, narrow nationalism and extreme racism made the Jews the focus of hatred throughout Europe. Indeed, Tsarist Russia and other countries carried out genocides against the Jews in the late nineteenth century.

Jews fitted in well with German rationality—there used to be a large number of Jews among the ranks of German artists, scientists, and thinkers. Before World War II, Germany pro-

duced far more Nobel Prize winners in natural sciences than any other country. After World War II, the lead was taken by the United States simply because Jews were either forced out of Germany or killed, which greatly weakened the German scientific community. Historically, German Jews were very loyal to the country, and they were the most important contributors to Germany's scientific and artistic achievements.

However, as Germany achieved worldwide success, narrow nationalist feelings intensified. The outward manifestation of this sentiment was the expulsion of Bismarck after Wilhelm II came to power. Externally, the Kaiser turned to the hegemonic strategy of challenging the British. At home, he magnified the pride and hubris of nationalism among the masses. During this process, some prejudices against Jews were also escalated and solidified, such as the idea that Jews were a special species, distinct from Aryans or even normal people, with peculiar smells and habits, and inherently evil—a racial science idea that would be embraced by Hitler's propaganda.

From the end of World War I to Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the bitter consequences of defeat were largely translated into a collective anti-Jewish hatred that combined with the anti-liberalism and anti-democracy ideologies that stemmed from dissatisfaction with the status quo. Jews were blamed for Germany's defeat and humiliation at the hands of France and Britain, including the belief that the Americans had been deceived by Jewish news bosses, that the war had gone wrong because Jewish blood had polluted the purity of the German nation, and that the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was started by Jews. The Germany that Hitler was about to take over was a dysfunctional country that had been deeply distorted by radicalized Antisemitism.

The disaster caused World War II raises questions in diverse fields including politics, economics, military history, and psychology. This paper has explored the social mentality of the German middle class and its relationship with the Nazis' rise to power from the perspective of group mentality history, examined the economic and cultural environment of the pre-Nazi period by using the basic methods and theories of group mentality, and highlighted several occupational specific sectors of the middle class to create a deeper understanding of the political changes that foregrounded the Nazi era.

Mentality, especially group mentality, influences and controls people's behavior. The disordered social mentality of the citizens of Weimar Germany changed the historical Antisemitic and anti-liberal character of the Germans into a more extreme and specific form, which the Nazis took advantage of. Though we cannot ignore the political, economic, and other factors of the fascist rise to power, the group mentality clearly demonstrated a pattern of criticizing democracy and supporting dictatorship that culminated in Nazi ruler.

Through a background research, this paper defines the research method of history of mentalities, on the whole, as a combination of the general classification of the population, the psychological state of the subject with the historical reality of the subject's experience. This is a pragmatic approach that is relatively free from conceptual debate. After evaluating several existing and popular researches of the national mentalities of Nazi Germany, this paper emphasizes the need for a pragmatic, eclectic approach to research with a small research objective. Too many psychological terms and overly biased personality definitions of certain ethnic groups can affect our pursuit of the final answer.

In chapter 2 and 3 of this paper, therefore, the idea is that, although the causes of collective Antisemitism and Antiliberalism of Nazi Germany were very complex, some of those necessary conditions, especially the rapid transformation from German people's historical unfriendly attitude towards Jewish and western freedom towards the extreme antisemitic and antiliberal mentality, can be traced completely from the historical reality directly.

We may try to solve problems such as how to prevent Nazism from happening again without looking into human nature, every mechanism of response in human psychology, or the innate psychological flaws of a certain nation.

It is commonly believed that, by establishing a social order that can provide equal opportunities and justice can people get emotional support and rational recognition. History shows that irrationality in human nature will easily go astray if it is not controlled and guided correctly. The more thoroughly we study the practical considerations, the closer we will get to the answer of how to build such a harmonious society.

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