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THE DEMORALIZATION OF GERMAN-JEWRY:  
FROM MACHTEGREIFUNG TO KRISTALLNACHT

by,

MARK STEPHEN MILLER

Thesis submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the require-  
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FOR MY MOTHER,

WITH LOVE

רבנות גנות עשו איה ואה עזית עכ כנפ (משה, יא:ס)

AND MY TEACHER,

RABBI FRANK ROSENTHAL

עשכ עכ רב וקנפ עכ אהר (אבות, יא:א)

DIGEST

This thesis intends to examine differential responses of German-Jews to mounting stress during the period 1933-1938. The reactions of the more important groupings, e.g., Zionists and assimilationists, are considered; emigration, the need to hope, attempts to establish a modus-vivendi, rationalizations, avoidance, denial, return to Jewish historical and religious roots, assimilation of negative stereotypes, transference of blame to other Jews, and suicide. Historical, sociological, and psychological trends and factors are weighed, as the Jews, fallen from their relatively secure and optimistic state, sought to find their moorings. Their Jewish frustration and self-assertion, their grasping for the slightest evidence of amelioration, and their final hopelessness, are studied.

Though transformed into strangers in a familiar land, the Jews of Germany had long thought of themselves in a hyphenated self-concept, with the inevitable tensions surrounding their identity. The Aryans destroyed this self-perception, substituting new and more intense anxieties in a systematic onslaught. The Jews were unprepared and isolated, with no allies to be found, and these conditions are reflected in their frenzied, and often confused, reactions. Their condition was exaggerated by friendly expressions of sympathy from numerous Aryans; some German-Jews derived comfort in these protestations, others recoiled from such condescending patronization, but all magnified the number and significance of these gestures out of relation to reality. Among other factors which reinforced Jewish myopia were love of the land, generations of loyalty, and belief in the historic inevitability of progress. The oft-repeated warning, that Jews must be more sensitive to

threats than to premises, was smothered by the certainty that the Nazi gangsters did not represent the true Germany, and that good Germans would soon come to their senses.

The affixing of the Yellow Star in 1941 was only the formalization of the Jew's status as intruder and outcast, determined a decade before. How they coped with years of subtle and violent denial of their self, legitimacy, and future, their Kafkaian torment in the endless trial before unseen judges, who presume guilt for crimes of which the defendant is unaware, is the scope of this study.

Czar Nicholas of Russia was once asked by Germany's Kaiser how the Jews were faring under his rule. The Czar spoke of ghettos, pogroms, confiscations, and expulsions. He then inquired as to how the Jews of Germany were treated. The Kaiser boasted of Jews in all areas of prominence, of their assimilation into the general culture, and of the minimization of differences between German and Jew. The Czar expressed amazement, and asked if the Kaiser did not think the more harsh method preferable.

"My dear Czar," the Kaiser retorted, "you kill your Jews in your way, and I will kill them in mine."



## INTRODUCTION

This is a chronicle of a people's despair, disillusionment, and descent; the mass denial of the reality, permanence, and consequence of the drive to alienate it; the reactions to assaults upon self-image, esteem and confidence.

The German-Jewish community, believing itself to be on the threshold of the best of times, found itself facing a calculated onslaught intended to drive it into the worst of times. The avenues of acculturation, once so seemingly broad and limitless, were closed, as the once active and self-assured participants in German life grew increasingly isolated.

The German-Jew could look back on a history of gains and setbacks in the struggle for emancipation, with whole areas of Germany frequently reversing themselves. The Bishop of Speyer invited the Jews to honor his city with their residence in 1048, but these Jews were among the first victims of the German Crusaders twelve years later. Joseph Suss-Oppenhimer controlled court affairs as Financial Minister to the Duke of Wurtemberg in the 18th Century, but he was later imprisoned in an iron cage suspended over the town square and then hanged. Walter Rathenau rose to the post of Foreign Minister, earning the respect of all Europe in the aftermath of World War I, but was soon the victim of an assassin.

The Jews adopted a metronome view of history; the pendulum swung and no situation was permanent. But the German Jews discerned a steady, if uneven, progress in their struggle for status, believing that their unnatural exclusion would fall under the weight of its own unnaturalness. The momentum of this historical inevitability could not be rendered impotent by the ascent

of gangsters in the world's most civilized nation. The intellectual and moral bankruptcy of the National Socialists, if not the eutery of the good Germans, would soon mark the end of this fantastic aberrancy which was brought on by temporary, desperate conditions.

Absorbed by his own historical dialectic, the German-Jew failed to take note of the more general inevitability, the equally compelling religious anti-Semitism of the German. Though centuries separated the modern German from the massacres attendant upon the Crusades or the Peasant's War, the laws promulgated by the Council of Basel in 1434 and throughout the Middle Ages caught the modern German's ear with their cry for political expression. "The Germans showed a proper appreciation of the continuity of their history when they declared that the first large-scale Nazi pogrom, in 1938, was a pious operation performed in honor of the anniversary of Luther's birthday."<sup>1</sup>

But the Jewish facility for coping with Luther's scatological diatribes would, the German-Jew felt, see him through modern expressions of his venom in the Nazi newspaper Der Stürmer. The German-Jew was the heir of centuries worn teachings that "the Gentile is stronger, to resist only fans his anger. 'If a goy hits you,' mothers told their children, 'bow your head and he will spare your life.'"<sup>2</sup> This reaction, this expression of defenselessness, is witnessed in the response of one Heinrich Welff, a legal adviser, to a beating by a storm trooper. A Hechburg University student who witnessed the spectacle, asked Welff why he did not attempt a defense. "Defend myself," he replied, "how could I? I am a Jew."<sup>3</sup> The incident occurred in 1932, one year before the Nazis assumed power.

Facing a concrete assault such as this, the Jew might indeed express

his powerlessness, but he was possessed by the overwhelming conviction that victory would be his. His staunch ally was enlightenment, for he was heir to Moses Mendelssohn's faith in the "beneficial effect of reason upon society."<sup>4</sup> Sartre has commented that the Jew has a "marked

inclination to believe that the worst difficulties may be resolved by reason."<sup>5</sup> That "inclination" may be applauded, but it is Sartre's subsequent pronouncement that marked the demise of the German-Jew: "He<sup>6</sup> does not see the irrational...."

Since its inception, I have been aware of the obstacles before me in this study. One can read books, but how much can be contained in the historian's turgid phrase, and how much slips through his net? What can a photograph, freezing only a moment, really impart? How much of a survivor's recollections are clouded by the passage of years?

How can I, nourished on the fact, not the illusion, of freedom, understand the wearing down of body and soul through long days and nights of intimidation and oppression? Yet, I am spurred to seek an empathetic relation, despite the inherent foreignness of the German-Jewish experience. This goal is expressed in the contradictory, though hopefully reconcilable, inscription on the entrance way into a Holocaust memorial in Israel: "See what can no longer be seen, hear what can no longer be heard, understand what is beyond all understanding."<sup>7</sup>

Freud warned of the boundaries of empathetic response:

"No matter how much we may shrink with horror from certain situations--of a galley slave in antiquity, of a peasant

during the Thirty Year's War, of a victim of the Holy Inquisition, of a Jew awaiting a pogrom--it is nevertheless impossible for us to feel our way into such people." 8.

Only a few decades and a few thousand miles separate us from the German-Jewish experience, yet for those who never underwent anything akin to the degradation, it may as well be light years away and have taken place on another planet.

The words of a historian, though, express my need to disregard Freud's caveat:

"To study it (the Holocaust), however, can expand our self-knowledge, show us what we are capable of being and doing, for good or evil, under stress, in shock or trauma. For the Jewish historian, there is an added consideration: writing the history of the Holocaust, or of a fragment of it, can become a secular act, of bearing witness to Auschwitz and to the mystery of Jewish survival." 9.

GERMAN-JEWISH SYMBIOSIS IN THE PRE-HITLER PERIOD

The Jewish community which Hitler surveyed as he took power early in 1933 was a numerical trifle, barely one per-cent of the total German population. It was an almost fully emancipated and integrated group, middle-class, liberal, and optimistic, and it fully identified with the German people, land, and destiny. The German-Jews were the spiritual descendants of the Parisian Sanhedrin, which reassured Napoleon that "There is no Jewish nation, but only Germans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen who profess the Jewish religion," and their attachments to Germany were often more binding than to the Jewish group. Jakob Wasserman could write unabashedly:

"The German-Jewish writer feels at home at the soil that nourishes him, in duty bound to share the good and bad fortune of the nation, heartily devoted to its interests, and mentally formed by its language, ideas, and ideals." <sup>10</sup>.

During World War I, Hermann Cohen rhapsodized:

"The German spirit is the spirit of classical humanism and of true world citizenship. Which nation possesses the spiritual unity of such heroic poets as Lessing, Herder, Schiller, and Goethe, who make our spiritual history a living reality! Which nation possesses that unity of classical literature and philosophy!" <sup>11</sup>.

In 1880, Ludwig Bamberger observed:

"To no other people have the Jews grown so close as they have to the Germans....There must be correspondence in the basic disposition (of the two peoples) which made Germany and all things German particularly attractive for the Jews...." <sup>12</sup>.

And three decades later, Moritz Goldstein predicted:

"In spite of persecutions, derision, and disdain, a common existence of a thousand years has so deeply interwoven Jewish with German life, that a disengagement would seem impossible." <sup>13</sup>.

Heinrich von Treitschke's advice, tendered when he was professor of history at the University of Berlin in the late 19th Century, that the Jews seek to become fully German, was fully embraced by the Jews as they sought participation in all respectable occupations, and complete identification with German values. Treitschke's words were not unfamiliar to the German-Jew, as he could proudly point to eight generations for whom German culture was natural, and to continual residence in Germany dating from the settlement in Cologne in 321.

A case in point was a Jewish businessman in Thallburg, who, in 1932, could trace uninterrupted ownership of his shop by his family back to 1702. <sup>14</sup>. Like his fellow citizens, he was well-assimilated into Thallburg life and culture, since the Jews easily gained membership in the various clubs and groupings, and often presided as officers. <sup>15</sup>.  
 "If they were differentiated, it was by class, not religion."

The strength and vitality of the well-entrenched Jewish community can be witnessed by its four theological seminaries, forty Jewish hospitals, more than one hundred homes for the aged, an equal number of summer camps for Jewish young, and scores of private and parochial schools administered by graduated Jewish teachers. <sup>16</sup>.

Beyond the statistics and institutions, again pointing to Thallburg, general superficial harmony reigned:

"The Jews honored their Christian neighbors by decorating their houses for Christmas and Easter and Whitsun, and many a Christian home was adorned with boughs of Green on the Feast of Tabernacles." 17.

#### POST-MACHTEGREIFUNG RATIONALIZATIONS

It should, then, occasion little wonder that those who warned about Hitler in 1933 were looked upon as "pessimists and defeatists." 18.

Though Jews were no less gullible than the conservative nationalists who discounted the more radical elements of Hitler's program with the rationale that power would sober him, the Jewish myopia must be examined in its own terms. When Jews did find time in the midst of daily activities to consider the larger events prior to the Nazi takeover, they drew comfort from the fact that the Nazis were only one political party, scorned by many, and "not very influential until it seized power." 19. Massive requests for membership did not begin until Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in February.

After attaining power, the Nazis could reasonably have been expected to inaugurate a bloodbath, based on the street tactics and rhetoric of the campaign. It was ground for hope, then, that the great violence attendant upon the Nazi rise to power, did not follow it into office. Legal means were immediately, if haltingly, undertaken to lessen the influence of the Jews, in a bewildering and relentless succession of edicts; but the Jews had lived under, and through, such circumscribing conditions before. Rule under the law was not, after all, rule by pogrom (see Nuremberg Laws).

Leo Baeck reports of the trust placed in the individual officials in the Nazi government. Even vice-Chancellor von Papen encouraged the Jews that their trust was well-founded. <sup>20.</sup> And Emil Fackenheim states:

"Believe it or not, in the early period of the Nazi regime, Jews sometimes felt that maybe Goering wasn't so bad after all--after Goebbels had just made a particularly blood curdling speech." <sup>21.</sup>

Even if one cannot avoid unpleasantness, one can blunt it with the rationalization that it is only temporary. A character in Treblinka articulates what must have been the observation of many German-Jews:

"All empires are perishable....We have seen thousands of them fall since God called Abraham. We have seen them arise in labor, grow in injustice, and die in pride, killed by other empires whose star appeared. This one will disappear like the rest." <sup>22.</sup>

Taking no note of the fact that Mussolini and Stalin, men of humble origins, had remained in power for a much longer period than predicted, the German-Jews would ask rhetorically how long would Germany allow itself to be ruled by a corporal? There was a belief, more than a hope, that the foreign powers would quickly put an end to the Hitler explosion.

Sigmund Stein, a prominent lawyer in Hochburg, articulated much of the general German-Jewish sentiment in response to Hitler's capture of the government. Stein spent his early years in Bachdorf-en-the-Frieden, a rural village in Hesse, and throughout his life thought nostalgically of the picturesque area. Stein was completely integrated into the general middle-class community, and served as head of the Central Union of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith.

His reminiscences of an idyllic rural village upbringing, and his



continued association with the peasantry in his law practice, made Stein receptive to concepts like the Germanic Folk-Community. In fact, one acquaintance remembers him exclaiming: "If it weren't for the anti-Semitic nonsense, I might have voted for Hitler."<sup>23.</sup>

Stein did not believe, though, that the Nazis represented the true German will, and he withdrew into an idealized view of his environment. After all, he had cultivated and retained the friendship of many non-Jews who apparently were not succumbing to the Nazi madness, and in his struggle to avoid disruption, this confirmed his belief in general German decency.<sup>24.</sup>

Stein would have concurred with this outpouring by a German-Christian:

"I know that this land is the living, beating heart of the world. I will go on believing in this heartbeat, despite all the covering layers of blood and dirt. But I know also that the thing up there that rumbles and thunders is the denial of right and justice, of truth, and faith, and everything that makes life worth living. I believe that this is a caricature of Germany, smeared by a malignant ape escaped from the leash."<sup>25.</sup>

The general anti-Nazi prediction was that the boil on the body-politic was bound to burst soon.

One of Goering's first moves after assuming power was to order the police to work in consonance with the S.A. and S.S. Stein viewed this development as grave, but consoled himself with the thought that the press, particularly the *Taegliches Hessenblatt* and *Frankfurter Zeitung*, were still free to criticize the action.<sup>26.</sup> The *Taegliches Hessenblatt* was suppressed shortly thereafter, but Stein took it as no confirmation of his fears, as freedom of the press was the exception during the 1920's,

rather than the rule.<sup>27.</sup>

Many German-Jews gave free rein to their misgivings over the Goering action, which made the police passive accomplices to the club and truncheon tactics of the S.A. and S.S.

"The psychological effect, the realization that there was no recourse to police, courts, or any other kind of redress, had the most far reaching of consequences. The Jews began to feel that they were no longer ordinary citizens protected by law and order."<sup>28.</sup>

But the German-Jewish press generally downplayed Nazi anti-Semitism in the

"knowledge that the situation could become worse, that National Socialism harbored malice as yet unleashed, and that a false step could sever the frayed restraints by which this malice was held in check."<sup>29.</sup>

The Jews did not have to find confirmation of their plight in the newspapers, though. Throughout the Spring of 1933, for example, the S.A. barred Jewish judges and lawyers from their courts in Breslau; under the new legislation, there was no appeal allowed to the police.<sup>30.</sup>

Still, Jews were by far not the only targets for the new regime. The S.A. established concentration camps for political opponents immediately after the election, but Jews were only a small percentage of those incarcerated, as the purpose was political re-education through intimidation. Jews were considered beyond such re-education, owing to their inherent nature. The German-Jews certainly did not lack for company in the initial phase of Nazi activity.<sup>31.</sup>

THE APRIL BOYCOTT

In the midst of the general intimidation, though, the Jews were soon to find themselves the targets of a specifically anti-Semitic action, as the community was rocked by a boycott of Jewish shops, goods, doctors, and lawyers.

Goebbels confirmed that Jews were henceforth to be regarded as guests of Germany just prior to the April 1st boycott: "If they believe they can (misuse our hospitality) they are sadly mistaken."<sup>32</sup> This was but the initial salvo in the Nazi attack on Jewish participation in the German economy.

Differing depictions of the boycott have come down to us. Most have "...every Jewish store and shop throughout Germany blocked to customers by husky storm troopers stationed at the doors."<sup>33</sup>

"A shopkeeper, or professional man, the breadwinner of a family, discovers that his customers, clients, or patients no longer dare to cross his threshold. All members of the local Nazi party and their relatives...are pledged to do no business with him. The remainder of the townsmen are deterred by a Nazi guard standing at his door with a camera."<sup>34</sup>

The reaction of Simon Leopold, owner of a clothing store, was indicative of the Jewish response to the boycott, as he attempted to prove his loyalty. Assuming a military pose, he stood outside his store with the Iron Cross proudly displayed on his chest. But that medal proved to be no talisman, indicating nothing to the Nazi except that the Jew had obtained it by cunning or purchase. There were Jews, though, who preferred to "lay low, waiting for the squall to pass,"<sup>35</sup>

but most protested.

"When people are accused of being un-German or un-American or un-anything, they rarely respond by asserting the irrelevance or negatives of the national concept, preferring instead to insist that they are in fact patriotic or that they are the true patriots." 36.

So, the Jewish citizenry as a whole, and not only the war veteran, was quick to point to Jewish sacrifice in the Great War. Two days before the boycott, the Hochburg Jewish community took an advertisement in the newspaper:

"Students of the Jewish faith in both the Gymnasium and the vocational high school volunteered side by side with their Christian comrades in the World War. Many of them fell in action, even as early as the battle of Langemark, the national anthem on their lips. Many were the Jews of Hochburg who fought and bled at the front for the glory of Germany. The greatness of Germany and the recent surge in German strength are both near to our hearts." 37.

The boycott, however, was greeted with yawning indifference by vast sections of the population, <sup>38.</sup> and many were not even aware of it. A number of Germans who were, used the occasion to express support for the Jewish community, and though it became increasingly dangerous for Aryans to buy in Jewish shops (the purchasers would find their pictures in the newspapers as "Jew-slaves"), many continued the practice in spite of the risk. <sup>39.</sup> Was this not evidence that the heart of the German people was good, and could not be suppressed by the government? Lee Baeck recalls: "Naturally, the little acts of kindness, which often called for considerable courage, lifted our spirits." <sup>40.</sup> One survivor reports the visit of many Christian friends who "disregarded the dangers of being photographed and marked as Jew-lovers." <sup>41.</sup> Emil

Fackenheim speaks of three anti-Nazi Christian friends who leered so large in his wishful thinking that they blocked out the reality that most Christians were National Socialists. If confronted with indications of this, he chose not to believe it.<sup>42.</sup>

Every crumb of evidence pointing to a continuation of normalcy was siezed upon. If non-Jews abandoned their friendship with Jews, then the sporadic friendly gesture of the Christian was magnified. For who is capable of believing that everyone seeks to isolate him, and that his enemies are so numerous?

During the burial of Fritz Rosenfelder, a noted Jewish sportsman of Bad Cannstatt who committed suicide five days after the boycott, Ernst Udet, a popular air force hero of World War I, flew low over the Jewish cemetery and dropped a wreath. The Jews could draw sustenance from this gesture.<sup>43.</sup> Many well-meaning Germans advised their Jewish friends to remain and wait for the storm to pass, serving to reinforce their sense of relative well-being. They were still treated by some friends with respect.

"Sigmund Stein lived out nine years of this regime on the crutch of the fact that there were numerous people in the town administration and populace who never ceased to call him 'Herr Doktor' and continued to seek his opinion and advice. Impossible as life was to become, the hope of an eventual change was never extinguished."<sup>44.</sup>

Also, there were a number of moderate Nazi officials who spoke in reassuring tones, giving the Jews further reeds to lean on. As a character in Arthur Miller's play Incident at Vichy put it: "It's just that you keep finding these little shreds of hope and it's a little difficult."<sup>45.</sup>

Jewish hopes were further roused following the quick termination of the April boycott. The Jews were ignorant of the fact that it was called off not so much because of citizen apathy, but because of the difficulty in determining what constituted a Jewish business. Still, Goebbel's warning that it would soon be reactivated to the end that "German-Jewry will be annihilated,"<sup>46.</sup> must have been noticed. Goebbel's was, however, a mainstay of the extremist wing of the party, and the boycott had obviously failed to attract support beyond the radical factions of the Nazi movement.

The Jewish community could take comfort in the fact that the general populace had rendered the boycott ineffective. What was ominous, though few glimpsed it through their relief, was that no one protested the action.

Though the economic effects were limited, the duration brief, and the coverage spotty, the effect of the boycott was to ostracize the Jews and display them as outcasts; it "atomized" the Jews socially.<sup>47.</sup> The German-Jews were becoming Jews.

"The effect of the boycott upon the Jews of Thallburg was cataclysmic. Greger Rosenthal and his wife could not at first believe it would take place. But when they saw the two S.A. men posted before their door the full significance of it broke upon them. They did not dare to leave their home at all that day and Rosenthal himself sat crumpled up in his chair for hours repeating 'Was it for this that I spent four years defending my Fatherland?'"<sup>48.</sup>

Jews would cross the street to avoid protestations from friends of sympathy and encouragement. Social intercourse within clubs and societies was avoided through resignations tendered for obviously

transparent reasons by Jews. The Jewish community began to withdraw into itself.

One Jew from Wurtemberg felt, four months after the boycott, that the only way to communicate with Gentile society was through suicide. His final note read:

"A German-Jew cannot go on living knowing that the movement from which national Germany expects its salvation considers him a traitor. I leave without any feelings of hatred. I have only one desire; that reason may return. Unable to engage in any activity for which I am suited, I am trying to arouse my Christian friends by my suicide. May this make you see what the German-Jews are going through. How I would have preferred to give my life for my country...." 49.

The renowned Jewish shipowner, Albert Ballin, chose to commit suicide rather than look upon Germany's surrender after World War I. 50. It was an indication of how far things had gone when we note that the suicide in Wurtemberg was one of 8,000 by 1935, not because of Germany's disgrace, but because they could not live in a society which considered them a disgrace.

Most German-Jews reacted negatively to the foreign boycott of German goods which followed the April 1st action. Though the Nazis ordered German-Jews to issue protests against such foreign actions, the Jewish response was inner-directed, not only to ensure survival, but to express genuine outrage at measures intended to harm the Fatherland.

Berlin-Jews wrote to the Chief Rabbi of England that "Spreading false news...will create difficulties and tarnish the reputation of our German homeland," and the German-Jewish Veterans Association begged Americans to halt its boycott "in the patriotic interest, but also in the name of truth." 51. The Jews only succeeded in extending their

jugular vein and further exposing their weakness.

### REACTIONS TO NAZI STEREOTYPES

An article in an April, 1933, edition of the Zionist Judische Rundschau newspaper read:

"The first of April, 1933, can be a day of Jewish awakening and Jewish rebirth--if the Jews want it to be; if the Jews are ripe for it and possess inner greatness; if the Jews are not as they are depicted by their adversaries." 52.

The crucial phrase is the last one. Did many Jews see themselves as possessing, in some measure, these traits which the Nazis ascribed to them? How were they standing up to the charge that was repeated ceaselessly, with the basest venality, that the Jews were not only different and hence unqualified for citizenship, but sub-human? Ludwig Lewisohn speaks of

"...the old, old fear expressed in the proverb 'Mitgefangen, mitgehen,' an ultimate dark suspicion that perhaps the world is in a measure right in its bitter total estimate of us." 53.

How many began to believe the charges so as not to have their faith in Germany undermined? Like the Russian bureaucrats during the Great Purges who believed the trumped-up accusations rather than abandon confidence in their convictions and government, some German-Jews behaved likewise as the Nazi party became identified with the State. Again, we find expression of this in Arthur Miller's Incident at Vichy:



Leduc: "You feel guilty, then."  
 Lebeau: "A little, I guess. Not for anything I've done but...  
 I don't know why."  
 Leduc: "For being a Jew, perhaps?"  
 Lebeau: "I'm not ashamed of being a Jew."  
 Leduc: "Then why feel guilty?"  
 Lebeau: "I don't know. Maybe it's that they keep saying such  
 terrible things about us, and you can't answer. And after  
 years and years of it, you...I wouldn't say you believe it,  
 but...you do, a little." 54.

In their efforts to find a modus vivendi with the Nazis, the Central  
 Union News advocated a "restructuring of the Jewish community away from  
 the manipulation of money to the manipulation and production of things,"  
 thus internalizing Nazi negative stereotypes. 55.

Sartre writes: "The very moment one treats the Jew as an inferior  
 and harmful creature, then he immediately feels he is a member of an  
 elite." 56. Is not the opposite valid? Deemed inferior, how many wished  
 they had not been born Jews, but Germans, out of an inferiority con-  
 sciousness?

The German-Jewish response to the Eastern-European Jew living in  
 Germany evinces this self-hatred. The Jews possessed their own scape-  
 goat, and practiced their own brand of anti-Semitism on the Ostjuden  
 in their midst:

"...they were different, obviously alien and intruders. It  
 was they who were responsible for anti-Semitism....German-  
 Jewry fed and clothed their brethren from the East, but they  
 shook their heads and solved the whole Jewish question by  
 sighing, 'Die Ostjuden!'" 57.

The Hochburg Jewish community related to the Eastern-European Jews  
 with a disdainful and "condescending tolerance." 58. They were embarrass-  
 ed by their customs and attire, as they presented to the German world

an image of the Jew which the respectable Hechburgers recognized in German anti-Semitism. The Ostjuden were spectres from the Middle Ages, who, by their very existence, frustrated the ambitions of the cultivated German-Jews to prove their similarity to the Aryans.

#### POST-BOYCOTT MEASURES

German-Jewish enmity in this area increased as conditions steadily worsened. Four limited laws were issued in April, directed at the civil service, legal profession, medical services and schools. Jews were not singled out in the legislation, as the intent was to circumscribe those with anti-Nazi leanings. Still, 5,000 Jews were expelled from government service by the Act for the Re-Establishment of the Career Civil Service, the first of 400 laws aimed at driving the Jews from participation in German life. President von Hindenburg protested the action and won small concessions from Hitler, and Jews could point again to sympathizers in the upper echelons of the government. Non-Aryan doctors were no longer permitted to work in hospitals, but Jews were specifically the target in a Gross-Berliner Artzeblatt editorial: "We the German doctors, demand that no Jew should be permitted to undertake the medical care of German citizens."<sup>59</sup> Doctors had to inform their patients before treatment that they were Jewish. There were no longer doctors who happened to be Jewish, but only Jewish doctors.

On March 31st, Hans Kerrl, Nazi Commissioner of Justice in Prussia, counselled all Jewish judges to resign and advised that Jewish public prosecutors be sent on indefinite leave. Five days later, he ordered

that no Jewish lawyer be allowed to practice. On April 28th, the appointment of Jews to assistant-judgeships was prohibited, and in July, pure Aryan blood was made the requisite for legal examinations.<sup>60.</sup>

Those who had served for a certain length of time in the civil service (since August 1st, 1914) were exempt from the expulsion, and the Jews drew consolation from this. The loophole was not intended, though, to mollify the Jewish community; it was inserted out of fear of administrative chaos.

Sigmund Stein was one of those disbarred by the new ruling, but although he considered emigration, he rejected that alternative in his view that the Nazi phenomenon was only a phase. Stein did have genuine obligations for the care of his parents-in-law, "but surely this was an emotional reaction and rationalization."<sup>61.</sup> He feared that his training in German law would be of no avail to him in another country, that he would have to leave most of his family and friends, and also because the mechanics of emigration were awesome, encouraging inertia.<sup>62.</sup> Relatively few Jews were leaving and this buttressed his foremost reason for not fleeing: he simply did not want to leave Germany. These who came to him for legal advice in this area were advised not to emigrate.<sup>63.</sup>

Jewish lawyers were still vastly over-represented in the profession in proportion to the population. But it was obvious this decline would accelerate, and although Jewish lawyers remained, their "court appearances must have been unpleasant at best and impossible at worst."<sup>64.</sup>

Jewish books provided most of the fuel for the great book burning on May 10th in Berlin. The works of Jewish composers were banned, and

65.

Jewish producers, directors, and actors were expelled from the theatre.

Jews were prohibited from teaching, while instruction in the racial sciences dominated education, exalting the German master race and depicting "the Jews as breeders of almost all the evil there was in the world...."

66.

Jews were characterized as having little understanding or will toward scientific truth, "Jewish physics" was termed a dilution of "German physics," and Jewish interest in science was portrayed as a means toward Jewish domination of civilization. Einstein was the principal villain, an "alien mountebank."

67.

Joseph Goebbels, taking control of all phases of cultural life in the Fall of 1933, issued the Reich Press Law which commanded that all editors possess German citizenship, be of Aryan descent, and not married to a person of Jewish origin. The Vossische Zeitung (circulation near 100,000) which was established in 1704, was forced to close due to its ownership by the House of Ullstein. The Berliner Tageblatt met the same fate, though it was allowed to continue three years longer. The Frankfurter Zeitung (circulation near 100,000) was directed to fire its Jewish editors.

68.

The Nazis, though, retreated after the flurry of laws in 1933 (as they were to withdraw after the Nuremberg Laws) to test public and world-wide reaction, and to allow German institutions to recoup. The fallback was not an indication of Nazi satisfaction with the status-quo or a permanent halting of their drive to make Germany Judenrein. The Jewish problem was by no means solved, but the German-Jews interpreted the lulls as expression of permanent, though circumscribed detente.

Even though the major legislative thrusts were well spaced, harassment was a daily affair. Even before the Nazi racial laws were enshrined at Nuremberg, severe pressure was put on Jews married to Christians. Jews were often forced to march through the streets wearing a placard reading: "I have besmirched a Christian girl." Street attacks were a commonplace, beard cuttings and other humiliations like street cleaning were daily fare, and rock throwing was widespread. Still, governmental inactivity was a silver lining.

"But by late 1933 the official anti-Jewish energies of the Nazi regime seemed temporarily spent....In July Hitler had proclaimed the Nazi revolution to be ended. By December the claim had taken on a ring of truth....In Jewish circles the hope that the Nazi storm was subsiding gained currency. Exclusion from the professions or even from the schools did not necessarily mean the end of the Jewish community. More likely it meant a period in which Jewish participation in German life would be circumscribed....The Jewish community began to hope for a stabilization of the status quo." 69.

Toward the end of that convulsive year, the *Judische Rundschau* noted: "Many German-Jews have lost their economic base for existence," but it looked forward to a hopeful, if limited economic future for the general Jewish community.<sup>70.</sup>

The extended breaks between frenzied anti-Jewish activity not only gave the German populace and bureaucracy an opportunity to adjust, but the German-Jews as well. Consequently, they would view the next outburst in relation to the one previous, and it would become more tolerable since it came not in relation to the freedom under Weimar, but to preceding degradations. That which might have seemed revolutionary if put into effect at once, was absorbed as a further modification of already existing legislation.

One highly visible trend in response to the anti-Jewish barrage by the government was a rush to the cities, as isolated Jewish families streamed from villages and towns to Berlin, Vienna, and Frankfurt.<sup>71</sup> This may be explained partly in terms of increasing impoverishment, but also by the need to join with others who shared their predicament, out of a belief in strength in numbers. The many Jews who fled the "People's Courts" of the smaller towns (whose stated goal was to remove the enemies of Nazism) and migrated to the larger population centers, left behind familiar surroundings and friends and naturally experienced rootlessness.

#### ASSIMILATIONISTS AND ZIONISTS

They were greeted by a Jewish community especially slow to admit the reality of the situation's increasing severity, a reality the rural Jew expressed in his migration. These liberal Jews had been long identified with progressive political parties, which guaranteed them, as "German citizens of the Jewish faith," equal opportunity and religious freedom. These highly urbanized Jews were naturally committed to the idea of equality, which ensured their security, and though the Nazis were equally committed to the idea of inequality, this was viewed as but a conservative reaction, a regression due to economic dislocations. Echoing Herzl, the urban assimilationist believed that the fruits of their long struggle could never be rescinded because of the overwhelming spirit of the age; equality was too deeply ingrained to be permanently discarded.

But the other tenets and policies of Herzl were anathema to the urban assimilationists, as they were the heirs of the thinking expressed by the German Rabbis when Herzl sought Munich as the site for his Zionist Congress:

"The endeavor of the so-called Zionists to found a Jewish national state in Palestine is contrary to the messianic hopes of Judaism," and "Judaism obligates its followers to give all their hearts and strength to the land to which they belong." <sup>72</sup>

The assimilationists echoed the sentiments of David Friedlander, a prime mover in the Prussian emancipation of 1812, as he constructed a new blueprint for social development:

"I am a Prussian citizen. I have sworn solemnly to promote and support the weal of my Fatherland. Both duty and gratitude demand that I achieve this with all my might. First of all, I must endeavor to join with my fellow citizens, to approach them in custom and habit, to enter with them into social and personal connections; for the bonds of sociability and love bind more closely and strongly than the law itself. And only through these bonds can I achieve the aim of living with my fellow citizens in harmony, peace and friendship." <sup>73</sup>

In response to Nazi gains and increased terrorism, an advertisement in the Vossische Zeitung, signed by several hundred prominent Jews, announced:

"We profess the Jewish religion, but reject any sort of Jewish nationalism. We regard ourselves, along with the overwhelming majority of German-Jews, as members of the German, not of the Jewish, people. In the establishment of the national Jewish homeland we see an error which is bound to jeopardize the work of emancipation of the champions of German-Judaism, and the ethical-religious task of Judaism for humanity." <sup>74</sup>

The Zionists, in this view, reinforced the anti-Semitic notion of the Jew as supra-national.

The central organization of assimilationist Jews declared: Nobody can rob us of our German Fatherland....In that we fight this battle, we carry out a German, not a selfish Jewish fight."<sup>75</sup> They felt their advocacy of "Heimatrecht" (inherent right to the ancestral home) to be eminently reasonable, and certain to bring positive amelioration of the situation. But amidst these protestations, the assimilationist Central Union News was forced to change its masthead from "Pages for Germanism and Judaism," to "A General Newspaper for Judaism." This did not go unnoticed.<sup>76</sup>

The assimilationist-minded Jew felt himself to be merely the object of Nazi excesses, spilling over from the attacks (legitimate?) on those most obviously Jewish and irrevocable non-German, the Ostjuden. The "Tendency for assimilation"<sup>77</sup> would be allowed to run its course once Nazi energies had been spent on those Jews who perhaps justifiably merited their outrage and scorn. The urban, "truly German" Jews considered themselves to be indispensable members in good standing of the German establishment. The City Without Jews, a book written in the 1920's by Hugo Bettauer, was avidly read in these circles. It describes an expulsion of Viennese Jews, and their subsequent swift recall after Vienna discovers it simply cannot survive without its Jews.<sup>78</sup>

While the assimilationists did not recognize themselves in Nazi stereotypes of Jews as "dark haired, stooped, hook nosed swindlers and seducers of fair haired Aryan maidens,"<sup>79</sup> he was the foremost target of Nazi vitriol. The Nazi historian Walter Frank wrote: "It will always remain the task of paramount importance to unveil the so-called 'noble,' 'German' Jew and expose him as the most dangerous type of



alien parasite."<sup>80.</sup> Eastern European Jews were readily identifiable, but those who sought to assimilate, who considered themselves Germans who happened to be Jews, were the ones to be ferreted out, pinpointed, and dealt with. The problem of the Ostjuden was too difficult, anyway, as the Nazis discovered when they attempted to strip them of citizenship in the De-naturalization Law of 1933. Most, due to the obstacles in becoming naturalized Germans, remained citizens of the country from which they fled from 19th Century pogroms. "The Nazis were to discover that even they could not revoke the citizenship of those who were not citizens."<sup>81.</sup>

The German-Jews were more readily confronted, and though they sought appeasement, for example under Max Naumann's leadership of the Union of National German-Jews, the Nazis would have none of it.

The Nazis did feel, for a time, that they could use the German-Zionists, whose ideology influenced only a small number in 1933. With Palestine off limits due to British restrictions and Nazi fears, and due to severe conditions placed on immigration by other European nations, the assimilationists felt themselves strengthened in their "working to improve their economic situation in Germany."<sup>82.</sup>

The Deutscher Vortrupp Gefolgschaft deutscher Juden, an anti-Zionist organization under Hans Joachim Schoeps, heavily under the spell of German-nationalist ideology, felt itself to be in an ideal position to extract favorable treatment from the government. Accepting the Nazi charge that Jews were over-represented in some professions and trades, Schoeps urged<sup>83.</sup> Jews to occupy themselves with agricultural and craft pursuits.

This feeble attempt was quashed by the Hereditary Farm Law of September, 1933, which expelled Jews from any involvement in agriculture, for only

those farmers who could prove pure Aryan blood back to 1800 could  
 84.  
 continue tilling the land.

Each desperate attempt to adapt to the new climate by restructur-  
 ing Jewish priorities to bring them into line with Nazi criticism, met  
 with like suppression. In a prayer he composed for Yom Kippur, Leo  
 Baeck urged that Jews create a new and strengthened identity as Jews,  
 and eschew such restructurings. "In those early years," he wrote,  
 the Jews suffered severely from the propaganda and calumnies by which  
 the Nazis slyly tried to turn all of the German people against them.  
 85.  
 It depressed them so gravely...."

"In this day of sorrow and pain, surrounded by infamy and  
 shame, we will turn our eyes to days of old....When we  
 look into the faces of one another, we know who we are." 86.

There was a renaissance of religious life, as Jews tried "to shift  
 their concentration more and more inwards, and to make it independent  
 even of the destruction of universities and prayer houses." 87. The  
 collective fate, the harsh uncertainties created by an ugly external  
 world, united Jews in a shared drive to religious roots which were  
 familiar, comforting, and immune to assault.

By no means, though, was this universal, as some behaved as though  
 little had happened, and others sought avenues of compromise. The  
 headlong immersion in Judaism which pre-occupied many was widely resis-  
 ted, as an answer to why they were singled out was sought (at least  
 the Communists knew why they were being persecuted). The reaction to  
 the obscurity was frequently confusion, leading to hopelessness, but  
 that very inexplicability lent hope that the maelstrom would subside.

Others would think like Lebeau in Incident at Vichy: "You begin wishing you'd committed a crime, you know? Something definite." <sup>88.</sup> As Schopenhauer put it:

"Suffering which falls to our lot in the course of nature, or by chance, or fate, does not seem so painful as suffering which is inflicted on us by the arbitrary will of another." <sup>89.</sup>

Immediately after the Nazi takeover of the government, the Zionists issued statements indistinguishable from the assimilationist position:

"The German people should know: a historical alliance, hundreds of years old, cannot be severed so simply." <sup>90.</sup> But their last appeal for a reconciliation was made in June of 1933, as the Nazis seemed bent on isolating the Jewish community from German life:

"The National Socialists, in their demonstrations, designate the Jews as 'enemies of the State.' That designation is incorrect. The Jews are not enemies of the State. The German-Jews have always desired and wished for the rise of Germany, for which they have always invested, to the best of their knowledge, all their resources, and that is what they wish to continue to do." <sup>91.</sup>

The Zionists, constituting no more than five per-cent of the Jewish population, <sup>92.</sup> began to identify the trend clearly. They felt that

theirs was the only tenable position, since the by-laws of the assimilationist Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith announced its major purpose as "fighting against anti-Semitism." <sup>93.</sup>

As anti-Semitism was a cardinal plank in the government's platform, the Central Association became an organization "hostile to the State." <sup>94.</sup>

The Zionists could readily point to the prevailing rejection of assimilationist thinking as an irreversable Nazi response, and felt their

own ideology vindicated. Assimilation was no longer a viable alternative, and Zionism became one of the few choices open to the German-Jew, as it spoke of a Jewish homeland and an ingathering of the exiles. The Nazis strengthened the Zionist position by allowing property transfer to Palestine in 1933.

Sales of the *Judische Rundschau*, the Zionist organ, rose eight-fold in the Spring and Summer of 1933, and contributions to Zionist coffers had tripled by early 1935 (proffered by a community reduced in numbers and affluence). But "this did not necessarily mean that the Jews wished to emigrate to Palestine; it was more a matter of pride."<sup>95</sup>

"Although Palestine was regarded by emancipated German-Jewry as a quixotic semi-charitable undertaking, it had the effect of lending credence to the idea of nationality, which did much to comfort as well as bolster the morale of many a German Jew in his hour of trial. It was not much later that they turned to Palestine for succor."<sup>96</sup>

Zionist newspapers and pamphlets contained advertisements for instruction in modern Hebrew, agriculture, means of transportation, and articles concerning work, life, and opportunities in Palestine. "An issue of the *Rundschau* would be something for Herzl to read."<sup>97</sup> The Zionist article "Jasagen zum Judentum" (Say Yes to Being a Jew) saved thousands of German-Jews from suicide. "The ideas expressed there were the rallying point and the source of strength for Zionist and non-Zionist alike."<sup>98</sup>

On March 20th, 1934, Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Bavarian Police, ordered that "groups which contributed to the strengthening of Jewish self-awareness" go on functioning. Included on the list were not only Jewish war veteran organizations and youth groups, but the Zionists as

well. Several months later, the S.S. and Gestapo were strongly encouraging the Zionists, for with them lay their best hope for eliminating the Jewish problem through emigration. "Encouragement" lay simply in not directing the same severity meted out to other Jewish groups. In order to promote the idea of emigration, Zionist speakers were again allowed to address audiences, and an intensive campaign was launched against those Jews who urged remaining in Germany.<sup>99.</sup>

But Zionist hopes were thwarted as Arab hostility to Jewish immigration found sympathetic British ears. In deference to the Arab position, the British limited Jewish immigration to the wealthy, skilled, or professional Jew. "...this new situation made Palestine uniquely unprepared to meet the emergency in Judaism brought on by Hitler's seizure of power in Germany."<sup>100.</sup>

After Britain's Peel Commission recommended partition, the Nazis backpedaled, not wanting to contribute to the populating of an independent Jewish State. "The proclamation of a Jewish State or a Jewish-administered Palestine would create for Germany a new enemy, one which would have deep influences on developments in the Near East,"<sup>101.</sup>

Adolph Eichmann noted. Echoing Hitler's fears, Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop said: "Germany must regard the forming of a Jewish State as dangerous, which even in miniature would form just such an operational base as the Vatican for political Catholicism."<sup>102.</sup>

Shaul Esh confirms the effect of the Peel Commission on Hitler's thinking:

"Suddenly...it appeared to him that by pushing the Jews to Palestine he advanced the establishment of a Jewish State and supported with his own hands the realization of the program of Jewish world rule in the existence of which he believed with all his heart."<sup>103.</sup>

Zionist leaders were caught off guard, and their fears of a betrayal of their hopes were confirmed when they suffered greatly in the massive boycotts and physical attacks of 1935.<sup>104</sup> Suddenly, Zionism took its place in the ranks of foreclosed options, for now it was their very identification with Jewish self-awareness that marked them for particularly harsh treatment. The S.A., constrained to make distinctions in their attacks (which they felt ran contrary to Nazi ideology), were now given license to intimidate Jews of whatever political shading. With nation after nation adopting restrictions on immigration, the Zionists could be of no further use and were now expendable as Jews.

#### EMIGRATION

But why, before the doors began closing, did the German-Jews not attempt emigration, as they sensed danger, witnessed strenuous physical expressions of national policy, and experienced daily degradation? Emigration of Jews from Germany totaled 150,000 between 1933 and 1939, with the months subsequent to the Machtegreifung witnessing the greatest flight, and succeeding years showing a consistently decreasing emigration (due in large measure to the widespread restrictions on immigration imposed by European countries).<sup>105</sup>

"The young, the Zionists, the relatively well to do, these best equipped to take up a new life abroad were generally the first to leave. In 1938, of the 350,000 or so Jews who had stayed, over half were more than 45 years old, past the age when emigration is easily undertaken. Then, too, the apparently inconsistent attitude of the regime toward Jewish persecutions served to encourage many Jews who resisted the thought of emigration....Hitler's announcement after the Nuremberg Laws that the Jewish question could be considered settled undoubtedly had an...important effect."<sup>106</sup>

Most of the first group of emigres, too, were politicians and authors, obviously threatened with incarceration due to public outspokenness against the new government. By the end of 1937, the Jewish community had been depleted by only twenty per-cent, and many of those who remained "believed that the anti-Semitic policy of the Nazis had exhausted itself in the laws hitherto enacted." <sup>107.</sup>

Brune Bettelheim posed the question to German-Jews in Buchenwald as to why they had not fled when conditions became unbearable. Responding to their citing homes and businesses, he comments:

"Their earthly possessions had so taken possession of them, that they could not move; instead of using them, they were run by them." <sup>108.</sup>

But Bettelheim misses the point. It was not the possessions as things which held sway, but what they represented, what the Jew saw as he surveyed his property and material status. For they reflected how far he had come, how great had been his advance, how much toil had gone into their accumulation, and the resultant satisfaction, and he could not abandon this hard-sought and won status and security. Further, an emigre could only hold on to ten per-cent of his possessions as he left German ports and stations. The vagaries of a new life on foreign soil, stripped of property and capital, was a prospect often too grim to act upon.

The hold of the land cannot be discounted, and one might capsuleize the German-Jew's thinking as: "This land was home for my father and father's father; my children and children's children will experience its magnificence and power as I have. The grip of the land is too

strong for me to abandon it because of the rantings of bullies and maniacs who have nothing in common with the land, least of all its permanence."

The descriptions of the German landscape in Jewish memoirs are lyrical and rhapsodic:

"Tiengen was the name of the town where we lived. It is a small town near the Swiss border, with the whispering pines of the Black Forest at its back, the rushing waters of the upper Rhine at its feet, and the distant panorama of the Swiss Alps before it. It was a peaceful and pleasant place in those days, a busy center of commerce by day, an idyllic rural village in the evening; a place where the sounds of trade and industry mingled with the crowing of cocks and the lowing of cattle."<sup>109</sup>

Jewish hopes for a normal life in Germany can perhaps be seen in the fact that most who fled in 1933-1934 went to bordering European countries and not to Palestine, feeling that once the Germans came to their senses, and recovered from their flirtation with National Socialism,<sup>110</sup> they could more easily return to their homeland. Many returned after the first convulsive period.

Those who remained believed that:

"...there was always a chance that their existence would become more difficult and more dangerous. Why exchange a known evil for another condition, another domination, which might result in new and therefore less bearable problems? Dissatisfied though they were with the present, they preferred to hold onto it rather than call for a change, the consequences of which they could not foresee."<sup>111</sup>

Many Jews in positions of responsibility in the Jewish community, such as Rabbis of all persuasions, remained despite insistent offers of sanctuary extended from many quarters, with the view of the captain



of a sinking ship who cannot abandon his charges.

The self-image of the German-Jew was German, and Nazi denials to the contrary were of little avail in destroying the self-concept. The Jews believed, too, that they were in the right; to flee would be to admit the veracity of Nazi claims. "Hitler's attacks were vicious, but they were also apparent nonsense."<sup>112</sup> Nazi fulminations evinced not the untenability of Jewish claims of legitimacy as Germans, but the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the Nazis. Hitler might scream of a 1,000 year Reich, but the Jews of Germany knew his days were numbered:

"Fascism is the rule of the tavern in the streets and in the government. Soon they will all be sent back to their bars or prisons. Soon the old Germany will punish her bad boys." 113.

The lull in governmental activity against the Jewish community in late 1933 and throughout 1934, which encouraged many who remained in Germany and caused the return of many emigres, was due to the confusion in the Nazi bureaucracy over sovereignty in the area, pre-occupation with strengthening its position, and world opinion. But the Jew's adaptation to reduced circumstance only convinced the Nazis that severer measures were required.

The Jews viewed the inactivity as a hopeful sign, especially due to the S.A. purge of 1934, which eliminated the more extreme leaders in the National Socialist party. But after von Hindenburg's death in 1934, the Nazis were emboldened to step up the pace of anti-Jewish activity. And even though governmental measures were in short supply during that year, Germany witnessed 400,000 public meetings, addressed

by some 12,500 speakers, with anti-Semitism as a key theme.

### THE NUREMBERG LAWS

Despite a paucity of public laws, the bureaucracy was constantly engaged in attempting to formulate anti-Jewish postures, and the principle that "a bureaucracy at rest tends to remain at rest while a bureaucracy in motion tends to continue in motion,"<sup>114.</sup> found expression at the Nuremberg Party rally of 1935. The transitional years of 1933-1935, a period of fear as to what the Nazis would do, ended with confirmation of those trepidations at the rally, as Jews were stripped of their civil rights.<sup>115.</sup>

Hopes for governmental validation of Jewish separateness and autonomy were dashed, as the regulations sought to eliminate all Jewish-Aryan relationships (especially marital) in a way extremely unfavorable to the Jews. Still, Jewish reaction was that a workable definition of Jewish security had been established:

"In late September, the Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland, the collective voice of Germany's Jews, issued a statement expressing its willingness to work for a modus vivendi with the National Socialists. The Reichsvertretung was willing to view the Nuremberg Laws as the beginning to such a tolerable arrangement."<sup>116.</sup>

The possibility of a new "bearable relationship"<sup>117.</sup> was underwritten by Hans Lamm, an extreme Zionist:

"Life is possible under every law. However in complete ignorance of what is permitted and what one cannot do, one cannot

live. A useful and respected citizen can also exist as a member of a minority in the midst of a great people." 118.

The fact that the regulations were garbed in legal terminology, in articles, ordinances, and categories (e.g., the "Mischlinge" described half-Jews who were not of the Jewish religion or married to a Jew on September 15th, 1935) had an effect, since the destruction of the S.A. proved Nazi intentions of dealing harshly with lawlessness and violence. The laws were not viewed with great alarm, since the Jews had faced less than equal status since the Machtegreifung. The laws would protect them from violence, and "if they kept to themselves, as they had been forced to do anyhow, they would be able to live unmolested." 119.

Those who were affected by the inter-marriage provision did view the laws with horror. Although the Nuremberg rally did not attempt to dissolve already existing marriages between Jew and Aryan, the Aryan partner was now strenuously urged to seek divorce. Suicide was the response of a number of Jews, such as the actor Joachim Gottschalk. 120.

This workable solution, heralding permanent truce, reduced the Jew from Reichsbürger, a citizen with full political rights, to Staatsangehörige, one who belonged to the nation without political rights. Previous laws had referred to Aryans and non-Aryans, but the Nuremberg Laws addressed "Germans and nearly related blood" and "Jewish blood." 121.

Sigmund Stein, who had always considered himself allied with the German-Folk, was informed of his error, for he obviously did not qualify in "demonstrating in behavior the will and the ability faithfully to serve the German-Folk." 122.

Paragraph 4 of the Nuremberg Laws forbade Jews to "display the

German flag or the national colors." The self-image of Jewish war veterans caused them to be particularly devastated by this ruling. 80,000 of these German patriots had proudly served during World War I, sustaining 12,000 dead and boasting 35,000 decorated for bravery in

action.<sup>123</sup> An illustration of how well they were treated in service,<sup>124</sup> is the fact that they could be fed Kosher food, even at the front lines.

Walter Rathenau was responsible for the economy during the war, and Fritz Haber manned the crucial chemical industry. The war gave Jews an opportunity to prove their patriotism and express their gratitude to Germany for their legal equality and rapid advancement over the preceding half-century. "And to the degree that this legal equality was not matched by social equality, the war provided the Jews with the opportunity to earn the latter."<sup>125</sup>

Jews paraded their loyalty to the Kaiser, and the Iron Cross became the badge of patriotism. The veterans could sing "Deutschland uber Alles" with sincere fervor, even singing Sabbath songs to its melody. They attacked the emigrants as people who had "deserted" their homeland, and who were now "shooting arrows from secure hiding places"<sup>126</sup> to the detriment of Germany and German-Jews.

The veterans could see their position as invulnerable, in spite of the strictures against other Jewish groupings, pointing for confirmation to von Hindenburg's letter, three days after the April boycott:

"In the last few days I have been notified of numerous incidents in which judges, lawyers, and judicial civil servants, who had been wounded during the war, were illegally forced to take their vacations and then dismissed because they were of Jewish origin. For myself, one who reveres those who died in the war and

is thankful to those soldiers who survived and the wounded who suffered, this treatment of Jewish war veterans now in the civil service is intolerable. I am convinced that you, Herr Chancellor, share these human feelings and so I urge you most heartily to concern yourself with this problem and to see to it that an honorable solution for the entire civil service is found. I feel that civil servants, judges, teachers, and lawyers who were wounded in the war or were soldiers on the front, or are sons of those who died or who had sons who died in battle must—insofar as they have not given cause to be treated otherwise—be allowed to continue in their professions. If they were prepared to bleed and die for Germany, they deserve to be treated honorably by the Fatherland." 127.

The numerus clausus of the April School Law, limiting Jewish enrollment to one and a half per-cent, exempted the children of war veterans who were Jewish, as did the other April regulations. 128.

The Nuremberg law relating to the flag, came hard on the heels of the Military Service Law of May, 1935, the first blow to veteran's illusions, as it required Aryan ancestry as a determinant for eligibility. The implied message, that the veterans were now fourth class citizens, rocked the Reichsbund Judischer Frontsoldaten. After the Nuremberg rally, a law was passed forbidding Jewish names to be written on new war memorials. 129.

For two years following the Nuremberg rally, the Jews enjoyed another respite from anti-Semitic legislation, and Hitler's assurance at the Nuremberg rally that the attack on German-Jewry was over "took on a certain credibility." 130. Jewish private property remained largely in Jewish hands, and Aryanization (expropriation of Jewish property and capital) was sporadic. The workable situation was working.

1936-1938

The Jews were mistaken in their understanding of the calm which followed the Nuremberg rally, for it was not intended to encourage them, but to impress foreign powers on the eve of the 1936 Olympic games. The Nazis desperately wanted the games to be held in Berlin to shore up prestige and legitimacy, and the banners "Juden Unerwünscht" (Jews not welcome) were removed from the Olympic stadium area.<sup>131.</sup> The Jews saw this as a sign of good faith.

The good faith of the Nazis revealed itself in the fact that by the time of the Olympics half of Germany's Jews were without means of livelihood.<sup>132.</sup> Forty per-cent of Berlin's 150,000 Jews were forced to live from the doles of Jewish relief agencies.<sup>133.</sup>

Behind the facade of the Olympics, Jews all over the Reich found it nearly impossible to buy food, milk for the young, drugs, and medicine. Hotels, as well, denied them service. The slogan "Judah Verreckt" was plastered all over Germany, outside of Berlin, a phrase referring to the death of animals.<sup>134.</sup> Whole towns competed with each other for the blessed state of being "Judenrein;" whole towns filled with banners warning: "Jews enter this place at their own risk."<sup>135.</sup> Approaching the town of Ludwigshafen, a sign greeted the Jewish eye: "Drive Carefully! Sharp Curve! Jews 75 miles per hour!"<sup>136.</sup>

Following the successful Anschluss in Austria in March, 1938, the government was again spurred to frenzied measures. By 1938, most Jews were without means of livelihood, and were forced to exist on dwindling

capital reserves. From a well-entrenched, optimistic community in the early 1930's, the Jews of Germany were, by 1938, "broken, demoralized, hysterical, and frequently suicidal (100 suicides per month).<sup>137.</sup>

With a drastic decline in the birth rate, the Jewish community had four people over 60 years of age for every child under fifteen years old.<sup>138.</sup>

1938 marked the end of Jewish denial of Nazi goals for exclusion, for no one who witnessed the intensification of Nazi activity could conclude that hopes for a continued life in Germany were realistic.. It was the year of complete ostracism from participation in the economic life of Germany.

Bella Fromm, a journalist, wrote on June 28th, 1938, of the scenes which met the stroller in the Kurfuerstendamm area:

"Everywhere were revolting and bloodthirsty pictures of Jews beheaded, hanged, tortured, and maimed, accompanied by obscene inscriptions. Windows were smashed, and loot from the miserable little shops was strewn over the sidewalk."<sup>139.</sup>

Jews could not enter certain Berlin streets, go to the symphony, own animals, or drive automobiles, use park benches, public transport, or purchase newspapers.<sup>140.</sup>

Per a directive of August 17th, 1938, Jews could only name their children with names permitted by a list published by the Ministry of the Interior. The list contained approximately 150 names acceptable to the Reich leaders. The names Israel and Sara had to be appended as a middle name by all Jews to facilitate recognition, and further humiliate them. Clearly, the Jews were now marked with a stain in the eyes

of the German people.<sup>141.</sup>

The Jews of Germany had long adopted the strategy of changing their names from obviously Jewish ones, to identify themselves more closely with their neighbors, and better facilitate assimilationist goals. This ploy, designed to deal more effectively with existence in a restrictive atmosphere, was foiled by the Name Change law. By having to append Israel and Sara to their own names, the Jews were unmasked, and the external identification naturally affected self-orientation. They were branded like cattle, and fully visible as tar-<sup>142.</sup>gets.

The Biblical verse, "Your name shall be Jacob no longer, but Israel, for you have striven with God and man and won," could not be applied to the Name Change law, for it was the crowning symbol of<sup>143.</sup> defeat.

The Nazis openly declared their aim to remove Jews from the economy early in 1938. In April, on publication of a law designed to force registration of Jewish property, the under-Secretary of the Ministry of Economics announced that the directive was intended to<sup>144.</sup> quicken the removal of Jews from participation in German economic life. Aryanization proceeded briskly throughout the summer, as Jews were forced to sell their property for the barest fraction of the market value.

During the summer, the Interior Ministry issued definitions of Jewish businesses (five years after the April boycott which failed, in part, because of the difficulty in formulating such a definition). If one board member or a legal representative was Jewish, the enterprise



was classified as Jewish. Even if the branch of a business was directed by a Jew, it was considered Jewish. In the winter of 1938, Goering ordered German businesses to fire Jewish managers by the end of the year, and several thousand individuals were let go. These two orders formed the basis for German expropriation of Jewish businesses and Jewish influence in Aryan concerns. <sup>145.</sup>

In July, 1938, all Jewish doctors were removed from professional practice, with lawyers meeting the same fate the following September. The March Jewish Communities decree removed recognition of their status under the law.

"This was a severe shock, the first official stroke against the Jewish community as a religious community. This law clearly intended to strike at the roots of the organic and financial existence of the German-Jews...." <sup>146.</sup>

Under the Jewish Communities law, the communities were relegated to inferior status relative to other religious communities. The administrative and economic foundations of the community were destroyed. <sup>147.</sup>

But these laws were but a prelude to the night of the greatest terror and destruction which the German-Jews were to experience: the Kristallnacht (Crystal Night). 1938 was not only a year of legislating under the law, for the Night of Crystal was presaged by numerous street actions. Hitler personally directed that the Great Synagogue of Munich be razed in June, whereupon Julius Streicher ordered the levelling of the Nuremberg Synagogue. The destruction of the Dortmund Synagogue soon followed. Himmler ordered mass arrests of Jews on May 27th, and the American charge d'affaires in Vienna opined that the action was

taken in order to "further demoralize the Jews, facilitate spoliation, and expedite exodus."<sup>148.</sup> Two weeks later, 1,500 Jews were arrested throughout Germany for crimes as petty as traffic violations. In October, the passports of all Jews had to be stamped with a "J".

### THE CRYSTAL NIGHT

The Reich's Jewish policy until November, 1938, was two-pronged: exclusion of the Jews under the law, and street terror undertaken by the police, loosely orchestrated from Berlin. But five and a half years after the direct street action of the April boycott of 1933 had been hurriedly abandoned, the Nazis undertook the most violent street action imaginable on November 10th, 1938. So great was its ferocity, that few Jews denied the possibility of a looming large-scale destruction.

The pogrom's roots lay in the situation of Germany's 70,000 foreign-born Jews. The Polish government took steps to void the citizenship of those Poles living in Germany, in an attempt to prevent their return. Although most did not desire to return anyway, due to Poland's rampaging anti-Semitism, one could not hope to emigrate from Germany without citizenship papers. Faced with the prospect of 70,000 Polish Jews forced to remain within the Reich, the Nazis determined to expel them, and shipped 17,000 toward the Polish frontier in cattle cars. The Poles blocked their entry, and they were forced to languish in a no man's land between the borders.

One of the refugees was the father of Herschel Grynzpan, a seven-

teen year old living in Paris at the insistence of his parents. He was sent out of Germany in July, 1938, and the resignation that many Jews were succumbing to is reflected in the final conversation between father and son: "You must stay in France until all this blows over." And when will that be....?" "Not in our lifetime, son, but maybe in yours." But outrage could yet characterize the Jewish response, as the younger Grynspan wrote in his diary: "It is not a crime to be a Jew! I am not a dog! I have a right to live!"

149.

150.

On November 7th, Grynspan assassinated a secretary in the German embassy in Paris in reprisal. The story was relegated to minor press coverage in Germany, but after Goebbels's statement "The German people are entitled to identify the Jews in Germany with this crime," the story achieved headline status. The assassination of Vom Rath offered the extremists the opportunity to accelerate Aryanization at the expense of the more "moderate" Nazis.

151.

The order went out from Gestapo Chief Heydrich's office at 1:20 a.m. on November 10th. Section 3 of Muller's order from Gestapo headquarters directed that the main component of the 20,000 to 30,000 Jews to be arrested should be the more wealthy. The S.A. was given its head, and by morning several dozen Jews were dead, hundreds beaten and raped, hundreds of synagogues burned, thousands of shops smashed, and 20,000 Jews put under arrest. Several hundred million marks worth of property were destroyed in all, and the broken glass alone amounted to approximately 24 million marks.

152.

153.

The insured value of the destroyed property was estimated at 25 million marks. By direct order of Goering, the Jews were to be entitled

to no compensation. The Jewish community even had to clear away the ruins of their gutted synagogues,<sup>154.</sup> and a billion and a quarter mark fine was levied on the Jews for having "provoked" the Germans to revenge the murder in Paris. One survivor summarized her realization of Nazi single-mindedness: "From that time onwards we knew Hitler would try to do all the things he had already spoken of in his book Mein Kampf." <sup>155.</sup>

No further rationalizations were possible, but the remaining 285,000 German-Jews hit upon still one more: the hope that the pogrom was a prelude to expulsion! The government, though, moved to close off all remaining avenues of emigration, and the beginning of the German war against Poland marked the end of Germany's Jews.

Joseph Goebbels had long exalted the "Big Lie," under the premise that the greater the falsehood, the more likely it was to be believed by a gullible public. The Jews were always correct in believing they shared much with their Aryan neighbors, but not least were they united in a desperate need to believe, though experience denied their every attempt. The "Big Truth" was all around them; too many failed to believe its existence, permanence, or direction.

#### CONCLUSION

"Be silent then, my lyre,

We sing before lords in vain.

I'll leave the minstrel choir,

And roam a Jew again."

### A. Modus Vivendi

A modus vivendi may be described as an acceptable, though circumscribed, pattern of relationship; it is a compromise accepted by one party in light of demands made by another. During the ghetto period, the Jew felt "the pressure to be essentially applied to the Jewish group as a whole. Now as a result of the disintegration of the group, he is much more exposed to pressure as an individual."<sup>157</sup> The individual Jew became more isolated, and hence more vulnerable to psychological assault under Nazism. There was no longer recourse to a walled section of the city which would afford a measure of security and protection from the general community, amongst a homogeneous group in a shared predicament. As the ghetto walls performed the function of circumscribing "bodily locomotion,"<sup>158</sup> Hitler restricted social locomotions. The circumscribed, though tolerable existence which many German-Jews thought had been the Nazi goal, is akin to the psychology of the ghetto dweller who, although cramped and stifled, was reasonably safe. Just as nations function within the narrow alternatives of a cold war, so people are often willing to exist within the parameters of a cold war directed against them.

### B. Links to Historical Jewish Responses

Was German-Jewish response characteristically Jewish? While a few turned their eyes to Zion, most

"waited with what faith and discipline a century of rationalism and communal disintegration had left them—as their ancestors waited for the Crusader's sword in the episcopal palace at Mayence. During the nine intervening centuries they had even learned the futility of fighting at the palace gate." 159.

For most, emigration was not a viable alternative, even when they were being encouraged to flee. It would prove the Nazi claims were correct, deny the posture that Nazism was only a temporary phenomenon, and sever natural links with the German people, the land, and the past. The overriding reason was the fear of separation anxiety which would result from forsaking the old and setting out to face the new and strange. Real or imagined threats of future failure rooted the German-Jew in a fixated response. The abilities he had long portrayed had stood him in good stead, but who could calculate their worth in foreign surroundings? It was this separation that the town-Jew experienced upon migrating to the cities of Berlin, Frankfurt, and Vienna, and it would only be exacerbated upon leaving Germany.

The German-Jewish community displayed a typically Jewish historical response to danger by remaining and struggling to ride out the storm:

"...the Jews have placed less hope, less expectation, less reliance, upon flight. It is true that the Jews have always wandered from country to country. But they have rarely done so because of the restrictions of a regime which became too burdensome. Jews have migrated chiefly for two reasons, expulsion and economic depression. Jews have rarely run from a pogrom. They have lived through it. The Jewish tendency has been not to run from, but to survive with, anti-Jewish regimes. It is a fact...that the Jews attempted to live with Hitler." 160.

Other Jews had managed to keep intact enough to build upon anew when tensions subsided; the German-Jews would do the same. Could not Goering's

favorite proverb, "The soup is never eaten as hot as it is cooked," be applied to their situation?

The Jews equated compliance with survival as a reflex response, clinging to a belief that the law of diminishing returns would apply to anti-Jewish measures:

"The Jews knew that measures of destruction were self financing or even profitable up to a certain point, but that beyond that limit they could be costly. As one historian put it: 'One does not kill the cow one wants to milk.'" 161.

This thought comforted them as they passed through the gates of the concentration camps, under the wholly credible sign "Work Makes Free."

Each stricture brought not the belief that the bottom had dropped out, but that it had been reached, and that now only recovery could ensue. Albert Memmi describes a corollary of this attitude, the escape into the adjustive reaction of rationalization as an aid to stability:

"After each family catastrophe, my mother used to thank God in this way: 'Blessed be He, the Eternal God, who hath preserved us from a greater misfortune.'" 162.

2 Raul Hilberg summarized the period thusly:

"The Germans issued instructions; the Jews reorganized their lives. The Germans became harsh, the Jews more vulnerable in their quandary. As German moves became more ominous, the Jews clung to hope. The Germans pressed on relentlessly, and the Jews despaired." 163.

### C. Uncertainty

The decisiveness of one's resolution and the basis of his security

are rooted in the firmness of an individual's ground. This is "probably the primary reason why he is extremely affected the moment this ground begins to give away."<sup>164.</sup>

"This unclarity of the situation, this uncertainty about the ground upon which he is acting, leads generally to uncertainty in behavior. The person does not feel at home and will therefore be more or less self-conscious, inhibited, or inclined to over-act."<sup>165.</sup>

The "unclearness" was a result of a spate of legislation, followed by an absence of activity (as in 1934), coupled with assurances that anti-Jewish measures would now cease (various officials would declare the Nazi revolution complete). Classic symptoms of repression were exhibited as the German-Jews became stiffened and strained in their relations with the external world, and were driven into emotional insulation. The Jews lived daily with uncertainty, and in their desperate attempts to seize remnants of dignity and normalcy, they were driven to extreme acts, be they intense expressions of patriotism and belonging by the war veterans, myopic rationalizations by the assimilationists (the Ostjuden have brought this misfortune upon us), or the ultimate attempt to rescue dignity and communicate--suicide. The attacks on personal worth and rights clearly caught the Jew off-guard, and he was forced to respond standing on one leg.

"It was done with such devilish cleverness. It was just like a net, at first with very wide mesh, but it gradually got narrower and narrower. People didn't know how narrow it had got until they found themselves caught in it--stricken with fear and terror, and not able to get out of it."<sup>166.</sup>

This panic reaction was from a woman who was forty two years old when



Hitler took power, a socially, politically, and academically involved Berliner.

As Von Berg, a character in Incident at Vichy, commented: "That is their power. To do the inconceivable; it paralyzes the rest of us." 167.

#### D. ANXIETY AND AVOIDANCE

Anxiety, or fear, arises from the lack of control over bodily decay, societal assaults, or the absence of positive external relationships. The latter two stimuli fed Jewish terror, for coupled with governmental onslaughts was the negative altering of individual relationships. It was a reality anxiety which the German-Jew felt, in that the fear arose out of threats from the external world which he perceived as potentially harmful.

Avoidance seeks to alleviate unhappiness and insecurity by denying or altering reality perceptions, and attempts to construct a substitute world in which the negative features of reality are expunged, and replaced by a framework more congenial to the individual's desires. Through such illusions, one may draw sustenance, and come to believe thereby that he is protected (e.g., most Germans are opposed to Hitler, and many in Hitler's circle support us).

Control of the situation was outside the Jew's power; for many the greatest need was to become insulated and try to regain shreds of emotional stability and consolation. This insulation was facilitated by a number of psychic needs and adjustments.

"No one," for example, "is willing to recognize himself as oppressed."

As long as a small percentage of the Jews were affected, the majority could feel relatively secure, since, after all, it was happening to someone else.

Reality avoidance can take many forms. In his autobiography, Jakob Wasserman tells of his compulsion to visit the public morgue and invite the intervention of the dead in his struggle. <sup>169.</sup> Emil Herz, a publisher of the prestigious Berlin-Ullstein house, would spend protracted periods in the cemetery, communing with the dead, as he could not with the living. The trauma which resulted from the deterioration of his status, led Herz to a state of helplessness.

Avoidance is most obviously witnessed in the anguish of a Jewish man who wrote:

"My wife and I tremble when our daughter sets out for school in the morning, and we tremble when she creeps home in the evening. We no longer ask questions, and she no longer tells what happens." <sup>170.</sup>

His avoidance was manifested in denial, and his concomitant refusal to undertake steps to realistically resolve the problems. His defense mechanism was to falsify reality by maintaining that what he did not know could not hurt him, and indeed hardly existed.

Freud identified a tendency of avoidance in the "as if" rationale:

"This asserts that our thought activity includes a great number of hypotheses whose groundlessness and even absurdity we fully realize. They are called fictions, but for a variety of reasons we have to behave 'as if' we believe in these fictions. This is the case with religious doctrines because of their incomparable importance for the maintenance of human society." <sup>171.</sup>

Obviously, the theory may relate to the incomparable importance of

maintaining social relations as one is familiar and comfortable with them. A community which had fought so hard, after having been deprived so long, and which finds itself pushed to the outskirts of society after having been admitted to its innermost precincts, had no less motivation to behave "as if" than the searcher for comfort in religious truths. In a time of the gravest threat to personal security, the scant solace of fantasizing and wearing blinders is often all one can find to alleviate anxiety. Rationalizations become indistinguishable from truth itself, as the intensity of stress increases. One may no longer be equipped to control the illusions as their hold strengthens with mounting crises.

The anchor of the German-Jew was swept away, as the great period of productivity and prolific contribution was extinguished overnight. Like Jakob Wasserman's characters, the German-Jew found that:

"everything he had planned for, fought for, accomplished up to a certain moment was vanity of vanities, a mistaken goal, a waste of time, a loss of precious values." 172.

The frontal, and more subtle, assaults, were systematically constructed to deceive the German-Jew and, caught off-guard, he could formulate no like strategem of systematic defense. The responses were feeble and easily broken, since they were hastily constructed, and not nourished for a period of years. The simple fabrications about their fate offered the illusion of protection (e.g., the failure of the boycott proved the Nazis did not represent the German will, and mitigated against further actions), though it was not realized that such rationalizations eroded the dignity and integrity of the Jew (e.g., the Nuremberg Laws

were heinous, but they could be lived under).

For many, paralysis stemmed from pre-occupation with their status as victims, and the inability to see the picture, not from an individual standpoint, but in its grim totality. As many began to behave like victims, evincing conditioned responses, the ability to formulate the proper reactions was severely diminished. This is treated in Incident at Vichy:

Leduc: "But how does one avoid feeling like a victim?"  
 Monceau: "One must try to create one's own reality in this world....You must try to think of something that makes you feel self-assured; anything at all....Any thought that makes you feel valuable." 173.

Some expressed their victim-status in aggressor identification, internalizing stereotypes, and believing what was said about them. As a child will try to be what his parents want him to be, some German-Jews assimilated the German attacks and lent credence to their supposed guilt. Various assimilationists would urge renunciation of Jewish connections with capital, and a turn to the "manipulation and production of things."

#### E. Denial and Retreat

Denial, with regard to the German-Jew, took form in his refusal to believe the permanency of his status-reversal, and his affirmation of inevitable amelioration (e.g., we have survived through other evils-- this one will vanish like the rest). Retreat was a result of the failure

of denial, and consisted of a return to Jewish roots and associations absent of tension. The German-Jew sought limited contact with the external world where possible, in order to repress anxiety arising from contact with a perceived danger.

Perhaps the German-Jews were unprepared to face this hostile world because the blinding light of emancipation and the rainbow of assimilation

"created within him a psychological predisposition against contemplating any alternative to the favorable and seemingly promising situation which German-Jews employed....If they were just Germans like any other Germans and if Judaism was was just a religion like any other religion, why should a Gentile German, except a small minority of prejudiced bigots, treat them as anything else?" 174.

But the "small minority" grew to be the only political party in Germany, and its avowed intention was to use the Jews as validation of Aryan claims to superiority by denying their Germanness.

"Everyone is charmed by the story of Sisyphus and his rock, but no one respects the mountain upon whose surface his heroic folly was dramatized. The mountain was the real power, and were it not for the labors of Sisyphus it would not be known how truly immense, difficult, hazardous its abraded incline really was. The mountain is the raw totality of power, but it is the stubborn stupidity of Sisyphus that gives the power meaning." 175.

The Jew-Sisyphus would be the affirmation of the Nazi mountain and magnify its height; the rock's strength lay in the Jew's essential difference and inability to overcome that difference.

Perhaps the Jews exaggerated the power of gratitude for their contributions, or perhaps their powers of prediction were not up to

the task. Rationalizing what they saw with two eyes, they could hardly give the third eye of foresight free rein. Perhaps they saw their position as too secure and stabilized (as the Thallburgian businessman who traced family ownership of his business back several centuries). As this overconfidence was shattered, Jews gave in to submission, and then despair. Denial entered, as it would later in the concentration camps, since "it was not truth that mattered most, but hope."<sup>176.</sup>

Barred from the Gentile world, many sought value in renewed or intensified association with the Jewish community and Judaism itself (as seen in the heightened identification with Zionist ideology, and the formation of Jewish social and educational institutions). Though harassed and humiliated, though circumscribed in movement, their minds were not wholly shackled as German-Jews traversed the Jewish terrain, and withdrew into more comfortable primary associations, seeking to regain identity. They were all simply Jews by the late 1930's, all untouchables, all fully exposed, as Hitler's laws of definition created a class of pariahs. The arguments of whether Jews were a community of blood or faith, or not a community at all, were dissolved, as they became a community of dread.

The assimilationists were resolutely driven back into the Jewish reservation. Kurt Lewin might well have been speaking of these Jews when he wrote:

"...Jewish people are often, in a high degree, uncertain of their relation to the Jewish group. They are uncertain whether they actually belong to the Jewish group, in what respect they belong to this group, and in what degree."<sup>177.</sup>

Goering relieved this uncertainty when he articulated the Fuehrerprinzip: "I determine who is a Jew." Sartre's central thesis that it is the anti-Semite who creates the Jew, was realized in the case of the assimilationists. Whereas, in the ghetto period, loyalty to the Jewish group was firm and unquestioned, the German-Jews of the post-ghetto period grappled unsuccessfully with the problem of self-definition, experiencing the anxieties of marginality. The Nazis moved to formulate such a definition, creating a community of shared crisis from which there was no escape. Sartre's advice to French-Jews, "moreover, let him not turn back toward Israel to find a community and a past to compensate for those which are refused him," was not heeded by the German-Jews.<sup>178</sup>

"The severe defeat and disillusionment drove many an emancipated, marginal Jew back to the reservation. By returning to the Jewish sources, to Jewish living, to the Hebrew language and to Palestine, the German-Jew's anxiety and distress was relieved. There has always been a psychological reservation to which members of a minority group could retreat in times of stress."<sup>179</sup>

#### F. Cathartic Humor

One defense mechanism, as a sidelight, was the Jewish propensity for black humor, a cathartic safety valve for the torment, and a shield against the grim predicament. In no time was there a more striking fulfillment of the wisdom from the Book of Proverbs: "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of mirth is heaviness."<sup>180</sup> The humor of the German-Jews reflects a terrible gravity, a desperation to

prevail in the unequal battle being waged. The helplessness, and need to accommodate is mirrored in this story:

"A Jew carrying a chicken under his arm, was walking along the street in Frankfurt-am-Main. He was stopped by a Nazi storm trooper who demanded, 'Where are you going, Jew?'  
 'To the store, to buy my chicken some food.'  
 'And what will you feed this chicken.'  
 'Corn.'  
 'Corn, eh? Germans go hungry while you, Jew, go and feed your chicken on German corn!' So saying, the trooper beat the Jew, then went on his way.  
 A few minutes later, another trooper stopped the Jew. 'Where are you going, dog?'  
 'To the store, to buy my chicken some food.'  
 'Food, eh? What kind?'  
 'Some wheat, maybe.'  
 'Wheat! Germans are starving and you give your Jewish chicken wheat!' And he beat him severely.  
 The poor, battered Jew continued on his way and was challenged by yet another trooper. 'Where are you going?'  
 'To get my chicken something to eat.'  
 'So! And what will you feed this chicken?'  
 'Listen,' said the Jew, desperately, 'I don't know. I'll give him a couple of pfennigs and he'll buy what he likes!'" 181.

As this story made its rounds, the German-Jews seemed to be saying with 182.

Byron: "If I laugh at any mortal thing, it is that I may not weep."

The futility of their struggle is seen in this anecdote:

"Meeting the worried and abstracted Goldstein, Kohn tells him that Davidsohn has died. Goldstein shrugs his shoulders.  
 'Well, if he get a chance to better himself....'" 183.

### G. The Attack on Jewish Self-Image

The German-Jews had thought themselves to be German and Jewish, mutually inclusive, and it was not accidental that "German" came first,



as in the title of Jakob Wasserman's autobiography My Life as German and Jew, for that is where the primary emphasis and loyalty lay. But the Nazis no longer allowed the symbiosis inherent in German and Jew, and demanded that the Aryan think in terms of German or Jew. There was no choice for the Jew, and no rush to the baptismal font would ameliorate his condition.

Perhaps the Jews were slow to see the identification of the Nazis with the German state and nation by the German people, believing that the majority of Germans viewed Hitler as a usurper; that to oppose Hitler, by supporting the Jews, was tantamount to fighting Germany and its interests. But there was precious little time or energy for such consideration of broader tendencies, for as one is forced to make every effort merely to survive, to eke out an existence, to find shelter and clothing (as law after law stripped the Jew of his profession, resources, and home, and denied him entry into shops, markets, and towns), the larger questions and solutions are pushed to the background. The Rabbinic maxim "If there is no meal, there is no Torah," that if one's stomach is empty there can be no inclination to pursue broader issues, can be applied here, especially as the border between living to eat and eating to live evaporates.

So:

"The problem for the Jews took shape less as the threat in the future--though such a threat was certainly felt in the form of insecurity--than as the pressing need to come to terms with the humiliations and difficulties of the present." 184.

Though friendly protestations from neighbors were comforting, they

imparted their own danger to the German-Jew, for he

"had hardly a day without being either advised to go and hang himself as a Jewish swine or demonstratively pitied; he dreaded the pity as much as the hate, since his only tenuous hope of getting through each day lay in complete anonymity." 185.

There was a desperate need for inconspicuousness, but

"There were some who tried by all means to indicate their sympathy for the unfortunates so marked. But when very well intentioned people undertook to raise their hats to Jews whom they encountered, the Jews felt that these salutes were extremely painful. Under the looks of support and compassion, they felt themselves becoming objects: objects of commiseration, of pity, of what you will—but objects. They provided these virtuous liberals with an occasion for making a general gesture, for uttering a manifesto. They were only an occasion." 186.

The spectacle of Jews crossing the street (and indeed, staying home) to avoid contact with "friends," and their wholesale withdrawal from social and cultural organizations, is testament to this need for inconspicuousness. This reaction became the norm, especially in light of comments by patrons of Meyer's jewelry store in Hochburg, to the effect that: "It's tough, and if the Fuehrer knew what was going on...." 187.

What a conflict, then, between the external and the self-image of the German-Jew, as he was forced to discover the significance of being Jewish. As Sartre stated it:

"But within himself, the Jew considers himself the same as others. He speaks the same language; he has the same class interests, the same national interests; he reads the newspapers that the others read, he votes as they do, he understands and shares their opinions. Yet they give him to understand that he does not belong, that he has a 'Jewish way' of speaking, of reading, of voting. And if he asks

for an explanation they sketch a portrait in which he does not recognize himself. There can be no doubt of its being his portrait, since millions of people maintain that it is. What can he do? ...the root of Jewish disquietude is the necessity imposed upon the Jew of subjecting himself to endless self-examination and finally of assuming a phantom personality, at once strange and familiar, that haunts him and which is nothing but himself--himself as others see him. you may say that this is the lot of all, that each of us has a character familiar to those close to us which we ourselves do not see. No doubt; this is the expression of our fundamental relation to the Other. But the Jew has a personality like the rest of us, and on top of that he is a Jew. It amounts in a sense to a doubling of the fundamental relationship with the Other. The Jew is over-determined." 188.

The German-Jew's self-identification, or image, could achieve no identity with the reality of the external world's identification, or object, and he retreated into the realm of wish-fulfillment. Any systematic response was obviated, as mind became unrelated to reality. The Nazis manipulated these spasmodic reactions which grew out of the Jew being over-determined (such as the Jewish negative response to the foreign boycott of German goods), and inaugurated the whole series of events and programs which were soon to engulf all of European Jewry.

And finally, the German-Jew could say with Heine: "Of my fair Fatherland, I once was proud...it was a dream." 189.

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26. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 125.
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28. Leuner, H.D., When Compassion was a Crime. 1966, Oswald Wolff, publisher, London, page 30.
29. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 163.
30. Schlunes, Karl A., Nazi Policy Toward German Jews: 1933-1938. 1966, University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, page 132.
31. Ibid., page 142.
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39. Leuner, H.D., op. cit., page 28.
40. E.H. Boehm, op. cit., page 288.
41. Glatstein, Jacot, et. al., editors, op. cit., page 19.
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43. Leuner, H.D., op. cit., page 29.
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47. Allen, William Sheridan, op. cit., page 209.
48. Ibid., page 211.
49. Poliakov, Leon, Harvest of Hate. 1954, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, pages 12-13.
50. Ibid., page 9.
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52. Weltsch, Robert, Wear the Yellow Badge with Pride. Friedlander, Albert H., Out of the Whirlwind. 1968, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, New York, page 120.
53. Lewisohn, Ludwig, What is this Jewish Heritage? 1967, Schocken Books, New York, page 58.
54. Miller, Arthur, op. cit., pages 80-81.
55. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 203.
56. Sartre, Jean Paul, op. cit., page 27.
57. Lowenthal, Marvin, op. cit., page 346. Jakob Wasserman had spoken of the Ostjuden "As a misfortune let loose upon Germany," and again "as hosts of semi-barbarians lusting for life and booty after generations of imprisonment in a ghetto jungle by a savage autocracy.

'What have I to do with them, I, whose ancestors on my father's and on my mother's side have for 600 years lived and worked in the heart of Germany?'" (Liptzin, Solomon, Germany's Stepchildren. 1961, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, page 174).

58. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 77.
59. Krausnick, Helmut, op. cit., page 28.
60. Ibid., page 28.
61. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 140.
62. Ibid., page 144.
63. Ibid., page 168.
64. Ibid., page 208.
65. Shirer, William L., The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. 1960, Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, page 241.
66. Ibid., page 250.
67. Ibid., page 251. Philip Lenard, winner of the 1920 Nobel Prize, counseled Hitler that nuclear physics was an outgrowth of the Jewish concern for world-wide control. (Speer, Albert, Inside the Third Reich. 1970, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, Macmillan and Co., page 228.)
68. Shirer, William L., op. cit., page 245.
69. Schleunes, Karl A., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. 1970, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, page 113.
70. Ibid., page 113.
71. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 106.
72. Lowenthal, Marvin, op. cit., page 268.
73. Katz, Jacob, op. cit., pages 104-105.
74. Lowenthal, Marvin, op. cit., page 372.
75. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 30.
76. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 167.
77. Lewin, Kurt, Resolving Social Conflicts (monograph). page 149.  
 "The most striking index of assimilation was the rapid increase in

the number of marriages between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. In the larger cities, Berlin and Frankfurt, where the Jewish population was concentrated, one of every three Jews was marrying outside his faith by the late 1920's. For Germany as a whole between 1910 and 1929, the number of Jews marrying non-Jews rose from 8% to 23%. For the assimilation minded, these marriages represented the last stage of a process begun when the Jew emerged from the medieval ghetto." (Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz, page 38.)

78. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 17.
79. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz, page 60.
80. Ibid., page 60.
81. Ibid., page 111.
82. Ibid., page 212.
83. Ibid., pages 188-189.
84. Krausnick, Helmut, op. cit., page 28.
85. E.H. Boehm, op. cit., page 286.
86. Ibid., page 286.
87. Zander, Walter, The Way of the German-Jew. February 7th, 1942. C. Nicholls and Co., Ltd., Great Britain. Reprinted from the Tablet, Vol.179, num. 5309, pages 68-71.
88. Miller, Arthur, op. cit., page 4.
89. Allport, Gordon W., The Nature of Prejudice. 1958, Anchor Books, New York, page 138.
90. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 30.
91. Ibid., page 30.
92. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., Nazi Policy Toward German Jews: 1933-1938, page 235.
93. Arendt, Hannah, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil. 1964, Viking Press, New York, page 59.
94. Ibid., page 59.
95. Ibid., page 59.



96. Colodner, Solomon, op. cit., page 30.
97. Lowenthal, Marvin, op. cit., page 415.
98. Lewin, Kurt, op. cit., page 198.
99. Schluenes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. pages 192-193.
100. Ibid., page 197.
101. Ibid., page 209.
102. Ibid., page 209.
103. Esh, Shaul, Between Discrimination and Extermination. Esh, Shaul, ed., Yad Vashem Studies in the European Catastrophe and Resistance. 1958, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, pages 86-87.
104. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. page 194.
105. Ibid., pages 198-199.
106. Ibid., page 199. "Better than 35% of the German-Jewish population was more than 50 years old. In 1933 about 10% of this population was over 65; by 1938 this percentage had almost doubled. During these 5 years the over-65 category had risen from 52,000 to over 74,000. Not only was emigration psychologically more difficult for these growing numbers of older people, but their prospects for taking up a new life in a foreign country, unless they were relatively wealthy, were severely circumscribed." (Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. page 186.)
107. Esh, Shaul, op. cit., page 85.
108. Bettelheim, Bruno, The Informed Heart. Friedlander, Albert H., Out of the Whirlwind. 1968, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, New York, page 43.
109. Glatstein, Jacob, et. al., op. cit., page 15.
110. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. page 198.
111. Memmi, Albert, Portrait of a Jew. 1971, translated by Elizabeth Abbott, Viking Press, New York, pages 250-251.

112. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. page 187.
113. Schwarz-Bart, Andre, The Last of the Just. 1973, Bantam Books, New York, page 231.
114. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 18.
115. The Jew was he who "(1) descended from at least three Jewish grandparents (full Jews and three-quarter Jews), or (2) descended from two Jewish grandparents (half Jews) and (a) belonged to the Jewish religious community on September 15th, 1935, or joined the community on a subsequent date, or (b) was married to a Jewish person on September 15th, 1935, or married on a subsequent date, or (c) was the offspring of a marriage contracted with a three-quarter Jew or a full Jew and was born out of wedlock after July 31st, 1936. For the status of the grandparents, the presumption remained that the grandparent was Jewish if he or she belonged to the Jewish religious community." (Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 48.)
116. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. page 126.
117. Arendt, Hannah, op. cit., page 40.
118. Ibid., page 40.
119. Ibid., page 40.
120. Vogt, Hannah, Burden of Guilt. 1964, Oxford University Press, New York, page 224.
121. Esh, Shaul, op. cit., page 84.
122. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 189.
123. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. page 37.
124. Interview with Rabbi Frank Rosenthal, August, 1973, Chicago, Illinois.
125. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 40.
126. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 30.
127. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. page 95.
128. Ibid., pages 106-107.

129. Krausnick, Helmut, op. cit., pages 34-35.
130. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., Nazi Policy Toward German Jews: 1933-1938, page 293. Many Jews, too, believed that Hitler's radical moves during this period, such as the military occupying of the Rhineland, were certain signs of his imminent collapse.
131. Shirer, William L., op. cit., page 233.
132. Ibid., page 233.
133. Poliakov, Leon, op. cit., page 14.
134. Vogt, Hannah, op. cit., page 115 note.
135. Shirer, William L., op. cit., page 233.
136. Ibid., page 233.
137. Sacher, Howard Morley, op. cit., page 429.
138. Poliakov, Leon, op. cit., page 13.
139. Esh, Shaul, op. cit., page 81.
140. Remak, Joachim, The Nazi Years: A Documentary History, 1969, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, page 148.
141. Esh, Shaul, op. cit., page 87.
142. Memmi, Albert, Name Changing. Evslin, Bernard, ed., The Spirit of Jewish Thought, 1969, Grosset and Dunlap, New York, pages 256-261.
143. Genesis 32:38.
144. Esh, Shaul, op. cit., page 82.
145. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., pages 59-60.
146. Esh, Shaul, The Reichvereinigung Der Juden in Deutschland. Esh, Shaul, ed., Yad Vashem Studies in the European Catastrophe and Resistance, Volume II, 1958, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, page 21.
147. Esh, Shaul, op. cit., Between Discrimination and Extermination, page 109.
148. Mosley, Leonard, On Borrowed Time, 1969, Random House, New York, page 109.
149. Ibid., page 109.

150. Ibid., page 109.
151. Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz, page 239.
152. Mosley, Leonard, op. cit., page 114.
153. Statistics vary on the exact extent of the damage. Schleunes puts it at nearly 300 synagogues burned, while Shirer places the figure at 195. Schleunes says that 25,000 Jews were arrested, while Shirer says 20,000. Whatever the total, the Kristallnacht was "...an orgy of violence, resulting in the most spectacular anti-Jewish pogrom since those of late 19th Century Russia." (Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., The Twisted Road to Auschwitz, page 240.)
154. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 28.
155. Rosenfeld, Elsbeth, The Four Lives of Elsbeth Rosenfeld, 1964, Victor Gollancz, Ltd., London, page 75.
156. A Jewish Minnesinger of great repute, whose positions among the Christians became untenable following the reaction to the edicts of the Fourth Lateran Council. (Ausubel, Nathan, A Pictorial History of the Jewish People, 1963, Crown Publishers, New York, page 122.)
157. Lewin, Kurt, op. cit., page 36.
158. Ibid., page 150.
159. Lowenthal, Marvin, op. cit., page 387.
160. Hilberg, Raul, op. cit., page 16. "Hopes for some kind of official recognition of Jewish separateness or autonomy were resurrected once more in late 1934. More important, this time the initiative came from the Nazi side. Hans Friedrich Blunk, the President of Goebbel's Chamber of Literature, and apparently an authoritative source, published an article in the Europaesche Revue which mentioned a possible concordat between the government and the Jews. Blunk said that at the moment prospects for a concordat were limited because of foreign interference in German affairs. Yet the implication was that the government was giving the matter serious thought. The reasons for Blunk's article remain obscure. If it was a trial balloon, Nazi authorities failed to react to favorable responses from the Jewish side. Both the Judische Rundschau and the Central Verein Zeitung expressed an immediate interest." (Schleunes, Karl A., op. cit., Nazi Policy toward German Jews: 1933-1938, page 249.)
161. Ibid., page 16.

162. Memmi, Albert, op. cit., Portrait of a Jew, page 18.
163. Hilberg, Raul, editor, Documents of Destruction. 1971, Quadrangle Press, Chicago, page 3.
164. Lewin, Kurt, op. cit., page 145.
165. Ibid., page 147.
166. Rosenfeld, Elsbeth, op. cit., page 54.
167. Miller, Arthur, op. cit., page 60.
168. Memmi, Albert, op. cit., Portrait of a Jew, page viii.
169. Herz, Emil, op. cit., page 263.
170. Lowenthal, Marvin, op. cit., page 413.
171. Freud, Sigmund, The Future of an Illusion. 1964, translated by W.D. Robson-Scott, edited by James Strachey, Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, page 43.
172. Liptain, Solomon, Germany's Stepchildren. 1961, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, page 174. "Vain to adjure the nation of poets and thinkers in the name of its poets and thinkers. Every prejudice that one believes to be disposed of breeds a thousand others, as carrion breeds maggots. Vain to interject words of reason into their crazy shrieking. They say: He dares open his mouth? Gag him! Vain to set an example in your life and behavior. They say: We know nothing, we have seen nothing, we have heard nothing. Vain to seek obscurity. They say: Coward! He is creeping into hiding, driven by his evil conscience! Vain to go among them and offer one's hand. They say: Why does he take such liberties with his Jewish obtrusiveness? Vain to keep faith with them as a comrade in arms or as fellow citizens. They say: He is Proteus, he can assume any shape or form. Vain to help them strip off the chains of slavery. They say: No doubt he found it profitable. Vain to counteract the poison. They brew fresh venom. Vain to live for them or die for them. They say: He is a Jew!" —Jakob Wasserman. (Tobler, Douglas F., The Failure of the German-Jewish Synthesis before 1933. 1968, Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, Volume 45, part 2, page 588.)
173. Miller, Arthur, op. cit., page 47.
174. Esh, Shaul, op. cit., page 50.
175. Cohen, Arthur, In the Days of Simon Stern. 1973, Random House, New York, page 144.
176. Steiner, Jean Francois, op. cit., page 30.

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178. Sartre, Jean Paul, op. cit., pages 84-85.
179. Colodner, Solomon, Jewish Education in Germany under the Nazis. 1964, Jewish Education Committee Press, New York, page 29.  
I. Heinemann, speaking of Abravanel, said that he "wrote his commentary after his diplomatic activities had proved futile and the splendor of life a mere vanity. He fled to the realm of eternity, in order to find there his anchorage and to create values which no storm can dissipate." (Baron, Joseph L., editor, A Treasury of Jewish Quotations. 1965, A.S. Barnes and Co., South Brunswick, New Jersey, page 477.)
180. Proverbs 14:13.
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184. Dickinson, John K., op. cit., page 160.
185. Grunberger, Richard, op. cit., page 462.
186. Sartre, Jean Paul, op. cit., pages 76-77.
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