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General Editor: Andreas Gestrich

Managing Editor: Falko Schnicke

Editors: Cornelia Linde
Markus Mösslang
Michael Schaich

German Historical Institute, 17 Bloomsbury Square,
London WC1A 2NJ

Tel: 020 7309 2050

Fax: 020 7404 5573

e-mail: bulletin@ghil.ac.uk

Website: www.ghil.ac.uk

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HITLER, MEIN KAMPF: A CRITICAL EDITION THE DEBATE

Edited by

ANDREAS GESTRICH AND MICHAEL SCHAICH

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Preface

ANDREAS GESTRICH AND MICHAEL SCHAICH

The decision by the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich and Berlin (IfZ) to publish a critical edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* has sparked a fierce debate about the rights and wrongs of such an undertaking and the scholarly merits of the editorial work. The discussion started well before the edition was released. In the run-up to the publication date the necessity and legitimacy of making such a text available again was publicly debated, leading the Free State of Bavaria to withdraw the funding initially pledged to the project. The publication of the critical edition on 8 January 2016, however, marked a crucial step, and in the process exposed the finished work to intense scrutiny in the global media and the academic community.

Political and scholarly controversies about how to deal with the National Socialist past have their own history in Germany. Unlike in the *Historikerstreit* of the second half of the 1980s, when Ernst Nolte argued that 'Auschwitz . . . was above all a reaction born out of the annihilating occurrences of the Russian Revolution' and 'not a first act or an original', the present discussion is no longer about the causes of the Holocaust.¹ Nor is it, as Hans-Ulrich Wehler famously put it, about attempts to 'dispose of' this specific German past.² On the contrary, it is about the way in which this poisonous text should in future become part of Germany's problematic 'heritage'. In what format, if at all, will *Mein Kampf* in future be found in bookcases and libraries in Germany? The fact that this new edition of *Mein Kampf* was the cause of so much controversy even before it was published shows that what it shares with the previous controversy is the high

¹ Ernst Nolte, 'Between Historical Legend and Revisionism? The Third Reich in the Perspective of the 1980', in *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*, trans. James Knowlton and Truett Cates (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1993), 1-15, at 13-14.

² Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Entsorgung der Vergangenheit? Ein polemischer Essay zum 'Historikerstreit'* (Munich, 1988).

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symbolic importance of the answer to this question and the immensely political nature of the debate.

Taking stock of the debate one year later, we can see that the discussions revolved mainly around four partly intertwined core issues, which come up in various ways in most of the reviews. The first concerns the fundamental question raised by Jeremy Adler about whether 'absolute evil' should be 'honoured' with a critical edition and thus, albeit involuntarily, given the status of a classical text. Adler fundamentally rejects this, while others maintain that *Mein Kampf* is a core historical source of the twentieth century and therefore requires exactly that, namely, a scholarly edition.

The second issue is that even if one concedes the political need for a scholarly critical edition of *Mein Kampf* as the adequate way to transmit this evil document in future, it could be asked whether there is an inherent tension between a scholarly enterprise of this sort and the wider public as a target audience. Neo-Nazis, so the argument runs, are more likely to read *Mein Kampf* on a right-wing website, where it has long been available anyway, than to buy and plough their way through two massive and expensive tomes. Critics see the edition, therefore, as a counter-productive effort to silence Hitler. Others maintain that this is not really the point and that it would be much worse if this were really the only form in which the text was available.

A third issue concerns the methodological problems of tracing the sources of Hitler's ideas and ideology. Hitler was a self-confessed unsystematic reader and it is very hard to prove what books he read at all. This has led several critics to question the scholarly usefulness of this massive research effort and to suggest that a more general contextualization of the text in the tradition of Anglophone intellectual history might have been more appropriate. Supporters of the edition respond to this charge primarily on a political level, arguing that it is exactly this detailed referencing of even hypothetical sources that reveals Hitler as a deeply unoriginal author and partly even as a plagiarizer. They insist that this takes away some of the aura which this text might have.

Finally, some critics think that the editors overestimate the contemporary political importance of *Mein Kampf* and, in consequence, its importance as a historical source. The editors themselves admit that Hitler's political success at the time was based on his speeches

rather than his writings. Again, some critics use this to argue against the usefulness of this undertaking, whereas others suggest that the scholarly effort should be extended to a critical edition of Hitler's speeches which, surprisingly, we still lack. As far as the political intention of the project is concerned, critics suggest that neo-Nazis do not read *Mein Kampf* and will not, in large numbers, turn to the text as their primary ideological inspiration, as they have not done in the past. There is, however, very little research on this, so that one of the positive effects of the controversy might be that more attention will be given to the present-day reception of *Mein Kampf* in right-wing circles.

All in all, the debate is an important example of how scholarly and political arguments are intertwined in this attempt to find the right way of transmitting a poisonous text now that its proliferation has finally become 'uncontrollable'. Although the debate was conducted with an international audience in mind, many of the reviews and articles were published in German newspapers and journals. To make them available to a wider, English-speaking public is the purpose of this special issue of the *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, which brings together thirteen texts that have been crucial in shaping the debate.

Countless articles and reviews of the edition have, of course, been published over the last year and it is not the aim of this special issue to provide a comprehensive coverage of the debate. Rather, we have selected what we considered the most important contributions to the discussion. Although we were not able to secure the rights for all articles that we intended to reprint, we are confident that the texts assembled in this special issue will go a long way towards conveying the main points of contention in the debate.

The texts are organized chronologically by date of publication. The special issue begins with an article by Andreas Wirsching published before the release of the critical edition, which sets out the remit and aims of the project. It is followed by a number of reviews that appeared mainly in newspapers and cultural journals in the first few weeks and months after the publication, representing the immediate reaction to the edition. The second half of this special issue contains two longer texts, by Wolfgang Schieder and Moshe Zimmermann, written for academic journals and published towards the end of 2016, followed by an exchange of opinions between Jeremy Adler and Alan Steinweis on the first anniversary of the publication. This

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special issue concludes with the only text not previously published, an essay by Neil Gregor which places the controversy in the wider context of recent developments in European (and global) politics. We thank all contributors and original publications for allowing us to reprint the texts.

The texts that have been translated have been reprinted without updating them, although in individual cases the odd typographical error or mistake in the original publication was rectified by the authors. In addition, in Jeremy Adler's second article and Alan Steinweis's response, passages which the newspapers in which they originally appeared cut for reasons of space have been reinstated.

This special issue is intended to provide a reliable record of a wide-ranging and important academic and political debate roughly one year on from the original publication of the critical edition. The debate will doubtless continue and more reviews are bound to appear, but some of the main arguments seem to have been exchanged. This special issue thus allows a first stocktaking and may perhaps serve as a basis for further discussion.

Hitler, Mein Kampf: A Critical Edition

ANDREAS WIRSCHING

Hitler's *Mein Kampf* has always been highly controversial. Written in two volumes, the first in 1924 while Hitler was imprisoned in the Landsberg fortress and the second in 1926 while he was at his mountain retreat in Obersalzberg, it was originally published by Eher Verlag, the Nazi Party's regular publisher.¹ After the end of the Second World War the USA as occupying power transferred this publisher's assets and copyrights to the Free State of Bavaria, specifically, to its Ministry of Finance. With reference to this legal situation, the state of Bavaria banned any republication of *Mein Kampf* in Germany. This was no problem for as long as the copyright was in force, that is, for seventy years after the author's death. In the case of Hitler, the copyright will expire at the end of 2015; from 1 January 2016 *Mein Kampf* will be in the public domain.

The fact that this material is highly political with foreign policy relevance is undisputed. And it is by no means a new realization. This becomes clear when we look at Hitler's 'second book', in which the later dictator gave a detailed explanation of his long-term objective of taking *Lebensraum* in the East by force. The manuscript, written by Hitler in 1928, remained unpublished at the time and was rediscovered by Gerhard Weinberg in the USA in 1958. With the explicit consent of the state of Bavaria, the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ) published it, 'essentially guided by the idea of prevent-

Trans. Angela Davies (GHIL). First published as Andreas Wirsching, 'Hitler, Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 43–45 (2015), 9–16. Translation published with the permission of *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*.

¹ For a detailed account of the history of its writing and reception see Othmar Plöckinger, *Geschichte eines Buches: Adolf Hitlers 'Mein Kampf' 1922–1945* (Munich, 2006), and the Introduction to Hitler, *Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition*, ed. for the Institut für Zeitgeschichte by Christian Hartmann, Thomas Vordermayer, Othmar Plöckinger, and Roman Töppel, 2 vols. (Munich, 2016). The original page numbers of *Mein Kampf*, which are reproduced in this edition, will be cited here.

ing any public misuse by producing an academic, critical edition'.² However, when the question arose of whether it was opportune to publish an official English-language edition authorized by the German side, the German Foreign Office expressed concerns. Any impression of official German involvement in a publication in the USA was to be avoided because of the danger 'of creating the impression among parts of the American public that Germany was officially supporting the dissemination of Hitler's manuscript, which might lead to misunderstandings'.³ Hitler's 'second book' was therefore initially published in the USA as an unauthorized edition. In 1995 the state of Bavaria gave its consent for an annotated version to be republished in Germany in the context of a large edition of Hitler's *Reden, Schriften, Anordnungen 1925–1933*, prepared by the IfZ. This time the title *Hitlers Zweites Buch* was considered to be politically problematic and therefore could not be used.⁴

This episode seems to anticipate the current discussion of *Mein Kampf*, but with the difference that copyright is no longer an issue. Against this background, the questions of the meaning and purpose, outcome and problems of a critical edition of *Mein Kampf* are all the more pressing. The IfZ had long been working on this edition of *Mein Kampf*, and it will be published in January 2016. This article will look first at the objective need for such an edition, and secondly at its aims and what it does. Finally, it will address a number of specific problems in the context of the public debate around this project.

² Martin Broszat to Auswärtiges Amt, 9 Nov. 1961, in *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1962*, vol. i: 1. Januar bis 31. März 1962, ed. for the Institut für Zeitgeschichte by Horst Möller, Klaus Hildebrand, and Gregor Schöllgen (Munich, 2010), doc. 76, p. 399, n. 2. The book was published as Gerhard L. Weinberg (ed.), *Hitlers Zweites Buch: Ein Dokument aus dem Jahr 1928* (Stuttgart, 1961).

³ Ministerialdirektor von Haefthen to Bayerisches Staatsministerium der Finanzen, 15 Feb. 1962, in *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1962*, doc. 76, p. 400.

⁴ It was published as *Außenpolitische Standortbestimmung nach der Reichstagswahl Juni–Juli 1928*, introd. Gerhard L. Weinberg, ed. and annotated Gerhard L. Weinberg, Christian Hartmann, and Klaus A. Lankheit (Munich, 1995).

Objective Need

The objective need for a comprehensively annotated new, critical edition of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* arises mainly from its relevance as a source. At first glance this seems to contradict the widespread opinion that the book is boring, confused, muddled, badly written, almost mad. Even contemporary critics, such as Andreas Andernach, author of *Hitler ohne Maske*, had relatively little to say about the actual contents of *Mein Kampf*. Instead they indulged in polemics against the 'dead boring and endlessly repetitive' 'Salvation Army sermons'.⁵ The opinion that Otto Straßer, Hitler's political opponent on the extreme right, expressed in 1940 has become widely influential: 'All of it was written in the style of a sixth grader, a dreadful chaos of platitudes, schoolboy reminiscences, subjective judgements, personal venom.'⁶ And if we take both descriptions together—on the one hand a boring book with confused contents, and on the other, one that hardly anyone could bring themselves to read—then we could wonder what all the fuss is about.

But to hold this view would be recklessly to perpetuate a situation described years ago by the historian Karl Dietrich Bracher in words that have been widely quoted since. He said that the history of Hitler was the history of Hitler being notoriously underestimated. In any case, to take a blasé attitude that regards any investigation of Hitler's writings as an intellectual imposition and beneath one's educated dignity is to make the same disastrous mistake as the contemporary Weimar elites. To start with, they did not take him seriously, then they tried to make use of his propaganda successes, and in the end they were exploited, repudiated, and thrown out by him.

In fact, *Mein Kampf* must be taken seriously to the extent that it provides the most important access both to Hitler's thinking and to his biography. In countless passages Hitler reveals his cynical, inhumane ideology, which provided the basis for the shockingly perverted, criminal rationality that was to become an essential condition for the Nazi regime. This is what we have to deal with, even if the message is conveyed in limited language and its thought processes

⁵ Andreas Andernach, *Hitler ohne Maske* (Munich, 1932), 23–6, at 23.

⁶ Otto Straßer, *Hitler und ich* (Buenos Aires, 1940), 59.

are not always straightforward. In the following, three examples will be discussed.

Hitler begins the chapter that holds the key to his ideology, 'Nation and Race', with a whimsical twist: 'There are hundreds of thousands of Columbus's eggs lying around, but the Columbuses are harder to find.'⁷ We hardly need to ridicule this sentence. After all, does it not confirm the widely held view of Hitler's work as badly written and confused? But if we read on, the picture changes. After a number of sentences that are not worth discussing in terms of style – 'the tit goes to the tit, the finch to the finch, the stork to the stork, the field mouse to the field mouse, the house mouse to the house mouse, the wolf to the wolf etc.'⁸ – we soon find out what is driving him. He speaks of 'nature', an 'iron law' that is inherent in it, and the natural 'exclusiveness of species'.⁹ Hitler also speaks of nature sanctioning any infringement of its 'iron law' by depriving those who offend in this way of 'resistance to diseases or hostile attacks'.¹⁰

In his way Hitler is drawing on the science, or rather, the popular science or pseudo science of his day. And he does something that social Darwinists of all stripes do, namely, he applies natural laws, or what he considers to be natural laws, to humans, human history, and human society. It is already clear, from the quoted passages, where this is leading. The chapter that begins with the 'eggs of Columbus' moves from the house mouse and how it is distinct from the field mouse to the contrast between the 'races', in particular, 'Aryans' and Jews, and their 'eternal' struggle in history, dictated by the 'iron law of nature'. Those who violate this law will lose their resistance to hostile attacks or their own illnesses. This argument culminates in the Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood of 1935 (*Blutschutzgesetz*) and the crime of 'racial shame' (*Rassenschande*) that it defined. This means that the 'eggs of Columbus' reveal a crucial feature of the ideological core of National Socialism. After 1933 Hitler's ideas about nature and its iron laws became the programme of the state with all its brutal consequences.

⁷ Hitler, *Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition*, vol. i [p. 300].

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

My second example relates to Hitler's demand that it be made 'impossible for defective human beings to reproduce and produce equally defective offspring'.¹¹ Hitler saw implementing this demand as 'mankind's most humane deed', which would 'save millions of unhappy people from undeserved suffering', thus tapping into the international debate on eugenics at the time. Hitler here clearly placed himself on the side of those who advocated the forced sterilization of physically and mentally disabled people. After 1933 these measures were implemented in the Third Reich, and their consequences are well known. Euthanasia and the 'destruction of life unworthy of living' are further examples which demonstrate similar continuities. Here Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was only one voice among many, but it resulted in the introduction of inhumane and murderous practices during the Nazi regime.¹²

A third and final example arises out of Hitler's damning criticism of imperial Germany's foreign policy, which he placed under the heading of 'Germanization'. In particular, he opposed the long-held view that non-German populations could be won over for German *Volkstum* through an active language policy. It is in the rejection of these cultural attempts at 'Germanization', familiar from imperial Germany, that Hitler's racially ideological thinking is revealed. The attempt at a cultural 'Germanization', he argued, was 'the beginning of a bastardization and thus, in our case, not a Germanization, but the destruction of the Germanic element'. One had to be clear, he went on, 'that only the *soil* can be *Germanized*, not the *people*'.¹³

This notion of the 'Germanization' of the land formed an integral part of the social Darwinist idea of *Lebensraum* which, according to Hitler, the Germans had the right to take by force in the East. Hitler consistently maintained this until well into the Second World War. On 3 February 1933, soon after his appointment as German Chancellor, he declaimed that 'the expansion of the *Lebensraum* of the German *Volk* will also be achieved by force of arms.—The target will probably be the East. But it will be impossible to Germanize the pop-

¹¹ Ibid. [p. 270].

¹² See the 'classic', Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche, *Die Freigabe der Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens: Ihr Maß und ihre Form* (Leipzig, 1920). Cf. Hitler, *Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition*, vol. i, ch. 4, n. 48.

¹³ Hitler, *Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition*, vol. ii [p. 19]. Original emphases.

ulation of the annexed or conquered territories. Only the soil can be Germanized.¹⁴ In future, too, the objective of ‘Germanization’ through the extensive expulsion or destruction of the local population was to remain a constant and consistent motif in Hitler’s preserved utterances. In talks he held with his military leadership on 5 November 1937, known from the Hoßbach Memorandum, Hitler stated that Germany’s future would be defined ‘solely by the solution of the need for space’. It was ‘a matter of gaining not people, but usable agricultural land’.¹⁵ At the beginning of the Second World War Hitler called for a ‘broad belt’ of Polish territory beyond Germany’s existing borders to be ‘Germanized and colonized’.¹⁶ And in his well-known address to his commanders-in-chief of 23 November 1939, Hitler laid out his aims clearly with a distant echo of *Mein Kampf*: ‘The increasing number of people require more living space. It was my aim to establish a sensible relationship between the number of people and the amount of space. . . . Maintaining a balance between the number of Germans and the space available for them is an eternal problem. Securing the necessary space. No cunning helps here, the only solution is the sword. A people that does not have the strength to fight must give up.’¹⁷

These examples show that Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* is a central historical source and should not be declared irrelevant. This applies especially to the connection between ideological thinking, the exercise of power, and later practices during the Second World War. Nowhere in the Nazi regime is Hitler’s personal role, his personal imprint as a dictator, more clearly recognizable than in the will to wage a war which he forced on Germany and Europe. In a mixture of ideological delusion, perverted and criminal rationality, and brutal unscrupulousness, he developed a ‘programme’ and stuck to

¹⁴ Quoted from Andreas Wirsching, ‘Man kann nur Boden germanisieren’: Eine neue Quelle zu Hitlers Reden vor den Spitzen der Reichswehr am 3. Februar 1933’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 49 (2001), 517–50, at 547.

¹⁵ *IMT. Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof: Nürnberg 14. November 1945 bis 1. Oktober 1946* (Nuremberg, 1947–49), vol. xxv. 406.

¹⁶ Alfred Rosenberg, *Die Tagebücher von 1934 bis 1944*, ed. and annotated Jürgen Matthäus and Frank Bajohr (Frankfurt am Main, 2015), 291 (29 Sept. 1939).

¹⁷ *IMT*, vol. xxvi. 329.

it until he died. The most important source for this obsession with war is *Mein Kampf*. In it, Hitler adopted the *völkisch* thinking that was already virulent in central Europe before 1914, adapted it in a specific way, and worked it into a new intellectual synthesis. Racial ideological maxims such as the superiority of the 'Aryan race', might is right, and the social Darwinist idea that the law of movement in world history prescribed ceaseless struggle and war between the peoples and 'races' shaped Hitler's conviction that the war to expand *Lebensraum* in eastern Europe was not only a necessary objective but, going beyond all legal traditions, a legitimate one.

Aims of the Edition

The claim of this edition of *Mein Kampf* to be 'critical' is based mainly on the commentary it provides, which serves a number of purposes. Wherever possible, it reveals the sources of Hitler's thinking, pointing not only to an abundance of anonymous brochures and pamphlets, but also to well-known authors on the *völkisch*-nationalistic spectrum. It is not unusual to find direct borrowings from these works in the text of *Mein Kampf*. But the commentary also does more, something of at least equal importance, namely, it shows which of the topics that Hitler seized on long predated him, and had existed without him as common property in the *völkisch* milieu. Whether it was the alleged 'softening and emasculation' of society in Imperial Germany,¹⁸ the tirades against 'miscegenation' and 'racial shame',¹⁹ brutal anti-Semitism or much else: Hitler absorbed all available *völkisch*-racist figures of thought and made them serve his ideas. By documenting this related stock of ideas and explaining central ideological concepts and their tradition, the commentary can regularly show that the National Socialism inspired by Hitler was deeply rooted in German society and culture. National Socialism was a parasitic movement; it did not come over German history from outside. On the contrary, it integrated essential elements of German political culture, exaggerated them, and then radicalized them for its own purposes. *Mein Kampf* is perhaps the single most important document for showing this.

¹⁸ Hitler, *Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition*, vol. i [p. 297].

¹⁹ *Ibid.* [p. 263].

Hitler's writing is interspersed with outright lies, more often with half-truths, enemy constructions, and unadorned hate propaganda, but also with subtle allusions. The task of a critical commentary, therefore, is not only to rectify misrepresentations and mistakes, but also to provide additional information, explain allusions, and correct one-sided accounts. And, finally, the IfZ's edition also looks at the consequences of Hitler's thinking. By repeatedly pointing out which of the ideologemes that had only been abstractly thought and formulated in 1924/26 were put into practice after 1933, it underlines the connection between cynical, inhumane ideology and criminal act.

And there is more. As well as revealing ideological thought patterns, the first part of *Mein Kampf* also contains the most comprehensive biographical information about Hitler that we possess. To be sure, it is a highly stylized autobiography, anything but a faithful, 'objective' account of his life. Once again, the need for a commentary becomes clear. If there were no other information about Hitler's life than *Mein Kampf*, today's readers would be totally at the mercy of this book, for good or ill. They would have to believe what was in it, without being able to make any critical cross checks.

Hitler's life embodied social bankruptcy. The lifetime achievements of his father, a social climber, had secured Hitler the chance of a proper start in life. He did not take advantage of it, and instead got to know pre-First World War Vienna from below. By 1909 Hitler's cash resources were gradually running out; inflation and housing shortages added to his personal plight. Contrary to the account in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler did not have enough regular work even to keep his head above water. Poor relief and soup kitchens, and shelters for the homeless were the consequence, contrasting sharply with the petty bourgeois security of his parents' home. This was not the glittering Vienna of the avant-garde, but the 'Vienna of immigrants, those who were down on their luck, and the inhabitants of men's hostels'.²⁰

Hitler dealt with this experience of coming down in the world in the same way that most people would. He stylized it to himself and others, wrapping it in a cocoon of self-righteousness and self-pity. Vienna in 1909, he wrote to the mayor of the City of Linz in January 1914, had been 'an infinitely bitter time' for him. 'I was a young, inex-

²⁰ Brigitte Hamann, *Hitlers Wien: Lehrjahre eines Diktators* (Munich, 1996), 7.

perienced man without any financial support and too proud to accept help from anyone, let alone to ask for it. . . . For two years I had no friends other than worry and need, no companion other than constant, insatiable hunger. I never knew the beautiful word youth.²¹ Four of the six statements in this report are demonstrably false. Hitler had received financial support, both from his family and from public funds as an orphan; he was certainly not too proud to accept financial assistance; and he had asked his aunt for money. And, finally, Hitler had enjoyed a youth free of material cares, which had offered him years of idleness and opportunities. He had outlived the former, and did not grasp the latter.

What Hitler had communicated as a purely personal matter to the mayor of Linz in 1914, he repeated ten years later in *Mein Kampf*. Vienna, he wrote, had been the saddest time of his life, holding 'five years of desolation and misery' for him. 'Five years, during which I had to earn my bread first as a labourer, and then as a minor painter, my meagre bread that never satisfied even an ordinary hunger. Hunger was my loyal attendant at that time, the only one who almost never left me.'²² In fact, Hitler had enough money from his orphan's benefits, an inheritance from his mother, and the interest on his inheritance from his father, which was paid out later, to live without seeking regular work.²³ Aware of how he had rewritten his biography, Hitler always sought to preserve and cultivate the anonymity from which he came. When his half-nephew, William Patrick Hitler, tried to capitalize on their common name in 1930, it is said that Hitler flew into a rage and declared: 'People must not know who I am. They must not know where I come from and what family I am from.'²⁴ And as far as he could, Hitler had any traces of his first thirty years of life systematically obscured.

We can see, therefore, that a critical engagement with *Mein Kampf* is indispensable in order to reveal Hitler's manipulation of his life-story, and to allow us to recognize the forces driving him, forces

²¹ Hitler to Magistrat der Stadt Linz, 21 Jan. 1914, in Eberhard Jäckel and Axel Kuhn (eds.), *Hitler: Sämtliche Aufzeichnungen 1905–1924* (Stuttgart, 1980), no. 20, p. 55.

²² Hitler, *Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition*, vol. i [p. 19].

²³ Cf. Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1945* (Munich, 2009), 37.

²⁴ Quoted from Hamann, *Hitlers Wien*, 76.

which in the end changed the world. On the other hand, the repeated assertion that politically aware readers do not need a critical commentary because they can get the picture by themselves, or because the text corrects itself, is naive. Without a commentary, readers are at the mercy of what Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*. In order to approach the text critically, they need a great deal of additional information that only a scholar who has specialized in the subject can provide. There is probably no other historical document as significant as *Mein Kampf* of which it is claimed that historical-critical annotations are superfluous.

The Public Debate

The reason for this is that in the discussion of *Mein Kampf*, academic, political, and moral arguments are superimposed on each other, which does not always make for clarity. This brings us to the political and cultural problems that the project of producing a critical edition of *Mein Kampf* inevitably touches on in the public sphere, and which have generated an intense, long-term discussion. It should be mentioned, however, that the regularly recurring public debate has been conducted in a remarkably factual way. A number of differentiated, enlightening, and reasonably argued contributions have appeared in the press and on the radio. The well-known methods of gaining public attention—exaggeration, polarization, emotionalization, and scandalization—have largely been avoided. But the discussion also points to a number of worrying trends in the public approach to Hitler in Germany. Often, these are shaped by two opposing extremes, both of which hinder rather than help a critical and rational debate.

One extreme arises out of the continuing fear of acting morally incorrectly or making political errors in dealing with Hitler's legacy. It is true that this topic demands heightened historical and political sensitivity, but the discussion around a 'ban' on *Mein Kampf* shows that these fears can produce a new, ominous tendency to create taboos. As explained, the book is a central source for the history of National Socialism. To try to prevent any sort of critical engagement with it would be tantamount to a short-sighted cover-up. It could give the (re)mystification of Hitler a dangerous boost, and might cre-

ate the impression that even after death, Hitler exerts a sort of demonic power. It would prevent any historical classification, contextualization, and explanation of his impact. To make a taboo of it is therefore the opposite of having a mature debate.

The other extreme can be found in the excessive concentration on Hitler (and *Mein Kampf*) in popular entertainment and satire. These regularly reinforce each other through the banal realization that 'Hitler sells'. Their suitability and impact, however, are problematic. In fact, National Socialism in general and Hitler's behaviour in particular often displayed a scurrility in real life that was almost satirical, and Hitler suffered numerous slip-ups. His pronouncements on the 'eggs of Columbus' referred to above are one example. But such oddities were inextricably connected with violence, terror, and the demand for annihilation. It is easy, of course, to separate the scurrilous from the violent, and to make it the object of satire. Hitler's moustache and German Shepherd, his pronunciation and appearance provide rich pickings for those wanting to poke fun. But when cabaret artists, writers, and film makers achieve great media success, this increases the risk of trivialization through banalization. All too quickly, a satirical and superficially amusing treatment of Hitler threatens to replace an intellectually more rigorous approach.

It would, of course, be presumptuous to suggest that there is only one, 'correct' way of dealing with Hitler in the German public debate. But a certain degree of enlightened seriousness can and should be expected. To do otherwise would be to underestimate Hitler once again. In order to avoid any suggestion that Hitler possesses post-mortem powers, his demagogy must be deciphered. His successes need to be explained, and the social and cultural motives behind them studied. This is a long-term task for Germans in academia, the media, and politics. This is the prerequisite for dealing with Hitler's disastrous legacy in a mature way and, at the same time, the strongest political and moral argument for the publication of a critical edition.

This argument stands even in the most difficult case, in relation to the victims of National Socialism. The feelings of the victims play a significant part. It could be difficult to persuade a Holocaust survivor that a new edition of *Mein Kampf*, albeit with a critical commentary, needs to be published in Germany. Among this group of the most affected, however, there are different and contradictory positions. Even possibly insurmountable indignation about plans to republish

Mein Kampf in any form is understandable and must be respected. In view of the legal situation, however, which is based solely on the expiring copyright, it is necessary to explain the circumstances and, in the end, to present the reasons that speak for transparency and openness.

There is no such thing as a dichotomy between empathy with the victims on the one hand and a 'cold' academic approach on the other. Historical and critical enlightenment can never be unethical. This sort of accusation, sometimes heard in public, directed against any scholarly work on *Mein Kampf* promotes the irrationality of the debate. To cast light on the history of National Socialism and its crimes also does a service for the victims and, in its way, serves to maintain their dignity. This is also true of work on *Mein Kampf*.

This needs to be emphasized all the more because *Mein Kampf*, as has already been said hundreds of times, is freely available outside Germany, on the internet, and in second-hand bookshops, and will continue to be so. Under no circumstances is the dissemination of the book to be prevented. And just because Hitler's inflammatory work, regardless of copyright, has long been out in the world, uncontrolled, and will, in future, continue to be so, the production of a serious edition taking a clearly critical standpoint is the order of the day. It is arranged in such a way that readers will not be able to take in a single page of Hitler's writing without being aware of the editors' critical commentary at the same time.

In conclusion, this may be seen as a plea to read the book. The recommendation for a critical reading suggests itself in the face of the never-ending and mutually reinforcing presence of Hitler and National Socialism in the media. Those who are interested can escape this cycle of the new and the eternally recurring only by returning to the source. That *Mein Kampf* is of value as a source for the history of evil is, as may have become clear, indisputable. And meticulous academic work provides the basis on which the criminal record of National Socialism can be better understood, intellectually and cognitively.

ANDREAS WIRSCHING is Professor of Modern History at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich and Director of the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ).

Absolute Evil

JEREMY ADLER

Any attempt to produce a ‘critical edition’ of *Mein Kampf* is destined to fail from the start. Editions of this sort are generally reserved for great works, for the classics and other cultural property. The purpose of this sort of edition is to locate the original version, to produce the best text, and cast light on difficult passages. Here the opposite is the case. The work is to be exposed for what it is. The project of printing a book because one rejects it goes against the whole tradition of textual criticism since late Antiquity and the Jewish Middle Ages. Scholarly editions by definition serve the author’s intentions. Textual criticism does not have the means to neutralize statements. The author has his say, but now with pretensions to being a classic. On Friday this new edition will be published by the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ).

Now, merely because the copyright has expired, a miserable, bungled piece of work will be granted the same dignity as Homer and Plato, the Bible and the Talmud. These are texts that should be read, that are part of our culture. The main purpose of critical editions is to preserve an original for all time. This new edition may have been produced with the best will in the world, but the reprinting of any questionable text can have only one outcome: to disseminate the author’s views. No editor can determine whether these will meet with public approval or rejection—and responsible editors must not direct their readers. As soon as they do this they are being polemical and forfeit their independence; they compromise their position as researchers. There is no way out of this moral dilemma.

It is worth reflecting on what this scandal is about, because by enthroning injustice as the principle of rule, this diatribe violates every law of reason: it offends against natural law as formulated by John Locke around 1690 by undermining human equality; it gives the lie to the American Constitution of 1787; it breaks with the reforms of the Napoleonic Code of 1804, which reverberated internationally and

Trans. Angela Davies (GHIL). First published as Jeremy Adler, ‘Das absolut Böse’, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 7 Jan. 2016, 9. Translation published with permission.

gave every citizen the same rights; it firmly discards the Frankfurt constitution of 1848, for instance, art. v, para. 144, which establishes religious freedom; it mocks the principles of the Weimar constitution of 1919 in force at the time; it violates the first article in the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which imposes an obligation to act in the spirit of fraternity; it contradicts the first article of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Basic Law of 1949, not only the opening sentence, but also the following one: 'To respect and protect it [human dignity] shall be the duty of all state authority.'

While this may not be sedition in today's legal terms as this book was written before the founding of the republic, we cannot help but recognize the rebellious intentions behind it. The trend is beyond question. No other work has ever incited crime so clearly while violating every legal norm. The legislator in no way envisaged the dissemination of inflammatory works of this sort; their printing was simply prohibited. To edit such a book, therefore, for whatever reason, is an affront to the state.

Absolute evil cannot be edited. When an author denigrates a whole people as scum, parasites, drones, a gang of infighting rats, a harmful germ, or even just apes, advocates their sterilization, and unmistakably calls for their extermination, psychiatrists may be able to reach a diagnosis, and a judge may be able to make a judgment. But an edition – unlike the disciplines of linguistics or historiography – is helpless before the horror. The state is undermined; the seizure of power is planned; world war is prepared. Faced with this monstrosity of madness and murder, any attempt to comment is silenced. Any reprinting means only one thing: repeating the infamy. Other methods must be resorted to in order to educate. The argument that similar texts have been edited does not get to the crux of the matter. This is the work that went into the world as a call to genocide; willy-nilly, as a last taboo, it has gained both iconic and factual significance.

Thus an observer can only look on in bewilderment as a country in which Holocaust denial is illegal republishes the book that shares much of the responsibility for instigating the Holocaust in the first place. The law makes no exception for offenders, and prescribes a punishment of between three months and five years imprisonment. It should be noted that the new edition is intended neither for professional historians nor the republic of letters, both of whom could claim special reasons, but as an aid to public enlightenment. How do they

imagine this working? Do they intend to limit the impact of a work that today still circulates in European prisons as an illegal photocopy, praised by the inmates, by releasing a new edition? Education requires very different methods. And who is the 'public' that is to be enlightened? The newsagent? The train driver? The greengrocer? Will they reach for this text? They deserve to be treated with more respect than to be encumbered with a book in two volumes.

This insoluble conflict between public education and scholarship is a dilemma produced by the new edition. For extremists, however, the sheer weight of the copies that will be pirated from the internet will provide the evidence they seek. They will find new sources for their prejudices in the edition's apparatus. Soon these references and the worst passages from *Mein Kampf* will be circulating on the internet. How can misuse of this edition be prevented? It is dubious, not to say dangerous, to warn of dangers by listing them in great detail.

It is argued that we need an edition of *Mein Kampf* because it is an important historical document. This is mistaken reasoning. Historical texts such as *The Republic*, *Magna Carta*, and the *Rights of Man* take their place in the human intellectual landscape because of their meaning, without reference to the personality of their authors. Such works give the world priceless gifts. *Mein Kampf* is the opposite case. The aim of this book is to destroy culture, even society as such, and to replace it with a fanatical 'mass'. The only reason it remains interesting is because the author and his cronies succeeded in doing this for a short, terrible period, and especially because he was the greatest mass murderer of all time. But this is no justification for editing his work, and this treatment will not make his text into a great document. It was and remains a demented diatribe, tied to the author's politics and terrorism, and can only be understood in connection with all his crimes. The text is not worthless; it represents an inverted value. In order for it to find its proper place, studies are needed such as the monographs and biographies recently produced by Ian Kershaw and Peter Longerich. An edition is by no means indispensable, and it can never achieve what is required here. Do we really want to test the limits of ethics?

Only an expert can produce an edition. The team of editors working on the new edition of *Mein Kampf* consists of four historians. This sounds promising. But if we look more closely, we notice that among the editors, who could naturally draw on advice from other experts, there is no-one with psychiatric expertise, no legal historian, no lin-

guist, no sociologist, and, above all, no proven text editor. This is hard to believe. How can an edition be produced without a single professional editor? The discipline of text editing is among the most difficult branches of philology. If an edition of a work as questionable as *Mein Kampf*, which was published in a number of different versions, is to have any claim to validity, the project has to be safeguarded by using the best possible techniques. Those who commissioned the work and its editors at the IfZ call their work a 'critical edition'. This raises the bar very high indeed. Not even the most significant edition of the last fifty years, Albrecht Schöne's *Faust* (1994), presumed to call itself 'critical'. And indeed, in their explanations, the new editors of *Mein Kampf* thoroughly confuse the traditional three forms of edition, demonstrating that they do not even know what a 'critical' edition is. According to them, they intend to produce: (1) a critical edition which will serve only to compile a text; (2) an annotated text containing detailed explanations; and (3) a reading edition which, according to the IfZ, will 'deliberately adopt a form and style . . . that will speak to a wide circle of readers'. These three aims cannot all be achieved at the same time in one edition. If they are combined in one work, either its readability, annotations, or academic credentials will suffer. There are of course critical editions with annotations. But these are always distanced from the text, unlike here. Any edition based on three competing principles will be an absurdity.

In fact, the editors have chosen not to reprint all existing textual variants because 'they do not add much in terms of content', thus violating the principle of completeness on which every true critical edition is based. And there is little trace of the feeling for tradition which is essential to anyone embarking on a project of this sort. The editors want to 'frame' the original, but seem unaware of how deeply offensive it is to see an editorial technique developed for the Talmud being used in *Mein Kampf*. And if the commentary engages with the author's lies — there can, of course, be no question of 'half truths' here — by providing counter-arguments, as one of the examples given by the editors confirms, then the whole project operates on the same dubious level as the original. A genuine 'critical edition' acquires a high ethical value through the skilled perfection and craftsmanship with which it guarantees the truth of its text. Such an edition works according to the strictest standards as the custodian of culture. If its principles are questionable, then so is the edition itself.

We also have to ask about the social embedding of this edition, its structural framework, as this is a national matter. After all, the breaking of a taboo should not result in a scandal. We often hear the voices of historians, who have an understandable interest in editing the text. But what about the philosophers, the poets, the intellectuals? Where did the debate take place before this plan was realized? If we take the new French edition as a comparison, we find a number of differences. First, an independent publisher, L'Éditeur Fayard, vouches for the book; secondly, the translation is by Olivier Mannoni, a highly respected scholar who has worked for many publishers, has translated several voices of the Shoah, and, very importantly, is associated with an independent public institution, the Centre National du Livre; thirdly, the work is supervised by an independent Academic Advisory Board especially convened for this purpose which is, again importantly, international; and finally, French law, which is different from the German law, unambiguously allows for a publication of this sort.

In the IfZ, by contrast, everything is done in house. The Institut's Academic Advisory Board supervises the project; the director monitors it; four employees carry it out; and it is self-published by the IfZ. The guarantees that are expected for all major editions, the independent bodies with a right to object, and sponsors who ensure that techniques are rigorous and standards kept up—why is the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft not behind this edition, as would be expected?—all this seems to be missing in this highly sensitive case. And there is more. When a government agency withdrew promised funding of 500,000 euros because of possible illegality, the IfZ continued blithely on its way. It seems highly surprising, if not irresponsible, to force a project through against the unambiguous warnings of the Bavarian justice minister when, as he stressed, the legal position has yet to be clarified.

Finally, the IfZ sees its work as paying homage to the victims. But this is pure mockery: they are calling on the defenceless dead to justify their own work. What next? Bavaria's justice minister has said: 'The whole world is watching closely what we do with this cynical and inhumane work.' While I write this, without having seen the new text, the jury is still out.

JEREMY ADLER is emeritus Professor and Senior Research Fellow at King's College London.

Mein Kampf: A Scholarly Burial

GÖTZ ALY

This large-format two-volume work weighs 5.2 kilograms and is 1,966 pages long. It is bound in linen of a military field grey and the title *Hitler, Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition* is emblazoned on the cover in discreet letters coloured SA brown. With meticulous attention, the scholars involved in preparing this edition have traced tiny textual variants in the many editions which were published between 1925 and 1945, as if we were dealing with Goethe's *Faust*. For example, the German filler word *nun* was often deleted; the word *liebge-wonnen* in the 1939 edition was replaced with *liebge-worden* but in 1944 changed back into *liebge-wonnen*, although they mean much the same thing (to become fond of); and the name of the Wagnersaal, a location in Munich, was sometimes hyphenated, and sometimes not. It would have been better if the editors had dispensed with this meaningless industriousness and concentrated on the few major changes, such as those concerning leadership within the Nazi Party.

Three thousand seven hundred substantive annotations form the core of the academic effort. Hundreds of them are unproductive. For example, Hitler reported about Linz, where he had attended school, that at that time, 'there were very few Jews' in the town, and all of them looked quite 'Europeanized', that is, assimilated. The marginal note, supported by three references to literature, reads: 'The Jewish community in Linz around 1900 numbered no more than 587, and there were almost no Orthodox Jews among them.' It seems that Hitler had described it correctly. Why the lesson?

In the style of a *Bildungsroman* (coming-of-age novel), Hitler continued by saying that at the time, he had reacted to the anti-Jewish animosities of his classmates with 'slight aversion' and 'a feeling of discomfort' because 'denominational squabbles' disgusted him. On this important point, however, the otherwise enthusiastic annotators

Trans. Angela Davies (GHIL). First published as Götz Aly, '“Mein Kampf”, wissenschaftlich eingesargt: Die kritische Edition von Hitlers Propagandabuch erstickt im Detail und weicht den zentralen Fragen aus', *Berliner Zeitung*, 11 Jan. 2016 © 2017. Translation published with permission.

are unjustifiably silent. For Hitler's later successes were based in part on the fact that he consistently addressed the theme of Germany's inner turmoil, not only the division between the denominations, but also the split between north and south, west and east, between federalists and those who advocated a unitary central state, and between the social classes. This made him popular. In this way he created the foundations for his new-style national people's party.

In a totally inappropriate place (I/864, no. 5) there is an annotation on the 'social, regional, and denominational openness' of the Nazi Party. The annotators introduce it by observing: 'Interestingly, Hitler here already describes the Nazi Party as a party of protest.' My goodness! This was the essence of his party from the start. And why do they write 'here already', referring to a passage at the end of the first volume of *Mein Kampf*? At this point they should have quoted the political scientist Sigmund Neumann, who characterized the Nazi Party in 1932 as follows: 'Protest against the November Revolution and parliamentarism, protest against the defeat and Versailles, protest against the economic system, and protest against the dominance of rationalism and materialism.'

In their reader-unfriendly way, the editors refer, at the end of the only moderately successful annotation quoted above, to the following annotations: 'ch. II/5, nn. 8, 35'. Having located these notes via the Table of Contents, on pages 1148 and 1164, we find that only note 35 is relevant. It could easily have been amalgamated with its less informative double in an appropriate place. But the reference to 'II/5, n. 8' leads us astray. There we read: 'On the term "financial Jews" cf. ch. II/13, n. 90.' Printing error? Presumably the editors meant the appropriate n. 28. How are interested general readers with some historical knowledge meant to find their way around in this mess?

Hitler enthusiastically advocated a policy that was intended to lead to 'mutual compatibility' between the denominations, and 'gradually to produce a reconciliation in this area'. The academic apparatus that the editors provide for this section does not deal with the fact that many Germans rejected the denominational schools that were still widespread at the time, and that numerous young people were heavily criticized if a Catholic introduced a Protestant bride to his parents, not to mention the brusque reactions of the respective clergy. Instead of looking at the real historical background, the editors refer to 'Hitler's concept of God', the timorous ecumenical activ-

ities of the time, and the anti-Church invective unleashed by the Führer and Chancellor of Germany in 1942, seventeen years after the publication of *Mein Kampf*. In this marginal note, which is questionable anyway, the commentators do not provide the absolutely necessary information that while Hitler called (mainly Catholic) dignitaries 'dung beetles' internally, he never did so in public. In this context the editors say nothing about the *Zentrum* (Centre Party), one of the main pillars supporting the Weimar Republic. It clearly saw itself as Catholic, and those who voted for it were almost exclusively Catholic. This split the Christian, democratic, and conservative middle. Not until 1945 did Konrad Adenauer draw the conclusions from this disaster and establish a supra-denominational political party, the Christian Democratic Union.

The issue of a federal or unitary state had occupied the Germans since 1806. The democratic national movement's tragedy was that in the nineteenth century it had to compete against territorial princes and monarchs, and therefore had to demand a strong central state in a country that historically had a federal structure. Finally, Bismarck achieved national unity in 1871 in an authoritarian and militaristic way. In somewhat stilted style, Hitler described this as follows: 'The Reich was formed not by the free will or equal contributions of the individual states, but by the hegemonic action of one state among them, Prussia.' In the annotations, the editors point out that the later historians Lothar Gall ('absorbed by Prussia') and Hans-Ulrich Wehler ('the creation of a Greater Prussian state') shared this opinion. Nice for Hitler, but less friendly towards Gall and Wehler, one could say. But in reality, things were more complicated. In 1925 the Prussian Landtag and the Prussian government formed a democratic bastion of the Republic. Hitler fused anti-republican and anti-Prussian resentments, and at the same time he energetically countered the Bavarian hatred of Berlin. His protest against the still widespread cult of Prussia gave him the air of an honest newcomer, as did his tirades against 'Habsburg hereditary evil' and 'the shallowness' and notorious 'cowardice' of the 'bourgeois mind'.

Like all radical right-wing parties at the time, whether in Italy, Romania, France, or Germany, the Nazi Party had both national and social aims. Hitler wrote on this: 'The broad masses can only be educated nationally via the detour of a social rise, as this alone can create the general economic preconditions that will permit the indi-

vidual to participate in the cultural goods of the nation.’ In other words, he was promising the German lower classes the chance of social advancement. What do the commentators have to say about this point, which was so crucial for the Nazi Party’s political success? To start with, the usual: ‘On this cf. Hitler’s argument in the chapter “Years of Study and Suffering in Vienna” (I/2), pp. 32–3, and the commentary there.’ In fact, there we find Hitler’s words that the “nationalization” of a people primarily [presupposes] the creation of healthy social conditions’ – but no commentary.

According to Hitler, the social gulf between the Germans could be overcome ‘not by the fall of the higher classes, but through the rise of the lower’ ones: ‘Again, this process cannot be carried out by the upper class, but only by the lower class, fighting for equality.’ The commentators again have nothing to say about this notion, which was so attractive to those with a socialist background. I recommend Friedrich Meinecke. In his book *Die deutsche Katastrophe* (1946) he developed the idea that in the nineteenth century the often initially opposing national and social movements ‘crossed over, affected each other, and ultimately sought to unite somehow’. And Meinecke pointed out that Hitler picked up on this: ‘The great idea lying in the air, the fusion of the national and the socialist movement, without question found in him its most ardent preacher and most determined executor.’

The editors do not list Meinecke in their bibliography. They think they can do without Hannah Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), any of her other writings, and Franz Neumann’s *Behemoth* (1942); they find the studies and editions of sources by Joseph Wulf superfluous, as well as Ernst Fraenkel’s *The Dual State* (1941) and H. G. Adler’s *Hitler als Persönlichkeit* (1960) and *Der verwaltete Mensch* (1974). They have probably never heard of Eric Voegelin’s *Rasse und Staat* (1933), or Wilhelm Röpke’s *Der Weg des Unheils* (1931) and *Die deutsche Frage* (1945); Friedrich A. von Hayek’s *Der Weg zur Knechtschaft* (1943 = *The Road to Serfdom*, 1944) and Heinrich York-Steiner’s *Die Kunst als Jude zu leben* (1928) are also missing. I consider the disregard of these authors, selected at random, as very strange. We should be aware that the bibliography of this edition of *Mein Kampf* covers 122 pages and contains more than 3,600 titles, including almost every narrowly focused Ph.D. thesis produced in the last twenty years.

The editors avoid the question of how and why Hitler was able to win over the masses with the programme set out in *Mein Kampf*. Of

course, external circumstances were required: the Versailles peace *Diktat* and the inflation, foreign military intervention, armed uprisings at home, and the Great Depression all paved the way for Hitler. He promised his electorate unconditional anti-liberalism and powerful state capitalism. To those who were racially allegedly equal and eugenically allegedly healthy, he promised the age of national social justice. He placed the totalitarian state above the individual. He transformed the social, religious, and regional differences that existed within German society into external national and racial ones. With this mixture, he succeeded in unleashing monstrously destructive energies.

Industriously, the editors provide a great deal of evidence to show that Hitler was a thoroughly bad criminal liar and a racist. This is true, but it has become commonplace. They claim to have 'deconstructed' *Mein Kampf*. This is not true. What they have deconstructed is history. All historians pose questions from the point of view of the present but they also have to put themselves back to the time in question and in this case explain why so many Germans voted for Hitler in 1932-3 and why, by the beginning of the war, even more were so enthusiastic about his policies. Historians must therefore explain to us not only why today's Germans see Hitler as a criminal, but also why their forebears, who were morally and intellectually no worse equipped, followed him so gladly and what they found so attractive about his crude language.

Hitler did not only produce 'a political party of a completely new type', as Sigmund Neumann has pointed out, but with *Mein Kampf* he also created a new literary genre that is still highly popular today. He was the first person in Germany to develop his political programme out of a stylized, partly invented biography. Before him, politicians had penned memoirs with titles such as *Thoughts and Memories*, or *Events and Figures*. Hitler described his life in approximately the following terms: I was a failure at school, my father beat me mercilessly, I had a bad time in Vienna; I come from the very bottom, I am one of you; I went through the war as a petty Lance Corporal, was wounded, and so on.

Today many politicians write autobiographies which follow this pattern in their formal structure. They publish baby pictures of themselves, confess to being failures at school, report their flight and expulsion and other dramatic youthful experiences. Let us take

Joschka Fischer's book *Mein langer Lauf zu mir selbst* and compare. Two years ago, Joseph Wälzholz, writing in *Die Welt*, did this on my suggestion. In Hitler's book we read, for example: 'For the first time I saw the Rhine. Through the delicate veil of the early morning mist, the mild rays of the early sun allowed the Niederwald monument to shine down on us, and the old (battle song) *Wacht am Rhein* (Watch on the Rhine) sounded out of the endlessly long train, and my chest grew tight.' And in Fischer's book we read: 'The morning mists were coming up from the Rhine and spreading over the government quarter in Bonn as I set out jogging for the first time. But after only a hundred metres, I began to wheeze.' Fischer complains: 'The alternative life of the 1970s was materially austere, at that time I had a paltry amount of money.' Hitler describes the 'uncertainty of earning my daily bread; the orphan's benefits I received were not enough to live on'. This struck a completely new tone in the political life of the young Weimar Republic. It conferred credibility and authenticity on Hitler. And as marginal note 132 in the Introduction shows, the editors remain unaware of this too.

Naturally, in addition to inappropriate and redundant annotations, the editors have also composed some very good ones, such as those about Hitler's violent, choleric father, for example. But as this critical edition of *Mein Kampf* stands, it can at best serve as a dictionary for experts. It surrounds the text with annotations, as if it were necessary to erect a cordon sanitaire. Possibly this represents a necessary break on the disturbing path by which the monstrous German past is constantly addressed anew. Perhaps a good, readable, shorter version can now be produced on the basis of this current edition. An abridged version could explain, classify, and invite questions and reflection, rather than automatic resistance, by reproducing long passages. Seen in this way, all this work would have been worthwhile.

GÖTZ ALY is a German journalist, historian, and political scientist.

Objectification of the Opposite

GERT UEDING

To this day, dealing with *Mein Kampf* is an obsessive, almost neurotic business, even as pursued by academics. The Bavarian government, until now in possession of the copyright, has prevented any reprints, even partial ones, by every means at its disposal. Anyone who studied the book was soon suspected of radical right-wing sympathies, and the political squabbles surrounding the critical edition put out by the renowned Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ) go in the same direction, creating taboos and repression. They have also dominated the first reactions to the new edition: a botched compilation that should have been left locked in the libraries' poison cabinets. The zealous criticism by Jeremy Adler, a literary scholar, was especially treacherous. Published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, his piece culminates in the claim that 'Absolute evil cannot be edited'.¹

This attitude is only the other side of the 'vision of horror' that is being attacked but in the same breath mythologized, and unwittingly does the author's business for him. Hitler wanted to elevate this to metaphysical heights, while his well-meaning detractors banish it to metaphysical depths: both are anti-enlightened responses.

This hints at the first breakthrough achievement of this new edition: it pulls the ground out from under obscurantism by confronting each sentence with the conditions to which it refers, or exposing its intentions. The attitude that permeates every statement, however, hardly requires unmasking. Nowhere does the author leave it in doubt. *Mein Kampf* is, in a brutal sense, a completely open-hearted book, and precisely for this reason, it is one of the most important 'sources for the reconstruction of the life story of the German dictator'. Probably the most important biographer of Hitler, Ian Kershaw, has bewailed the fact that so few sources remain.

Trans. Angela Davies (GHIL). First published as Gert Ueding, 'Versachlichung des Gegenteils', *Der Freitag*, 13 Jan. 2016. Translation published with permission.

¹ See above, Jeremy Adler, 'Absolute Evil', in this issue of the *GHIL Bulletin*.

Role Identification

Even Hitler's obvious distortions, inventions, and errors are highly significant, as almost every correction by the editors shows. When Hitler wrote his 'Reckoning' (the subtitle of the first volume), he was a failure, imprisoned (although quite comfortably) in Landsberg fortress after an unsuccessful putch attempt, and felt the need to justify himself. Contrary to all other accounts, he wrote the book himself between June 1924 and June 1925. What he pounded into the typewriter, however, was not a work of reflection, but a record of the endless soliloquies that he had conducted in his head and occasionally reported to people who shared his views. Thus it was a monologue that sometimes switched abruptly between sentimental memory and furious defence, a programme and plans for the future, a tirade and a factual report, and it all had to be laboriously fitted into chapters. The commentary frequently notes: 'Empty phrases and formulas that were typical of Hitler's speeches.' Like many a failed image, these passages point to the casual, everyday language used by Hitler, with its automatic responses and imprecisions, and to the empty formulas and turgid statements typical of his political language. This also applies to the second volume, which was written in 1925-6.

But the critical comments go far beyond the issue of style. In his written texts, Hitler tried to reproduce some of the lively rhetoric of his spoken language, to which he owed his previous public successes. The techniques he used included vagueness, blurred outlines, and ambiguous reminiscences and explanations. The indistinctness of Hitler as a person noted by Kershaw was a deliberate rhetorical device intended to create an aura of superiority and greatness. If there are no heroes in the eyes of the valet, heroes must remove themselves from the gaze of the valet. How much more this applies to the man who wanted to be the saviour of his people, even of the world!

Neither a psychological diagnosis of megalomania nor popular demonization are convincing, given such systematic role identification. The pragmatic and detailed commentary in the new edition is a good antidote to both. The editors have chosen to base their work on the two-volume first edition of 1925/27 because it is closest to the author's linguistic style, and the few substantive changes in later editions are noted in the commentary, as are stylistic variants. The critical edition, an immense task for the scholars involved, aims for the

ideal of accurate historical reconstruction, and is explicitly oriented by the principles of 'objectification' and 'verifiability', in the full awareness that *Mein Kampf* represents the exact opposite of these principles.

These are important editorial principles which must not be touched. They convey an understanding of the outline of the book and its building blocks, but we still have to work out exactly how it functioned from the evidence presented. Thus the commentary, presenting the common sentiment 'in reality, it was quite different', captures the facts but is out of sync with the text and its intentions.

In order not to be misunderstood: all these corrections are necessary. We need to know how and where Hitler distanced himself from an empirical fact or a historical consensus, what traditions his most abstruse views were based on, and which of the usual prejudices of his time he accepted and which he rejected, whether we are speaking of social Darwinist pamphlets, classical world literature, or antisemitic trash such as the *Elders of Zion*.

But how Hitler's book could ever function as the 'Nazi Bible' that the popular edition suggests it was, becomes ever more puzzling under the enormous weight of the commentary. This is not an objection to the critical edition but a reference to the open questions that it poses, for over long stretches the book reproduces historical developments, political convictions, and a contemporary awareness of crisis quite correctly and appropriately simplified, given the contemporary target audience. In this way the author creates a reserve of credibility on which he can draw when it comes to uncertain or even fraudulent references.

Crucial to the book's success was a text pitched at a level that has little to do with truth, but all the more with archetypes, uneven dreams, and the presentation of the author as a personal witness of the events. Eye witnesses have an a priori credibility in European culture, and in his book and all major speeches, Hitler made good use of it.

Mein Kampf is a 'compilation' only in the sense of a tactical fabrication which resembles a montage. The book is not intended to be read as a whole, and everything that we know suggests that it was rarely read from cover to cover. The popular edition of 1930, which brought the breakthrough to bestseller status, contains a technical curiosity: the index is placed at the beginning of the book, even

before the Foreword. This means that the volume was planned from the outset for selective reading. Readers were intended to follow their interests and chart their own course through the book, whether pursuing Hitler's life story, the Party programme, its ideological positions, or the tirades of fury and hatred directed at Jews or Marxists, or both.

Selective Reading

The edition casts light on other features of the text. The use of repetitions, often verbatim and meticulously noted in the comments, is not only a common propaganda technique, but guarantees that even when the book is read selectively, the messages most important to the author are not lost. Similarly, the change of style from pathos to bureaucratic objectivity, from the pretentious use of foreign words to homely German diction, proves to be appropriate to the target readership. From his own rhetorical experience, Hitler knew about the charm of using difficult words and uninhibitedly breaking linguistic taboos.

Potentially the most effective parts of the book are its autobiographical narratives. As in every autobiography, they are constructions, here embedded in the image world of a mythical consciousness that lives on in dreams, artistic fantasies, and religious yearning because desires are unfilled in them. One of the few examples that the editors, who otherwise carefully note every biblical quotation and religious reference, missed is the sentence with which Hitler begins his life story. As we discover, he spent a long time honing it: 'Today it seems a happy destiny that fate assigned Braunau am Inn to me as a birthplace.' A 'small border town', he adds, but at the same time the 'symbol of a great task'. Was he aware of Goethe's verses: 'O Weimar! To you fell a special lot! / Like Bethlehem in Judah, small and great'? In the context of Hitler's messianic fantasies, this opening acquires its own flavour.

All in all, the critical edition makes it clear for the first time to what extent Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is a cleverly composed collection of dissimilar content. Regressive impulses build up into a desire for murder; dull remnants of peasant life are submerged in blood-and-soil murmurings; petty bourgeois anxieties and dreams find fulfil-

OBJECTIFICATION OF THE OPPOSITE

ment in images of women and sexual morality. In addition, there are eschatological memories and a continuing craving for salvation, mingling with similarly unequal hopes of a better life—a truly stunning formula. The critical edition has uncovered its components in great detail so that the literary symbol of National Socialism's power is fully exposed, providing the foundation for any further study of the book.

GERT UEDING is emeritus Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Tübingen.

'Jews': See 'Poison Gas'

WOLFGANG BENZ

In 2012 the Bavarian state government came to the conclusion that, given the imminent expiry of the copyright on *Mein Kampf*, it was necessary to act. As the author's legal successor, the state of Bavaria could ban the publication of new editions until the end of 2015 (except, of course, abroad, on the internet, and in pirated versions). The ministers responsible recognized the danger and commissioned the edition under review here. The Minister of Culture justified the project, subsidized to the tune of half a million euros, as follows: 'We need not only an academic commentary on this work, but also strategies for interpreting and dealing with it which go beyond the purely scholarly editing of the book.' The Finance Minister agreed, saying that it must not fall 'into the wrong hands', as neo-Nazis liked to use the original source.

Two years later, these laudable moral impulses on the part of the authorities took a different direction when the Bavarian Minister President, Horst Seehofer, changed his mind while on a trip to Israel. Charlotte Knobloch, leader of the Jewish religious community in Munich and Upper Bavaria, persuaded him to reconsider, and the cabinet resolved that *Mein Kampf* was a 'slandorous work that caused the victims of National Socialism and their relatives great pain'. This also applied to the commission that had been granted by the state, and the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ) was venturing onto thin ice when, rightly undeterred by political and media excitement, it continued working on the edition.

Those who can read will recognize the shadowy invocations in the introductions to the edition in which the editorial team justify their attempt to demystify Hitler's text, while sitting under the Sword of Damocles that Bavaria's sudden change of policy represented. The historical source is seen as a possible armoury for mad-

Trans. Angela Davies (GHIL). First published as Wolfgang Benz, "'Juden': Siehe "Giftgas" ', *Die Zeit*, 14 Jan. 2016. © ZEIT ONLINE. <<http://www.zeit.de/2016/03/adolf-hitler-mein-kampf-neuedition-bewertung>>. Translation published with permission.

ness and a clandestine symbol of evil. From a professional point of view, this is an unusual description of the aims and intentions of an academic project.

The method and structure of the edition, as well as its graphic design, are explained in detail in the forewords. The right-hand pages of the book contain the original text along with variations, which are clearly printed in the margins. The left-hand pages are reserved for the numerous annotations, references to literature, and the whole scholarly apparatus. The design problems which result from the sheer volumes of text in different typefaces are brilliantly resolved. Outwardly, this gives the edition something of the character of a valuable Bible, but after a period of adjustment, it makes the edition manageable.

Nonetheless, researching the text remains tedious, partly because of the material (the original editions of *Mein Kampf* were, with good reason, equipped with extensive indexes, with whose help interested Nazi Party members and *Volksgenossen* could navigate through Hitler's bombast), and partly because of the amount of scholarship invested in it. Readers have to know that the reference is quoted using the original pagination. Thus they cannot refer to the edition's page numbers, but have to look for the original page number given in square brackets next to the column titles, and they must not confuse volume 1 and volume 2.

With some practice, even older scholars can manage this. The younger generation, brought up on computers, possibly finds it more difficult. For example, anyone looking for the famous passage which is often cited as evidence for Hitler's genocidal fantasies and as an announcement of the Holocaust, has a long struggle finding their way through the jungle that is the index. The term 'poison gas' refers the reader to 'World War, First' and from there to a sub-entry 'chemical weapons'. This takes us to three passages, but not to the quotation we are seeking. In a second attempt, under the term 'Antisemitism' the reader finds a reference to 'Racial Antisemitism', but this is essentially a circular reference that leads back to 'Antisemitism', where we started. The reference to 'Jews', however, is helpful because it contains a sub-entry 'poison gas', which eventually, after some physical exertion moving the weighty tomes around, produces the desired result: 'If, at the beginning of the war and during it, twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the

people had been subjected to poison gas like the hundreds of thousands of our very best German workers from all classes and professions, who had to endure it in the field, then the sacrifice of millions at the Front would not have been in vain.'

Our research efforts are now richly rewarded in the form of a footnote that not only provides information about the text, but counteracts misinterpretations: it leads the reader to further examples of radical anti-Jewish rhetoric, and to Himmler's reaction to this passage. Reflecting the state of research, a clear differentiation is made: despite rampant and ritualized hostility towards the Jews, in the mid 1920s there was no plan to exterminate the Jews that could be suggested by the term 'poison gas'. And in its early years, the Jewish policy of the National Socialists, once they had come to power, aimed to exclude the Jews from German society and expel them, but not at their physical annihilation. The genocidal intent developed only gradually after the occupation of Poland and intensified with the attack on the Soviet Union. The stations of the murder of the Jews are mentioned, and finally, the number of victims.

The annotations have a didactic intention beyond providing information. Concerning Hitler's praise for the part played by Protestant and Catholic clergy in strengthening the will of the Germans on the front and at home to hold out during the First World War, there is an annotation (no. 235 on p. 342) which gives detailed information about the history, organization, and extent of military pastoral care, including that dispensed by Jewish rabbis in the field. The last reference explicitly addresses the antisemitic stereotype of the 'Jewish shirker', without reference to Hitler's text. In many cases the annotations expand into a compendium, especially in relation to terms such as 'degeneracy', '*Volksgenosse*', '*Volkskörper*', '*Volksgemeinschaft*', and 'Marxism'. Rarely are the annotations as brief as the one that explains the term 'vitriol' used by Hitler as 'sulphuric acid'. Others are simply unnecessary: Hitler wrote '*gewitzig*', which is explained as 'made wise by (bad) experience or harm'. Information about and corrections to the author's biography and explanations about things that are not easily accessible are useful. The numerous cross-references, however, often create confusion rather than clarity.

The commentary is based on the results of decades of international research, rather than on deep, untapped resources. After all, the function of a scholarly edition is to explain the text, make it compre-

hensible if necessary, place it in its historical context, to trace its roots and background, and, finally, to document the written tradition and variants. It is not the task of an edition to fill gaps in the research. Therefore the statement that there is nothing so far unknown to report about Hitler's intentions, their origins, and development, and nothing new about the 'movement's' programme and ideology, or even about the genesis of the murder of the Jews, is not a condemnation. The edition can safely disappoint the needs of the media and the expectations of a public fixated on 'the new'.

What is decisive is something else, anyway. By embedding the text in its historical context, the editors contribute to demystifying and historicizing *Mein Kampf*. To this extent the edition is an enlightened endeavour. But who is it addressed to? Who will actually read its 2,000 pages? Hardly the radical right. Not only because they are unlikely to buy themselves an edition with a critical commentary, but because *Mein Kampf* plays only a subordinate part in today's right-wing extremist scene.

For general readers with an interest in history, the high cost of the edition is unreasonable and in the end it offers them little more—apart from the complete original text, of course—than what can be found much more comfortably in the relevant secondary literature on *Mein Kampf* or a biography of Hitler. The masses will probably not spend their evenings reading this edition, despite the media frenzy that has driven sales up to unlikely heights (15,000 advance orders, and the first edition of 4,000 copies was sold out on the first morning).

This edition is really interesting only for historians, although it does not present a source that has not been available before. *Mein Kampf* was never banned in Germany; only reprints were not allowed. Anyone who wanted to read the authentic text could turn to the many copies in libraries and private ownership. And for professional readers, most of this will be nothing new. The detailed information will be welcomed by the experts, both for reference and as a starting point for new research. Thus the scholarship that is reflected in the thousands of text-critical annotations is to be praised, even where it goes too far.

The didactic hopes which have been vested in the work since the Free State of Bavaria commissioned it, however, are naive. The idea that school students will, in future, interpret *Mein Kampf* with the help of this two-volume work is already absurd given the marginal-

ization of history as a subject. In classroom practice, the large-scale use of *Mein Kampf* would amount to a reduction of the whole complex of National Socialism to Hitler's slanderous work. This would be to revert to the postwar period, when the Führer was demonized as someone people had to succumb to, even against their will.

The evil antisemitism that Hitler spread was his own obsession, put together from common stereotypes and clichés. Antisemitism as a misanthropic phenomenon cannot be explained by studying *Mein Kampf*; at most, this book can illustrate its effects on one man who became a dictator and then had the power to implement his hatred of the Jews in a genocide of unique proportions. And this is the real question for the history of National Socialism: how could the Germans (and Austrians) be so infatuated by this figure? Why did they throw themselves into Hitler's arms so enthusiastically? Why did they offer so little resistance as he transformed Germany into a dictatorship and Europe into an inferno? Why did they follow him to the bitter end? Even this critical edition of *Mein Kampf* provides no answers, perhaps because the Germans were more intoxicated with the rhetoric of Hitler the orator than with the intolerable prose of this egomaniac.

WOLFGANG BENZ is emeritus Professor of Modern History at the Technical University Berlin and was Director of its Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung from 1990 to 2011.

Only the Spoken Word had a Mass Impact

WOLFRAM PYTA

Mein Kampf is a work loaded with significance that does not stand up under close scrutiny, mainly because the book has become a cipher for crimes for which its author is blamed. This makes it seem like a confession, in which the author gives free rein to a boundless contempt for humanity and his brutal will for extermination. And this leads to the view that even seventy years after Hitler's death, it would be irresponsible to give him a forum in which to preach the extermination of the Jews.

For decades, well-known historians have pointed out that too much is being asked of *Mein Kampf*: anyone who seeks a 'master plan' for the extermination of the Jews in this work will not find it there since the author was careful not to announce his intentions. Hitler was preparing his political comeback while in prison, and for this reason, it seemed advisable to write a book that would also allow him to be taken seriously as a theoretician of the *völkisch* movement.

He therefore had to keep his intentions regarding extermination under wraps, although he had openly discussed them in a small circle. It annoyed him that during the time he was imprisoned, a book was published whose author, Georg Schott, to whom Hitler had exposed his political intentions unfiltered, revealed in more than one place what Hitler had in store for his political opponents.

In public, *Mein Kampf* is often presented as a key document that puts all other sources in the shade and shows the dictator's true face; even some historians who like to explain the world in terms of a text, declare that in *Mein Kampf* they have found this sort of source. But in his book Hitler did not write a life story that was true to the facts. Rather, he made up an autobiography and organized it according to considerations of political expediency.

He thus devoted many pages to narrating how he had become a convinced antisemite during his stay in Vienna between 1908 and

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1913, and claimed that his book contained the fruits of almost fifteen years of studying of the 'Jewish question' as an autodidact. By doing this, Hitler wanted to distract attention from a circumstance which could give rise to uncomfortable questions, namely, that he had not politically committed himself in public until the autumn of 1919. Nobody could take offence at his political passivity in the steamy atmosphere of Munich during the turbulent period from November 1918 to May 1919 if his account of himself was believed, namely, that by this time he had long since matured into a convinced antisemite, and that all he was lacking was an adequate field for his political activities. This striking example illustrates why expertise in textual analysis is necessary to decode the author's narrative strategy and distinguish between works of the imagination and of truth. This requires a historical-critical edition that subjects the text to meticulous source criticism.

The Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ) in Munich is well prepared to tackle this demanding task, among other things because in Christian Hartmann, head of the editorial team, it has an expert on the history of National Socialism who specializes in foreign policy and the conduct of war, both of which take up a great deal of space in *Mein Kampf*. Over almost 2,000 pages, this two-volume edition demonstrates the virtues of sober philology. It also deserves appreciation because it does not adopt a text-centred interpretation of Hitler. In their Introduction, the editors leave no doubt that the real Hitler can only be found in the spoken word.

Thus it is no coincidence that the only large text which Hitler wrote himself, the first volume of *Mein Kampf*, was created in an exceptional situation, namely, in prison, where there was no chance to talk. The editors rightly point out that in *Mein Kampf* Hitler repeatedly emphasized the advantages of the spoken word over the written one, thus relativizing the significance of his own text. From Hitler's point of view, the spoken word was not only vastly superior to the written word because of its impact on the masses. Hitler did not entrust the unvarnished communication of his intention to murder the Jews living in his sphere of power to the written word, but shouted it out on 30 January 1939, speaking to the Reichstag and thus to the world. And Hitler also initiated the implementation of this crime through the spoken word. To look for a written instruction from Hitler himself is to misunderstand the nature of his style of leadership.

This does not relativize the significance of *Mein Kampf*. Rather, Hitler's work is placed into the context of its origins, and thus demythologized. The academic value of this edition is measured by whether it provides background information that illuminates contexts for users. In this respect, the editorial team's achievement is superlative. The number of annotations alone, far more than 3,000, suggests very thorough textual work. And they are not tucked away at the end of the book, or printed in small type at the bottom of the page, where they would address a small circle of insiders only. Rather, the edition places the annotations, many of which resemble a dictionary entry in terms of length and content, right next to Hitler's original text. In this way, readers have a compendium that does not omit any topic covered in *Mein Kampf*. Thus, for example, we find out a great deal about Hitler's political home, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. And the murky depths of the *völkisch* movement of the early 1920s are illuminated. The annotations on the early history of the Nazi Party will enrich research because they are based on archival materials that have not often been used so far.

The editors faced a particular challenge in tracing the references that Hitler used in preparing his text. The original manuscript of *Mein Kampf* no longer exists, and very few pages of drafts have survived. On top of this is the fact that Hitler systematically wiped out traces in cases where he wanted to present ideas as his own, while he liked to lay false trails claiming to have gained political inspiration from people who could no longer defend themselves against such appropriation. Hitler seems to have incorporated the work of third parties into his own in such a sophisticated way that it is almost impossible to identify the authors and passages that he used. Thus the edition painstakingly documents passages that display striking similarities, but only in a few cases is it possible to demonstrate that Hitler actually cannibalized these works for *Mein Kampf*.

The edition sometimes goes too far, for example, when it implicitly suggests, on the basis of textual similarities alone, that the leader of the Pan-German League, Heinrich Claß, was one of the most important sources of ideas for Hitler, although they had a strained relationship. In this case the editors might have got further if they had systematically searched for intertextual allusions to predecessor texts, a method commonly used in literary studies.

The annotations, however, are not only the scholarly crux of the

edition. They also shield the whole editorial project from accusations of being too close to Hitler's text. Even if the criminal nature of Hitler's policies comes out more clearly in *Mein Kampf* than in other sources, an edition of this book must take care not to be transformed into an unwilling mouthpiece for Hitler. To this extent, the annotations are intended to be an antidote that neutralizes the original text. This is why the editors have placed them around three sides of the text, and in the same typeface. The reader cannot avoid them. They work as instructions which cannot be ignored if readers want to ingest a dose of *Mein Kampf*. Yet however justified the editors' intention to address not only experts interested in gaining deeper knowledge but also readers without much prior knowledge, and however striking their solution, namely, to cover the page with battalions of annotations, one cannot help but see a certain over-eagerness here and there, and this can upset the balance.

In general, the editors accept that Hitler's statements about his life must be seen as forming part of his constructed life story. But occasionally they take his assertions at face value, unchecked, and then have to work at unmasking them. This applies, for example, to Hitler's statement that while in Vienna, he was politically shaped by the city's mayor, Karl Lueger, and Georg von Schönerer, veteran of the Pan-German League. But why should Hitler have chosen to tell the truth here, when he had already fabricated a life story that perfectly matched his political self-image? If Hitler wanted *Mein Kampf* to seal his success as the most important theoretician of antisemitism in the *völkisch* camp, then he could only mention the political teachers that people unacquainted with conditions in Vienna would expect. And here Lueger and Schönerer were figures who, because they were so well known, seemed to be possible mentors for Hitler.

By mentioning these names, Hitler was diverting attention away from the fact that at the time when he was in Vienna, Schönerer had long since become a marginal political figure, while Lueger, whose Catholicism was alien to Hitler, was soon to die. And he also spared himself uncomfortable questions about why he had not allied himself with the forerunner of a National Socialist movement in Vienna, the lawyer Walter Riehl, while he was there if he had really become an antisemitic National Socialist before the war as he claimed.

Naturally, the excellent Introduction to the edition strongly refutes the view that everything essential has already been said about Hitler's

programmatic work, and about his career as a politician. Thus this edition provides more than just a few building blocks towards getting to the bottom of the talking culture in the political hothouse that was Munich at the time. It also demonstrates that a literary history approach to *Mein Kampf*, examining the various types of text it contains, including autobiography, coming-of-age novel, and ideological tract, is long overdue.

If historians cannot make any really reliable statements about the genesis of the ideas expressed in *Mein Kampf*, literary scholars will find enough evidence in the narrative structure and style of language to draw conclusions about Hitler's political self-understanding. Thus they will notice that Hitler almost always speaks of 'theses' when referring to the twenty-five 'points' which the later Nazi Party presented as its programme at its first mass public rally on 14 February 1920.

This is no trifling matter because Hitler was thereby sending out two political messages. He was indirectly claiming to have shaken up the world, like Luther, by proclaiming 'theses'. And he was underlining that his authority was not that of a scribe, but of a political preacher. Whereas Luther, according to the knowledge of the time, had nailed his theses to the door of the Schlosskirche in Wittenberg as a text, Hitler had stood up in the banqueting hall of the Munich Hofbräuhaus as someone who disseminated his theses among the people in the form of the spoken word. Hitler presented himself in *Mein Kampf* not as the sole author of these twenty-five theses, but as their authoritative preacher.

The present edition will provide an indispensable source for research on Hitler and National Socialism. Should it not encourage us to consider making available to scholars a historical-critical annotated edition of the speeches Hitler delivered when in power? As the Hitler who spoke was always at the same time a power who acted, a project of this sort would be a logical follow-up to complement the edition of *Mein Kampf*. To academia and the public alike, it would present Hitler in ruling mode.

WOLFRAM PYTA is Professor of Modern History at the University of Stuttgart.

Mein Kampf: A New Edition

MAIKEN UMBACH

Long awaited, much debated, the new critical edition of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* has now appeared. The Bavarian state had used copyright legislation to ban any new German editions after 1945. That copyright expired in January 2016, raising concerns about the proliferation of inappropriate new editions. The Institute of Contemporary History in Munich decided to pre-empt this by launching its own, critical historical edition. As the editors explain, their aim was an exercise in ideological containment: they want to foreground 'what we can counterpose to Hitler's innumerable assertions, lies, and expressions of intent'. The first print run of 4,000 copies sold out in a few days, with over 15,000 orders arriving before the book even hit the shelves.

Of course, the text had never really disappeared from view. Before 1945, 12.5 million copies of *Mein Kampf* were distributed in Germany, in over 1,000 editions. Millions of legacy copies survived and it was never illegal to trade them. There are also millions of translations, both old and new. *Mein Kampf* is widely read across the globe, regularly features on bestseller lists in India, where, perhaps most worryingly, it is also used in business schools as a manual for effective leadership techniques. The text is also freely downloadable on the internet. What is at stake is not, therefore, the availability of the text, but the political symbolism of printing a new German edition.

Can we decontaminate *Mein Kampf* by 'framing' it in historical scholarship? Commentators have been divided in their response. The Central Committee of Jews in Germany welcomed the edition as a pedagogic tool, while the World Jewish Congress and other commentators registered concerns. Raphael Gross, Director of the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture in Leipzig, suggested that the monumentality of the new edition inadvertently replicates the pathos of Hitler's own rhetoric and thus subverts any

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attempt at moral distancing. Two large-scale volumes, bound in elegant grey linen, nearly 1,948 pages and over 3,500 footnotes, do indeed make for a peculiar product. The new edition looks and feels like that of a canonical text of Western civilization. The layout of the notes, too, which literally encircle Hitler's text on three sides, is reminiscent of critical editions of 'great works', even the Bible.

And yet, there are good reasons for the edition's peculiar appearance—and they go to the heart of the political problem of how we should remember National Socialism. To frame this debate in terms of the prevention of hate speech is misleading. If we are looking for utterances that may inspire or serve the purposes of Neo Nazis today, we will find them much more readily elsewhere. The infamous speeches of Joseph Goebbels, rousing the masses to enthusiasm around the idea of 'total war', Leni Riefenstahl's great propaganda movie *Triumph of the Will*, or the antisemitic caricatures of *Der Stürmer* have never been outlawed, although they are much more likely to elicit visceral responses and polarize opinion. Such overt 'propaganda' Hitler mostly left to his henchmen. *Mein Kampf* is something altogether different. It is a long-winded, highly personal, idiosyncratic text. It only reveals a very partial picture of Nazi ideology and even less about what made the Nazi regime unique. Racist ideas are certainly sprinkled liberally throughout the book, but it contains no 'blueprint' for the Holocaust.

What is distinctive about *Mein Kampf* is, rather, its personal tone, suggesting that it holds the key to Hitler the man. It is this quality that gives it its symbolic power and which still causes so much concern today. Hitler was unique in writing a major personal and ideological memoir before he came to power and then continuing to issue that same work throughout the lifespan of the Third Reich, with only minimal changes. As Hitler is now regarded as the very epitome of evil, his authorship suggests that *Mein Kampf* must also be the most evil book in the world.

But in spite of its autobiographical features, *Mein Kampf* is surprisingly unoriginal. Whole passages are plagiarized or adapted from earlier thinkers. The Munich edition makes this very clear. We learn about the vast array of sources Hitler drew on. Many of these works were present in the prison library at Landsberg, where Hitler was incarcerated in 1924, which he, ironically but not wholly inaccurately, referred to as 'his personal university'. Footnotes compare

Hitler's prose to his models and many also reproduce excerpts of the correspondence that Hitler conducted with some of the writers he used. Not all of them were fellow Nazis, or even proto-Nazis. Hitler drew on mainstream conservative, occasionally liberal and, at times, even socialist works. To these he added numerous references to key texts of Western thought, from Homer and the Bible to Francis Bacon and Ernst Jünger. Hitler incorporated such references into his personal voice. His description of his own political awakening, for example, which opens the book, is presented in terms of a conflict with his father. It was inspired, as the Munich editors uncover, by the autobiographical writings of Richard Wagner, which served Hitler as a role model for the construction of an authentic German genius's coming-of-age.

Even when *Mein Kampf* moves beyond the personal, it defines politics in the widest possible sense. It addresses, often at length, issues ranging from economics to architecture, from landscape aesthetics to history. There are certainly antisemitic rants, too, but what gives the text coherence, in so far as it has any, is a general mood music about a new style of politics of 'intuition' and 'character', rather than theory and logical deduction. Hitler's skill was to synthesize and personalize and thus make these ideas and assumptions accessible. The ideological context on which Hitler drew was familiar to many at the time. This contributed to the book's apparent 'common sense' appeal, which in turn helped to mask some of Hitler's more outlandish conclusions as apparently self-explanatory. This also explains the ease with which *Mein Kampf* in turn was integrated into seemingly 'respectable' milieus at the time: the conservative legal theorist Carl Schmitt, for example, organized a series of academic symposia at German universities, each of which took a particular line from *Mein Kampf* as its title.

By uncovering the full extent of this relationship between the text and its context, the Munich edition provides an impressive documentation of how ordinary, in many respects, National Socialism was at the time—and how that very ordinariness lured so many people into supporting a regime that committed the most extraordinary crimes. In doing so, it steers a middle course between the moral imperative to emphasize the essential otherness of Hitler's thought and the need to document the process whereby superficially respectable assumptions about 'national greatness' and the dangers of mul-

MEIN KAMPF: A NEW EDITION

ticulturalism can evolve, quite rapidly, into a programme of war, mass murder, and genocide.

MAIKEN UMBACH is Professor of Modern History at the University of Nottingham.

An Unnecessary Undertaking? On the Annotated Edition of Mein Kampf

PATRICK BAHNERS

The copyright on Adolf Hitler's literary legacy was held by the Free State of Bavaria until 1 January 2016, when it expired. One week later, on 8 January, the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ) published a 'critical edition' of *Mein Kampf*. At a press conference held at the Institute's building in Munich, this edition of the work, the first published in Germany since 1945, was presented to the public. Two large-format volumes with a total of almost 2,000 pages provide space for more than 3,500 annotations by the four editors. The Foreword by the Institute's director, Andreas Wirsching, is dated 5 October 2015 and mentions that the project was accompanied by 'substantial public debates'. Wirsching's summing up of these debates merely states what he claims was uncontroversial: 'One thing, however, is undisputed: it would be academically, politically, and morally irresponsible to allow this racist product of inhumanity to make its way in the world freely and without a commentary, and not to counter it by providing a standard critical edition that puts the text and its author in their place.'

This is not true. The need for an annotated edition was, indeed, hotly contested. It was the subject of debates on the expiry of the copyright relating to the IfZ's scholarly plans rather than on the legal question of how to deal with unannotated reprints of *Mein Kampf*. For years, many contemporary historians had been calling for an annotated edition, but the efforts of Wirsching's predecessor, Horst Möller, to gain permission from the Bavarian state as copyright-holder had proved unsuccessful. Individual experts, however, regarded the undertaking as superfluous, including Wolfgang Benz, author and editor of standard works on genocide and antisemitism, who worked at the IfZ from 1969 to 1990. Objections in principle were ex-

Trans. Angela Davies (GHIL). First published as Patrick Bahnners, 'Ein überflüssiges Unternehmen? Zur kommentierten Edition von *Mein Kampf*', *Merkur*, 70/802 (March 2016), 18–30. Online at <www.merkur-zeitschrift.de>. © Klett-Cotta Verlag. This translation is published with the permission of Redaktion MERKUR im Klett-Cotta Verlag.

pressed by Holocaust survivors and representatives of those who had been murdered, including Charlotte Knobloch, leader of the Jewish religious community in Munich. In response to these protests, Horst Seehofer, the Bavarian Minister President, withdrew the state funding which had been pledged by the *Landtag*.

It is understandable that, given the objections and resistance to the project, Wirsching wanted to express his conviction of its rightness as clearly as possible. To claim that one's own position is difficult or even impossible to contest is a stock response in a situation like this. But Wirsching turns the Institute directorate's firm opinion that it is difficult to contradict their view into the false assertion that it was not disputed. This is not a good omen for an edition which has made it its aim to correct every false statement by the author. This understanding of the need for comprehensive editorial correction lies behind the grandiloquent claim that the edition intends to put Hitler in his place. And it is in relation to this specific concept of a commentary providing constant contradiction, not just for the project of an annotated edition as such, that Wirsching claims there is no alternative. Not to have produced these two massive tomes, he suggests, would have been academically, politically, and morally irresponsible. Has there ever been another academic work whose publication is dictated by a categorical imperative? In the case of the director of a research institute which, since its employees acted as expert witnesses in the war crimes trials of the 1950s and 1960s, sees its special expertise as measuring the scope for responsibility in extreme situations, such expressions of justification must be placed in the balance and weighed up carefully. These expert witness reports were likewise self-published by the IfZ in book form.

Without Seeing the Object

On 7 January 2016, the day before *Mein Kampf* was published, an article entitled 'Das absolut Böse' appeared in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, questioning the legitimacy of this 'critical edition'.¹ Its author, Jeremy Adler, argued as a literary scholar. The intellectual force of his intervention came from the fact that he did not pull any punches. He log-

¹ See above, Jeremy Adler, 'Absolute Evil', in this issue of the *GHIL Bulletin*.

ically developed his criticism out of one thought, the metaphysical starting point for the craft of editing. The key sentence of Adler's argument reads as follows: 'Scholarly editions by definition serve the author's intentions.' The 'project of printing a book because one rejects it', he says, goes against 'the whole tradition of textual editing since late Antiquity and the Jewish Middle Ages'. Those responsible for the edition who spoke at the press conference did not refute this argument. They complained that Adler had made his judgement without examining the book, of which no advance copies had been distributed. But the point of his piece was precisely that it had been written without seeing its object. Adler wanted to demonstrate the impossibility of an edition of *Mein Kampf*, and the care which was taken with individual annotations was irrelevant.

Adler obviously lacked knowledge of internal institutional working processes, the Institute's director stated in front of the world's press. This critique of the critic was directed at the conclusion of Adler's article, which deals with institutional politics. In fact, it does contain an error: not all four editors are employees of the IfZ. The volumes themselves, however, reveal next to nothing about the internal history of the edition. It will soon be necessary to explain to students that the importance of the 'public debate' was reflected in the withdrawal of public funding.

According to Adler, the point of preserving a text in an edition is to overcome time. Seen in this way, every edition has an anti-historical tendency. 'The main purpose of critical editions is to preserve an original for all time.' In this case, 'a miserable, bungled piece of work will be granted the same dignity as Homer and Plato, the Bible and the Talmud'. The similarity to the Bible and the Talmud is obvious because the double-page layout with annotations placed not only underneath the text but also in the margins of the page adopts an ordering principle that we first encounter in the manuscripts of these sacred texts. We can read this in the Introduction to the edition, and also that this layout has 'proved itself', and was used in an edition of the Talmud as late as 1979. Nothing more. Adler's divinatory suspicions are confirmed: 'The editors want to "frame" the original, but are unaware of how deeply offensive it is to see an editorial technique developed for the Talmud being used in *Mein Kampf*.'

On the other hand, they tried to avoid giving offence where, except for a few specialists in the history of typography, nobody

could have taken it: in the choice of font. They considered using Trump Antiqua as 'a readable and objective font with a neutral effect'. But after 'further research', it was discovered that in 1934 Georg Trump had been promoted to the headship of the masters' college for book printing in Munich, and had been greeted with a *Sieg-Heil* salute on taking up this office. 'This proximity to the Third Reich was on no account to be created.' In terms of the categories of resistance developed at the IfZ during Martin Broszat's directorship, this esoteric distancing gesture must be classified as 'resistivity' (*Resistenz*).

In their instructions for using the critical apparatus, the editors pose the question: 'To what extent is it appropriate to edit a text like *Mein Kampf* using standards that are usually reserved for literary texts? Does this not confer on Hitler's writing a linguistic, intellectual, or even artistic significance that it never really had?' They reassure themselves by pointing out that the text-critical treatment as such, the documentation of variants, 'ultimately works against the aura of the sacred with which Nazi propaganda tried to surround Hitler's debut as a "writer"'. But as it is sacred texts that are generally handed down with a text-critical treatment, this does not amount to much. Given the Biblical and Talmudic associations of the page layout, we will have to understand the word 'entgegenarbeiten' (to work against) used in the quotation above as meaning the opposite of what the authors intended. Since Ian Kershaw discovered the phrase in a speech by a Nazi agrarian politician who claimed that it was the duty of every German to work towards the Führer ('dem Führer entgegenzuarbeiten'), it has become customary in research on National Socialism to use the term 'entgegenarbeiten' to mean 'to work towards'.

A Unique Edition?

Ian Kershaw, biographer of Hitler and historian of the Hitler effect, that is, the dissemination of belief in the Führer throughout German society, was present in Munich on 8 January 2016 and contested the uniqueness of the edition as asserted by Adler. Texts such as *Mein Kampf*, Kershaw said, were constantly being edited: works by Stalin and Mussolini, and by Hitler, in a multi-volume edition put out by the IfZ of his *Reden, Schriften, Anordnungen*, a project now in a way completed by this edition of *Mein Kampf*. There is, however, no other

example of a tyrant's manifesto that is edited like *Mein Kampf*, with the attention to insignificant detail of graphic design worthy of a classic, but in a spirit of inexorable rejection of the contents. The correction of autobiographical myths and other propaganda lies is certainly standard practice when editing the ego documents of dictators. Such corrections are among the necessary information that every scholarly edition of a historical source must provide. But Christian Hartmann and his co-editors also refute statements by Hitler whose ideological nature is obvious. According to Hans Buchheim, it was one of the Institute's first tasks to put right the 'incompletenesses', 'distortions', and 'ambiguities' in the memoirs of old Nazis. Hartmann & Co. now want to add an explanation of the rest of the world to their exposition of the world view. 'The commentary adds everything that Hitler ignores or deliberately conceals.'

In the Introduction, the editors themselves concede that, contrary to what Kershaw said at the press conference, there is 'fundamentally very little that is comparable' to their project. They admit that their polemical commentary may 'seem unusual from the point of view of classical editing techniques'. 'But it is also unusual—and this brings us to the core of the problem—to publish an edition of a source whose historicization is not yet complete.' This cryptic statement forms the final sentence of the Preface, the introduction to the Introduction, and it is not explained further. What does historicization mean here?

The book has not yet become completely historical; it is not yet a historical object like any other. If the statement may be paraphrased thus, it relates to the way in which *Mein Kampf* was treated as something clandestine after the war. The fact that there were no reprints came to be seen as a prohibition. There could be no cursory treatment of this vestige of the dictatorship, as would be normal for books, with the familiarity of browsing quickly giving way to indifference. This book, of all books, that has always been described as unreadable, could by no means be boring. If we then understand why *Mein Kampf* has not yet been historicized, it is strange to find that, in the context of source editions, this is seen as something unusual. Most historical sources, after all, are published for the first time when they are edited. Previously these documents, diaries, or household accounts were unknown. Their historicization could only begin once they were published. In this sense, namely, that it could not be printed for seventy years, *Mein Kampf* is not unusual.

The statement about incomplete historicization becomes meaningful only if we compare it exclusively with other sources on the history of Hitler, such as, for example, his speeches in the Reichstag, the Hossbach memorandum on wartime planning, the Nuremberg laws, and Leni Riefenstahl's films. The editors do not specifically mention sources on the Nazi period here because for professional contemporary historians, the terms 'historicization' and 'National Socialism' belong together anyway, especially for employees of the IfZ. These two terms stand for the Institute's theoretical ambitions at the height of its prestige, for the historical and political will expressed in a disciplinary avant-gardism. Over this, however, is a question mark about the ability to deal with criticism. 'Plea for a Historicization of National Socialism' is the title of an essay which Martin Broszat published in *Merkur* in 1985.²

Broszat, who made himself an advocate of historicization, although this was meant to be a natural, inevitable process anyway, presented it as a counter-concept to a moral view or, at least, to the 'blanket' condemnation and 'exclusion' of the Hitler period that was typical of 'political pedagogics'. This antithetical stance provoked Saul Friedländer's criticism. As Ernst Nolte also fought under the banner of historicization in the *Historikerstreit* that broke out in 1986, Broszat, pioneer and organizer of structuralism in research on the Nazi period, had to defend himself against concern that his concept amounted to no more than a relativization of German crimes against humanity. In an exchange of letters, printed in the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, the IfZ's house journal, Broszat and Friedländer tried to clarify their respective positions.³

From today's point of view, what is striking about Broszat's essay is that genocide and the war of extermination are marginal to his overall interpretation of National Socialism. Broszat mainly deals in a highly abstract manner with the motives for the participation of broad social strata, emphasizing the desire for social advancement and downplaying any ideological agreement with the regime's programmes. At the beginning of the essay, to be sure, the murder of

² Martin Broszat, 'Plädoyer für eine Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus', *Merkur*, no. 435 (May 1985), 373–85.

³ Martin Broszat and Saul Friedländer, 'Um die "Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus": Ein Briefwechsel', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 36 (1988), 339–72.

Jews serves as an explanation for why this past does not want to go away. The 'shock of civilization' persists, as Broszat quotes from the *New York Review of Books*, but he goes on immediately to restrict this statement to the wider readership of this review: 'This applies not only to Israel, but also to the big cities of America's East Coast, where hundreds of thousands of emigrants and survivors from central and eastern Europe found refuge.' Memory of the Holocaust as a local phenomenon?

In his correspondence with Friedländer, more space is devoted to the murder of the Jews. The same applies to an essay in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, the main journal for professional historians, in which Broszat brings together in a collage the most important parts of his side of the correspondence, but without referring to Friedländer, thus making a monologue out of what had been a dialogue.⁴ Here Broszat speaks of the 'centrality of Auschwitz', but considers it to be so only 'in retrospect' because the victims could not leave the subject alone. 'In view of the particularly intense Jewish memory of the Holocaust, it may very well be that, in the memory of the world, it will eventually allow other deeds and misdeeds of the Third Reich increasingly to fade away.' But according to Broszat, 'the historian cannot simply accept' the 'whole history' of the Third Reich being 'placed in the shadow of Auschwitz'. The (non-Jewish) historian makes himself the advocate of the non-Jewish victims, including those 'elements of non-National Socialist German traditions' that, 'because they were "pressed into service", to some extent themselves became victims of National Socialism'.

Broszat explains delayed historicization by pointing out that even the academic literature is still dominated by 'the overwhelming impression of the catastrophic end and final state', 'the idea of the systematic character, calculated succession, and ideological purpose of a machiavellian regime working with divided roles under the predominant leadership figure of Hitler'. The backward state of historical awareness is here demonstrated by the fact that Broszat's own approach has not yet established itself. After all, his functionalism consisted precisely in criticism of this notion of system, succession, purpose, and Hitler's dominance. Broszat saw a 'demonological'

⁴ Martin Broszat, 'Was heißt Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus?', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 247 (1988), 1-14.

view of Hitler that rejected the Nazi period as a whole, but in reality exonerated the posthumous exorcists, as typical of the immediate postwar period. In his study of the Holocaust and West German historians, Nicolas Berg shows that Broszat's narrative of structuralism replacing demonology is a myth.⁵ The doctrine of a chaotic division of labour in the apparatus of the Nazi state, driven by necessity and its own dynamic, was developed early in the existence of the discipline of contemporary history, and its outcome is no less exonerating than blaming the demon Hitler and his clique. And it was part of the founding programme of the IfZ, as the writings of the second director, Hermann Mau, demonstrate.

New Objectivity

To describe the ideal of a historiography that took the history of the Third Reich out from under the shadow of Auschwitz, Broszat in 1985 used a term dating from the period before National Socialism: *neue Sachlichkeit* (new objectivity). In the IfZ this ideal research aesthetic was anything but new. Berg argues that the demand for objectivity in force from the founding of the Institute to the time when Broszat was director made it possible to refuse positions at the IfZ to private scholars who were Holocaust survivors. One of the authors affected by this was H. G. Adler, Jeremy Adler's father. He had been interned in Theresienstadt in February 1942, and was taken to Auschwitz in 1944. In 1955 he published a book about Theresienstadt. With the historians of the IfZ, Adler shared an anti-modern perspective on the camps as exemplifying an 'administered world' (*verwaltete Welt*). His correspondence with the Institute shows that in contrast to other Jewish private scholars, such as Joseph Wulf, Adler endorsed the *habitus* of objectivity that shaped the IfZ. Thus in 1959, when seeking a research grant for his work on the deportation of the Jews, he undertook to maintain a 'very rigorous and unemotional tone'. Adler received funding for his research, but when he submit-

⁵ Nicolas Berg, *Der Holocaust und die westdeutschen Historiker: Erforschung und Erinnerung* (Göttingen, 2003). An abridged version has been published in English translation as *The Holocaust and the West German Historians: Historical Interpretation and Autobiographical Memory* (Madison, 2015).

ted the manuscript for publication in 1965, it was rejected by the IfZ. The Institute's referees criticized it for not separating evaluation of the sources from analysis. And they missed an overview of the state of research in what they regarded as a 'highly personal product' by someone who was 'not only a scholar, but also a contemporary and directly involved'.

In 1960 Adler had suggested commissioning Hermann Langbein, co-founder of the International Auschwitz Committee, to carry out research on a 'typology of the camp staff'. The IfZ replied that Langbein would do better to present his 'experiences and insights' in the form of a 'witness report'. They would be delighted, they wrote, to receive 'a detailed report on Auschwitz by someone who experienced it', which could provide 'a counterpart to the memoirs' of the camp commander, Rudolf Höß. The IfZ had edited Höß's prison notes in 1958, although the Institute's Academic Advisory Board had expressed concern 'that the Institute intended to publish the written effusions of a mass murderer'. According to Broszat, Höß had 'a kind of retrospective objective interest (*Sach-Interesse*) in the topic', and although Broszat regarded this kind of 'objectivity' as 'concise and displaying the precision of a book-keeper', he also used such expressions of disgust as 'shameless' and 'overbearing' to describe it.

In his letters to Friedländer, Broszat insisted that there was a conflict between strictly scholarly research and eye witness accounts by the victim, which are not required to be objective, or the collective memory of survivors, which passes such reports on. Broszat posits a contrast between Jewish memory and German research, along the lines of the conflict between *mythos* and *logos*. His predecessor, Mau, had described contemporary historians and eye-witnesses, who in the early years of the IfZ typically came from the circle of the tainted, encountering each other in a feeling of contemporaneity: 'This sometimes produced a surprising and moving human solidarity between the historian and the witness, which could be extremely useful for the work.' Thirty years later Broszat recognized solidarity only with witnesses from among the victims, but now in the knowledge that fate had separated the historian from the witness. 'Among the peculiarities of investigating this past as a scholar is the awareness that it is still occupied by a variety of monuments of mourning and also accusatory memory, occupied by the painful feelings of many, especially Jewish people, who insist on a mythical form of remembering.'

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Although the word 'occupied' is here drawn from psychology, given the spatial metaphor of the memorial landscape, an association with occupation also suggests itself.

Although Broszat himself spoke in images, he was disturbed by the power of images in the 'mythical memory' which might be based on 'the forgetting of details and imponderables of history still familiar to contemporaries'. 'Among the problems faced by a younger generation of German historians who tend more towards rational understanding is certainly that they have to deal with this sort of contrary memory that coarsens history among those damaged and persecuted by the Nazi regime and their descendants.' This opposition between increased rationality and coarsening shocked Friedländer, whose parents had sent the 10 year old to a Catholic boarding school in France before they were murdered. Broszat rejected Friedländer's precise questions about the implications of his constructions based on oppositions as an expression of 'mistrust' and 'suspicion', the 'reasons for which', however, remained 'hidden' from him.

Pandora's Box

A documentation of sources on the activities of the Warsaw ghetto's chief medical officer, who had become head of the Federal German Health Authority in Bonn, put together by Joseph Wulf, gave Broszat an 'impression of carelessness or coarsening' in 1964. In one of his letters to Wulf, Broszat assured him: 'I understand the motives behind your work.' In the same way, the editors of *Mein Kampf*, in their Introduction declare that Charlotte Knobloch's 'judgement' that the book is a Pandora's box which can never be closed again is 'psychologically comprehensible' and must be 'taken seriously'. This expression of understanding alone can be regarded as condescending; the psychological is not far from the pathological. The assumption that Knobloch is judging out of personal concern rather than articulating a general point of view is misplaced because it was only after speaking to other survivors that she, as their spokeswoman, came out in opposing the editorial project. Jeremy Adler warns: 'This new edition may have been produced with the best will in the world, but the reprinting of any questionable text can have only one outcome: to disseminate the author's views. No editor can determine whether

these will meet with public approval or rejection—and responsible editors may not direct their readers.’ Rather than leaving it to the future to decide whether Knobloch’s fears would prove to be unfounded, the editors discuss whether the image of a Pandora’s box is ‘appropriate’. ‘Does this not completely overestimate, mystify all over again, and ultimately suppress the potential of a book whose first volume appeared ninety years ago and which, in many respects, is quite simply old, stale, and incomprehensible to today’s readers?’ Mystification is a polite synonym for coarsening.

Take note: this book is so dangerous that it cannot be allowed to make its way in the world unaccompanied, although the annotated edition is on sale freely and can be passed on by one reader to another. But the annotations, at a stroke, can make it harmless. Belief in the powers of scholarship to combat magic is the red thread running through the work of the IfZ. The editors say that the main guideline of the editorial work is the ‘principle of objectification’ (*Versachlichung*). Under the proviso of ‘rationality, verifiability, and universality’, they are seeking an ‘enlightening debate’ with *Mein Kampf*, ‘which will put an end to the potential power of this symbol once and for all’. It cannot be claimed that, unlike Höß, Hitler made even the smallest attempt to simulate objectivity. In a book of essays attempting a diagnosis of Adolf Hitler, to which H. G. Adler contributed, Hans Buchheim wrote in 1960: ‘When he said Germany, he was not serving the cause (*Sache*), but trying to force it into his service.’ What Hitler lays out in his work is, from the first to the last page, the opposite of rational and universal, and it is verifiable only against the author’s will. Thus in the view of the editors, Hitler’s history of the Nazi Party is ‘anything but an objective, true-to-life account’. He lacked ‘any systematic schooling in either writing or logical thinking’. To be sure, Hitler called the Landsberg fortress, where he had written the first volume of *Mein Kampf*, his ‘university at government expense’. But ‘this had nothing at all to do with scholarship’.

In the history of the IfZ, the publication of this edition marks the end of the dominance of structuralism. This method is no longer surrounded by an aura of progressiveness, as it was during Broszat’s time. The commentary in the edition juxtaposes Hitler’s pronouncements with his later actions, allowing the impression to arise that there was a great deal of systematic planning and direction in his policies, whose primacy Friedländer defended against the social dy-

namic invoked by Broszat. This revision is not official Institute policy; it would go against the rules governing a research institute. The current director, Wirsching, takes every opportunity to stress that *Mein Kampf* must not be read as a 'blueprint'. To do otherwise would be to revert to the 'Hitlerism' of the demonological phase. The editor in charge, Christian Hartmann, a student of Andreas Hillgruber, on the other hand, intimates that in his opinion a blueprint is not a bad image.

The notion of 'error' runs through Broszat's letters to Friedländer. He wanted to understand 'why such large parts of a civilized nation erroneously fell so strongly under the influence of National Socialism and Hitler'. He believed that the research on everyday life in Bavaria which he had conducted had 'made the motives of erring, petty bourgeois Nazi supporters understandable'. But in what had the 'erring petty bourgeois of the Nazi period' been mistaken? Wasn't it in the assumption that the path indicated by *Mein Kampf* did not lead to Auschwitz? In his first comprehensive overview of National Socialism (1960), Broszat spoke of the 'extraordinary self-delusion' of the Germans who had ceded responsibility for their lives to the 'monstrous Nazi ideology'. According to Broszat, Hitler's autobiographical manifesto, 12 million copies of which had been distributed, played no part in this monstrous outcome. In an essay about Hitler's 'second book', a foreign policy work of 1928 which was printed in the IfZ's publication series in 1961, Broszat called it 'methodologically unfortunate' that contemporary historiography 'draws so strongly on *Mein Kampf* as evidence of Hitler's political maxims'. 'It is part of the history of *Mein Kampf* that it was hardly read or taken seriously by believers, critics, and opponents until 1945'.⁶ This textbook view, dating from the post-war period, has today been refuted thanks to the research of Othmar Plöckinger, one of the four editors of the edition.⁷

For Jeremy Adler, the fact that 'the IfZ sees its work as paying homage to the victims' is 'pure mockery: they are calling on the defenceless dead to justify their own work'. The relevant part of the Introduction speaks of respect: 'And, finally, there is another reason

⁶ Martin Broszat, 'Betrachtungen zu "Hitlers Zweitem Buch"', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 9 (1961), 417–29.

⁷ Othmar Plöckinger, *Geschichte eines Buches: Adolf Hitlers 'Mein Kampf' 1922–1945* (Munich, 2011); id. (ed.), *Quellen und Dokumente zur Geschichte von 'Mein Kampf' 1924–1945* (Stuttgart, 2016).

for a close and critical commentary on *Mein Kampf*: to show respect for those who fell victim to the ideology expressed here.' At the press conference, Wirsching said that they had respect for criticism from the perspective of the victims, and he repeated this when he was asked about Adler. 'Respect for the victims of the Nazi crimes', Broszat wrote on 29 September 1987 in the first of his three letters to Friedländer, requires us 'to leave space for their mythical memory.' Wirsching accused Adler of restoring the negative myth of the book that had been locked away. The editors sum up their work by pointing out that 'Hitler's work represents something like a monster in terms of content, language, and structure', so that 'they had no choice but to look as closely as possible at its shape'. Like a monster: the editors respond to the 'continuing mythologization of the book' in the language of ancient mythology.

A book by Hitler was the very first edition of sources published by the IfZ in 1951: a posthumous compilation of table talk (*Tischgespräche*) in the Führer headquarters. Federal President Heuss had personally signalled his approval in the meeting of the Council and Advisory Board that took this decision. Nevertheless, this edition also created a scandal. The Cabinet of the Federal Republic of Germany resolved to review the Institute's activities and attempted to prevent the publication, especially a preview which was to appear in the illustrated magazine *Quick*. The Bavarian Minister President, Ehard, condemned the publication in a parliamentary speech to the *Landtag*. The Institute's director, Mau, had rather imprudently told *Spiegel* magazine that the IfZ was bringing out an 'international publishing sensation'. In the *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* we read: 'We must ask whether it was sensible and right to publish this book. To answer yes would be to leave oneself open to the reproach of having overlooked the potentially dangerous impact of sentences written by this man who, it seems, had something to say on every subject. To answer no would mean giving a bad report to a liberal way of life, or rather, to the degree to which it is perfected in Germany.' On 8 January 2016 Ian Kershaw endorsed the sentiment expressed in the last sentence.

The editor of the *Tischgespräche*, the influential and eloquent historian Gerhard Ritter, who had been arrested after 20 July 1944, had to leave the IfZ's Advisory Board. He had dispensed with a commentary, accepting the danger that 'ignorant readers would take

Hitler's most extreme statements at face value merely because they were made so confidently'. The Advisory Board expressed its astonishment at the extent to which Ritter had 'underestimated the importance of a scholarly commentary'. With her unflinching talent for cutting to the chase, Hannah Arendt wrote in her review in *Monat*: 'As there was no commentary of any sort, Hitler was given the word, freely and without contradiction, just as when he was alive.' Broszat called Arendt's criticism 'naive' and 'wrong'. The table talks, he went on, were 'unquestionably one of the best sources for getting close to Hitler's unadorned nature', now outdone by *Mein Kampf*, which is, for the editors, 'the most comprehensive and, in some respects, the most intimate testimony of a dictator whose policies and crimes completely changed the world'.

Faced with Hitler the politician and the criminal, Wirsching and his editors are not lost for words. But as at Broszat's time, they lack words for critics whose points of view the editors explain in terms of personal history. The premiss on which Nicolas Berg's work is based is confirmed: it is worth 'paying particular attention to failed communication in historiographical debates as a crucial point in the effort to gain knowledge'.

PATRICK BAHNERS is a German historian, author, and journalist for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Hitler's Mein Kampf: An Edition—But For Whom?

WOLFGANG SCHIEDER

After seventy-two years an edition of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* has again been published in Germany. The editors of the two-volume work stress that there is 'basically nothing comparable' (p. 66) to it.¹ This is true to the extent that it is the first historical-critical complete edition, but there can also hardly be any other contemporary edition that has caused such a public stir, even before publication. The reasons for this are not so much scholarly as political. The Nazi Franz Eher Verlag, which held the copyright for *Mein Kampf*, was banned by the Allied Control Commission in 1945 as an NSDAP organization. After a complicated legal process in 1965 the copyright was transferred to the Bavarian state whose Finance Ministry has held it since then. According to the legal provisions the Ministry could retain the copyright for seventy years calculated from Hitler's death and this meant that until 1 January 2016 it could prevent any reprint of *Mein Kampf*. Of course, the copyright was not intended to protect the author but had a political purpose right from the start: it was meant to help prevent *Mein Kampf* from disseminating Nazi ideology.

What was forbidden, however, was reprinting the book, not owning it or trading in old copies. In any case the ban was very difficult to enforce abroad. For all these years anyone with an overwhelming urge to read it could do so in larger libraries, buy it at second-hand markets, or acquire reprints abroad, where neo-Nazi publishers often even had copies of the German original on offer, for instance, in Denmark or Canada. In the meantime, the book can also be downloaded from the internet. Even this reviewer has owned a copy for some years and often used it as the textual basis for his research and uni-

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¹ Since the edition, somewhat confusingly, has two different paginations and also chapter numbering, pages for quotations are from the only pagination that runs through the two volumes, pp. 1–1,966.

versity teaching; naturally its use for scholarly purposes was not banned either.

It was just widespread ignorance of all this that gave rise to the false public assumption that only with the expiry of the copyright on 1 January 2016 would *Mein Kampf* again become available after a long time. Connected with this was fear that the book could once again have a disastrous effect, something which must be counteracted. Of course, this was also a purely political assumption, by no means generally shared by historians. From a scholarly perspective publication of *Mein Kampf* after expiry of the copyright was nothing to get excited about as long as it did not explicitly serve to glorify National Socialism. The only cause for concern was the idea that neo-Nazi publishers might profit from a new edition of the book, for which a specific defence strategy should be considered.

In the opinion of this reviewer and others the public hype about *Mein Kampf* is based on the notion, disputed by scholars, that Hitler essentially had this book to thank for his path to political power. However, until 1933 *Mein Kampf* was anything but a hugely successful publication. In fact, the public tended to be unimpressed by it if they took any notice of it at all.² Before Hitler came to power it was Alfred Rosenberg's *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*, not so much *Mein Kampf*, that was regarded as the central manifesto of National Socialism and, significantly, disputed by the Christian churches.³ To put it somewhat exaggeratedly, one could say that Hitler came to power despite, not because of, *Mein Kampf*. As his early critical biographers from Theodor Heuss to Konrad Heiden have established, it was not Hitler's writings that had such a fateful effect on the masses but his speeches.⁴ Fixation with *Mein Kampf* distracts from the fact that it was quite different political, social, economic, and cultural factors that 'made Hitler possible' (Werner Conze).

This is not to say that it is quite wrong to republish Hitler's *Mein Kampf* today. The book is undoubtedly a 'key historical source', if not

² See Othmar Plöckinger, *Geschichte des Buches: Adolf Hitlers 'Mein Kampf' 1922–1945* (2nd edn. Munich, 2011), 173–91.

³ Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (4th edn. Munich, 1932).

⁴ Theodor Heuss, *Hitlers Weg: Eine historisch-politische Studie über den Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1932); Konrad Heiden, *Adolf Hitler: Das Zeitalter der Verantwortungslosigkeit. Eine Biographie* (Zurich, 1936).

for Hitler's political rise then for his original pipedreams. The editors rightly stress that the book is 'the most comprehensive and, in some respects, the most intimate testimony of a dictator whose policies and crimes completely changed the world' (p. 9). Regardless of the book's contradictory content and its chaotic structure, in which biographical and ideological elements are completely mixed up, it can certainly provide important insights into Hitler's self-perception and policies as a dictator. This applies to his obsessive racial antisemitism and also to his cut and dried foreign policy notions. There can also be no doubt that after Hitler came to power the book, with massive state support, was made into the central programmatic text for National Socialism.

So it certainly is a valid enterprise to present a largely misinformed public with an edition of *Mein Kampf* accompanied by critical commentary. The Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ) has delivered this service. To a large extent the edition historicizes *Mein Kampf* in its political significance and recognizes it as a characteristic product of the time in which it was written. Andreas Wirsching, Director of the IfZ, hopes thereby to prevent in a purely scholarly way this 'racist product' from making 'its way in the world freely and without a commentary' (p. 4) again today.⁵ It is questionable, however, whether this can actually be achieved with the edition.

Background, Aim, and Presentation of the Edition

The mere announcement that this scholarly edition was to be published did mean that after the copyright expired no German publisher dared to put a simple reprint of the original text on the market. And so far there has been no objection to the fact that the IfZ, out of understandable concern that a private (possibly extreme right-wing) publisher could make money from *Mein Kampf*, published the new edition itself using public funds. However, this reticence does not, of course, apply to translations of the original text into other languages that are starting to appear outside Germany. In Italy today there are already six different editions piled on the tables of larger bookshops, though all are reprints of the 1934 translation. And although there

⁵ Andreas Wirsching in the Foreword to the edition.

was a public dispute about the advisability of a French edition after the socialist politician Jean-Luc Mélenchon came out heavily against it the translation was still published after renowned contemporary historians such as Christian Ingrao gave their support. In this context it is completely farcical that the Bavarian Landtag decided not to finance the project any longer having previously provided, it is said, about 600,000 euros. One can only applaud the Munich institute for not being intimidated by this and for publishing the edition using its own and third-party funds.

But how was the edition of *Mein Kampf* supposed to be structured in terms of content? If the main aim was to enlighten the public then Hitler's book needed to be thoroughly commented, but without any burdensome research. If, on the other hand, the aim was to do justice to the professional rules for historical editions, comprehensive text-critical work was needed but very little commentary since experts in the field can be assumed to have a high degree of knowledge. The editors have made no clear decision in either direction. Given public expectations on the one hand and the requirement to meet academic standards on the other this was probably the only solution. However, the result is not entirely convincing.

In technical terms, the editors' greatest problem was that there is no complete manuscript of *Mein Kampf* that can serve as the basis of an edition. Of the original typed text of *Mein Kampf* only 23 pages remain: the first five pages and a further 18 conceptual pages with notes on chapters 4 to 7 and 10 to 11 of the first volume.⁶ Apart from that an earlier printed work by Hitler has survived, namely the well-known essay entitled 'Warum musste ein 8. November kommen?' of 1924.⁷ On the other hand, another text, a sixty-page memorandum that Hitler presented at his trial in spring 1924 has strangely gone missing. So the only possible basis for the edition was the text of the printed book, though between 1925 (vol. 1) and 1927 (vol. 2), combined in 1930 into a *Volksausgabe*, no less than thirty-eight versions

⁶ See *Mein Kampf*, 69, based on Florian Beier and Othmar Plöckinger, 'Neue Dokumente zu Hitlers Buch Mein Kampf', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 57/2 (2009), 261–318.

⁷ Adolf Hitler, 'Warum musste ein 8. November kommen?', *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, Apr. 1924, printed in Eberhard Jäckel (ed.), *Hitler: Sämtliche Aufzeichnungen 1905–1924* (Stuttgart, 1980), 1,216–27.

were published.⁸ Because of this dilemma the editors decided to take the first editions of the first and second volumes as their text and to take account of seven other editions at particular points. This proved to be a sensible decision since in the editions selected there were only small stylistic changes, nothing substantial (p. 70). So the edition's critical apparatus does not deliver any particular insights. The editors can rightly ascertain that in twenty years Hitler made virtually no changes to his book.

Another editorial decision concerns the layout. In principle the editors had two possibilities here: they could either stick to the original setting of Hitler's text or else ignore the original pagination. The editors went for the first option, though without really explaining this important decision (p. 77). While commentary and text are divided on each double page into a pattern of five columns, the body of the text is reproduced on each right-hand page in two columns and in its original size.⁹

However, the disadvantage of this historicizing procedure, which amazingly the editors have not considered, is that it creates great proximity to Hitler's book. Instead of the reprint generating the greatest possible distance from the Führer's efforts, which was actually the editors' intention, they produce a sort of authenticity. The edition makes it possible to read the text of *Mein Kampf* in its original form without taking notice of the surrounding commentary and the text-critical apparatus. The effect of such selective reading of the edition on uninformed readers could well be rather creepy and would probably induce them to read the commentary anyway. However, uncritical sympathizers or those with merely a feeling of nostalgia have the opportunity to enjoy *Mein Kampf* as if it were an original or unchanged reprinted edition. Not to have thought that all their editorial efforts could have been for nothing due to the graphic layout of the text is a considerable failure on the part of the editors.

Of course, in the translations of *Mein Kampf* that are now popping up all over the place the original text is certainly presented in an

⁸ See Hermann Hammer, 'Die deutschen Ausgaben von Hitlers "Mein Kampf"', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 4/2 (1966), 161-78, to which the editors essentially refer. Cf. *Mein Kampf*, 71.

⁹ On p. 79 of the edition it states that there are always two columns for the commentary and three for the text, but this is an error – the exact opposite is the case.

alienated way, so why not in a critical edition in the original language? I consider this to be a spurious attempt at originality in a historicist vein, which in the case of Hitler, of all people, is totally inappropriate. Precisely if the intention is not to show too much respect to the original, as the editors claim, then it would have been sensible to abandon the original pagination of *Mein Kampf*, and to chose a different path typographically as well, not just in terms of the font used. Technically it would not have been difficult, as in many other editions, to mark the original pagination in a suitable form in the printed text. Admittedly this procedure would mean that the original running titles would disappear but since it can be proved that these were not introduced by Hitler but in the first volume by Josef Stolzinger-Cerny, an editor with the *Völkischer Beobachter*, and in the second volume by Rudolf Hess, this would be no great loss.

Again, as in other editions, forgoing reproduction of the original would have made it possible to have a variable pagination and, where necessary, to reduce the body of the text to fewer lines, depending on the number of text-critical notes and the amount of commentary. At least this would have avoided overloading the text with 'white areas'.¹⁰ According to the reviewer's rough calculation, on the left-hand side of the double pages there are at least fifty with a maximum of three, mostly very short notes, and at least ten are completely empty. In about half of the cases the space under the body of the text is also free of notes. So it is hard not to think that if there had been a different typographical page layout a great deal of space could have been saved in the edition.

On the other hand, of course, it could be argued that ultimately it is of little importance whether a new edition of *Mein Kampf* is very lengthy or space-saving. After all, this is the first complete critical version of *Mein Kampf*. This would be all well and good if the editors had not had the stated intention of making the edition particularly reader-friendly (p. 79). This is certainly not the case. Two heavy volumes measuring 21x28 cm, in other words, the size of a lexicon, are not exactly reader-friendly, as the reviewer has discovered. The editors' assertion that this is a format 'often used for works of non-fiction but also for magazines' (p. 77) does not help at all. Since when does the format of *Spiegel* or *Gala* justify that of a scholarly edition?

¹⁰ *Mein Kampf*, 77. This technical term conceals the fact that on many of the double pages of the edition there is an enormous amount of empty space.

Finally the pretentious layout of the edition is particularly apparent in the way the commentating notes are arranged. In theory, in the format chosen for the edition, these could have been printed on the left-hand side of the double pages in three columns and on the right-hand side under the text of *Mein Kampf*, again in two more columns in numerical sequence. For some inexplicable reason, however, the editors decided to interrupt the arrangement of the columns and to place the notes randomly, such that there is no recognizable ordering principle. What is more, since the notes are set in italics page after page a turbulent, sometimes chaotic picture emerges. One often has to search for a note because the sequence is not immediately apparent. This system certainly cannot exactly be described as reader-friendly.

As a model for this format the editors, or the graphic designer, refer amongst others to Arno Schmitt's *Zettels Traum*, well known for being a particularly absurd example of graphic book structuring (p. 76). However, they also refer to a Jewish Bible from Venice of 1546 and to a reprint of an early modern edition of the Talmud as 'striking forms' of book structuring (p. 75). Quite apart from the fact that, unlike the present edition, in the case of early prints of the Talmud it was a question of fitting as much as possible on to a page because of the cost of paper, it seems to me to be extremely dubious to refer to editions of the Talmud, of all things, when discussing an edition of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

The fact that the editors were not entirely comfortable with the layout of the edition is revealed in the few attempts they make to defend its structure with metaphorical concepts. The key concept here is that of 'encirclement'. Their assertion is that the text of *Mein Kampf* is 'encircled' by the critical notes and the text-critical apparatus (pp. 79, 81). What this is supposed to mean is never explained. Presumably this metaphor, military in origin, is meant to suggest that the surrounding commentary makes the content of Hitler's text untouchable. But even if we were to take this metaphor seriously it makes no sense. The commentary and text-critical apparatus leave so many holes open to the text that there can be no question of complete 'encirclement'. So this metaphor is at best an original idea that has no place in a scholarly edition.

The editors talk of an 'edition with a point of view' (p. 12). This sounds very decisive but it is less unusual than they seem to be

aware. The fact that as an editor one would have a conviction and would make this into the yardstick for the scholarly work actually goes without saying. More promising is the editors' intention to see *Mein Kampf*, beyond the actual text, as a 'powerful symbol overlaid by myth' that should be demystified (p. 10). Unfortunately, however, here too there is no explanation of this symbolism. Do they mean a subtext beneath the text of *Mein Kampf* that needs deciphering? Or is it about the effect of *Mein Kampf* quite separately from the text? These are by no means trivial questions, for it would only be possible to demythologize *Mein Kampf* if it were clear what the mythology was in the first place. Presumably the editors are convinced that whatever myth *Mein Kampf* is about is destroyed by their critical commentary so that there is no need to go into such complicated questions at all. But this would be a mistake, as demonstrated, for instance, by the scholarly dispute about Hitler's 'charisma'.¹¹

Assessment of the Edition's Contents

The actual core of the edition consists of more than 3,000 scholarly commentaries. Of course it is impossible to assess the numerous corrections, and also discoveries, contained in these in the scope of a review. What is possible, however, is to arrange them into certain categories in order to give a systematic impression of the achievements, but sadly also the shortcomings, of the commentary. Into the first category fall those commentaries in which historical events and people, or contexts unknown today that Hitler mentions just briefly or incidentally, are explained in detail. They contain a wealth of information without which it would be virtually impossible to understand *Mein Kampf* today.

In a second category the editors go a step further and reveal factual errors and false assertions made by Hitler. Some of these are unconscious mistakes attributable to his lack of education. The editors can demonstrate, for instance, that Hitler got the wrong idea about Darwin's theory and that he confused species and races (p. 740). In the case of other mistakes they can prove that Hitler deliber-

¹¹ See Ludolf Herbst, *Die Erfindung eines deutschen Messias* (Frankfurt am Main, 2010).

ately provided false data (p. 458). They appropriately call this 'planned mendacity' (p. 33). Hitler made such false statements particularly frequently, they maintain, when it came to the 'stylization of his early biography' (p. 371). One example is Hitler's move from Vienna to Munich. He pre-dates this by a year in order to conceal the fact that he did not leave Vienna until after his twenty-fourth birthday on 20 April 1913 when he was paid his father's inheritance (p. 372). The editors also believe that Hitler's assertion in *Mein Kampf* that for a while in Vienna he worked on a building site is not true (p. 177). What they are overlooking here, however, is that he returned to this again in his *Table Talks* in order to draw a parallel between his own biography and that of Mussolini.¹² It can therefore be assumed that what he remembered was true.

A third category of commentaries on Hitler's *Mein Kampf* consists of explanations of terms. The editors were especially at pains to elucidate Hitler's use of political terms that were crucial to him. They can demonstrate, for instance, that Hitler uses the term *Volksgemeinschaft* particularly often even though, as they rightly stress, it was originally 'not genuinely National Socialist' (p. 190). According to the editors' calculations it appears in *Mein Kampf* no less than forty times, especially often in the fourth chapter of the second volume (p. 61). Also interesting is what they have to say about Hitler's use of the term *völkisch*. While he considered himself to be part of the *völkisch* camp, before the November putsch of 1923, he used it as a matter of course. To distance himself from the *Völkischen* it was not until the twelfth chapter of the first volume that he maintained that 'due to its lack of conceptual exactitude' it was 'practically indefinable'. As the commentaries here reveal, the editors discovered that in his appeal of 26 February 1925 for the refounding of the NSDAP Hitler even claimed 'always to have resisted the umbrella description *völkisch*' (p. 929).

It is also important that the editors can show the term 'Aryan' to have been a 'key concept' for Hitler at an early stage (p. 744). Less surprising is what the editors have to say about the term 'propaganda' since they have not taken the relevant research on conceptual his-

¹² Cf. Werner Jachmann (ed.), *Adolf Hitler: Monologe im Führer-Hauptquartier 1941-1944. Die Aufzeichnungen Heinrich Heims* (Hamburg, 1980), 246: 'At the same time both myself and the Duce worked on building sites. So there is also something human that connects me with him.'

tory into account here. On the other hand their finding that the content of the key term 'race' always 'remains vague' in *Mein Kampf* should be emphasized (p. 754). This confirms the older finding that National Socialism was unable to develop a definitive biological racial theory because this simply cannot be founded in natural science. It is no accident that the antisemitic Nuremberg Racial Laws of 1935 referred to the Jewish religion. It is less surprising than the editors seem to think that Hitler used the term synonymously with that of *Volk* (p. 779). This was in line with the by no means only racist usage of the word in the nineteenth century, which to some extent still exists today in the English word 'race'.

Unlike in most editions, in a fourth category of commentaries the editors also 'look at the future of that time' (p. 64). Although they warn against taking Hitler's book as a sort of 'blueprint' for the Nazi system of rule, in all the commentaries they point out a remarkable number of instances where the contents of *Mein Kampf* coincide with that of later Nazi policy (vol. ii, 14). As they demonstrate, for instance, the chapter 'Ostorientierung oder Ostpolitik' points more clearly than previously assumed to the Nazi policy of conquest in the Second World War (ibid.). Statements in the chapter 'Der Staat' are convincingly related by the editors to the later *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses* (Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases) of 1933 (pp. 64–5). What should be emphasized particularly is that at a place long disputed where Hitler cynically regrets 'not having poisoned with gas twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebrew people who are damaging our people, like hundreds of thousands of our very best German workers', they take a differentiated view. They maintain that 'although this was not a plea for the genocide of millions', it 'did include the possibility of mass murder' (p. 52).

A particularly large proportion of the commentaries belong to a fifth category, that of establishing the ideological roots of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. This is not the result of any particular interest in the history of ideas on the part of the editors, nor is it reflected in their problematic methodological approaches. Rather their aim is to demonstrate 'how remarkably few independent and original thoughts are to be found in Hitler's book' (p. 57). Here they want to present *Mein Kampf* as the pitiful effort of an imitating dilettante in which there are only very few original ideas. In this way, Hitler's supposedly origi-

nal *Weltanschauung* is obviously meant to be deconstructed and his book de-demonized. In itself this is a very promising approach that can justify the reprint of *Mein Kampf* without more ado, even if the transfer of ideas to Hitler in terms of the history of their reception is not adequately substantiated. Less apparent, however, is why the editors nonetheless maintain that *Mein Kampf* contains a 'synthesis', even if they describe this only cautiously as a 'intellectual edifice largely consistent in itself' and not as a 'definitive synthesis' (p. 26).¹³

From a methodological point of view the first question should be what Hitler actually read and in what form he digested his reading. This is not pulled together in this edition but can be reconstructed to some extent from scattered references. According to August Kubizek, a friend during Hitler's youth, in Linz Hitler read 'numerous books'.¹⁴ In his later *Table Talks* Hitler himself maintained that in Vienna he read 'book after book, brochure after brochure'.¹⁵ But in 1941 he gave an insight into his style of reading. According to his statement he always started to read books from the end and it was only ever ' cursory reading'.¹⁶ Hitler did not read books in order to experience new things but only in order to confirm his pre-formed opinions. As another of his acquaintances reported in 1921,¹⁷ a 'hasty and somewhat random study' of the books was typical. Which books Hitler consumed in this superficial way must largely remain a mystery.

Before 1914 he most probably only borrowed books from libraries so that what he read at that time can no longer be reconstructed. The assertion by his first biographer, Adolf-Viktor von Koerber, that week upon week he saved up his meagre wages for '200 volumes of valuable scholarly works, history books especially political, philosophical scripts' must surely be pure fantasy (p. 145). From 1933 onwards his library only grew through chance gifts from his admir-

¹³ Cf., on the other hand, Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitlers Weltanschauung: Entwurf einer Herrschaft* (Tübingen, 1969), 119.

¹⁴ August Kubizek, *Adolf Hitler: Mein Jugendfreund* (Graz, 1953), 226.

¹⁵ See Harry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier* (3rd edn. Stuttgart, 1976), 177. Cited in *Mein Kampf*, 168.

¹⁶ Kubizek, *Adolf Hitler*, 227.

¹⁷ Cf. n. 153 in *Mein Kampf*, 1,352, based on unpublished memoirs by the Starnberg dentist and member of the Thule Society, Friedrich Krohn.

ers.¹⁸ Precisely for the time of *Mein Kampf*'s genesis hardly anything is known about Hitler's access to books. Even if we happen to know that in autumn 1921 Hitler was recommended Sparker's *Weltgeschichte* by Hess there is nothing to suggest that he followed this recommendation or that he ever held even one volume of this monumental work in his hands.¹⁹ Nor is there any evidence that he read the essay by the Americanist Franz Terner published in January 1924 in Karl Haushofer's *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* just because it was available in Landsberg prison, though the editors assume that he did (p. 745).

As we know, Hitler mentions only very few people by name in *Mein Kampf*. This makes it difficult to establish clearly who the people were whose ideas he may have appropriated. Whether, as the editors assume, he deliberately suppressed their identities because he 'certainly did not want to seem like an imitator' (p. 56) we do not know. As the editors themselves concede, however, it can 'generally not be established exactly where Hitler's wisdoms came from' (p. 745). So according to the strict rules of scholarly editions all that should actually have been said is that there is no direct evidence of a transfer of ideas. But since the editors want to establish Hitler as an imitator they committed themselves to searching for ideological models, especially in the *völkisch*-racist literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even though there is certainly no direct reference to it in *Mein Kampf*. As their commentary shows, they have walked a conventional path in the history of ideas here. There is no trace of approaches to an intellectual history, of recent methods in the history of reception or discourse theory, even though the Hitler biography by Wolfram Pyta which the editors consulted would have given important clues.²⁰

The commentaries create the impression of an omnipresent flow of ideas in which Hitler is a possible recipient, though not a definite

¹⁸ See Timothy W. Ryback, *Hitlers Bücher: Seine Bibliothek – sein Denken* (Cologne, 2010).

¹⁹ Otto Kaemmerer and Konrad Sturmhoevel (eds.), *Spanners Illustrierte Weltgeschichte: Mit Berücksichtigung der Kulturgeschichte*, 10 vols. (3rd edn. Leipzig, 1893–8).

²⁰ See Wolfram Pyta, *Hitler. Der Künstler als Politiker und Feldherr: Eine Herrschaftsanalyse* (Munich, 2015).

one. They are full of suppositions, assumptions, and comparisons with other texts that could have been the sources of Hitler's ideas even though this generally cannot be clearly proved. Whether Hitler drew from the texts mentioned by the editors, whether he even knew of them, and above all how he digested these texts is not touched upon at all. It is enough for the editors if any parallels to *Mein Kampf*, however remote, can be found in a book. In numerous notes they point out that a formulation or a thought is 'reminiscent', 'very reminiscent', or 'again reminiscent' of *Mein Kampf*. If Hitler had read all the books that he supposedly plagiarises in *Mein Kampf* he would have had to have spent all his time reading before he wrote it. Of course this is out of the question even if we accept, as he himself admitted, that he only flicked through them. In the heat of the moment the editors obviously forgot to take Hitler's intellectual ability to receive ideas when reading into account.

The commentators are on more solid ground only when dealing with the relatively few reference texts that Hitler explicitly mentions in *Mein Kampf*, or which we can assume for other reasons that he had read. The commentators can reference here Houston Chamberlain, Heinrich Class, Theodor Fritsch, and Hans F. K. Guenther. Amongst the foreign authors Henry Ford and Graf Grobineau should not be overlooked. We know that of the small circle of his early supporters Hitler was influenced by Dietrich Eckart, Gottfried Feder, and Alfred Rosenberg. All these are given special emphasis in the edition, but here, too, there is no exact analysis of how their ideas were received.

The commentators miss the target completely when they claim that Hitler was influenced by the anti-Jewish blood metaphors of a fourth-century Syrian religious teacher (p. 825). Not very convincing either is that Hitler's racially based idea of a 'mission of the German people' is conceptionally reminiscent of the role 'attributed to the proletariat in the Marxist view of history' (p. 1,016). It is methodologically extremely questionable if the editors think they can trace Hitler back to Max Weber: 'Admittedly Hitler would not have known Max Weber's writings first hand—if at all—but here Hitler formulates a thought that Weber had also developed in the context of his typology of rule' (p. 1,306).

Ultimately it is difficult to assess the edition from the point of view of a contemporary historian. The enormous editorial effort involved in producing the book certainly should be recognized. This

work could only be carried out by a large working group based at an academic research institute. However, if it was the editors' intention to do justice to both expert historians and a non-expert public, then the outcome is ambivalent. It was undoubtedly difficult for the editors to satisfy both. If they had decided on an edition that just followed scholarly editorial principles, then this certainly would not have been a great public success. On the other hand, an edition whose character was more that of a didactic documentation would have run the risk of not being taken seriously by scholars. Since this dilemma is basically insoluble, the editors chose a middle way. As mentioned, the great editorial edifice of the book does not make it particularly user-friendly for non-experts, and then again the numerous commentaries in which well-known historical facts are explained or mere suppositions expressed are problematic for contemporary historians.

In my view the editors' attempt to present Hitler just as an imitator of numerous *völkisch*-racist authors and to deny him his own ideological positions has not succeeded. Although it is undoubtedly a great achievement to have traced Hitler's ideological sources systematically for the first time, in the end far too much remains vague and cannot be validated in methodological terms. Since the editors regard Hitler just as an imitator of numerous *völkisch*-racist authors, at no point in the edition do they attempt to mark any of Hitler's independent ideological positions and to recognize to some extent the imitator's system. Did Hitler really just adopt unchecked everything that he read? Did he not simplify, exaggerate, or intensify the alleged fruits of his reading and sort of hammer them into his readers through constant repetition? The editors do grant Hitler a 'creative achievement' because in their view he formally forced together what was 'experienced, conceived, and acquired by reading'; but what this intellectual amalgamation process was actually like in detail remains largely unexplained.

WOLFGANG SCHIEDER is emeritus Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the University of Cologne.

On the Advantage and Disadvantage of the 2016 Model of 'Mein Kampf'

MOSHE ZIMMERMANN

Helmut von Gerlach is one of that rare species of political personalities who switched from Right to Left in pre-First World War Germany. Gerlach, a close confidant of the court preacher Adolf Stoecker, a leading figure in the antisemitic current of the time, recounted, after his transition to the left side of the aisle, how he had fallen into the trap of antisemitism at the outset of his political career. Somebody on a street corner jammed into his hand a tract from the Association for the Fight Against Antisemitism (Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus), which had been established in 1890. Gerlach read the pamphlet and came away convinced . . . that the antisemites were right. This is an edifying example of the counter-productivity that information campaigns sometimes create. Perusal of the annotated edition of *Mein Kampf*, published in German this year, evokes concern that this work may be fated to influence German readers much as that anti-antisemitic pamphlet did more than 120 years ago.

At face value the intention seems good and worthy. The ban on publishing Hitler's book, imposed by the Allies at the end of the Second World War, and followed by German law, expired at the end of 2015—seventy years after its author's death and upon the expiration of his official heirs' copyright (held, since 1965, by the Bavarian finance ministry). Thus, on 1 January 2016, printing *Mein Kampf* in Germany became permissible under German law. Since this news came as no surprise, the political arena and the historians' guild in Germany had plenty of time to confront the 'evil' or, as the German saying has it, *aus der Not eine Tugend machen*—to find the silver lining in the cloud. Since there is no point in promoting an anti-publication policy by means of new legislation—today even more than in the pre-online era—the solution was found several years ago to task the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ) with publishing Hitler's two-

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volume book, which originally had appeared in 1925–6, along with scholarly apparatus (hereafter: the critical edition). In order to keep readers from being susceptible to the author's arguments, the new *Mein Kampf* was augmented with an Introduction and some 3,700 detailed footnotes that aim to provide background, to spotlight falsehoods, deceptions, and inaccuracies, and, above all, to provide sources for Hitler's fallacious views.

The idea is basically sound. In Israel there was a similar attempt about twenty years ago. Selected parts of the book—those that seemed relevant in explaining the historical meaning of National Socialism for the Hebrew reader—were translated and embellished with notes that were meant to clarify for readers in the 1990s—history students above all—the circumstances that the text addresses, as well as the risk that anti-democratic forces pose to democratic society.¹ The policy adopted by the German IfZ, however, was different. The institute's mission statement, presented in the introduction (p. 11), is to produce a scientific commentary on a historical source and, at the same time, to tackle a symbol 'the influence of which has not yet reached its concluding phase'.

As warranted by the first part of the mission statement—in the finest German tradition of critical scientific editions—the text is presented in full and festooned with notes relating mainly to the sources on which Hitler relied or may have relied, as well as notes on variant wordings (most of little consequence) in the various editions of the original text. This, however, already paves a path toward the counterproductive outcome alluded to above.

In duelling, the German term *satisfaktionsfähig*—'worthy of response'—is commonly used. There is a code of behaviour that defines who is worthy of being challenged to a duel in view of an insult that he has expressed, and who is not. On the basis of this definition, the challenge to a duel of those who are 'unworthy of response' should be passed up. Following this thinking, *Mein Kampf* should be defined from the outset as 'unworthy of response', for the simple reason that its author is plainly a pathological liar and the text itself is a mishmash of prejudices resting on foundations of racism. Perceiving it as a text worthy of scholarly treatment (similar to the

¹ Moshe Zimmermann and Oded Heilbronner (eds.), *Mein Kampf: Chapters from Adolf Hitler's Ma'avaki* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1994).

treatment of the writings of Goethe or Kafka) is tantamount to falling into a trap. Nevertheless, the editors decided that the axiomatic statement that Hitler's arguments are 'unworthy of response' does not suffice to spare the average reader from harm. Therefore, they set out to deconstruct Hitler's autobiographical opus point by point (as the director of the institute writes in his Foreword).

This approach to *Mein Kampf*, as worthy of response is, after all, reasonable mainly in view of the fear that publishing the original text verbatim would gift the far Right a tool. Today, however, with the massive set of footnotes, the catastrophe having passed, and decades of research having been carried out, such an edition should probably address not only the question of 'where did you come from?' (i.e., where does *Mein Kampf* fit in among similar texts from its time?), but also 'where are you heading?' Where did the Hitlerian worldview lead, and what is it capable of bringing about from 1945, to our times, as the populist Right steadily gathers strength?

This is also said in regard to the second part of the mission statement: 'tackling a symbol', as the editors express it. This act of tackling should shift the emphasis from discussing the origin of the text to coping with its success and the story of its reception since it was published. The editors of the critical edition proudly affirm that they are not neutral and that their interpretation 'takes a stance' (p. 12). However, even if they do not mean it, and precisely in view of all that has been noted above, it turns out that they confine their attention to one question only: the influence of this book up to 1945. Thus, they risk missing the target in both parts of the mission statement.

The editors of this edition, after making Hitler into a 'thinker' 'worthy of response', settle mainly for a painstaking explanation of the circumstances of the writing, refrain most of the time from presenting counterarguments, and risk a counterproductive outcome, as demonstrated below. The editors surely should not be suspected of invoking a tactic that the late Ernst Nolte habitually used – quoting foul opinions and claiming as an alibi that this is done merely to reveal their absurdity – but the outcome appears to be much the same.

For the sake of argument, two things distinguish the craft of interpretation in the Israeli case from that of the German case: the addressees; and the choice of objects to be interpreted and explained. The reading and interpretation of a text differ from case to case

depending on who is being addressed – a German, a Brit, an Arab, or a Jew – and depending on the time. That is, publishing a text fifty years ago is not the same as publishing it today, and doing so in its source language is not the same as doing it in translation. The distinction matters when the policy of the critical edition of such a text is set. The IfZ went far beyond creating a basis for the interpretation of topics in which the average German reader is not well versed. The institute, as stated, sees the book as a text ‘worthy of response’, as if it were a piece of exemplary literature or a scholarly treatise that deserves interpretation and clarification down to the last letter (yet nevertheless retains many portions of toxin that still await attention). If the critical edition would indeed make a positive impression on the average German reader to whom it is addressed – leaving less room for empathy with the Nazi message, all the better. However, the concern is that this publication will have the opposite effect: providing information which, as in this article’s opening anecdote, will strengthen belief in the veracity of Nazi claims precisely among the uninformed and unfamiliar, in the sense of ‘where there’s smoke, there’s fire’. A painstaking reading of the topics discussed below, however, brings to mind a discussion of UFOs that ultimately convinces people to start believing in them.

This book’s target readership is not the professional historian, for whom bibliographic references in appropriate places suffice, but the average reader, one of those tens of thousands who have in fact purchased this heavy work (two volumes weighing more than 5 kilograms). Truth be told, the commercial success of the critical edition confirms the fear that people are indeed combing it for a glimpse into the secrets of the ‘Elders of Zion’, until now locked away in what is known in German as the ‘poison closet’ – not only by studying Hitler’s original text but also by inspecting its accompanying notes and commentary. Below I will attempt to show that at least where Jews and antisemitism are concerned, the information in the critical edition may fail to attain the editors’ express goal.

The critical edition, edited by four historians and four associates (*Mitarbeiter*), includes an expansive Introduction (approximately ninety pages) that presents the editors’ main topics of discussion: the circumstances behind the writing of *Mein Kampf*; the author’s language; Hitler’s self-searching; the invention of his biography; the history of the Nazi party; the party’s positioning among the *völkisch*

movements; and, last and best of all, a forward-looking discussion from the vantage point of 1926—how the book relates to the catastrophe that occurred during the Third Reich. Underlying this taxonomy of topics is the editors' principled position against perceiving the book as a blueprint. For this reason they assign only one role to their two heavy tomes: 'interpreting [the original text] in the context of the era in which it came into being'. The editors do realize, however, that this does not go far enough. As a document *qua* document, *Mein Kampf* is but one of many coeval works of a similar nature published in that period. Accordingly, they revert to discussing the meaning of the book until 1945.

Examining the impact of *Mein Kampf* from its writing to the defeat of the Third Reich is an undisputed *sine qua non* in coping with this book. The editors' examination starts with a laconic revelation: even though Hitler considers Germany a world power, he evidently forgets to relate to important players such as the United States and Japan (p. 48). Here Hitler already reveals himself as a German-centric rube, thus explaining the potentially enormous menace of his pretensions. Those interested in the relation between the book and its implementation should also give thought to the conclusion of the editors, who point to 'enormous gaps between the National Socialist method of governance and Hitler's locutions in *Mein Kampf*' (p. 65). In another matter of central concern to us, thought should be given to an additional conclusion by the editors: 'To build a path that leads directly from Hitler's hate-filled discourse to Auschwitz is overly simple. Disregarding the relation between the two, however, is more problematic' (p. 53). To reach this conclusion, however, one need not consult these two bulky volumes; it suffices to read Karl Schleunes' *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, published many years ago.² Neither is there anything novel in yet another statement in this subchapter: 'The Jews [occupy] the epicentre [*Fixpunkt*] of all of Hitler's fears'; or in the caveat against over-interpreting the paragraph in *Mein Kampf* in which Hitler explains that he would have preferred to gas 12,000 Jews to death back in the First World War.

The Introduction to the critical edition also concerns itself, naturally in view of the editors' attitude, with the more technical aspects

² Karl Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy towards German Jews 1933–1939* (Urbana, Ill., 1970).

of the history of *Mein Kampf*. There was a time when some pondered the counterfactual question of how things would have turned out had Hitler been named Schicklgruber? Here, in contrast, the speculation concerns the fate of this book had it retained its original title (as indicated by an advertisement in 1924): *4 ½ Jahre Kampf gegen Lüge, Dummheit und Feigheit* ('4 ½ Years of Struggle against Falsehoods, Vapidity, and Pusillanimity'). The editors, who go to such pains to track down every scrap of knowledge that may have influenced Hitler, should have addressed themselves in this context to a book that appears in their bibliography – that by the pacifist Emil Gumbel, published the same year: *Vier Jahre politischer Mord*³ – that may definitely have had something to do with the title of Hitler's book.

The Introduction also has much to say about the typography and graphic design of the critical edition. It explains the vacillations that attended the choice of the font for the text – both the original and the notes. The fact that the editors initially selected a Trump-Antiqua font, but wavered in their final decision because, in 1934, Georg Trump was principal of a book-printing school in Munich, which he ran in the spirit of the party, may be regarded as a peculiarity (p. 78). But the decision in principle to use a layout that replicates a page of Talmud or the classic Hebrew Pentateuch and main commentaries (see photo on p. 75 of the edition) is more than a curiosity; it is an act of defiance. What Victor Klemperer called with irony the 'bible of National Socialism' is given bizarre visual expression in the critical edition, a matter at least in bad taste, if not worse, particularly when the two Jewish books are explicitly called 'precedents' for this purpose (*ibid.*). From the practical standpoint, too, the page layout is ponderous; it confuses the reader and creates unnecessary bother in using the index of names and topics, which refers to page numbers in the original edition (and not to those in the critical edition), and in tracking cross-references among footnotes.

Hitler's book, like the critical edition, is comprised of twelve chapters in Volume I, and fifteen in Volume II – from 'In the House of My Parents' and 'War Propaganda' to 'Propaganda and Organization' or 'The Right of Emergency Defence.' In order to demonstrate the method in the critical edition, with its advantages and drawbacks, it is worth focusing on the most important chapter from the standpoint

³ Emil J. Gumbel, *Vier Jahre politischer Mord* (Berlin, 1922).

of readers of *Yad Vashem Studies*: the one titled 'Volk und Rasse' ('Nation and Race'), Chapter 11 in Volume I of *Mein Kampf*. In the original the chapter was comprised of thirty-three pages; in the critical edition it takes up eighty-three.

In this chapter, as throughout the critical edition, the object of the editors' most intensive concern is 'the historical-ideological roots' and not the transition from the writing of the book to the reality that the Third Reich produced. The search and investigation focus on tracking down the writings from which Hitler harvested ideas or felt ideological proximity. Most of the attention, as the Introduction states, accrues to the German authors Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Theodor Fritsch, and Julius Langbehn, and to the non-Germans Henry Ford and Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau. The extent of their direct connection to *Mein Kampf*, however, remains hypothetical, because neither the text itself nor Hitler's subsequent remarks report the origin of all the information that he presented. Be this as it may, the editors note ten categories of textual criticism on which basis the material used for the many textual glosses was gathered.

The first topic to which a far-ranging footnote is devoted in this chapter is the Jewish claim to 'chosenness' (p. 778). The bibliographic reference attached to this note, which is meant to explain the matter (note 83), confirms a truth that is reflected throughout the chapter: not everyone who is an expert on the history of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's biography, or the history of the Second World War is an expert on Judaism, Jewish history, or the history of antisemitism. Here are several additional examples: notes 151 (p. 811) and 156 (p. 814) suggest clearly that those behind the critical edition are unfamiliar with German Neo-Orthodoxy, which was faithful to the German language and culture, and are equally unacquainted with Mordechai Breuer's relevant book on Orthodox Judaism in imperial Germany.⁴ Their unfamiliarity with matters Jewish is not limited to Orthodoxy; they do not understand Liberal Judaism either. Thus, in note 177 (p. 210), they claim that 'religion was a weak basis for self-definition [for Liberal Jews] because most of them rejected the traditional ritual practices' – an allegation that any Jew affiliated with the Liberal stream would of course reject. (It is regrettable that the

⁴ Mordechai Breuer, *Jüdische Orthodoxie im Deutschen Reich 1871–1918* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986).

editors did not read Michael Meyer's history of the Reform movement.)

Indeed, the editors' reading of Jewish history, even if strewn with bibliographic references, is fundamentally unprofessional; as such, it abets the counterproductive outcome mentioned at the beginning of this review. At the end of Volume II, in three pages of acknowledgments (pp. 1745-7), the editors thank the experts (mainly those known in German as 'student auxiliaries', but also top-notch authorities, and the rabbi of the Munich Jewish community) for helping them with advice on the topics of antisemitism and Judaism. Their list of credits is bewildering; either the advisers' expertise is limited, or they did not read the final version of the texts and thus are used as a mere alibi or fig leaf.

Professional shortcomings are apparent not only in the use of research literature but also in matters of language. Faulty command of Hebrew results in unprofessional locutions and, worse still, in misleading ones – a phenomenon that has no place in a scholarly edition, as the book purports to be, and at an institute that forgoes no stringency in its reference to studies written by others. The editors instruct the public (p. 784, note 93) that the familiar German term *Maloche* comes from Yiddish. Instead, for accuracy's sake, they should have explained that the term *M'lochoh* is the Ashkenazi form of a Hebrew word (which later metamorphosed into Yiddish and then entered the German lexicon). The antisemitic term *Mauscheln*, the editors explain (p. 816, note 162) descends from *Mausche*, which, in their opinion, is 'the Jewish [*sic*] form of the Biblical name Mose'. Now, it is plain that the Biblical name, i.e., the Hebrew one, is משה (Moshe; with its different Ashkenazi and Sephardi pronunciations) and that Mose is but a translation. The lack of professionalism is even more embarrassing when a bibliographic entry relating to this reviewer (p. 1839) renders his name as Mosheh Tsimerman, even though the book referenced appears in German and the editors' names in it are of course spelled correctly. Was this a case of transcription from German to Hebrew and back to mangled German, or did someone think a Hebrew writer would find a German spelling inappropriate? Either way, professionalism and the observance of scholarly rules, of which the institute preens, are absent here.

Let us return to the 'chosen people'. To clarify the matter, a verse about the chosen people from Exodus is quoted in Chapter 11, note

83, followed by remarks by the historian Heinrich Graetz, the German Zionist Emil Bernhard Cohn, and the author Max Brod. Commenting on Brod, the editors add a value judgment: his take on chosenness is 'more modest'. By implication, the editors think that those quoted before Brod do not nurture the Jewish chosen-people idea modestly enough. Would the average German reader not believe, despite a parenthetical remark about the Nazis' attempt to respond by transforming the Germans into the 'chosen people', or a quotation from a venomous statement by Himmler's adjutant about the extermination of several thousands of the 'chosen people', that, when all is said and done, that there is some truth to the argument against the Jews?

In other remarks, too, Hitler's anti-Jewish prejudices are mentioned in succession and are identified as such. Instead of dismissing them axiomatically (or, alternatively, challenging them), the editors add detail and thereby create a counterproductive effect. In note 96 (p. 786), for example, concerning Hitler's argument about the absence of Jews' contribution to art, Wagner is presented, correctly, as a source for this Hitlerian outlook. Added to this, however, is a statement to the effect that Jewish musicians also supported Wagner's antisemitic stance. Two Jewish composers whom the author of an article, in 2009, dredged up from the dead,⁵ give the reader the sweeping impression that Zionist musicians agree with the antisemitic Wagner. If this is the case, might there perhaps be room for an after-the-fact understanding of Wagner's and Hitler's fictions? This is stated again in reference to the allegation about Jews' evasion of productive labour (p. 784). The editors' intentions here appear to be pure; they wish to demonstrate that, on the contrary, Jews are willing to work. Having surmounted this dubious hurdle, the editors then tell us about the existence of Jewish labour unions. In so doing, however, they reveal their amateurism once again: how could they overlook the Bund?

Next in line is the canard about the Jews' ostensibly illegitimate practices in economic life. A relatively lengthy quote from Werner Sombart's 1911 book, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (p. 804, note 141), is written in a manner that makes the reader wonder if a

⁵ James Loeffler, 'Richard Wagner's "Jewish Music": Antisemitism and Aesthetics in Modern Jewish Culture', *Jewish Social Studies*, NS, 15/2 (2009), 2–36.

respectable academic such as Sombart believed this, does Hitler's working assumption not contain a grain of truth or, at least, extenuating circumstances that justify its adoption? It happens again in the context of Hitler's claim (p. 332 in the original edition) that the Jews contribute to the community's welfare for egoistic reasons only, in contrast to the New Testament imperative of unadvertised charity. Here the editors go out of their way to quote critical remarks from the Gospel According to Matthew in the same spirit, instead of referring to what the Jewish tradition calls 'giving secretly'. Their choice can only reinforce Hitler's claim, not weaken it, in the reader's eyes (note 169).

And what utility would the reader gain from a remark on the charge of deceit that Hitler levels at the Jews — that they profess to be a religious community but are in fact a people (p. 792, note 111)? The editors' commentary on this weighty topic asserts that there are Jews, i.e., Zionists, who agree that the Jews are indeed a people! While this is indisputable, its insinuation in this connection, directed at the reader who is not an expert in Jewish history, first disregards the majority of Jews, who defined themselves as members of a religious community before Zionism emerged in the late nineteenth century, and the fact that only a small minority among the Jews became Zionists after the Zionist movement was established. Second, it creates the impression that 'the Zionists' do agree with Hitler — a sense that gathers strength after one reads note 129 (p. 800). In response to Hitler's indictment of the Jews for deceitfully camouflaging their racial and not religious essence, the editors do not begin their footnote by stating that most Jews are indeed convinced that they belong to a religious community (they relegate this statement to the end of the footnote), but by asserting that there are Jews who reject the claim of Jewishness as being a religion and that certain Jews, primarily doctors, even used the term 'race'. This claim is correct in itself. However, in the place and context where the editors have placed it, it prompts the average reader to conclude that, see, the Jews themselves support their definition as a race — and, if so, where is the difference?

This matter descends into absurdity at the place in the book where Hitler reveals his sexual fantasies about the 'black-haired Jewish youth' who waylays a wholesome German girl. The editors' note here (p. 849, note 229) concerns itself with the question of penetration

(impregnation) and, as an aside, devotes considerable space to Otto Weininger. One who reads this note will probably conclude, again, that, ‘They said it themselves’, i.e., that this belief is not specific to the Nazis and Hitler but is shared by them and ‘the Jews’. Even if the original interpretive intention is fine, the outcome is counterproductive. This is also the place to note, parenthetically, that those who fall into the trap of racism are precisely those behind the critical edition – they indeed do yeoman’s work when they steer the reader toward statistics attesting to the proliferation of Jewish-Christian intermarriage, particularly Jewish males and Christian females, in order to disprove Hitler’s claim (p. 824, note 178). The example that they consider epitomic, however – Victor Klemperer – shows that they have tumbled into a trap that Hitler set for them: Klemperer was Jewish by ‘race’ only and not by religion or self-definition!

Typically and repeatedly, the editors of the critical edition take up the very same problematic topics toward which Hitler drew his readers during his lifetime – and that persist today as well. Is it necessary to contend with the weighty question of whether Jews reek of garlic? The answer would be affirmative only among commentators who find it appropriate to invest effort in debating the question of the stench of beer that wafts from the mouths of Germans or others. Unfortunately, however, the garlic question is indeed discussed (p. 825, note 181), including a learned reference to a recommendation in the Talmud about eating the guilty herb. They even combine it in one breath with a stereotyped depiction of ghetto Jews in their unhygienic milieu – a matter undeserving of space from the outset, even in accordance with the editors’ express definitions. Even if the details are correct in themselves, in the cumulative they leave the reader with the recurrent impression of ‘admitting to some of the facts’, of the existence of some internal truth in Hitler’s book, and of the notion that the film *The Eternal Jew* is ultimately not just vitriolic propaganda.

The next topic is the Jews’ ability to assimilate and acculturate. This theme, central in the historiography of the Jews, is referenced in note 88 (p. 780), in an unprofessional summary, albeit one that is meant to ‘defend’ the Jews as worthy of integration. Worse still, a reader unversed in this issue might get the impression that Felix Theilhaber (whose name surfaces several times in the critical edition) is a dominant figure in the Jewish camp. He is dressed in respectability as a representative of the ‘hygiene of the Jewish race’ (p. 815, note

159); he also serves as proof of the acceptance of the antisemitic argument about Jewish egoism among the Jews themselves on the basis of a quotation from his well-known 1911 book about the demise of German Jewry.⁶ Those who are unfamiliar with the history of Zionism (including the editors of this edition) may, of course, come away with the notion that the German racists and Theilhaber, or Hitler and Theilhaber, or perhaps even 'Hitler and the Jews' are in agreement.

Indeed, insofar as Zionism is at issue, the information provided by the editors—in an area that lies outside their expertise—is rough and vague, if not worse. The explanatory note about Hitler's statements concerning the establishment of the Zionist movement (p. 210, note 176), the inception of Zionism, and Vienna as a Zionist centre is puzzling in its content. (It finds no room for Leon Pinsker, Moses Hess, and Rabbi Isaak Rülff.) Given that Hitler was 8 years old when the Zionist movement was established, and 15 when Herzl died, the treatment of Zionism, Vienna, and Hitler requires a footnote of a totally different type. Familiarity with the anti-Zionism that reigns among today's antisemites (some of whom may have purchased the two-volume work at issue) indicates it would be preferable not to quote Alfred Rosenberg's book about Zionism (p. 846, note 226) and the world Jewish conspiracy, but instead to attempt here, too, to challenge the assumption that the state of the Jews is but a platform for such a conspiracy.

The commentators in the critical edition consider nearly everything mentioned in the issues discussed above fit for extensive discussion; indeed, they relate to a lengthy series of anti-Jewish prejudices that are firmly anchored in European society. The notes refer time and again to remarks by Wilhelm Marr on the assumption that he had been one of Hitler's guiding lights. This is puzzling. The contribution of Marr, who introduced the term 'antisemitism' into the political lexicon ten years before Hitler was born, is mentioned in the commentary to this chapter very often, as is the book by Marr's follower Theodor Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage* (originally titled *Antisemiten Katechismus*). The editors of the critical edition, however, not expert in Jewish history or the history of antisemitism, do not bother to study the only existing biography of Wilhelm Marr in order to

⁶ Felix Theilhaber, *Der Untergang der deutschen Juden: Eine volkswirtschaftliche Studie* (Munich, 1911).

frame the man's contribution and explain the chain that leads from him via Fritsch to Hitler.⁷ Furthermore, they limit themselves to a quick glimpse at only two editions of Fritsch's *Handbuch*, even though this work reappeared almost every year. The changes that it underwent deserve follow-up where the question of influence on Hitler is concerned, no less than the painstaking tracking that is warranted regarding negligible corrections of wording in *Mein Kampf*.

Since these commentators are unacquainted with the evolution of Marr's attitude toward the Jews, they overlook, for example, a relevant work for the discussion of racial mixing outside the Jewish context. It would have been proper to choose a work that Marr designated for this purpose on the basis of his stay in Central America in the middle of the nineteenth century instead of the one that appears in note 231 (p. 850). Those who are firmly oriented in the topic are also aware of the importance of the difference between the meaning of enmity towards Jews in Marr's work *Der Judenspiegel* (1862) and that in his *Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum* (1879), along with the relevance of this important difference for discussion of antisemitism generally and Nazi antisemitism particularly. Above all, if we compare the account of the history of the Jews' 'domination' in Marr's 1879 opus with Hitler's description, we should subject to thorough examination the similarity, the continuity, and the in-between stages that lead not only from Marr via Fritsch to Hitler but onward, to Auschwitz and to the Holocaust deniers. Furthermore, how can one posit Hitler's offensive against the Jews as targeting a group not defined by religion without relating to the central theme in Marr's 1879 book, subtitled *Vom nichtconfessionellen Standpunkt aus betrachtet*? The literary stunt that Marr employs at the end of his book—the use of the slogan *Finis germaniae*, replaced by Hitler with the slogan 'a German state for the German nation'—also demands attention, provided that one is aware of the similarity.

The historian Götz Aly,⁸ in his pointed and compelling critique of the critical edition, calls attention to the fact that the bibliography on

⁷ Moshe Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr: The Patriarch of Antisemitism* (New York, 1986).

⁸ Götz Aly, 'Die neue "Mein Kampf" Edition erstickt im Detail', *Berliner Zeitung*, 11 Jan. 2016. See above for the translation published in this special issue of the *GHIL Bulletin*.

which the edition is based lacks highly important relevant works and makes room for publications of dubious significance and credibility. Insofar as this pertains to the 'Nation and Race' chapter and to the crux of the chapter on the Jews, his criticism is definitely well founded. The editors avail themselves, for example, of nothing written by Jacob Katz, including his work on antisemitism. The historian Walter Zvi Bacharach is totally absent. Other neglected items are mentioned above. Israeli historians are not alone in being omitted. For example, should the note on the Jews' voting patterns in the Weimar era not reference Martin Liepach's classic work⁹ (p. 798, note 127)?

Even if we agree that the section that explains the background of Hitler's writings is not 'unworthy of response' and should even be extended, the notes often seem to expand by quoting members of Hitler's supporting cast. Yet they usually refrain from presenting counterclaims that, in this reviewer's opinion (but also in accordance with the editors' statement), should be, didactically, the all-important part of the message for the average and unknowledgeable reader of this thick tome. For example, Hitler thinks that the 'social problem' is typical of urban society only (p. 336 in the original edition). The editors of the critical edition attempt to enlighten us by commenting that there definitely was a social problem in the rural sector (note 189). However, is it not more important for the reader to ask (as is discussed in the professional literature) how the intersection of the 'social problem' and the 'Jewish problem' evolved from the late nineteenth century onward? And as for Hitler's claim that the modern contempt for unskilled labour traces to the Jews, would it be preferable to explain that Henry Ford and Adolf Stoecker viewed this allegation positively (as the editors did in note 190), or rather to advise that this allegation is fundamentally wrong? The same should be asked about Hitler's assessment of the Jews as great capitalist exploiters who concurrently and hypocritically speak for the exploited workers (p. 337 in the original edition). The note on this topic (196) adds an allegation by Hitler's adviser, Rosenberg, but does not confront it.

In all of these cases, reasonable German readers are offered no counterclaim; they may contend with Hitler's arguments only by

⁹ Martin Liepach, *Das Wahlverhalten der jüdischen Bevölkerung: Zur politischen Orientierung der Juden in der Weimarer Republik* (Tübingen, 1996).

invoking the axiomatic proposition that anyone who shares Hitler's views is by definition illegitimate. As stated, however, the editors do not settle for axiomatic propositions. Incidentally, in some other matters the editors prefer to make factual corrections rather than rest their cases on axioms. See, for example note 236 (p. 852), which aims to establish the correct number of people murdered in the Soviet Union, and note 245 (p. 854), which presents an expert opinion from 1936 that challenges Hitler's assumption about the irreversible damage of racial mingling.

Once the editors presume that the text is 'worthy of response', one may complain not only about the content of notes that fail to confront the allegations but also about the absence of notes where such should appear. Do the editors assume that the average uninformed reader should consider footnote-free statements sound? Examples of this are the statement that, 'The Jews were responsible for bringing Negroes into the Rhineland' (p. 345 in the original), and the description of the exploitation of princes by Jews in the era of Absolutism (p. 328 in the original edition, before note 146). Observations pertaining to Zionism are given the same treatment: on p. 324 of the original edition no clarification is offered as to the difference between Zionists and non-Zionists in the context of the broad historical background (apart from scattered information about Zionism in notes at other locations).

If the mission of the critical edition is not only to present the origins of Hitler's ideas but also, as stated, the connection between *Mein Kampf* and the future, then it is the missing information, not the surfeit of information, that becomes broadly apparent. This is said not only with regard to footnotes relating to specific points but also about matters of principle that should receive attention in places where the text is 'worthy of response'. As a case in point, the entire historical account of Hitler's confrontation with the Jews centres on Germany. In a critical edition the question of why all the rules should apply only to Germany and not, for example, to France should be asked (on p. 347 of the critical edition at the very latest). Here we return to this reviewer's original contention: if such matters are 'worthy of response', it would have been better to gather the axiomatic claims against Hitler's prejudices in a brief essay at the beginning of each chapter, without the counterproductive detail and hair-splitting.

Just the same, two alternatives may be noted that suggest how, at the right time and in the right place, a critical approach not pursued

via the footnotes and the critical scholarly edition of *Mein Kampf* may respond to the problem of the uncontrolled use of Hitler's book, which is now permissible for publication. In 1938, the British linguist Emily Lorimer concluded, in view of a partial translation of *Mein Kampf* into English, that in order to warn the British about what they were up against, she should summarize the main points of the ideas that Hitler expressed in his book. She accomplished this in all of 180 pages, allowing the reader of her time (and ours, too) to realize exactly what was at issue without falling into the counterproductive trap. In a chapter only ten pages long, 'Enemy – and Scapegoat', Lorimer apprised her readers not only of the main tenets of Hitler's antisemitic doctrine in *Mein Kampf* but also of counterclaims, without declaring *Mein Kampf* 'worthy of response' *ab initio*. Lorimer's mission statement was explicit: to refute Hitler's approach by demonstrating the illogic of his remarks – not only by mentioning the idealism in the Old Testament or the number of Jews who contributed to the development of modern medicine, but also by analogy. On the question of the nature of Jewish economic activity, for example, Lorimer responds to the Hitlerian threats in *Mein Kampf* that were turning into reality as follows:

The English reader, remembering with gratitude how much the stability of British finance has owed to the co-operation of generations of British Jews with English bankers, would like some indication of just how Hitler would prove Jewish finance was necessarily so fatal to Germany, but Hitler does not attempt to *prove* any of his amazing theses.¹⁰

This is the right way to subject *Mein Kampf* to critical treatment in pre-Second World War Britain, and its lesson may be learned in a later era as well. In Germany after the war and the Holocaust, the interpreter has the further advantage of knowing the outcome or, at least, the sequence of events after 1938, and this advantage should be pressed in accordance with the needs of contemporary German society. The best-advised way to do this may not be a critical historical edition that trims notes of one kind and adds notes of another kind. A current and effective alternative, similar to Lorimer's vehicle, is

¹⁰ Emily O. Lorimer, *What Hitler Wants* (London, 1939), 49.

Thomas Weber's recent book, *Wie Adolf Hitler zum Nazi wurde: Vom unpolitischen Soldaten zum Autor von 'Mein Kampf'*.¹¹ This work attains the worthy goal of treating Hitler's farrago of ideas critically from a present-day perspective and providing an optimal frame for discussion of the circumstances under which the Nazi bible came into being in the middle of the 1920s. It may be best, then, to do without the two hefty volumes of the critical edition and suggest to those who have read a full or partial version of *Mein Kampf* (available online, after all) that they follow up with Weber's work, or with Othmar Plöckinger's books *Unter Soldaten und Agitatoren* and *Geschichte Eines Buches: Adolf Hitlers Mein Kampf*, thus placing Hitler's opus within an appropriate frame.

As stated, the commercial success of the critical edition may have something to do with the book's way of not only quoting Hitler's prejudices but also helping to revive them. It stands to reason that the massive sales of the book (nearly 100,000 copies at the present writing) originate partly in the footnote information that creates the effect mentioned at the beginning of this review. As we said above, the addressee should be kept in mind. A critical edition of *Mein Kampf* in Germany and such an edition in Israel are two different things. In Israel, there is no fear that the reader will fall for the antisemitic message, either by reading the original text alone or by consulting the explanations in the footnotes. Such is not the case in Germany. It is no hyperbole to state that this book would have been better off had it not been created, although one may argue that the chapter of focal interest in this review is an exception relative to the twenty-six other chapters. However, a work that is more pretentious than professional in certain parts is a problematic enterprise when served up to uninitiated German readers – particularly when its object, the historical source, is Hitler's *magnum opus*, and when the subject is the Jews and Jew-hatred.

¹¹ Thomas Weber, *Wie Adolf Hitler zum Nazi wurde: Vom unpolitischen Soldaten zum Autor von 'Mein Kampf'* (Berlin, 2016).

MOSHE ZIMMERMANN is the former Director of the Richard Koebner Minerva Center for German History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Absolute Evil Cannot be Neutralized

JEREMY ADLER

It is a year since the new edition of *Mein Kampf* prepared by the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ) was published in Germany. Johanna Wanka, Germany's Federal Minister for Science and Education, gave the work state legitimation by calling for it to be used in schools. Eighty-five thousand copies of the work have been sold, and the sixth edition will be published at the end of January. It is time to take stock.

The condition for a reprint was that it had to be scholarly, what the title calls a 'critical edition'. At first glance, however, it can be seen that this is anything but. The manuscripts and an important preliminary stage, an essay, have been left out—documents that are indispensable for a critical edition. And no attempt has been made to produce a 'critical text', that is, a good, corrected, possibly definitive version. What has been reprinted is merely the first edition of the two volumes dating from 1925 and 1926, with selected variants. Similarly, it lacks a systematic textual history, something that is considered standard for an edition of this sort. This makes it look amateurish; as a scholarly text, it has little value.

We are thus dealing with an 'annotated edition', but the commentary is also problematic. The intention of the editors is to distinguish between truths, half-truths, and outright lies in *Mein Kampf*. But this contravenes the principles of exegesis that Friedrich Schleiermacher, the founder of modern hermeneutics, laid down in 1809. Every interpretation must take the whole context into account. There is no 'truth' to be read out of *Mein Kampf* because in this decoction, every word is in the service of lies. By disregarding this principle, the editors make a number of bad mistakes.

Editing texts, the field which specializes in producing 'critical editions', is among the most difficult branches of philology. Germany has a well-developed infrastructure for this field, with around eight

Trans. Angela Davies (GHIL). A slightly shorter version was first published as Jeremy Adler, 'Das absolut Böse lässt sich nicht neutralisieren', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5–6 Jan. 2017, 11. Translation published with permission.

institutions dedicated to it, such as the Zentrum für Textedition und Kommentierung in Münster and the Institut für Textkritik in Heidelberg. In Frankfurt, the Freie Deutsche Hochstift is responsible for this discipline, while there are also experts in Berlin and Wuppertal. And since 2008 there has been the Zentrum für Editions-wissenschaft in Munich, of which the IfZ is a founding member. The aim of this organization is to support the work of producing editions in all forms – organizationally, methodologically, technically. Its statutes explicitly state that it aims to guarantee and improve the quality of scholarly editions. Here, under one roof, we find a number of outstanding achievements, such as, for example, H. W. Gabler's (controversial) edition of Joyce's *Ulysses*. But not *Mein Kampf*. It seems that the difficult task of editing *Mein Kampf* was undertaken without being embedded in this 'institutional framework' that was created explicitly to 'bring together all the editorial projects in Munich and enable effective, interdisciplinary cooperation'. On 2 June 2008, a few years before beginning its editorial work, the IfZ had signed a cooperation agreement with the Zentrum für Editions-wissenschaft. For inexplicable reasons, however, this cooperation did not happen in the case of *Mein Kampf*, with serious consequences.

The aim of a traditional 'critical' edition is to study all the elements of the text in order to produce a definitive version. It is usual to start with any manuscripts that are available, but the editors have inexplicably left out the sparse material for *Mein Kampf*. And even if these are published elsewhere, a 'critical edition' should contain them for the sake of completeness. Twenty-three typewritten pages of text, the first five pages, and eighteen pages of drafts with notes are all omitted. Any major variations should, in principle, be found in a 'critical edition'. Another preliminary work (1924) is also missing. These sources should have been included for the sake of completeness, not least because they contain information which the commentary mentions only very vaguely. This undermines any claim to scholarlyness.

The next stage, that of evaluating printed versions, is pursued here in an equally arbitrary fashion. Without any attempt to produce a 'critical text', the editors merely reproduce the text of the first editions of volume one (1925) and volume two (1926). The apparatus contains variants from a number of editions which appeared between 1930 and 1944. This selection is unsystematic and cannot claim to be

'critical'. Even worse, the variants are not analysed in any way and the various changes are indiscriminately listed without investigating whether they are due to printing errors, the style of a particular compositor, or the intervention of an editor. The editors proudly point out that they invented a new computer programme to compare versions, as though we have not long had the venerable Hinman Collator (since around 1940) to do this. Here again we see the naivety and professional isolation that characterizes this new edition.

The luxurious presentation of the work is equally questionable. One historian described it as 'scandalous' because it confers a new 'aura' on the work. A curious decision was made to bind the book in fine, grey linen, reminiscent of the field grey of German military uniforms, and to print the cover in brown letters, the Nazis' identifying colour. This amounts to an aestheticization of fascism as practised by Leni Riefenstahl and Albert Speer at the time, and against which Walter Benjamin issued such serious warnings.

Today's buyers get a Nazi totem, the classic of annihilation, for their money. Its inner structure merges seamlessly with this image. The layout is deliberately modelled on that of the Hebrew Bible, here disrespectfully dismissed as the 'Jewish' Bible, and the Babylonian Talmud. There is no such thing as a 'Jewish' Bible; only a 'Hebrew' Bible. Small illustrations underline the similarities. It is perverse indeed to take the Jewish scriptures as a model for the design of the book that preaches the total extermination of the Jews. This expresses nothing but symbolic disdain for Judaism.

In this sort of work, the editors have a duty to correct all lies and passages that offend against the norms of civilization. But countless examples remain in this edition, creating the impression that the editors endorse these calumnies. This results in severe distortions. But the editors also make a number of mistakes. Marxism, for example, is incorrectly described as a party rather than an ideology, and the definition of shrapnel given leaves out two of its main components, the detonating agent and the fuse. Without them, the grenade could not explode. If we cannot even rely on such simple data, the apparatus loses even more of its scholarly credibility.

The saddest aspect of this edition is its treatment of the Jews. This goes so far that an antisemitic perspective creeps into the commentary, especially where the editors reproduce lists of embarrassing statements without any critical reflection. The footnote that seeming-

ly provides a definition of Jewishness contains forty-four lines of antisemitic slander with no disavowal. These citations confirm the lies and distortions in the main text.

The sentence in *Mein Kampf* which claims that the Jews 'exploit their fellow human beings' remains without comment, as though this were really the case. Where it says that 'the Jew' is driven by 'nothing but obdurate egoism', no correction is made, although charity is the highest commandment in Jewish ethics, from the second book of Moses to the Talmudic tract from the Sayings of the Fathers, to Philo, Lazarus, and Martin Buber.

Where *Mein Kampf* asserts that the Jews stole their ideas, this slander is substantiated by a list of the alleged booty, for example, a monotheistic God, thus only increasing the damage. Similarly, this crass sentence is simply reproduced: 'The Jews were always a people with specific racial characteristics and never a religion.' Yet it is generally known that religion is the pillar of Judaism. Since no correction is forthcoming, this grotesque denigration continues to stand. In order to prove that *Mein Kampf* is really lying, however, one would have to go back to the essence of Judaism.

Thus we find all sorts of basic lies. The Jews cultivate their language with reverence, as it is so important for their reading of the Bible and their prayers. Spinoza, no less, composed a Hebrew grammar that anticipated modern 'universal' grammar. Yet the editors leave unchallenged the claim in *Mein Kampf* that the Jews 'attached very little importance' to 'preserving their language'. This adopts the author's view and implicitly negates the central role of the Hebrew language for the Jewish people.

The editors also reproduce a quotation claiming that the Jews are 'a Mediterranean-Mongoloid mixed breed', without exposing the nonsense that this is based on. When the text defames the Jews by calling them 'devils', the apparatus provides the evidence, as though the accusation were justified. Artur Dinter's claim that the Jews are 'not the chosen people of God, but the chosen people of the devil' is not contradicted. The scurrilous observation that 'the Jew always remains the same' is similarly uncontested.

Elsewhere, the editors offer a brief, abstruse description of the Talmud without explaining that this is the canonical work which, providing multi-layered instructions for living, belongs next to the Bible itself and presents the Jewish laws in their full complexity. It is

a 'literary work', they say, followed by a few antisemitic quotations which have little to do with the passage. This meagre note cannot get the better of the evil in *Mein Kampf*, claiming that 'the Talmud' is 'a book that does not prepare one for the hereafter, but for a practical and tolerable life'. This could easily be refuted.

A note on the resurrection is similarly uninformed, as the editors jumble up the different historical layers—the Bible, the Talmud, Maimonides. The editors lack any tact towards a people who have already suffered so much through this particular book.

Too often, a really simple, helpful annotation is missing. When the main text claims that the Jews are incapable of founding a 'state', the note provides evidence in the form of Heinrich Claß' taunt: 'Nowhere is the Jew creative—in what one is accustomed to call politics, he is unconditionally and totally negative.' Should they not point instead to the achievements of great politicians such as Simson or Rathenau here? Rather, the prejudices, half-truths, and imprecision mount up.

History and culture fare no better. The editors seem seriously to believe that between the destruction of the Second Temple and the founding of the state of Israel, no Jews lived in Palestine. This error strengthens the stereotype of the rootless Jew. Instead of refuting this prejudice, the editors cite works which reinforce it.

The editors negate the central question of whether the Jews have an independent culture in an extraordinary sentence. Where the main text claims that 'the Jew' had never 'possessed his own culture', they strengthen the attack by describing this view as 'self-evident'. In doing so, they ignore the specifics by which the existence of a great, independent Jewish culture can be demonstrated. In fact, by every criterion, the Jews have a distinctive way of life: identity, religion, laws, social structure, language, calendar, festive days, rituals, customs, houses of worship, schools, cult objects, agriculture, trade, clothing, hairstyles, medicine, dietary prescriptions, cuisine, mysticism, philosophy, legends, literature, music, painting.

Elsewhere, the editors go so far as to write that in the Diaspora, the Jews were interested only in 'religion' and 'social structures', whatever that may mean. This strange observation is refuted by Maimonides's work as a medical doctor alone. And how does the career of the Jewish boxer, Daniel Mendoza, fit in with this prejudice on the part of the editors? Mendoza founded modern, 'scientific' box-

ing, and was the author of the standard work on the subject, *The Art of Boxing* (1789). A list of achievements of this sort would be impressive.

The account of the modern period is similarly strange. The treatment of Moses Mendelssohn, the leading figure of the Haskala, the Jewish Enlightenment, rings alarm bells. He is presented as though he advocated assimilation, whereas in reality he distanced himself from it in old age. In addition, Mendelssohn's influence on emancipation is limited solely to Christian Wilhelm Dohm's problematic book, *Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews* (1781). This makes it seem as if only the Prussian state supported the emancipation of the Jews, ignoring the efforts, years earlier, of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in works such as *Die Juden* and *Nathan der Weise*, and especially of the Jews themselves and, from 1781, of the Habsburg Monarchy. Ultimately, Dohm's reforming ideas went back to his encounter with Mendelssohn.

The contribution made by Jewish thinkers to modernity is not mentioned. *Mein Kampf* derides their support for ideals such as 'enlightenment', 'progress', and 'freedom'. In order to demonstrate that the Jews did enrich German culture after all, the editors cite two random examples, Heine and Einstein. Given the profound participation of the Jews in German intellectual life from Rahel to Bloch, this seems like a cheap cliché or a distortion.

Finally, the editors fall into the trap set by *Mein Kampf* of denouncing the allegedly excessive role of the Jews in the press. By listing the numbers of journalists and providing meticulous percentages, they merely perpetuate the wrong and thereby confirm the prejudice. Particularly confusing is the sentence in which the editors say that the nineteenth-century rabbis were interested only in the 'ethnographic unity' of the people. Perhaps they meant 'ethnic'. But even that makes no sense.

The presentation of the worst stereotype of all, that of the Jews and money, is extremely questionable. No commentary is offered on sentences such as 'of course he', meaning 'the Jew', 'ever more thoroughly destroys the foundations of an economy that truly serves the people'. The following sentence about 'the Jew' similarly stands uncontradicted: 'Whatever this costs him', he 'recoups in a few years by charging interest and compound interest. A true bloodsucker.' Also uncontradicted is the lie that 'financial services and trade' have

become 'entirely' a Jewish 'monopoly'. The old caricature endures, also in details such as, for example, when the offensive term 'financial Jew' (*Finanzjude*) is merely called 'pejorative'.

In many sensitive cases, the repeated claim that the original will be 'framed' by corrections remains unfulfilled. Thus on the one hand, words such as 'monster', 'foreign merchants', 'sucked out blood', 'world Jew', 'God's scourge', 'devilish intentions', 'bloodsucking tyranny', 'mental pestilence', 'parasite on the people', and many more are printed unthinkingly and without the usual distancing and denials. And on the other, prejudices and lies are designated incorrectly as 'myths' and 'topoi', which confers an undue dignity on them.

Naively confusing the categories of language and reality, the editors condescendingly cite the loanword 'moloch' as 'eloquent semantic evidence for the fact that the Jews were no strangers to hard physical labour'. Are we really meant to take this seriously? It might be thought that many of these details are taken out of context, but this is not the case. For example, in a long footnote on the topic of 'work', we find three mistakes in six lines on Exodus; an error rate of 50 per cent. The constant, sarcastic use of 'the Jew' in the original, instead of 'the Jews', is never corrected. What is missing is the constant deconstruction of this incendiary rhetoric by a linguist who could expose the horrific language on which most of *Mein Kampf* is based. Without this unmasking, the impression is created that in innumerable cases, the edition might approve of the author's paranoid bombast. His seditious strategy remains intact, unchallenged, effective. The editors use the racist term 'mixed marriage' (*Mischehe*), and go so far as to use the phrase 'Jewish blood' themselves (although admittedly, it is placed in inverted commas).

The caricature of the Jews as 'parasites' and 'vermin' is only weakly countered. The existence of a 'Jewish politics', invention of antisemites, is accepted uncritically. Although the slanderous pamphlet *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1903) is exposed for what it is in a footnote, elsewhere the view that the alleged Jewish plot to take over the world was based on 'promises in the Old Testament and in the Talmud' is adopted without contradiction or documentation. This motif should have been handled with the utmost caution, not least because it is at the forefront of anti-Jewish propaganda today. But the editors treat it without any understanding. The statements in Isaiah,

for example, can only be understood in their original mythical context. They have nothing to do with the present age. They are not about the power of the Jews, but an appeal to all the peoples of the earth to serve one God. The editors, however, unreservedly express their opinion that the Bible favours global domination. This and many other examples accumulate to produce an unacceptable overall picture.

Some historians and the IfZ celebrate this edition as the marking the end of a 'myth'. But this 'myth' never existed, as every sensible person could see from the start what *Mein Kampf* was about. Others praise the breaking of a 'taboo'. Social anthropologists are more careful. At the latest since the fundamental work of F. B. Steiner, living in exile in Oxford, we know that taboos are necessary for banishing social dangers, including slanderous works. In a state ruled by law, where inciting the people is illegal, this edition should be withdrawn.

Anyone who wants to read the original can do so easily. Further, the IfZ should perhaps reconsider its position. Thanks to a negligent education policy this bizarre product will continue to have an impact, and it is to be feared that it will darken the image of the Jews in Germany among many readers, for example, young people.

Mein Kampf is so infamous, the evil attacks so numerous, that even a team of scholars cannot keep this shocking product in check. It is methodologically impossible to neutralize the contents of a book. The result resembles what Aristotle called a 'monster'. The four editors have worked with diligence and care to do the impossible, but as I argued a year ago in these pages,¹ and now sadly see confirmed in this failed attempt, absolute evil cannot be edited. It endangers everything that is good.

¹ See above, Jeremy Adler, 'Absolute Evil', in this issue of the *GHIL Bulletin*.

JEREMY ADLER is emeritus Professor and Senior Research Fellow at King's College London.

Response to Jeremy Adler

ALAN E. STEINWEIS

'Absolute evil' is not an especially useful analytical concept for a scholar attempting to understand and explain National Socialism and the Holocaust. Through its vagueness and its externalization of human motivation onto an abstract metaphysical plane, it explains nothing, and in fact inhibits explanation by diverting attention away from empirical inquiry. But this is the concept at the heart of Jeremy Adler's recent broadside against the critical edition of *Mein Kampf* published at the beginning of 2016 by the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ). Adler not only accuses the editors of the edition of incompetence when it comes to questions of Jewish culture and anti-semitism, but goes further, arguing that Hitler's text—the absolute evil—is by its very nature impervious to critical scholarly analysis. He claims that the published work bears out his earlier warnings about the futility of the Institute's *Mein Kampf* project. More ominously, he concludes that the publication 'will darken the image of Jews in Germany among many readers'. I cannot disagree more strongly with Adler's contention that the publication, and by extension the IfZ, have legitimized antisemitic stereotypes and thereby done damage to the Jews of Germany.

First some full disclosure: like Professor Adler, I am a scholar of Jewish background. I am a member of the Academic Advisory Board of the IfZ, and an associate editor of its journal, the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*. In 2013–14, during a visiting professorship at the Institute for Jewish History and Culture at the University of Munich, I made a small contribution to the *Mein Kampf* project in the form of a memorandum in which I set out my understanding of Hitler's views on Jews and race. As a historian, I see Hitler as a politician of world-historical significance whose ideas and writings can be, in fact must be, analysed in terms of their intellectual genealogy, veracity, and rhetorical strategies. I count among the many Jewish scholars working in many countries who recognize the intellectual legitimacy of

A shorter, German version of this text was published as a Letter to the Editor in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 12 Jan. 2017. Reprinted here by permission.

the IfZ's *Mein Kampf* project, and who appreciate the anti-antisemitic spirit that animated it. Readers of Professor Adler's essay should not form the impression that his opinions reflect some kind of 'Jewish view' of the subject.

Professor Adler's essay reads less like a scholarly encounter with an ambitious publication than it does like the summation of a prosecutor arguing a weak case by magnifying the significance of isolated and marginal pieces of evidence. The most egregious example of this is Adler's assertion that the IfZ has made itself complicit in the 'aestheticization of fascism' by binding the volumes between grey covers with brown lettering, colours associated with the *Wehrmacht* and the Nazi Party, respectively. Having been present at a meeting in December 2014 at which the graphic designer commissioned for the project by the IfZ presented his design concept to an international team of scholars, many of whom hail from countries that had been overrun or occupied by the *Wehrmacht* and suffered tremendously under the yoke of the 'Brown Dictatorship', I can report that we all regarded the austere colour scheme as appropriate to the project. Obviously, it is important to avoid the unintentional reproduction of Nazi symbols, but our caution should not give way to paranoia. Do we avoid the colour blue because it was the colour of *Luftwaffe* uniforms, or green because it was the colour worn by the German police? Is the fact that the volumes are printed in black ink on white paper further proof of its 'aestheticization of fascism' because these were two of the three colours on the Nazi flag?

The main part of Adler's essay is an enumeration of antisemitic passages in Hitler's text that, as Adler sees it, remain unchallenged by the editors. While the editors included a great number of footnotes refuting or contextualizing Hitler's assertions about Jews, they did not do so for every single one. According to Adler's tortured argument, these omissions will be interpreted by readers as validations of Hitler's statements. So, to cite two examples, the editors did not annotate Hitler's reference to the Jews (quoting Artur Dinter) as 'the chosen people of the devil', nor did they insert a footnote to comment on the statement that the Jews pursue the 'looting of their fellow human beings'. In Adler's view, the editors, in not expressly refuting such statements, legitimize them. This argument is highly problematic in a couple of respects. First, the editors provide voluminous commentary to challenge antisemitic statements that Hitler present-

ed as fact. But general expressions of hatred, for example, that an entire people consists of 'children of the devil', are not scientifically falsifiable. Adler holds that *none* of Hitler's antisemitic statements ought to be refuted because *not all* of them can be. From a scholarly perspective, I consider this view to be an intellectual capitulation. Second, Adler's argument implies an exceedingly low opinion of the readers of the publication, as though in the absence of specific guidance from the editors they would not be capable of recognizing self-evident expressions of fanatical bigotry when they see them. I seriously doubt that such people will be represented in large numbers among the users of these two formidable volumes.

Early in his essay, Adler admonishes the editors of violating Schleiermacher's dictum about exegesis: 'Every interpretation must take the entire context into account.' But in fact, it is Adler himself who violates this dictum by cherry-picking ostensibly problematic passages while failing to recognize the profoundly anti-antisemitic nature of the two volumes.

I am certainly not suggesting that the edition does not contain errors, nor even that each and every criticism levelled by Professor Adler is entirely without merit. But the content and especially the tone of his essay treat the project, its sponsoring institution, and especially its editors with the greatest of unfairness. They deserve better.

ALAN E. STEINWEIS is Professor of History, Miller Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies, and Director of the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont.

'Mein Kampf': Some Afterthoughts

NEIL GREGOR

Was it right to republish *Mein Kampf*? Two or three years ago, as the world's media first started to discuss in earnest the implications of the then impending lapse of copyright on Hitler's notorious book, the answer seemed relatively clear. The acknowledged stability of German democracy; the recognition that Germany has done more than any other modern nation-state to wrestle with the moral challenges that came with the history of genocidal dictatorship; the sense that the growing temporal distance to the crimes of the Third Reich now facilitated calmer, more reasoned reflection on a period of history whose capacity to inspire imitation was, if anything, fading; and the ongoing presence of a committed programme of civic pedagogy that placed rejection of extremist ideologies at the heart of its mission—all of these made the principled argument for supporting republication obvious.

Pragmatism, moreover, pointed in the same direction. With various publishing houses lining up to re-issue the book, for reasons either of commercial expediency or ideological sympathy, the presence of an authoritative scholarly edition would strengthen the hand of those needing to apply the provisions of the German Criminal Code relating to the distribution of hate literature. The availability of a scholarly edition would, amongst other things, make it much easier to refute the spurious defence of far-right publishing houses that they were reprinting the book solely for study purposes, and to demonstrate that the agendas of such companies were most likely to be pernicious. There were, of course, dissenting voices, and those who counselled caution, both inside and outside Germany; there were occasional moments of political tension in the background as the editing work proceeded. Yet given the near-limitless capacity of the world's media to sensationalize anything to do with Nazism, its propensity to magnify minor differences of opinion on the topic into major points of alleged scandal, and its insistence on reducing complex, sensitive issues to crudely polarized, simplistic polemic, what is most striking about the discussion of the last few years is that this

uniquely symbolic moment has been the subject of so little meaningful dispute.

This is not to say that the scholarly edition was universally praised when it eventually appeared. A survey of the initial critical reaction can only conclude that the reaction has been very mixed. Some, most notably the literature scholar Jeremy Adler,¹ have rejected in principle the idea of applying the practices of philology – with all their tacit endorsement of the intellectual substance and cultural value of that upon which they are being brought to bear – to a text so horrendous that it negates all the traditions of education, cultivation, and reflection in which that discipline is anchored. Others, embracing the (equally ‘enlightened’) position that one should always ‘dare to know’, have been far more accepting of the idea in principle, but somewhat critical of the end result. For some there are too many footnotes, for some: too few. For some, such as Götz Aly,² those notes are too dully factual, while for others, Jeremy Adler among them, those notes compound the insult of the original text by re-inscribing the same ideological positions, vicious antisemitism included, of Hitler’s rhetoric into the scholarly apparatus.

For Götz Aly, the emphasis in the edition on the intertextual connections of Hitler’s words to the world of ideas of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries crowds out the necessary work of explaining how Hitler’s thought connected with the desires, fantasies, and hatreds of his supporters in the 1920s and 1930s. For others, the connections made between Hitler’s words and those of his intellectual and ideological precursors are not intertextual enough, because they register general rhetorical affinities rather than specific, verifiable instances of inspiration or appropriation and thus fail to meet the exacting standards of the philological tradition. Some critiques are anchored in slightly different disciplinary assumptions concerning what the work of editing entails; in some cases, the robust performance of democratic citizenship seems to make it a matter of honour to argue the point, whatever; with others, one suspects, the element of institutionalized rivalry and zero-sum competition in the economy of scholarly prestige – a particular characteristic of the German academ-

¹ See above, Jeremy Adler’s articles ‘Absolute Evil’ and ‘Absolute Evil Cannot be Neutralized’ in this issue of the *GHIL Bulletin*.

² See above, Götz Aly, ‘Mein Kampf: A Scholarly Burial’, in this issue of the *GHIL Bulletin*.

ic habitus, and one never to be underestimated — is somewhere in the mix too.

If these diverse layers of critique have their origins in a single underlying issue, this surely lies in the fact that the editors of the volume — as they were also fully aware — were walking something of a tightrope act throughout. The peculiar challenge of this project, which reflected its location at the ambivalent interstices of scholarship, politics, pedagogy, and ethics, lay in the inherent tension between the scholarly imperative to show how the text works and the political necessity of preventing it from speaking. The greatest achievements of the project lie, first, in the connections it enables readers to draw between Hitler's own voice and those of the thought worlds in which he was socialized, and, secondly, in documenting the many often obscure allusions to the politics of the 1920s into which his writings were an intervention. In showing so clearly how Hitler's thought was anchored in elements of the mainstream European intellectual tradition — and thus how thoroughly familiar, and correspondingly comprehensible, the rhetoric will have felt to contemporaries — the volume furnishes a key to understanding the sense of authenticity that cleaved to Hitler's voice, and thus some of the reason for his widespread appeal. At the same time, however, the editors have been obliged to try to neutralize the prose, hence the apparatus of footnotes seeking to dismantle the tissue of lies, inaccuracies, and clichés and expose them for the ideological filth that they are. The edition thus reveals an underlying tension between a claim of scholarly authority that rests on the illusion of dispassionate academic editing in the service of the academy on the one hand, and the pursuit of an agenda of didacticism and political pedagogy aimed at a wider citizenry on the other.

But arguably this is only making manifest the gap between the positivist pretence of objectivity and the reality of subjective positioning that is always there in such editorial work. The difference is that usually the world of scholarship is rather happier to conspire in maintaining the illusion. For all that one acknowledges the ambivalences, judged against the conventional standards of scholarly inspection it was entirely right to pursue the project. The edition represents a major scholarly achievement, a tool that will, if used intelligently, sensitively, and critically, serve expert historians, students, teachers, and other interested lay people alike.

SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS

Yet as the foregoing has implied, the conventional standards of scholarly inspection are not the only framework in which to judge the issue. In the brief period of time between the conceptualization of the project and its completion much in the world has changed, and it has done so in a manner that reminds us forcefully that the expert judgments of the academy could never be the only criteria for answering the question. For the edition has appeared at a time when the stability of western democracy, taken almost entirely for granted until very recently, has come under substantial threat.

In Germany, widespread resentment at the government's response to the refugee crisis has been accompanied by considerable levels of violence, most notably in attacks on refugee accommodation that recalled the notorious racist hate crime wave of the immediate post-reunification period. The political corollary of this has been the insurgency of the far Right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), a movement notable not only for its aggressively nationalist attitudes towards immigration but also, increasingly, for its willingness to challenge openly the deep-seated consensus regarding the centrality of Holocaust memory to the political culture of the Federal Republic. Particularly pertinent in the context of a discussion of the republication of *Mein Kampf*, the AfD has repeatedly tested the limits of permitted speech in Germany, seeking the rehabilitation of political vocabularies deemed until very recently to be toxic as part of a sustained programme of normalizing radical nationalist ideology under the ever-seductive banner of 'common sense' once more.

Such a phenomenon is hardly confined to Germany, and is all the more worrying precisely because it is but one manifestation of a profound resurgence of radical, aggressive nationalism across the western world that until recently seemed to exist only on the margins. Each country has its variants, each of which presents itself in a slightly different form, as one would only expect, since each is the product of slightly different circumstances. Brexit, Trumpism, the Front National in France, the near-triumph of the far Right in Austria's recent presidential elections, or the Kaczyński regime in Poland are products of their own peculiar contexts, and it can sometimes be too easy to make the argumentative move from one to another. Yet the successful forging of a broad coalition of overtly fascist politics, conservative nationalism, post-colonial nostalgia, social protectionism, and anti-establishment protest is broadly familiar across the western

world; the organization of that ideological coalition into political movements that are highly disruptive to party systems undergoing long-term processes of disintegration is similarly recognizable in many places; the context of an economic crisis that is both structural (the transition from industrial to post-industrial society) and cyclical (the long-lasting effects of the 2008 financial crisis) also provides a recognizably common background.

Moreover, the renaturalization of the discourse of the far Right across western polities has been accompanied by sustained attacks on democratic constitutions, most notably in Poland, that have sensitized us anew to the fragility of democratic politics. While deficits in democratic culture visible in eastern Europe can perhaps be explained in part by the still fledgling nature of post-Communist constitutions, just as striking is the openness with which nationalist and conservative politicians seek to undermine democratic settlements in western countries – witness the issue of voter registration in both the USA and Britain. The nationalist electoral revolt of 2016 has revealed the weakness of the democratic reflexes in some of the supposedly most stable and long-standing democracies in the world, levels of ignorance and indifference regarding basic constitutional proprieties that are shocking, and a capacity to listen to the siren voices of ‘post-truth’ politics that leave those accustomed to living by the customary rules of reasoned, evidence-based argument in a state of considerable, ongoing disorientation. The early days of the Trump administration are the clearest, but far from the only, measure of this.

Suddenly those more than 3,500 scholarly footnotes that dissect *Mein Kampf* so thoroughly, that layout that works so hard to contain the ideological filth the text purveys, the apparatus that offers such excellent starting points for teaching about the book and its contents – all appear less like the incisive tools of a robustly confident civic pedagogy, and more and more like the thin blue line that stands, in all its fragility, between an ugly message and a newly receptive mass audience for populist far Right politics across the western world. In this context it seems not only reasonable but necessary to ask again: was it right to re-publish *Mein Kampf*?

How one answers this depends not only on acknowledging the threats posed by the resurgence of ultra-nationalism, but also, ultimately, on how straight, short, and bold a line one is inclined to draw between the extremist politics represented by Hitler and the mani-

festations of far-Right extremism that are affecting Germany and elsewhere now. There is no gainsaying that the underlying mental structures of contemporary racism have their origins in far older forms of it, and that all such ideologies have a clear archaeology that stretches back a very long way; there are also overtly neo-Nazi strands of the Alternative für Deutschland that can trace their organizational ancestry back through the Deutsche Volkunion, the Republikaner, the NPD, and thus to networks of former members of the NSDAP. In this sense, a degree of caution is certainly in order. However, the same points about political and ideological archaeologies can be made of other far Right formations in Europe. It is clear, for example, that UKIP has absorbed the constituency of the British National Party which, in turn, incorporated much of the remnants of the National Front of the 1970s and 1980s; there were clear personnel links stretching back from the National Front through the League of Empire Loyalists to the British Union of Fascists. The element of colonial nostalgia that animates the British far Right is, unsurprisingly, a significant part of the ideology. Yet it makes far more sense to explain UKIP in terms of its inchoate protest against structural and cyclical economic problems, widening income inequalities, the failings of welfare states in retreat, resentments over globalization and migration, all glued together with a strong dose of Islamophobia that provides the explanatory and emotional cement for its constituency. Most of this has comparatively little to do with memories of the 1930s.

Similarly, it makes more sense to understand the AfD as a German manifestation of a widespread contemporary European phenomenon than it does to foreground its Nazi mental archaeologies, and to place it in the context of UKIP, the Front National in France, or the Dutch Party for Freedom rather than that of the Third Reich. Even if one focuses directly on the resurgence of antisemitism in Europe in recent years it is too easy to draw the conclusion that overtly neo-Nazi politics are in operation, and that this should have implications for the republication of *Mein Kampf*. For many years, the ebb and flow of antisemitic attitudes in Europe has had far more to do with the vicissitudes of the Arab-Israeli conflict, of which it functions as a reliable barometer, and comparatively little to do with Christian nationalist supremacist traditions, though these are still there too. Above all, the patterns of antisemitic abuse do not map onto the pub-

lishing geographies of *Mein Kampf* in any meaningful sense. Indeed, some of the liveliest and ugliest traditions of antisemitism are to be found in the places where the book is most heavily proscribed.

If anything, the political and cultural shifts of the past few years remind us forcefully that the toxic blend of racism and nationalism that *Mein Kampf* embodies is impossible to quarantine simply by seeking to police the circulation of an individual text. Refraining from publishing a scholarly edition of *Mein Kampf* would not stop the endless rhetorical associations of foreigners with crime, of foreigners with disease, of foreigners with predatory sexual behaviour, or any other of the deep-seated racist tropes that are so central to western political and popular culture. In showing just how anchored in so many strands of very mainstream nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought *Mein Kampf* was—most of which are far less peculiar to Germany than the Anglophone world sometimes wishes to imagine—the great achievement of the edition is to show that this language was not just Hitler's. At the same time, of course, it stands as the paradigmatic symbol of what such language can be used to legitimate and where that language can lead. In that sense, for all the nervousness that the contemporary political moment causes for liberal observers, the edition should be seen and used not just as a tool for research, but also as the starting point for renewing our thinking about what a democratically committed historical pedagogy might look like.

NEIL GREGOR is Professor of Modern European History at the University of Southampton.

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The Allied Occupation of Germany Revisited: New Research on the Western Zones of Occupation, 1945–1949. Conference organized by the Institute of Contemporary British History at King's College London, the German Historical Institute London, the German History Society, the Society for the Study of French History, and the Beyond Enemy Lines project at King's College London, funded by the European Research Council, and held at the GHIL, 29–30 Sept. 2016. Convenors: Camilo Erlichman (Amsterdam) and Christopher Knowles (King's College London)

After many years of neglect, there is now renewed interest in the Allied occupation of Germany. The conference showcased new international research by both established academics and early career historians. Since there have been few opportunities over the last two decades for scholars of the different zones of occupation to meet and discuss, the conference created a forum for future exchange.

The conference focused on the Western zones because significant differences between the Western zones had previously been neglected as historians concentrated on the emergence of a Cold War Europe, divided between East and West. The panels covered a broad range of themes: ideology and ruling strategies, interactions between occupiers and occupied, the handling of crime and punishment, and the experience of occupation in daily life, which is now emerging as a major new research area being explored by early career historians.

Although most of the papers looked mainly at one of the three Western zones, the conference aimed to bring together those researching the postwar occupation of Germany and starting to formulate comparative questions. Until now, historians have rarely

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undertaken an inter-zonal analysis of the occupation, and there have been few in depth comparisons of the policies, activities, impacts, and legacies of the Western occupiers. As a result, the conference attempted to disseminate and encourage novel research that could contribute to a new integrated history of occupation.

In his introduction, Christopher Knowles (London) emphasized that occupation is a transnational phenomenon. At the end of the war almost all European countries had either been recently occupied, or were themselves now occupiers. However, occupations in different countries have been analysed and interpreted differently. One aim of the conference was to explore whether a common framework can be applied to the study of different occupations. Camilo Erlichman (Amsterdam) suggested a new conceptual framework for analysing the period that revolved around understanding occupation as a dynamic power relationship. He proposed an exploration of the subject around four themes: ideologies and ruling strategies; interactions between the occupiers and occupied; placing the occupation into the context of the broader history of Germany and Europe in the mid twentieth century; and analytical comparisons between and across zones.

In the first panel on contextualizing occupation, Susan Carruthers (Rutgers) showed that research on occupation must also include consideration of the occupying country's previous experiences of war and of earlier occupations. In the case of the United States this extended back to the 'occupation' of the defeated Southern states after the American Civil War. She showed that the occupation of Germany and Japan after the Second World War had a particular role in US history and popular memory as examples of 'good' occupations. Carruthers discussed the training courses provided for future US occupation officers in Charlottesville, Virginia, during the war. She concluded that good planning and training was considered essential for a successful occupation. However, she showed that officers in occupied Germany did not feel well prepared, despite their training, when faced with numerous practical problems.

Peter Stirk (Durham) located the occupation of Germany within the broader history of the international law of occupation since the nineteenth century. Exploring the three themes of hostages, food, and regime transformation, all of which played a decisive role in the gradual codification of the law of military occupation, he emphasized the ambiguity of British and US policymakers in accepting that

international law should apply to the case of Germany. Their recognition of the obligation to feed the population can be seen as a watershed in the practice of occupation, but the problem of how to deal with regime transformation has had a contested legacy with implications for more recent debates on the legality of regime change.

During the second panel, Andrew Beattie (Sydney) provided a comparative study of managing cooperation and conflict by examining the internment of German civilians. According to Beattie, each of the three occupying powers understood internment (without trial) to be within their rights as occupiers and an important political means of removing former Nazis from positions of power. The American occupiers interned 170,000 German civilians in camps, the British almost 100,000, and the French 21,500. Most of the interactions between those interned and the occupiers can be described as conflicts. Nevertheless, there were also friendly contacts and cooperation with some German groups who supported the policy of internment.

Trond Ove Tøllefsen's (Florence) paper focused on the removal of industrial plants as reparations in the British occupation. He showed that by 1949, the peak year for dismantling in the British zone, the Germans were convinced that the British were continuing to dismantle purely for commercial reasons. It caused a crisis in the relationship between British and Germans, with the paradoxical outcome that German campaigns against dismantling resulted in the British continuing to do so in order to demonstrate their strength. However, the dismantling programme conflicted with the overall goals of re-education and incorporating Germany into new political structures in Western Europe. Therefore this is an example not only of conflicts between occupiers and occupied, but also of internal conflicts within an occupying force.

The high level of complexity was emphasized during the subsequent discussion. Conflict and cooperation on the same issue co-existed. In addition, neither the Germans nor the Allies were a single homogeneous group because of the diversity of different views among those involved.

Caroline Sharples (Central Lancashire) presented a most interesting approach towards a comparative history of the occupation by investigating how the Allies disposed of the bodies of Nazis executed for war crimes. Most were buried, but how these burials were handled affected public as well as private memories, as they concerned

the families of those executed as well as attracting general public interest. The British occupiers gave no information to relatives about the grave or its location, nor did they take family wishes into account. The Americans, on the other hand, created graves for war criminals and gave more information to families. But when the British occupiers left, some bodies were exhumed and re-buried elsewhere. This led to political protests and demonstrates that the treatment of executed Nazis was a long-lasting issue. Sharples showed that occupiers implemented different policies.

Similarly, denazification policies need to be examined individually for each of the occupying powers. In her keynote presentation, Rebecca Boehling (Maryland) presented her current project on the comparative history of denazification in the Western zones. She outlined the major themes, which included the overall process, the responsible persons, the consistency or inconsistency of decisions, the involvement of Germans, and the common understanding of denazification as the basis for democratization. From a comparative perspective, such an inter-zonal analysis of denazification can be connected to broader debates about the function and legacy of 'transitional justice'.

Heather Dichter (Western Michigan) examined the role of sport in implementing democracy. She described how sport was part of the Allied policy of re-educating the Germans. All the Western Allied forces employed experts who worked on transforming the Nazi sports system into one with a democratic leadership. Ideas of re-organization and re-education were promoted through exchanges and visits by sports leaders and organizers. Some Germans were sent to the United States to learn about training techniques, fair play, and leadership. Even though the Americans had the widest programme, all three Western Allies recognized the importance of sport as part of a broader policy of cultural exchange.

One of the most interesting panels covered experiences and encounters in daily life. Bettina Blum (Paderborn) presented her research on the requisitioning of houses by the British in Westphalia. Based on sources and testimonies provided by around a hundred individuals, Blum discussed some key problems that affected the relationship between victors and vanquished: requisitioned properties left empty and unoccupied for a long period; German resistance to requisitioning; and compensation for the loss of property. A build-

ing programme that provided accommodation for British troops and their families reduced the need for requisitioning of German properties, but also led to the isolation of British forces and made contacts between Germans and British more difficult.

In her paper, Ann-Kristin Glöckner (Magdeburg) illustrated German–French encounters in Freiburg under French occupation, using a gender studies approach to analyse the occupiers’ power and interactions with the population. She suggested that comparing public spaces such as streets or bars with private houses was a useful framework to adopt, especially because many of the French occupiers (unlike the British or Americans) shared houses with German families. Glöckner highlighted that this could result in a power struggle between the French and Germans within the shared home, and concluded that the occupiers were not always in a stronger position.

A different perspective on occupation was provided by Daniel Cowling (Cambridge) who introduced two British women and their experiences of occupied Germany as revealed in ego documents, mostly letters and photographs. According to these documents, they experienced occupation as a form of personal enrichment and adventure. Despite the revealing insights provided by such documents, further research is needed to determine the extent to which private narratives such as these influenced British perceptions of the occupation more widely.

Questions raised in the subsequent discussion included whether the case studies presented drew on a sufficiently large number of encounters between occupiers and occupied Germans to be representative, and how much significance should be given to individual cases.

Complex interactions and the role of intermediaries were explored among others by Julia Wambach (Berkeley). She pointed out that the French occupiers did not start an occupation from zero when they arrived in Germany in 1945. In contrast, they experienced occupation themselves on both sides—as occupiers and occupied. She demonstrated that Vichy officials were deeply involved in the French occupation and held high positions in Baden-Baden, the capital of the French zone. These officers appeared to possess expertise and experience, which to those in the French postwar government who appointed them seemed to be more relevant than the fact that they had cooperated with Nazi Germany.

The multiple conflicts between Germans and occupiers illustrated the need for mediators. Johannes Kuber (Aachen) provided an insight into the relationship between the German Catholic Church and the French and American occupiers in Baden-Württemberg. Priests often acted as intermediaries between occupying officials and the local population. Relations between Catholic clergy and the occupiers were mostly friendly and respectful, as the occupiers generally allowed the church to continue its spiritual and pastoral work without interference, and priests were exempted from requisitioning. Shared religious beliefs seemed to facilitate encounters and encouraged interaction, allowing local priests to present themselves as the protectors of their congregation.

Dominik Rigoll (Potsdam) analysed the role of what he termed the 'original 1945ers', those officials who took up leading positions in the immediate postwar period, and discussed their historiographical marginalization in the last three decades. Through a detailed analysis of individuals employed by the Federal Republic's Ministry of the Interior, he produced a typology of officialdom, showing how certain types of officials who had come to the fore during the occupation period took over key positions within a crucial ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The question of the legacy of occupation was also addressed. Drew Flanagan (Brandeis) presented his findings on the role of German Francophiles during the occupation, followed by Michael Wala (Bochum), who described a shift in how the British and American occupiers treated a group of former SS, SD, and Gestapo members. After initially being perceived as untrustworthy criminals, they were able to persuade their US interrogators that they were experts who possessed extensive knowledge which would be useful in uncovering communist agents. A significant number were recruited and worked for the new intelligence and secret services established by the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1950s.

The concluding discussion illuminated the high potential of comparative work on the different zones for achieving a better understanding of Germany during the immediate postwar period. Participants agreed that the Cold War does not provide an adequate framework for understanding either occupation policies or the political and social history of the emerging Federal Republic. The complexity of occupation was described in many ways during the con-

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ference. Power relationships, everyday experiences, and interactions between occupiers and occupied emerged as important themes for future research. To conclude, the conference brought out multifaceted aspects of occupation and revealed differences between the zones as well as the importance of studying the legacy of occupation and the long-term impact of occupation on both Germans and the American, British, and French occupiers.

LENA EGGERS (Berlin)

Pop Nostalgia: The Uses of the Past in Popular Culture. Joint Workshop with the BSSH South Sport and Leisure History Network, held at the German Historical Institute London, 10–11 November 2016. Organizers: Dion Georgiou (London) and Tobias Becker (GHIL).

Nostalgia is seemingly present in most aspects of life, from recollections of one's childhood and Hollywood reboots of beloved film franchises to vague calls to 'make America great again'. It is therefore no surprise that academic study of nostalgia has grown in recent years, with broad discussions of its effects not just on the individual, but on society as a whole. It is, however, the appearance of nostalgia within popular culture that indicates just how widespread this phenomenon has recently become. Bearing this in mind, the organizers of the workshop 'Pop Nostalgia: The Uses of the Past in Popular Culture' set out to answer a few key questions. Has nostalgia become worse from decade to decade? How widespread is popular nostalgia? And how does popular culture 'use' the past?

After a brief introduction by the workshop organizers, Dion Georgiou (London) and Tobias Becker (GHIL), the first panel, 'Alternative Pasts, Presents, and Futures', chaired by Deborah Sugg Ryan (Portsmouth), began with a paper by Susan Baumert (Jena). Baumert comparatively studied three main retro-events: the prohibition era inspired Jazz Age Lawn Party in New York, the Blitz Party in London, and the Bohème Sauvage in Berlin. There was much discussion about the authenticity of the events inspired by these retro-events, with boisterous 'Blitz Parties' overshadowing the true experience of life during the Blitz in 1940s London. Yet Baumert convincingly presented the motivations behind creating and attending such events, whether to satisfy tastes in fashion, to seek historical significance, or to pursue individual pleasures. She also suggested that in an age of prominent remembrance, all three retro-events were about escaping the present to imitate the past. In this sense, these events all aimed to create positive emotions about historical eras while providing incentives to engage in a serious study of the past. Helen Wagner (Duisburg-Essen) gave the next paper, discussing the cult fictional charac-

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ter Horst Schimanski and localized nostalgia for the Ruhr area. Although not an immediate popular success, Schimanski eventually became a local symbol of the Ruhr area and its industrial past, strongly linking nostalgia and identity-formation. Though Wagner rejected the notion that nostalgia is simply a longing for yesterday, she argued that nostalgia for cult figures could help to shape a new regional identity for the future. The last paper in the panel, by Tobias Steiner (Hamburg), examined how television is widely employed to import historic occasions into the present. Stressing the importance of television as the principal means by which children and adults learn about the past, Steiner drew on television shows that present an alternate history, such as *The Man in the High Castle* and *11.22.63*, to argue that they allow viewers to see the past from a different perspective. By repurposing history through alternate history, audiences are presented with a fantasy of what could have been, highlighting not only the viewers' preoccupation with the past, but also their ability to engage critically with various examples of the past.

The second panel, chaired by Sabine Sielke (Bonn), focused on gendering the past. Elena Caoduro (Luton) presented a stimulating paper on the cultural phenomenon of retro femininity. She noted that today's society is much more preoccupied with the past than ever before, especially with regard to pop music. More importantly, Caoduro argued that through popular music, retro femininity challenges and resists traditional notions of femininity, and in the process provides new forms of identity for female music artists to develop. Kim Wiltshire (Ormskirk) delivered the next paper, discussing the changing portrayal of men in cinema. Drawing on films featuring Michael Caine and their later remakes such as *Alfie* and the *Italian Job*, Wiltshire discussed the shift from a 'lad archetype' to presenting masculinity in crisis. The remakes represented a different period for men, contrasting with the 'simpler times' portrayed in Caine's original films. The superficial male dream, as seen through Caine's characters, gave way to broader concerns in the presentation of men for later generations, as highlighted by film remakes and reboots. Thus Wiltshire noted that nostalgia is not simply about the past; rather, it is about a sense of absence in the present. The last paper in the panel, by Christina Bush (Berkeley), highlighted the relationship between nostalgia and sneaker culture. Bush argued that the release of Reebok's Alien Stomper sneakers to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of

the film *Aliens* in men's sizes only suggested wider issues of gender identities in modern times.

The last panel of the day, chaired by Michael Dwyer (Philadelphia), focused on the relationship between nostalgia and fashion. Heike Jenss (New York) opened the panel with a paper examining the uses of the past in the context of fashion consumption and production. Fashion, Jenss pointed out, is situated in time and therefore provides a personal and cultural memory of clothing worn in specific periods. By using terms such as 'vintage' and 'heritage', memory has the potential to add value to old clothing. For example, much as in wine culture, the term 'vintage' can refer to the quality of a product. Moreover, the use of websites such as Ebay, which make it possible for unique goods from the past to be sold, has not only increased the demand for vintage clothing, but has also made purchasing it easier. The past therefore serves as a profitable resource when linked with fashion. Josette Wolthuis (Coventry) continued with a paper on nostalgic representations of fashion on television. More specifically, she analysed the transition of fashions between the 1950s and 1960s on television shows such as *Mad Men* and *Call the Midwife*. The gradual changes in fashion between the two decades helps to highlight a change in the periods which television shows represent, even if the change is an ostensibly sudden transition. Nevertheless, Wolthuis suggests that with the help of fashion, period dramas are capable of creating sentiment amongst their viewers while also offering a social critique of the past and the issues faced at the time. The last paper of the day, by Michael Williams (Southampton), focused on Calvin Klein's spring 2016 advertising campaign, which was influenced by classical sculptures. Williams highlighted this as a prime example of recycling the past that is present within advertising, with the juxtaposition of past and present 'stars' showcasing a literal shift in time whilst demonstrating how the past still influences the present through marketing.

The conference continued on the following day with a panel entitled 'Sensory Nostalgia', chaired by Gary Cross (State College). Elodie A. Roy (Glasgow) began with a paper on the consumption of time and how time itself has become a commodity in an artificial sense. Interestingly, Roy argued that in modern times, there is no time to wait for objects to age. Instead other avenues are explored to find 'aged' products such as 'preworn' shoes. Tutorials on the inter-

net can provide information on how to rust metal, or age a musical instrument, underlining that emulating age shows that a product has lived. This preoccupation with new 'old' products helps the consumer to reach back to the past, rebuilding it through the look and feel of objects, even if such processes of ageing occur artificially rather than naturally. Bodo Mrozek (Berlin) continued the discussion of sensory nostalgia by examining the link between *Ostalgie* (nostalgia for East Germany) and smell. Unlike the senses of touch, sight, and taste, smell, Mrozek argued, is often overlooked in investigating how memory and nostalgia are triggered. Much as a child remembers the smell of a parent's cooking, people can also remember the smell of their surroundings or of particular consumer goods, thus strongly linking smell and memory. Drawing on the example of the perfume industry, Mrozek suggested that the use of East German brands created a nostalgic effect that was both warm and positive, while also highlighting that smell is, indeed, an element of *Ostalgie* and nostalgia in general. Lily Kelting (Berlin) delivered the final paper of the panel, discussing specific restaurants and their engagement with Southern history in the USA. Referring to restaurants such as Aunt Pittypat's Porch, Mary Mac's Tea Room, and Empire State South, Kelting pointed out that sensory nostalgia works in various ways. From deceptive nostalgia presenting a rose-tinted view of a certain period of time to highlighting a restaurant's personal history, nostalgia is clearly a marketable phenomenon within the food industry.

The final panel of the conference related to digital nostalgias and was chaired by Claire Monk (Leicester). The panel began with a paper by Aline Maldener (Saarbrücken) examining nostalgia within Internet forums. Social media, Maldener argued, has changed communications in both past and present. Technology allows us to engage with the past much more easily, allowing different generations of people to discuss, become aware of, and share their perceived pasts. Internet forums, therefore, act as multifunctional memory archives that give people who are interested in a past that is not simply their own a sense of amusement and sociality. They also provide a strong understanding of how nostalgia has developed in recent times. In the age of social media, it has become much easier to find a community of people who discuss the past nostalgically. Rieke Jordan's (Frankfurt) paper carried on the discussion of digital nostalgias, analysing music in both digital and physical formats. Using

recent examples such as Beck Hansen's *Song Reader*, released solely as sheet music, Jordan argued that certain musicians are challenging notions of modern music consumption, especially at a time when physical media is becoming obsolete and music is invisibly stored in electronic devices. By going against this supposed status quo, consumers can engage with modern music in interesting ways, helping the concept of nostalgia to thrive in an 'offline' setting. Dion Georgiou presented the final paper of the panel with a talk on Rage Against the Machine's (RATM) unlikely Christmas number one achievement in 2009. With the *X Factor*'s contemporary monopoly on the Christmas number one, Georgiou suggested that RATM's 2009 success highlighted a few important issues. First, as a symbol of 1990s rock rebellion, RATM's music was able to encourage desired change as against the pop music produced by the *X Factor*. Secondly, social media can strongly influence a popular movement against norms within the music industry. Thirdly, at a time when downloading has become much easier, consumers have a greater ability to retain cultural artefacts in the present.

The conference then proceeded with a final discussion of the papers delivered and proposals for further research. It was suggested that nostalgia might be a solely Western phenomenon, especially in the context of pop nostalgia. For example, do people from Asia or South America feel a sense of nostalgia regarding popular culture like Westerners? Improvements in technology and the rise of social media have also provided easy access to the past in ways previous generations could not have experienced. The distribution of nostalgia has been facilitated by technology, thereby helping to spread nostalgic tendencies amongst individuals. These, in turn, may have made the dissemination of nostalgia worse. Yet there is no doubt that nostalgia and popular culture are strongly linked, especially considering the numerous examples discussed by the conference's participants. It was clear that in spite of any stigma attached to nostalgia, or to scholarship related to it, there is a wide array of topics to be analysed and discussed.

OWEN MOLLOY (East Anglia)

The De-Industrializing City: Urban, Architectural, and Socio-Cultural Perspectives. Joint workshop with the Society for the Promotion of Urban Discussion (SPUD), held at the GHIL, 12-13 December 2016. Organizers: Jörg Arnold (Nottingham), Tobias Becker (London), Simon Gunn (Leicester), and Otto Saumarez Smith (Oxford).

In the late twentieth century, complex developments of de-industrialization and transformation, migration and multiculturalism, conflict and resilience, farewells and new beginnings re-shaped urban environments. In order to gain more insight in the many facets of the processes transforming former industrial cities and societies, Jörg Arnold (Nottingham), Tobias Becker (London), Simon Gunn (Leicester), and Otto Saumarez Smith (Oxford) organized this joint international workshop. Experts from different disciplines were brought together to explore and debate late twentieth-century European cities as key sites of cultural and societal transformation from a comparative Anglo-German perspective.

Tobias Becker chaired the first panel, 'Concepts of De-Industrialization and Multi-Culturalism: A New Master Narrative of Urban History?', which aimed to investigate ways of conceptualizing theoretical approaches and bringing together the various social, cultural, societal, and economic aspects. Focusing on employment change, Jim Tomlinson (Glasgow) approached de-industrialization processes by pointing out strengths and weaknesses, since neo-liberalism and the formation of information and knowledge-based societies went hand in hand with inequality, insecurities, and precarious job situations. In his paper, 'De-Industrialization: Strengths and Weaknesses as a Key Concept for Understanding Post-1945 Britain', he emphasized that de-industrialization had to be embedded in the larger processes that had already started in the 1950s. In their contribution, 'From Fordist to Neo-Liberal Urban Spaces in Times of De-Industrialization: A Conceptual Frame for a Complex Relationship', Arndt Neumann and Lutz Raphael (Trier) advocated an integrative theoretical approach that brings together various perspectives determining the complex process of de-industrialization, including different social, cultural, architectural, and demographic trends. Using the example of Ham-

The full programme can be found under 'Events and Conferences' on the GHIL's website <www.ghil.ac.uk>.

burg, they showed that the city's transformation was shaped by a variety of processes, from production to creativity, rationalization to digitalization, social security to precariousness, and suburbanism to the renaissance of the 'inner city'. These trends could provide starting points for considering the temporal and spatial specificities of the prevailing cities. The relationship between de-industrialization and multi-culturalism was explored by Elizabeth Buettner (Amsterdam) in her paper 'Multi-Cultural Cities: Problems or Possibilities?' by looking at changing perceptions of Indian restaurants. Multi-ethnic areas used to have a bad reputation as red-light districts with social problems and crime, but in the 1980s, the perception of Indian restaurants in particular changed. Since then, they have become popular objects of 'white consumption', as the example of London's Brick Lane demonstrates, and Buettner emphasized the significant impact of de-industrialization on the perception of multi-culturalism in urban spaces. The following discussion made two main points. First, there is no 'general concept' to explain the transformation of 'the former industrial city', since every city follows individual temporalities. Secondly, there is no single working class as a societal point of reference. It is no longer the main centre of attention, but one among others.

Jörg Arnold chaired the second panel, 'Social Perspectives. Community, Conflict and Cohesion: The Urban Crisis Revisited', which focused on the interconnections between politics, economic change, and cultural means of expression. Looking at the connection between teenagers' expectations and attitudes towards work and the formation of a specific youth culture, Felix Fuhs (Berlin) investigated the interplay between economic change and work/leisure relationships as expressed in the formation of a specific youth culture. In his presentation, 'Teenagers' Future: London's Labour Market, the Youth Employment Service and British Youth Cultures in the 1960s', he concluded that teenagers' frustration was one of the most visible reactions to urban transformation. Emphasizing the importance of language for the process of constituting meaning, Christiane Reinecke (Leipzig) investigated changes in the political use of the term 'ghetto' from a comparative Franco-German perspective. In her paper, 'Of Ghettos, Marginality, and Gentrification: Global Terms and local Imaginaries in West Germany and France', she argued that the 'ghetto', formerly constructed as instrument for designating social and

economic urban problems, has become a means to negotiate the chances and limits of integration. Starting from the significant question of how changes in urban cities are structured temporally, Otto S. Smith provided a critical approach to the Thatcher period, arguing that broader societal, economic, and political transformation processes since 1945 must be considered. In his paper, 'The End of Urban Modernism', he showed how Thatcher made political use of a predominantly negative image of Britain's urban spaces as a spatial-material locus for what had gone wrong. The general tendency was to identify the dualism between metropolitan city centre and periphery as the essential problem, as it created power struggles between 'the core and the rest' that were negotiated in urban transformation politics.

The third panel, 'City-Planning Perspectives. Urban Blight and Regeneration: The Case of Port Cities', was chaired by Sebastian Haumann (Darmstadt) and focused on the multi-faceted processes by which maritime urban spaces were transformed. Based on specific examples drawn from the port city of Hamburg as it developed from the 'poor house of Germany' to an economic success story, Christoph Strupp's (Hamburg) paper emphasized the significant impact of broader geo-political events on the process of deindustrializing cities. In his paper, 'Urban Economic and Planning Policies in an Age of Uncertainty: Hamburg in the 1970s and 1980s', he reflected on the interplay between macro-historical developments and social, political, and economic processes at local level. Struggles between hope and reality shaped the processes of urban transformation. Using the example of the German city of Wilhelmshaven, Jörn Eiben (Hamburg) demonstrated the fatal consequences of politicians strongly promoting a utopian narrative of progress while ignoring both the critical voices of local actors and real economic trends. In the case of Wilhelmshaven, the discrepancy between hope and reality resulted in the city being publicly declared a 'successfully industrialized city'—without attracting any companies. Both visibility and imaginary determine the perception of urban spaces. In his presentation, "'Behind the Imposing Facade of the Boulevards": De-Industrialization, Society, and the Built Environment in Liverpool, 1968–1982', Aaron Andrews (Leicester) reflected on the impact of political and public discourses on Liverpool's problematic areas. These were mainly shaped by the parallelism of images of urban and

economic decline, and local improvement activities as reflections of hope. Gentrification is not only a radical side effect of the de-industrialization of urban spaces, but is also determined by a multiplicity of trends, as Arndt Neumann argued in his paper, 'De-Industrialization and Gentrification: The Inner City of Hamburg, 1956-2010'. He analysed the complex interplay between population change, migration, the decline of industrial areas and job losses, new social movements and the increasing influence of students, the collapse of modernist urban planning, and the rise of a new generation of architects. In the following discussion, it was suggested that the process of de-industrialization has to be embedded in a longer continuity, opening up the perspective instead of limiting discussions to the Thatcher period. Further, the significance of versatile approaches was highlighted. Since urban transformation stands at the intersection between global developments and local/regional specificities, a differentiated investigation requires both the typical and the specific aspects to be integrated while considering the prevailing historical, economic, and social development of the particular city. This goes hand in hand with the claim that the investigation of de-industrializing cities requires a remodelling of the classic approaches of urban history.

Moritz Föllmer (Amsterdam) chaired the fourth panel, 'Cultural Perspectives "Ghost Town": The Late Twentieth-Century City in the Cultural Imagination', which focused on the intersection between cultural and political factors. Lucy Robinson (Sussex) used the example of the British reggae singer Smiley Culture to emphasize the problematics of London as an urban space in the 1980s, including multi-culturalism, the emergence of new identities, and friction between race and class. 'Smiley Culture: London's Hybrid Voice' showed not only the significance of language as a powerful instrument for criticizing racism, but also the dichotomy between state control and consumer society, which was negotiated behind the backs of ethnic minorities. Using the popular buzzword of 'glocalization', Malte Thießen (Oldenburg) spoke about town twinning from a (national and EU) political, cultural, and social perspective. In his paper, 'Coming to Terms with Glocalization: British Town Twinning in the Twentieth Century', he identified town twinning as both a reflection of various social problems and developments, and a strategy for finding solutions. Seeing town twinning as a means to

improve global understanding distracts from the fact that it also reproduces former colonial power structures in a decolonized world. A more detailed insight into specific actors, interests, and power constellations would have been desirable, especially in the context of 'global town twinning' with formerly colonized countries. Jörg Arnold emphasized the change in visual and narrative representations of industrial city landscapes in the process of de-industrialization, from the former imagery of 'anti-organic' landscapes of the 1980s to contemporary representations of a romanticized 'cultural industrial landscape'. In this context, Arnold pointed out the problems of the construction and reproduction of a specific narrative of the industrial past, which combines mining areas with romantic rural imagery, and thus creates a clear contrast with the 'rather sinful city of London'. In the following discussion, the ambivalence of town twinning was emphasized, alternating between elitist social practice and a means of socio-cultural exchange, which highlighted the need for a critical look. The question of whether Smiley Culture must be regarded as a London-specific phenomenon or whether his agency could be transferred to other spaces emphasized the complex tension between typical and specific aspects.

The round-table discussion, 'The Late Twentieth-Century City in the Continuum of the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries' was chaired by Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite (London). Moritz Föllmer, Simon Gunn, Florian Urban (Glasgow), and Natasha Vall (Teesside) explored future issues in this field of research. Natasha Vall's call to integrate gender into discussions of de-industrialization was very timely, as the pluralization of dominantly masculine discourses is overdue. The power of 'male perspectives' was also mirrored in the conference, which emphasizes the need to consider female experiences of de-industrialization. Florian Urban argued for a stronger focus on continuities and fractures in the formation of present-day urban spaces, considering that these cities arose out of the specific urban structures of industrial cities. Calling for dominant 'master narratives', Simon Gunn argued for the need to deconstruct the dual explanation of neo-liberalism and de-industrialization, as complex and pluralist developments shaped the transformation process and neo-liberalism is only one aspect.

PIA EIRINGHAUS (Bochum)

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Scholarships Awarded by the GHIL

Each year the GHIL awards a number of research scholarships to postgraduate students and postdocs at German universities to enable them to carry out research in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and in some cases to postgraduates at British and Irish universities for research visits to Germany. The scholarships are generally awarded for a period of up to six months (only full months), depending on the requirements of the research project. Applicants from British universities will normally be expected to have completed one year of postgraduate research, and be studying German history or Anglo-German relations. Deadlines for applications are 31 March (for the period from July) and 30 September (for the period from January) each year. Applications should include a CV, educational background, list of publications (where appropriate), and an outline of the project, along with a supervisor's reference confirming the relevance of the proposed archival research. During their stay in Britain, scholars from Germany present their projects and first results at the Institute's Colloquium, and scholars from the United Kingdom or Ireland do the same on their return from Germany. For further information visit <<http://www.ghil.ac.uk/scholarships.html>>.

In the first allocation for 2017 the following scholarships were awarded for research on British history, German history, and Anglo-German relations.

Julana Bredtmann (Berlin), Entnazifizierung in der ehemaligen Reichshauptstadt: Erfolge und Misserfolge am Beispiel der Berliner Stadtverwaltung 1945-1949

Robert Ding (Bayreuth), The Hun is at the Gate: The German Invasion of England in British Fiction 1871-1914

Morgan Golf-French (London), Intellectual Reception of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars at the University of Göttingen

Daniel Monninger (Cologne), Das Tavistock Institute of Human Relations und der Wandel der Arbeitswelt, ca.1940-1980

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Yves Schmitz (Marburg), Waffenhandel und imperialstaatliche Durchdringung in Grenzregionen des südlichen Afrikas und Nordamerikas in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts

Kerstin Schulte (Bielefeld), Volksgemeinschaft! Hinter Stacheldraht: Die Internierungslager in der britischen und US-amerikanischen Besatzungszone und ihre Bedeutung für die deutsche Nachkriegsgesellschaft 1945–1950

Silke Schwandt (Bielefeld), *De recto defecisse*: Rechtspraktiken und soziale Dynamik im Umfeld des Phänomen 'default of right' im englischen Recht des 12.–14. Jahrhundert

Stefan Tetzlaff (Göttingen), Industrial Policy, Technical Cooperation, and Business Interests in Mid-Twentieth Century Indian Automotive Engineering: Hindustan Motors/Morris Motors, and TELCO/Daimler-Benz, c.1942–1969

Stefan Weiß (Bayreuth), Koloniale Krisen und Imperiale Identität: Der Sepoy Aufstand 1857 und die Reflexion in Großbritannien

Felix Wiedemann (Berlin), Rassenportraits aus der Vergangenheit: Britische und deutsche Expeditionen nach Ägypten zur fotografischen Erfassung antiker Menschendarstellungen um 1900

Joint Stipendiary Junior Research Fellow with IAS/UCL

The Institute of Advanced Studies, University College London and the German Historical Institute London award a joint Stipendiary Junior Research Fellow, tenable for a period of six months. The purpose of the Junior Research Fellowship is to offer an outstanding early career scholar from a German university the opportunity to pursue independent research in the stimulating intellectual environment of the two host institutions.

Applications are invited from postdoctoral academics with an excellent research record. The fellowship is open to those working in any of the subjects that have a strong research base at the Institute of Advanced Studies and the German Historical Institute London such as history, art history, and literary studies. There are no restrictions on nationality. Applicants, however, must be affiliated to a German university or non-university research institution. They must also have obtained their doctorate and will normally have no more than

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five years of postdoctoral research experience in an academic environment.

Fellows will be expected to take up residence in London for the duration of the fellowship and present their research project at both institutions. To allow the fellow to focus on carrying out research, there are no teaching or administrative duties associated with the fellowship.

Applicants should send a CV, details of their proposed research project (maximum length 1000 words), a sample of their written work, and the names of two referees in one PDF file to the Deputy Director of the GHIL, Dr Michael Schaich (schaich@ghil.ac.uk), by 1 May 2017.

In 2016/17 the scholarship was awarded to:

Andreas Weiß (Brunswick), Britain, International Organizations, and the Cold War

Postgraduate Students Conference

The German Historical Institute London held its twenty-first postgraduate students conference on 12–13 January 2017. The intention of the conference is to give postgraduate research students in the UK and Ireland working on German history an opportunity to present their work-in-progress, and to discuss it with other students working in the same or a similar field. The conference opened with words of welcome by the Deputy Director of the GHIL, Michael Schaich. Over the next one and a half days, thirteen speakers introduced their projects to an interested and engaged audience. Participants gave a short summary of their work containing general ideas, leading questions, sources, and initial findings, followed by discussion. Information about institutions that give grants for research in Germany was also exchanged. The GHIL can offer support here by facilitating contact with German archives and providing letters of introduction, which may be necessary for students to gain access to archives or specific source collections. In certain cases it may help students to make contact with particular German universities and professors. The confer-

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ence was preceded by a palaeography course tutored by Dorothea McEwan.

The GHIL is planning to hold its next postgraduate students conference on Thursday 11 and Friday 12 January 2018. For further information, including how to apply, please contact the Secretary, Anita Bellamy, German Historical Institute London, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2NJ.

Finn Schulze-Feldmann (London), The Reception of the Sibylline Oracles in the Context of the Reformation

Crawford Matthews (Hull), Royal Dignity, Ceremony and Rank: Anglo-Prussian Relations and their Impact, 1688–1714

Stuart Wrigley (Royal Holloway), Johannes and Bertha Ronge: A Case Study in Anglo-German Relations

Itzel Toledo García (Essex), The German Colony in Mexico City from the Belle Époque to the Great Depression

Samraghni Bonnerjee (Sheffield), From Kaiserswerth to the Crimea: Florence Nightingale and the Shared Histories of British and German Nursing in the Nineteenth Century

Simon Unger (Oxford), Between National Socialism and Resistance: The Protestant Journal *Eckart* and its Readers, 1924–1960

Nadine Tauchner (Leicester), Austrian Journalism between Nazism and Democracy: Otto Schulmeister (1916–2001) in Context

Stefan Boberg (Sussex), The People's Card Index (*Volkskartei*): Registry for Enrolment and Segregation. Compiling Personal Data in National Socialist Germany

Bas Willems (Edinburgh), Violence in Defeat: The *Wehrmacht* and German Society, 1944–1945

Simon Coll (London), Social Perspectives on Nationalism, Normalization, and East German–Polish Relations, 1949–1989

Kate Hiepmo (Manchester), 'Aktion Störfreimachung' and Diabetes Mellitus in the Shadow of the Berlin Wall, 1961–1966

Mary Ikoniadou (Manchester), Image and Text in the Construction of Greek National Imaginaries: *Pyrros* Magazine in the GDR, 1961–1968

John Nicholls (Hull), Darkwave GDR

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Prize of the German Historical Institute London

The Prize of the German Historical Institute London is awarded annually for an outstanding Ph.D. thesis on German history (submitted to a British or Irish university), British history (submitted to a German university), Anglo-German relations, or an Anglo-German comparative topic. The Prize is 1,000 euros. Former Prize winners include Ben Pope, Mahon Murphy, Chris Knowles, and Helen Whatmore.

To be eligible a thesis must have been submitted to a British, Irish or German university after 30 June 2016. To apply, send one copy of the thesis with

- a one-page abstract
- examiners' reports on the thesis
- a brief CV
- a declaration that the author will allow it to be considered for publication in the Institute's German-language series, and that the work will not be published before the judges have reached a final decision, and
- a supervisor's reference

to reach the Director of the German Historical Institute London, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2NJ, by 31 July 2017. The Prize will be presented on the occasion of the GHIL's Annual Lecture on 3 November 2017.

For further information visit: <<http://www.ghil.ac.uk>>

Email: ghil@ghil.ac.uk Tel: 020 7309 2050

Forthcoming Conferences

The Long End of the First World War: Ruptures, Continuities, and Memories. Conference organized jointly by the Leibniz University of Hanover, Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Volkswagen Foundation, and the German Historical Institute London, to be held at Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover, Germany, 8-10 May 2017.

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The Herrenhausen Symposium will focus on relations between global history and social history, highlighting actors and regions, and will systematically engage with the issue of diverse periodizations. In discussing linkages between experience, historiography, and commemoration, the symposium aims to unsettle the notion that the First World War had a static and clearly defined 'end', a construct mainly based on European developments.

While the armistice of 11 November 1918 marked the end of fighting on the Western Front, the case was different in other parts of the world, in particular, in the former Russian and Ottoman Empires and in East Africa, where armed conflicts related to the destruction and re-formation of political orders persisted, in some places even for years. These struggles affected daily life and biographical trajectories as well as local perceptions, representations, and interpretations of the war. Which events or developments marked the 'end' of the war? How did the processes which marked the end of the war differ regionally, and how did prisoners of war, demobilized soldiers, women, and children from and in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East perceive and experience the 'end'? How did this 'end' influence new networks, social movements, society, economic processes, and ecological developments? And how were these questions discussed by contemporary intellectuals in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East?

With the centennial of the outbreak of the war in 1914 and the increasing temporal distance it conveys, the nature of remembrance, too, is changing. The centennial in 2014 was marked by extensive commemorative activities in many parts of the world, not only at various political levels but also in the media, in the field of literature, and in the arts. The symposium asks whether and how they shaped contemporary dialogues on commemoration, not only in Asia, Africa, and Latin America but also in Europe. Can the loss of 'Zeitzeugen' be compensated for by the use of electronic and other media? And does this make transnational commemoration easier (or more difficult)? We are particularly interested in issues and questions of what could be called 'non-memory', forgotten or submerged memories. What has been written out of historical narratives and what is being rediscovered? In this respect, the symposium will also discuss questions of changing memories and contested commemorations.

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Moralizing Commerce in a Globalizing World: Multidisciplinary Approaches to a History of Economic Conscience, 1600–1900. Conference co-funded by the Economic History Society and the University of Liverpool, to be held at the German Historical Institute London, 22–24 June 2017. Conveners: Felix Brahm (GHIL) and Eve Rosenhaft (University of Liverpool).

In the twenty-first century the principles and practices of ethical investment and fair trade, the politics of boycotts, and corporate ‘greenwashing’ are well established in the repertoire of corporate and individual actions and public debate. The history of transatlantic slavery and its opponents in the eighteenth century, and of the opposition to colonial exploitation in the nineteenth century remind us that this repertoire has a history; neither moral indifference nor ethical engagement is ‘natural’ or self-evident. When and how do (and did) people with a measurable material interest, but who are not already embedded in long-standing maritime–mercantile networks, come to see themselves as participants in global businesses? How and when does (and did) awareness of one’s material stake in an aspect of global trade prompt awareness of ethical implications and/or moral–political engagement? How and when have those who benefited from business enterprises with human or environmental costs indirectly, at second hand, or as subaltern agents come to reflect on the nature of the business?

This conference aims to provide a focus for discussion of how we might historicize economic conscience, investigating the means and processes by which individuals and collective actors have learned to see their own economic choices as contributing to a global system and to reflect on the impacts of their choices on other people and places, both near and far. Accordingly, our interest is less in critical characterizations of global systems—colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism, for example—or the social movements that inscribed those critiques on their banners, than in the structures of sentiment and knowledge that made possible new articulations between understandings of moral obligation, locality, the spaces of humanity and the ‘economic’. Based on that, we further ask about respective individual expressions and collective actions like criticism of greed for profits from global commerce, voluntary self-restrictions, consumer boycotts, and responding corporate strategies.

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Cultures of Conservatism in the United States and Western Europe between the 1970s and the 1990s. Conference to be held at the German Historical Institute London, 14–16 September 2017. Conveners: Martina Steber (University of Constance), Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University, Washington, DC), and Tobias Becker (GHIL).

This conference will examine the cultural history of conservative ideas and movements in Western Europe and the United States between the 1970s and the 1990s. Focusing on cultures of conservatism, the conference will rethink the general contours of conservatism. It will pay close attention to the intersection between culture, politics, and economics in order to broaden our understanding of the processes of change that have unfolded since the 1970s.

Poverty and Education from the Nineteenth Century to the Present: India and Comparative Perspectives. Conference organized by the Transnational Research Group on Poverty and Education of the Max Weber Foundation, to be held at the German Historical Institute London and King's College London on 27–29 September 2017.

The Transnational Research Group on Poverty and Education in India will mark the end of its five-year funding period by discussing processes studied by the group in India in a wider comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. The conference proposes to look at the overall topic of poverty and education in a way which allows us to look at themes that cut across some of these research areas and lend themselves to international comparisons. The following are the main, broad themes of the conference: (1) poverty and education in nineteenth- and twentieth-century intellectual and scholarly debates; (2) actors 'from above'; (3) actors 'from below'; and (4) education of the poor and the professionalization of jobs, formalization of vocational training / requirements for professional careers.

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Shaping the Officer: Communities and Practices of Accountability in Pre-modern Europe. Workshop organized by the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU) and the German Historical Institute London, to be held at the GHIL, 8–10 November 2017. Conveners: María Ángeles Martín Romera (LMU Munich), Hannes Ziegler (GHIL).

Interactions between subjects and rulers have been studied in a wide range of historiographical approaches. Among them, the question of officers' accountability has been of particular interest as a fundamental field for the analysis of rule and authority in premodern Europe. And yet, while recent research has attributed to communities a more active role in defining these interactions, they are still mostly portrayed as reacting to input from above. Even in recent approaches on 'state-building from below' or in more specific concepts such as 'empowering interactions', local populations are depicted as either posing resistance or participating in an arena conceded to them.

Officers' accountability is the main focal point of this conference since it is a privileged field for analysing these phenomena. Instead of thinking of communities as essentially reactive agents, however, this conference is an attempt to look at how communities actively modelled the officers' behaviour, shaped institutions, understood as including formal and informal practices, and thus established both their own and the officers' actual scope of action. We are especially interested in the various ways local populations engaged in holding officers accountable, both through regular and extraordinary procedures, and through everyday interactions with office-holders.

The workshop includes a wide range of papers that reflect on the role of communities in processes of officers' accountability in Europe from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century. Special emphasis is placed on practices rather than regulations, and local perspectives rather than central institutions.

In memoriam Ernst Schulin
12.10.1929–13.2.2017

With great sadness the German Historical Institute London announces the death of Ernst Schulin, eminent historian and long-serving member of the Institute's Academic Advisory Board.

Sharing the same birth year, 1929, with Ralf Dahrendorf, Jürgen Habermas, Eberhard Jäckel, and Gerhard A. Ritter, Ernst Schulin belonged to a generation of young academics who, through their research and academic teaching, shaped not only the humanities and social sciences in post-war Germany, but also made a large contribution to transforming the country into the liberal democracy it gradually became.

Re-orientating themselves ideologically after the war for this generation meant primarily turning to the West, both physically and in their academic interests. Whereas Dahrendorf, Habermas, Ritter, and the only slightly younger Hans-Ulrich Wehler (born 1931) gravitated towards Britain and the USA, Schulin, who had enrolled at Göttingen University in 1949 to read history, German, and religious studies, spent a semester first in Spain and then in France. He would academically 'return' to these two countries later on in his career in major studies of the French Revolution (1988) and Emperor Charles V (1999).

For his Ph.D., however, Schulin looked to the East to understand the German notion of the West. Schulin finished his studies in Göttingen with a Ph.D. on *Die weltgeschichtliche Erfassung des Orients bei Hegel und Ranke*, that is, on the post-Enlightenment construction of Europe's 'other' in the East. The history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography and critical reflection on the categories and trends of the historical profession became a lifelong interest of Ernst Schulin.

Before he came back to this area of research, Schulin opened up for himself another field, namely, early modern British history. First as a member of the Mainz Institute for European History, at that time under the directorship of Martin Göring, then at the University of Giessen, Schulin worked on his *Habilitation* on the rise of public interest in Britain in trade and trade policy. Published in 1969 as *Handelsstaat England: Das politische Interesse der Nation am Außenhandel vom 16. bis ins frühe 18. Jahrhundert*, this book provides a brilliant analysis

of the growth of public engagement with questions of foreign and economic policy. In many ways it provides a much more detailed view of the early modern British political public sphere than that given by Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, which was published slightly earlier.

This book not only established Schulin as an important scholar of early modern British history, but also resulted in his subsequent and long-lasting support for closer relationships between British and German historians. When a British–German Association of Historians was founded in 1969, Schulin, who had just been appointed professor at the Technical University of Berlin, joined this initiative and supported its efforts to establish a German Historical Institute in London modelled on those already existing in Rome and Paris. These efforts succeeded in 1976, when the London Institute was formally opened and started to receive government annual funding on a similar scale to the partner institutes in Rome and Paris. Like his contemporary and friend Gerhard A. Ritter, Schulin remained a member of the British–German Association of Historians and also served as its Chair from 1992 until its end in 1995 when it was dissolved because it had served its purpose after the German Historical Institute was integrated into a new legal framework. Schulin was also a member of the Institute’s Academic Advisory Board from 1980 to 1988 and again in 1993.

In 1974 Schulin was appointed to the chair of modern history at the University of Freiburg, where he spent the next quarter of a century as an inspiring academic teacher and prolific scholar. First he turned to yet another area of research, German–Jewish history and historiography. He participated in editing Walter Rathenau’s works and letters. In 1995 Schulin delivered the German Historical Institute’s Annual Lecture on *‘The Most Historical of All Peoples’: Nationalism and the New Construction of Jewish History in Nineteenth-Century Germany*.

This lecture was one of a number of major studies published in the 1980s and 1990s that grew out of Schulin’s extensive engagement with nineteenth- and twentieth-century German and European historiography, which dated back to his doctoral research. Along with Wolfgang Küttler and Jörn Rüsen he organized a series of seminars which resulted in a five-volume series on *Geschichtsdiskurs*, analysing the developments and the methods of analysis of modern historiography. Including many then still junior colleagues in the field, this series has established itself as an indispensable compendium for the

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study of historiographical trends and developments in Europe and beyond.

Schulin became emeritus professor in 1995. After retirement he returned to where he in some ways started: to Spain, with an analysis of the politics of Emperor Charles V—a study less of his personality than of the large challenges he had to face and which shaped Europe for the subsequent centuries.

Ernst Schulin died in Freiburg on 13 February 2017. It is with great gratitude and respect that the German Historical Institute London will keep Ernst Schulin's memory alive. He will be greatly missed by colleagues and friends in Britain and Germany.

Andreas Gestrich

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