



A Nazi German cartoon circa 1938 depicts the Jews as an octopus encircling the globe.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Plank, Josef. "Churchill and the Great Republic: Seppla, Jews as an Octopus Encircling the Globe." *Library of Congress*. 1935-1943. <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/interactive/html/wc0213.html>

## ANTI-SEMITISM IN NAZI GERMANY

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From the first century of the Christian Era, for a period reflecting two thousand years of anti-Semitism, there have been three singular anti-Judaic measures implemented against European populations of Jewish people: conversion, expulsion, and complete annihilation.<sup>2</sup> Raul Hilberg argues that anti-Semitism has had three successive goals during its post-Roman era. Hilberg proclaims that the “missionaries of Christianity had said in effect: You have no right to live among us as Jews. The secular rulers who followed proclaimed: You have no right to live among us. The German Nazis decreed: You have no right to live.”<sup>3</sup> Why was anti-Semitism so widespread in Germany, both in the political sphere and in the cultural sphere, and what were the contributing factors that led to the near-annihilation of European Jewry?

In the eyes of anti-Semites, conversion and expulsion were only temporary solutions in dealing with the Jewish Question. Hilberg asserts, “The process began with the attempt to drive the Jews into Christianity. The development was continued in order to force the victims into exile. It was finished when the Jews were driven to their deaths.” In other words, Hilberg argues, the cyclical triad of anti-Jewish resentment did not originate in Germany but rather was completed in utter destruction. The Nazis only differed from previous regimes because they turned actions into words in eradicating the Jews, whom they identified as racially degenerate, parasitic, Untermensch (sub-humans),

economic powerhouses, media owners, Marxists, World War I backstabbers, and World War II instigators.<sup>4</sup> The third and final stage of Hilberg’s cyclical triad was fully executed under the Nazis’ fanatical belief that Jews initiated the Second World War. The National Socialists did not “discard the past; they built upon it; they did not begin a development; they completed it.”<sup>5</sup>

The earliest accounts of National Socialist anti-Semitic policies towards Jews originated during the infant stages of the socialist movement which gained ground under the highly unpopular Weimar Republic.<sup>6</sup> The lack of stability of the Weimar regime was largely attributed to the humiliating defeat of the Great War, the subjugation of foreign oppression, and the economic depression that followed soon afterwards.<sup>7</sup> Also associated with the Weimar was the series of disastrous events in the post-war years: financial collapse; rising inflation; the inherent structural weakness of a foreign-designed constitution; the deep resentment of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles; the lack of support for the Republic among the German people; and, most importantly, as National Socialists argued later, lack of awareness of the degree to which International Jewry was attempting to control

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<sup>2</sup> Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2003), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Hilberg, *Destruction*, 5.

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<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 152-53.

<sup>5</sup> Hilberg, *Destruction*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany* (Princeton, New Jersey Princeton University Press, 2007), 38.

<sup>7</sup> Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's Weltanschauung* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1972), 27.

the German people.<sup>8</sup> The lack of anti-Semitism this newly instated republic demonstrated only intensified suspicions amongst radical nationalists that this “disgusting” form of oppressive government, leading to the dismemberment of the Second Reich, was the work of Jews.<sup>9</sup> The Weimar Republic was seen as an instrument of exploitation created by Democratic Jews who wanted to bankrupt the resources of the Fatherland.<sup>10</sup> It was thought that international Jewry might successfully take over Germany by establishing a democratic rule where their voices would be much louder than the voices of the rest of the German people.<sup>11</sup> National Socialists believed that the Jews established the Weimar Republic because they knew they could not be legally persecuted or punished for their transgressions and financial and political ambitions under a democratic or Marxist administration.<sup>12</sup>

On February 25, 1920, the Twenty-Five Point Program of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) was promulgated in the city of Munich. The extremist ideology of the Twenty-Five Point Program was evident in the wide range of topics it addressed: German ultra-nationalism; complete denunciation of the Treaty of Versailles; condemnation of the newly established Weimar Republic; “Racial Hygiene”; military rearmament; territorial expansionism; and hostility towards large businesses.<sup>13</sup> This program established the

ideological foundation blocks of the Nazi party. It was of primary significance because it not only symbolized the ambitions of the growing party but it also laid out the system of beliefs under which its future administration would govern.

The first mention of racial segregationist measures against Jews lay in Point Four of the program, addressing the construct of Racial Hygiene. It dictated, “Only those who are our fellow countrymen can become citizens. Only those who have German blood, regardless of creed, can be our countrymen. Hence no Jew can be a countryman.”<sup>14</sup> From the very beginning, the leaders of the Nazi party knew that their dream of establishing an Aryan utopia would have to come at the expense of excluding and ultimately exterminating would-be offenders that could infect (as they saw it) the racial purity of the Nordic race. These groups included the Sinti (Gypsy), the Roma (a subgroup of the Romani people), and the Jews.

In Point Twenty-Four, the program dictated the following:

We demand freedom of religion for all religious denominations within the state so long as they do not endanger its existence or oppose the moral senses of the Germanic race. The Party as such advocates the standpoint of a positive Christianity without binding itself confessionally to any one denomination. It combats the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us, and is convinced that a lasting recovery of our nation can only succeed from within the framework: The good of the state before the good of the individual.<sup>15</sup>

The interesting part of this excerpt is that when referring to religion it mentions mainly

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<sup>8</sup> Weitz, *Weimar Germany* 35-37.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 147.

<sup>10</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company 1999), 562.

<sup>11</sup> Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany* (Princeton, New Jersey Princeton University Press, 2007), 139-140.

<sup>12</sup> Herf, *Enemy*, 152-53.

<sup>13</sup> Donald D. Wall, *Nazi Germany and World War II* (Belmont : Thomas Wadsworth, 2003), 29

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<sup>14</sup> The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy. “Program of the National Socialist German Workers' Party.”

<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/nsdappro.asp>.

<sup>15</sup> Konrad Heiden, *A History of National Socialism*, 1935. Translated by Alfred A. Knopf, page 17.

Christian sects such as Catholicism and Protestantism but when it references Jews, it simply identifies them as materialists rather than a religious group that has existed for three millennia. In Nazi Germany Jews were not persecuted on the grounds of their creed but rather for many other ideologically-driven reasons or presumptions.

Why did early Nazi leaders such as Adolf Hitler, Anton Drexler, Gottfried Feder, and Dietrich Eckart propose such appalling discriminatory measures towards the Jewish population not only in Germany but also in Europe as a whole? The answer to that question can be found in Germany's defeat during the Great War. Throughout the course of his infamous book *Mein Kampf*, Hitler speaks of a struggle not only between races but also between ideologies. Time after time Hitler makes reference to Marxism and Jewry as interchangeable concepts used as a common rationale to destroy civilization. He refers to Marxism as a Jewish doctrine "that rejects the aristocratic principle of Nature and replaces the eternal privilege of power and strength by the mass of numbers and their dead weight. Thus it denies the value of personality in man, contests the significance of nationality and race, and thereby withdraws from humanity the premise of its existence and its culture."<sup>16</sup> The fact that most of Bolsheviks who were involved with the October Revolution were of Jewish descent only added fuel to the hysterical belief that Communism was a Jewish-inspired and Jewish-led movement seeking world domination.<sup>17</sup> The fall of Czarist Russia was attributed solely to Jewish revolutionaries whose ultimate goal was to destroy all established order, annihilate

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<sup>16</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company 1999), 64.

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 100, 102, 108.

Christianity from the face of the earth and ultimately impose their own dominion from horizon to horizon.<sup>18</sup>

In *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, Saul Friedlander argues that "the most explosive ideological mixture present in postwar Germany was a fusion of constant fear of the Red Menace with nationalist resentment born of defeat."<sup>19</sup> Communism was Nazism's greatest adversary in post-World War I Germany. Up until the early 1930s, the German Communist Party (KPD) had won the majority of the vote, thus establishing itself as a cohesive movement whose chief concern was to obtain administrative power. The most powerful tool the Nazis often exploited to their advantage was the linkage they established between modernization, advanced capitalism, Bolshevism and Jews. The vast majority of the German population resented the encroachment of Marxism and feared a gradual Marxist takeover in all facets of German everyday life. Hitler utilized his charismatic oratorical skills to lend authority to public denunciation of all communist activities and beliefs; his outspoken linkage of communists and Jews was highly popular. As a result of combining growing anti-Semitism with everything that was supposedly wrong with Germany, economically, socially, and racially, Hitler achieved unprecedented success with his diatribes, and party membership flourished to record highs.

Incidents that further added fuel to the general notion that Jews were disproportionately using an insurrectionist Marxist creed to achieve dominion in Germany were uprisings such as the Spartacist Rebellion of 1919, which aimed to overthrow the democratically established Weimar Republic. The goal of the Spartacist

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<sup>18</sup> Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers 1997), 90.

<sup>19</sup> Friedlander, *Jews*, 90.

uprising was to “create a socialist state run by the workers’ and soldiers’ councils that had sprung up all over the country as the old imperial system disintegrated. With the model of Lenin’s Bolshevik Revolution in Russia before their eyes, they pressed on plans for a second revolution to complete their work.”<sup>20</sup> The failed insurrection was led by Rosa Luxemburg, founder of the German Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in 1918, along with Leo Jogisches, Paul Levi, and Julian Balthasar Marchlewski, who were all Jews.<sup>21</sup> Friedlander argues that the prominence of Jews amongst the leaders of the failed revolution in Bavaria added further incentive to the already passionate anti-Semitic hatred among right-wing fanatics.<sup>22</sup>

Soon named Führer of the Nationalist Socialist German Workers Party, Hitler foresaw the role of Jewish involvement in Marxism and thus made it one of his chief topics during his speeches. By doing so, he exacerbated what was once mild anti-Semitism among the general public, which became more and more vitriolic. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler emphasized that “if, with help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men.”<sup>23</sup> From such passages, we can infer that Hitler saw the world in two dimensions: black and white. For him without total victory, there would be an utter devastation of the Fatherland and eventual decline of the rest of Europe.

Communism’s purpose was seen as destructive to individualism, the class system,

and ethnic nationalism, which according to the conservative Far Right was the greatest of sins. Without nationalism or pride of heritage, then the Nazis believed that the German race would come to an end. Hitler believed that the Jews who had no homeland and who were scattered across the nations of the world favored anti-nationalism on the grounds that they were always the minority. In essence, he believed that Communism offered Jews a way in which they could remain powerful through high positions, behind the mask of Marxism, which sees all men as equals in gender, race, religion, class, and heritage. Hitler viewed Marxism as the destroyer of culture and he believed he was predestined to fight against this “foreign disease”. He concludes his third chapter by proclaiming “I believe that I am in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.”<sup>24</sup>

Among the chief concerns of the Nazi regime from its inception was the notion of Racial Purity. Their argument for this base ideal was the omnipotent driving force for the destruction of supposedly lesser-valued races. The idea that some races are in some way favored more than others played a monumental role in shaping Nazi governmental society in all facets.<sup>25</sup> The proponents of Social Darwinism argue that full-blooded Germans were inherently culturally superior and that this superiority legitimized German rule over Slavic and Polish peoples.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, in the immediate pre-war years the wars of different ideologies came to an abrupt end, with National Socialism triumphing over all other competing political doctrines.

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<sup>20</sup> Richard J. Evans *The Coming of the Third Reich* (New York: Penguin Group 2005), 74.

<sup>21</sup> Evans, *Third Reich*, 57.

<sup>22</sup> Evans, *Third Reich*, 91.

<sup>23</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company 1999), 65.

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<sup>24</sup> Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 76.

<sup>25</sup> Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 65.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Burleigh, Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), 25.

With the conclusion of the political takeover in Europe, a new conflict arose from the ashes of the Fatherland, which led to a racial war categorizing people into superior or inferior classes on the basis of Nazi pseudo-science. From the very beginning, the Party founders believed that the Germans belonged to a mythical master race that had existed from the dawn of humanity. The results of “scientific” analysis of the time legitimized the belief that the Germanic race was indeed superior and that the greatest threat to its continued existence would be interbreeding with lesser races such as the Gypsies, Jews, Poles, Roma, and Sinti, which would result in cultural deterioration of the elite.<sup>27</sup> According to Richard Weikart, “Hitler believed that these biologically unequal humans, just as other organisms, were locked in an eternal, inescapable Darwinian struggle for existence. The strong triumph and the weak perish.”<sup>28</sup> This appropriation of the Darwinian creed of the survival of the fittest became the rationalization for the persecution of all those who threatened the Aryans. Hitler also believed that if the subjugation of the inferior were not to be achieved, the racial purity of the German elite would be destroyed and lost forever. Implementing laws that distinguish, separate, and persecute inferior races would preserve the master race from any threat, either domestic or foreign. Hitler may have believed that he was only speeding up the process of Nature in destroying the weak who are not able to adapt. The greatest fear of the National Socialists was that over time the racially “unfit” would multiply exponentially, rebel, and overthrow the Aryan race from power and authority, resulting in racial “degeneration.”

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Burleigh, Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), 38.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004), 7.

When the Nazis finally acquired power in 1933, the first anti-Jewish labor laws were voted into law. The expropriation of Jews first began in the fields of education: drastic measures were taken on an unprecedented scale against Jewish professors, teachers and students, and thereafter against Jewish physicians, lawyers, bankers, soldiers, government officials, storeowners, media moguls, newspapers, theatre, and the arts. Non-Aryans were completely excluded from society because they were seen as corrupting the master race. Positions that once were held by Jews were now being offered to and bestowed upon Aryans. Prior to this time, 60% of the banks were controlled by Jews; 80% of lawyers and judges were Jews; some of the most popular newspapers and theatres were run by Jews; and successful chains of department stores were controlled by Jews. The success, power and influence of the Jews who dominated the socio-economical and cultural aspects of everyday German life was a reality too great for the Nazis to ignore.

A prime target of National Socialists had been the chains of department stores, “where since the nineteenth century people had been able to go to buy cheap, mass produced goods of all kinds. Many of the founders of such stores were Jewish.”<sup>29</sup> The most prominent chains of department stores that were controlled by Jews were those of the Wertheims and the Tietzes, whose total stores numbered over 65 around the capitol city of Berlin. The Wertheim's controlled a modest seven shops whose employees numbered 10,450, with sales of 128 million Reichsmarks.<sup>30</sup> By 1928, the Tietzes owned 58 department stores whose employees numbered 31,450 and whose annual sales generated a staggering 490 million Reichsmarks. Richard J. Evans proclaims

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<sup>29</sup> Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin Group 2005), 378.

<sup>30</sup> Evans, *Power*, 379.

that, “these department stores accounted for less than five percent of total retail sales in Germany up to the late 1920’s.”<sup>31</sup> The Nazis used this encouragement and exploited the continuing hatred toward the Jewish role in the German economy. The reality that a small minority of the nation controlled so much wealth and power was the driving force that led to the nationalism and persecution of all non-Aryan businesses.

The idiosyncratic goal of Aryanization was to expropriate not only all Jews, but also all homosexuals, Gypsies, Romas, Communists, people with mental disabilities or illnesses, feminists, a-socials, Jehovah witnesses and any other minority group which played any kind of socio-economic role in the German nation. Its purpose was clear: it strove to exclude all alien races that are racially unfit, poisonous, less valuable, low class, or destroyers of racial purity from the national community. Aryanization was made possible through a series of legislative acts known as the Nuremberg Laws, passed during the Nazi takeover of the administration. The infamous Nuremberg Laws were series of edicts whose ultimate purpose was to denaturalize, exclude, and expel all non-Aryans. In October 1935, Section One of the Nuremberg Laws, known as the Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People, was passed, explicitly separating alien groups deemed as racially unfit, from Aryans.<sup>32</sup>

This campaign of exclusion was further legitimized when the Law of the Protection of German Blood and Honor was initiated to prevent miscegenation between Germans and so-called alien races such as Jews, Blacks, and Gypsies. The Far Right vehemently believed that “interbreeding between races

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<sup>31</sup> Evans, *Power*, 379.

<sup>32</sup> Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 152.

would result in bastardization and a deterioration of racial value.”<sup>33</sup> Sections One through Four of the Law of German Blood and Honor dictated the following:

Section 1; Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they were concluded abroad. Section 2; Sexual relations outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Section 3; Jews will not be permitted to employ female citizens of German or kindred blood as domestic servants. Section 4; Jews are forbidden to display the Reich and national flag or the national colors. On the other hand they are permitted to display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.<sup>34</sup>

Mercy did not exist in any aspect of life when in dealing with Semites. Burleigh argues that Nazis envisioned Jews and others as the embodiment of evil who were capable of anything and everything including the greatest sin of all, which is the racial deterioration of the Germanic Nordic race.<sup>35</sup>

The second regulation under the Nuremberg Laws was The Reich Citizenship Law, which was passed on September 15, 1935. The Reich Citizenship Law deprived all Jews of their German citizenship and introduced a new distinction between “Reich citizens” and “nationals.” The Reich Citizenship Law excluded all minorities from membership in society and expropriated their

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Burleigh, Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), 38.

<sup>34</sup> Jewish Virtual Library, “Law for the Protection German Blood and Honor,” <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holo-caust/nurmlaw2.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Michael Burleigh, Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), 36.

human rights. They no longer had the same rights in regards to education, public service, military service, professions, political possessions, ownership, personal freedom, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, or the right to petition. Article Two of the Reichstag Citizenship Law declared that “1. A citizen of the Reich is that subject only who is of German or kindred blood and who, through his conduct, shows that he is both desirous and fit to serve the German people and Reich faithfully. 2. The right to citizenship is acquired by the granting of Reich citizenship papers. 3. Only the citizen of the Reich enjoys full political rights in accordance with the provision of the laws.”<sup>36</sup> The major effect of the Reich Citizenship law was that it made Jews and other minorities second class citizens who were politically powerless to stand up to Nazi persecution, while reserving full political and social rights only to full-blooded Germans.

Aryanization was so successful that within three months, 83% of the handicrafts, 82% of the monetary services, 50% of the individual businesses, and 26% of the industry owned by Jews were taken over by Nazis in Vienna alone.<sup>37</sup> After Aryanization was complete in Austria, only eight of the original 86 Jewish-owned banks remained unscathed, while the rest got liquidated into the Reich Bank.<sup>38</sup> This was the beginning of the end for European Jewry in the Fatherland. In 1939 Aryanization was further intensified, and with unrelenting speed. Evans proclaims that “[A]ll Jewish-owned businesses had disappeared in Vienna. Of the 33,000 Jewish enterprises that had existed in the Austrian

capitol at the time of Anschluss [Annexation], some 7000 had already been liquidated” in May of 1938.<sup>39</sup> Five thousand of the remaining 26,000 were Aryanized and the other 21,000 were completely liquidated into the national socialist movement.<sup>40</sup> Also by the end of 1938, a total of 44,000 of 70,000 Jewish owned apartments were Aryanized as well.<sup>41</sup> As an immediate result of the decimation of the purportedly Jewish-controlled elements of German-speaking society, many Jews fell into severe poverty. By 1939 five to six Jewish families were living in one apartment room, with an obvious lack of plumbing, radio, telephone, kitchens, bathrooms, beds, and overall space to accommodate the needs of all residents.

A crucial precipitating crisis for European Jewry occurred when a European Jew named Herschel Grynszpan took action into his own hands. Grynszpan was a seventeen-year-old Jew living in Paris who had discovered that his parents, along with thousands of other innocent Jews, had been expropriated and deported from Germany to Poland. In an act of vengeance, Grynszpan purchased a revolver and marched towards the German embassy.<sup>42</sup> On November 7, 1938, he eventually came across a German diplomat named Ernst Vom Rath, and shot him. The bullet did not kill him instantly; he received a wound which would be fatal later that day. Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, decided to make this Jewish assassination of a German diplomat into a major propaganda weapon that painted the incident as an assault by world Jewry on the Third Reich.<sup>43</sup> Immediately after the assassination of Rath,

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<sup>36</sup> Jewish Virtual Library, “Law for the Protection German Blood and Honor,” <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/nurmlaw3.html>

<sup>37</sup> Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 243

<sup>38</sup> Friedlander, *Jews*, 243.

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<sup>39</sup> Friedlander, *Jews*, 243.

<sup>40</sup> Friedlander, *Jews*, 243.

<sup>41</sup> Friedlander, *Jews*, 243.

<sup>42</sup> Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin Group 2005), 580.

<sup>43</sup> Evans, *Power*, 580.

Goebbels ordered vicious assaults on synagogues and on Jewish neighborhoods. The first measure demanded by the Ministry of Propaganda portrayed the Jews as collectively responsible for the death of Rath. According to Burleigh, the Jews were forced to pay one billion Reichsmarks to the Nazi regime for “recompensation.”<sup>44</sup>

For the National Socialists this event now definitively justified any and all kinds of maltreatment of the Jews. This was the turning-point, after which time the Nazi regime felt justified in acting without remorse, mercy or humanity, and in ignoring international interference. According to Evans, “Hitler immediately issued instructions to Goebbels for a massive, coordinated, physical assault on Germany’s Jews, coupled with the arrest of as many Jewish men as possible into leaving Germany, through a terrifying, nationwide outburst of violence and destruction.”<sup>45</sup> The assassination of Ernst Vom Rath was significant for the Nazi regime because it provided the “propagandistic justification for the final, total expropriation of Germany’s Jews and their complete segregation from the rest of the German economy, society, and culture.”<sup>46</sup>

On November 9, 1938, the infamous pogrom of state-organized massacre known as “Kristallnacht” or “Night of the Broken Glass” was planned and ordered. Goebbels, with Hitler’s administrative permission, decreed a “state of emergency” in which Party members, supporters, Schutzstaffel (Protective Squadron, abbreviated SS), Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service, abbreviated SD), and Gestapo (Secret State

Police) were encouraged to believe it was their national duty to despoil, wreak havoc, loot, pillage, plunder, ransack, rape, ravage, strip, and deplete all Jewish synagogues, stores, banks, schools, law firms, businesses, and Jewish-controlled media throughout the nation. The total amount of damage done during the infamous Night of the Broken Glass – the reference was to the countless Jewish shop windows broken - is recorded in a preliminary confidential report by Reinhard Tristan Eugen Heydrich to Hermann Wilhelm Göring on November 11, 1938.

The extent of the destruction of Jewish shops and houses cannot yet be verified by figures . . . 815 shops destroyed, 171 dwelling houses set on fire or destroyed only indicate a fraction of the actual damage so far as arson is concerned . . . 119 synagogues were set on fire, and another 76 completely destroyed . . . 20,000 Jews were arrested. 36 deaths were reported and those seriously injured were also numbered at 36. Those killed and injured are Jews. . . .<sup>47</sup>

More recent estimates claim that all synagogues were burned, 40,000 Jews were arrested, over 200 Jews died, 7,500 shops were destroyed, and estimates of total national damages reached as high as one billion Reichsmarks (\$250,000,000 U.S. dollars in 1938).<sup>48</sup> The estimated damage of broken glass alone came to five million marks (\$1,250,000 in 1938).<sup>49</sup> The result of Vom Rath’s assassination in Paris was fully exploited to justify the expropriation and subjugation of the Jewish community in Germany: the action of one European Jew resulted in the suffering of an entire nation’s Jewish population. All Jews were held completely responsible, whether or not they

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Burleigh, Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), 93.

<sup>45</sup> Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin Group 2005), 581.

<sup>46</sup> Evans, *Power*, 581.

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<sup>47</sup> William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc. 1960), 386.

<sup>48</sup> Donald D. Wall, *Nazi Germany and World War II* (Belmont : Thomas Wadsworth, 2003), 114-15.

<sup>49</sup> Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 386.

were in any way involved. The whole Jewish population of Germany became the propagandistic scapegoat for Rath's murder and Jewish victims of the pogrom were held responsible to pay for the destruction of their own property.

Hitler fervently believed that it was the Jews who started World War II. During the war, the "propaganda of the Nazi regime repeatedly asserted that an actual political subject, an actor called Jewry or international Jewry, was guilty of starting and prolonging the war and that a Jewish international conspiracy was intent on exterminating Germany and the Germans."<sup>50</sup> The ideology behind Nazism was survivalism in a world filled with conflict. Jewry was seen as at the forefront of all problems both domestic and abroad. The conflict, if not settled or crushed, would in the minds of the National Socialists ultimately destroy the racially fit, risking the eventual destruction of mankind. Along with his senior officials, Hitler believed that the reason the World War II ignited was Jewish manipulation of capitalists in Europe and America and communists in Russia into fighting their wars for them. The Nazis constantly referred to the world as dominated by International Jewry whose fundamental goal was to destroy all opposition hostile to the interests of Jews. In this case, it was Nazi Germany that was the devil incarnate in the eyes of international Jewry. Hitler believed that the world was continuously struggling to defeat this monolithic system of corruption, but had always fallen short of accomplishing its goal. Thus his war was indeed targeted at the whole world, because he believed all global organizations were run by Jews seeking to extinguish the Germans' hopes of unification, growth, and racial evolution.

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<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 2.

Jeffrey Herf, in *The Jewish Enemy*, argues that the Nazis fervently believed the Jews had successfully launched World War II in order for the National Socialists to be obliged to wage war on European Jewry.<sup>51</sup> In response to the threat of global war between Aryanization and Jewry, Hitler declared that "today I will once more be a prophet: if the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."<sup>52</sup> He clearly believed that defeating the Jews was in part a necessity for an ongoing evolutionary cycle of the strong prevailing over the weak.

The greatest challenge to the spread of Nazism was without a doubt the international presence of Jewry in politics, economics, and financial banking. National Socialism obsessively reiterated that the idiosyncratic goal of Jewry was to destroy the racial purity of the German people. "Reactionary Modernism" dictated that National Socialism must liberate technology from the supremacy of wealth from Jewish materialism. Nazi historian Peter Schwerber argues that only victorious racial superiority over the lesser-valued races could prevail against Jewish materialism; it was thought that whereas the Jews destroyed and distorted technology, the Master Race was ideally suited to it.<sup>53</sup> The laws of nature demanded Reactionary Modernism in the sense that all political,

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<sup>51</sup> Herf, *Enemy*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Stein, Dr. S. D., "Statements by Hitler and Senior Nazis Concerning Jews and Judaism." <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/genocide/statements.htm>.

<sup>53</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 193.

racial, and economic opposition must be eradicated or mankind would suffer complete annihilation. Herf contends “Radical anti-Semitism rested on the belief that the Jews were a cohesive, politically active subject - that is, a group united on a global scale by racial bonds that transcended any allegiance to nation-states.”<sup>54</sup> He further attests that this powerful international entity of Jewry led the Nazis to believe that it controlled and manipulated puppet states to serve its own evil interests.<sup>55</sup> Thus it was Nazi creed that the Allies, Britain, France, and the United States, only declared war on Germany because they were financially and politically motivated and funded by world Jewish leaders who wanted the destruction of the Germanic race.

It was the young Jew’s decisive act of defiance in 1938 that finally enabled the Nazis to envision the Judenfrei (free of Jews) German society, which began to become a reality in all facets of life. The assassination of Ernst Eduard Vom Rath fed the National Socialists the propaganda justification for the final, total expropriation of Germany’s Jews and their complete segregation from the rest of the German economy, society, and culture.<sup>56</sup> The reality of Volksgemeinschaft (Racial Community) began to be fulfilled as all lesser-valued races were expelled, and expropriated from German life.<sup>57</sup> Arguably, the most portentous moment in the lead-up to WWII resulted from the assassination of an unimportant diplomat whose death was seen by the Nazis not as a loss but rather as a basis for promoting the decimation of the Jewish

presence in German life. In this chain of events, efforts to decimate the entire European population of Jews were set in motion.

The stage had been set for the final act. The third and final element of Hilberg’s cyclical triad (Conversion, Expulsion, Deportation) was soon to occur. The Final Solution to the Jewish Question was now proclaimed in bold letters. But in the event, the solution would not be deportation but rather the attempt at complete annihilation of the Jewish population of Europe. Genocide and ethnic cleansing grew out of an uninterrupted chain of events that reduced and crippled the Jewish presence in Europe, involving practices on an unprecedented scale we should hope never to see repeated in any approximation.

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<sup>54</sup> Herf, *Enemy*, 7.

<sup>55</sup> Herf, *Enemy*, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin Group 2005), 581.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Saunders, “Nazism and Social Revolution,” in Gordon Martel, ed., *Modern Germany Reconsidered, 1870-1945* (London: Routledge, 1992), 166-67.

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