

Weimar Constitution and the transfer of power to an executive authority that was no longer responsible to the Reichstag. It could have been of little solace to Kaas that when Hitler assumed the chancellorship, his appointment was consistent with the letter, if not the spirit, of the Weimar Constitution. All that remained was the desperate hope that the conservatives who had installed Hitler in power would be able to control the dynamism of the Nazi movement and harness it to their own political agenda.

That this hope would prove illusory became abundantly clear in the weeks that followed Hitler's appointment as chancellor. What ensued was the marginalization of Hitler's conservative allies and the devastatingly rapid consolidation of power in the hands of the Nazi elite. This was accomplished by a combination of violence and coercion coupled with willing complicity and eager enthusiasm on the part of a German public that embraced Hitler as the messiah who would redeem Germany from the cloud of defeat and despair that had descended upon it in 1918. That all of this took place under the Damocles sword of physical retribution and incarceration for those who disagreed with their new masters makes it difficult to gauge just how much of this excitement was genuine. Yet, even where the passionate eagerness as exhibited by parts of the youth movement was absent, there was still a hopeful desire by elements of the trade union movement, Catholic conservatives, Protestant church leaders, and even the Social Democratic pundits who wrote for the *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus* to seek commonalities and accommodation with the regime. These commonalities, often misconstrued or exaggerated by opportunistic or fearful individuals, were generally sufficient to stifle determined resistance.

By the end of 1933 the changes in the German state and society were all-encompassing and irreversible. Federal traditions with deep roots in German history that reached back over centuries had been eliminated and replaced by a centralized state that flew in the face of Germany's historical development since the Reformation and was more reminiscent of revolutionary France. The multifaceted nature of German society and organizations, from political parties, big business, and trade unions to the churches and religious associations, had been brought into line. In many respects, the period of the Nazi seizure and consolidation of power would prove more radical than what followed during the years of peace between 1934 and 1938. The wave of antisemitic violence that swept through Germany in the spring of 1933 met with no opposition and seemingly few misgivings on the part of German civil society. Neither the civil administration nor the churches nor the conservative elites that had placed Hitler in power were willing

to risk their place in the new Nazi state for the sake of the Jews. For many, the issue of antisemitism would prove to be the decisive litmus test of how they would relate to the regime in general. The process by which the Nazis seized and consolidated power between 1932 and 1934 would do much to define the essential features of Nazi society and the Nazi state for the millions of Germans who would either embrace it or, what was much less likely, reject it.

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Notes

1. For the essential elements of Mosse's argument, see George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), 254–93.
2. Fritz Fischer, *From Kaiserreich to the Third Reich: Elements of Continuity in German History, 1871–1945*, trans. Roger Fletcher (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), esp. 97–99.
3. In this respect, see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Entsorgung der deutschen Vergangenheit. Ein polemischer Essay zum "Historikerstreit"* (Munich: Beck, 1988), as well as the fourth volume of Wehler's *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Vom Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges bis zur Gründung der zwei deutschen Staaten 1918–1949* (Munich: Beck, 2008), esp. 580–89.
4. For example, see Larry Eugene Jones, "Why Hitler Came to Power: In Defense of a New History of Politics," in *Geschichtswissenschaft vor 2000: Perspektiven der Historiographiegeschichte, Geschichtstheorie, Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte; Festschrift für Georg G. Iggers zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch, Jörn Rüsen, and Hans Schleier (Hagen: Magrit Rottmann Medienverlag, 1991), 256–76. In a similar vein, though with different conclusions, see Geoff Eley, *Nazism as Fascism: Violence, Ideology, and the Ground of Consent in Germany, 1930–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 13–22.
5. Robert Thomson Clark, *The Fall of the German Republic: A Political Study* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935), 9–13.
6. Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik: Eine Studie des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie*, 3rd ed. (Villingen-Schwarzwald: Ring-Verlag, 1960), esp. 686–732. For the classic statement of this argument, see Theodor Eschenburg, "The Role of Personality in the Crisis of the Weimar Republic: Hindenburg, Brüning, Groener, Schleicher," in *Republic to Reich: The Making of the Nazi Revolution*, ed. Hajo Holborn (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 3–50.
7. Hans Mommsen, *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy*, trans. Elborg Forster and Larry Eugene Jones (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 490–544. For a more pointed critique of the role that Germany's conservative elites played in the appointment of the Hitler cabinet, see Hans Mommsen, "Die deutschen Eliten und der Mythos des nationalen Aufbruchs von 1933," *Merkur: Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken* 38 (1984): 97–102, and "Die nationalsozialistische Machteroberung: Revolution oder Gegenrevolution," in *Europäische Sozialgeschichte: Festschrift für Wolfgang Schieder*, ed. Christof Dipper, Lutz Klinkhammer, and Alexander Nützenadel (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 2000), 41–56.
8. Heinrich August Winkler, *Weimar 1918–1933: Die Geschichte der ersten deutschen Demokratie* (Munich: Beck, 1993), 535–94.
9. Henry Ashby Turner Jr., "'Alliance of Elites' as a Cause of Weimar's Collapse and Hitler's Triumph?," in *Die deutsche Staatskrise 1930–1933:*

- Handlungsspielräume und Alternativen*, ed. Heinrich August Winkler (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992), 205–14.
10. Henry Ashby Turner Jr., *Hitler's Thirty Days to Power: January 1933* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1966), esp. 163–83.
 11. Karl Dietrich Bracher, "Stages of Totalitarian Integration (*Gleichschaltung*): The Consolidation of National Socialist Rule in 1933 and 1934," in *Republic to Reich*, ed. Holborn, 109–28. For a fuller elaboration of Bracher's argument and periodization of the Nazi consolidation of power, see his chapter "Stufen der Machtergreifung," in Karl Dietrich Bracher, Wolfgang Sauer, and Gerhard Schulz, *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung. Studien zur Errichtung des totalitären Herrschaftssystems in Deutschland 1933/34* (Cologne and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1960), 31–219.
 12. In this respect, see Hermann Beck, *The Fateful Alliance: German Conservatives and Nazis in 1933; The Machtergreifung in a New Light* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 219–52.
 13. On Röhm, see the excellent biography by Eleanor Hancock, *Ernst Röhm: Hitler's SA Chief of Staff* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), esp. 140–66.
 14. On the German military and its role in the series of events that led to the Röhm Purge in the summer of 1934, see the classic study by Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Das Herr und Hitler: Armee und nationalsozialistisches Regime 1933–1940* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1969), 88–141, as well as the more recent monograph by Immo von Fallois, *Kalkül und Illusion: Der Machtkampf zwischen Reichswehr und SA während der Röhm-Krise 1934* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994).
 15. On Papen, the Marburg speech, and the conspiratorial activities of the Papen vice chancery, see the definitive study by Rainer Orth, "Der Amtssitz der Opposition"? Politik und Staatsumbaupläne im Büro des Stellvertreters des Reichskanzler in den Jahren 1933–1934 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), esp. 345–450.
 16. Fritz Stern, "National Socialism as Temptation," in Fritz Stern, *Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 147–91.
 17. Hermann Beck, "The Antiburgeois Character of National Socialism," *Journal of Modern History* 88 (2016): 572–609.
 18. "Die nach Amerika gerichtete Rundfunkrede des Herrn Generalsuperintendenten Dibelius vom 4. April 1933," Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin, 51, EII e 8, 4.

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