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In June 1935, Bertha and Bettina Moralat attended the national meeting of the Union of Germans Abroad (Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland, VdA) in East Prussia.¹ Upon returning to their Swabian hometown, as the two recalled in an interview almost seventy years later, the Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer* proclaimed that “[t]he children of the baptized Jew Moralat have participated in a VdA meeting. Jewish behavior [*Judereien*] like this must no longer take place in the future.” A local window display of the notoriously anti-Semitic *Der Stürmer* prominently featured this anti-Semitic slur. Its use of the phrase “baptized Jews” implied, in line with racial anti-Semitic thought, that converts would always remain Jews. “*Judereien*” also was a German-language word play on “pig’s mess” (*Sauereien*), which reminded readers of “Jewish pig” (*Judensau*), a popular late medieval anti-Judaic image.² As the children of a Protestant mother and a father who converted from Judaism to Catholicism, the two Protestant teenagers had little reason to feel different from their friends before 1933. Given their family’s political conservatism, they had even initially welcomed the Hitler regime.

But as the only family in town known to have Jewish ancestors, the Moralats were soon identified as targets by the press and local Nazis. In the fall of 1935, the Nuremberg Racial Laws officially defined Bertha and Bettina as “Jewish mixed-breeds” (*Jüdische Mischlinge*), the descendants of one or, in their case, two “full-Jewish grandparents.”³ Facing increasing social discrimination and

¹ Bertha and Bettina Moralat, interview by author, tape recording, Weinheim, Germany, 28 July 2001. In accordance with the data protection laws, I have used pseudonyms. This practice is continued throughout the book unless the persons in question were figures of public importance or their writings have already been published under the real names. Where there are archival collections, researchers can easily locate the names with the help of the file name and record number.

² Nicoline Hartzitz, “Die Sprache der Judenfeindschaft,” in *Antisemitismus. Vorurteile und Mythen*, eds. Julius H. Schoeps and Joachim Schlör (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1995), 22.

³ “Erste Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 14. November 1935,” *RGBl I* (1935): 1333–4.

outright physical violence, the Moralat family moved to Stuttgart, where they hoped to benefit from the greater anonymity of a large city. During the war, the Nazi authorities pressed the sisters into forced labor. Their father only escaped the final deportations by the Secret State Police (Geheime Staatspolizei, Gestapo) by going into hiding. Although the sisters and their parents ultimately survived, the Nazis murdered most of their relatives on the father's side, along with many others in their circumstances.

Shortly after the liberation of the Moralat family in the spring of 1945, an increasing number of German Gentiles, from Nazi Party officials and business leaders to neighbors and acquaintances, visited the Moralats. All came for the same reason: to ask for documentation to prove to the American occupation authorities that they as German Gentiles had helped the Moralat family in times of need. The sisters even produced a series of "certificates of blameless conduct" (*Persilscheine*). In her letters, the twenty-three-year-old Bettina Moralat did not hesitate to identify herself as a "*Mischling* of the first degree" and emphasized how the "family . . . had to suffer exceptionally under the rule of the Nazis."⁴ Bettina Moralat did not emigrate, rather remaining in Germany. Like her sister, she broke with the Protestant church, deeply disappointed about the behavior of her fellow Lutherans during the Nazi period. Both sisters converted not to Judaism, but to Catholicism.

The struggles of the Moralat sisters illuminate key conjunctures in the discourses that shaped the ways in which German citizens did and could speak and write about what it meant to be German and Jewish during the late Weimar, Nazi, and early postwar periods of German history. In the Weimar Republic, Germany's first democracy, individuals could draw on a broad array of competing languages prescribed by the state, churches, synagogues, and political parties. During Weimar pluralism, many young Protestant Germans with Jewish ancestors like the Moralat sisters were much more aware of a Catholic rather than a Jewish Other. Some did not even know about their family's Jewish roots and previously had no need for words to address them. The establishment of the Nazi regime in 1933–4 elevated racial anti-Semitism to a legal doctrine, enforced by the state and disseminated by its propaganda and pedagogical institutions. The Nazi leadership embarked on a project to separate even the most acculturated citizens from a normalized German *Volk*, using the party's racial imagery as a basis. Bertha and Bettina Moralat's ability to flawlessly recite the lines of *Der Stürmer* that identified their deeds as "Jewish" decades afterwards demonstrates the powerful impact of Nazi language at the time and later.

The defeat of the Nazi regime in 1945 brought about a delegitimization of Nazi racial terminology and definitions. In the denazification projects of the Allied military governments and German antifascists, the meanings of racialized constructs such as "*Mischling*" temporarily changed from figures with an abject status to those with symbolic power. After the war, impoverished and

⁴ Bettina and Bertha Moralat, interview by author. Copies of these 1945–6 certificates by Bettina Moralat are in the possession of the author.

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persecuted young women like the two sisters could validate the new German-ness of members of the country's business elite who had previously joined the Nazi movement and profited from its wartime raids across the continent. Yet, such reversal of exclusionary discourses remained limited and German-Jewish survivors and other Germans of Jewish ancestry continued to grapple with their far-reaching legacies.

Scholars of Nazism and the Holocaust have largely focused on language as part of their studies of Nazi anti-Semitism. Even historians who downplay the importance of anti-Semitism still acknowledge that racist lingo and propaganda played a limited function in mobilizing support for the regime. Studies that place anti-Semitism at the center of their explanations of Nazi policies and mass crimes – and many works have shifted in this direction in recent years – attribute massive manipulative powers to Nazi language and propaganda in building an anti-Semitic consensus.⁵ Some have revived narrower conceptualizations of language that subsume it under conventional categories of ideology and incorporate it into a conceptual grid of top-down manipulation. In these readings, supposed masterminds such as Nazi chief propagandist Joseph Goebbels and other members of the “community of anti-Semitic intellectuals” consciously employed simple propaganda slogans to mislead and win over the wider population.

The broad reception of the diaries of Victor Klemperer, a Holocaust survivor and scholar of French literature, and the renewed interest in his 1947 work on the “language of the Third Reich” (*Lingua tertii imperii*, LTI) intensified these research currents. Based on a schematic philological and idealist position, Klemperer testified to the tremendous impact of Nazi parlance and argued that no one, not even the victims of Nazi racial policies like himself, was spared from the “poison” of Nazi language.⁶

For all their fascinating accounts of how Nazi concepts influenced the everyday language of German Gentiles and Jews, works like Klemperer's tend to overstate the manipulative power of Nazi language on people's own construction of their identities. Klemperer's observation that nobody, not even German Jews, could escape committing “the same sin” of speaking and being corrupted by the LTI does not leave enough room for personal agency. Nazi constructs did not “writ[e] and thin[k] for” Germans with Jewish ancestry, as demonstrated by my study's analyses of their discursive engagements.⁷ Even at the

⁵ David Bankier, ed., *Probing the Depths of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Berghahn, 2000); Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996); and Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy. Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). On studies that downplay the role of propaganda see Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992) and Martin Broszat's influential “Soziale Motivation und Führer-Bindung im Nationalsozialismus” *VfZG* 18 (1970): 392–409.

⁶ Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich. LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii* (London: Athlone Press, 2000), 192, 61.

⁷ *Ibid.*

height of the regime's power in the early phase of the war, Nazi propagandists never controlled the complex meanings and multifaceted languages of German-ness and Jewishness. The regime's parlance and language in general remained, as Geoffrey Harpham has pointed out, a "site of a massive confusion." Even though often contradictory, the attempts and obsession of the Nazi state leadership, party propagandists, officials in the ministerial bureaucracy, and police to remake language and define Germans and Jews produced categories and statements with symbolic, material, and deadly impact.⁸

This study offers a different conceptualization of language, agency, and violence that addresses these concerns and provides a richer understanding of the linguistic and discursive dynamics that proved so pivotal to those living under Nazi rule. In its analysis of the making and remaking of Germans and Jews from the late Weimar to the early postwar years, this book first examines the institutions and officials involved in creating and shaping language. Second, it focuses on the means to disseminate this language that, in a "nation of newspaper readers," spread throughout the broad array of daily and weekly newspapers. Finally, my work traces how readers received, renegotiated, and resisted this language in their increasingly brutalized worlds. At every step, categories and statements were subject to change and were polyphonic and contested, involving multiple actors and dynamics. In fact, these three layers – official agencies, newspapers, and individuals – interacted with each other in an ongoing and interrelated fashion. Historian Saul Friedländer has called for "both an integrative and an integrated history" of Nazism and the Holocaust that relates perpetrator, bystander, and victim histories and analyzes a multitude of interactions, perceptions, and reactions even at the micro level. My work offers a linguistic and discursive dimension of this type of study.⁹ It is the first empirically based work of the creation and dissemination of violent and exclusionary language, its uses, and responses to it in Weimar, Nazi, and early postwar Germany.

This work's narrative follows the path of the language itself, from Nazi government agencies to press conferences, through official directives to the print media, and via newspaper print to Germans of Jewish descent who read it and offered active and meaningful responses. The narrative thread begins in 1928 at the end of the Weimar Republic, a time of relative stability of the decade-old democratic system in Germany. Under this system the lives of most German Jews had improved, as political and legal systems removed existing barriers to full participation in public life. At its first layer, my study turns to the United Press Office (UPO) of the Reich Government and the State Department,

⁸ Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *Language Alone. The Critical Fetish of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2.

⁹ Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination. Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), xiv; idem, "Eine integrierte Geschichte des Holocausts," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 14–15 (2007): 9–10; and Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866–1918*, vol. 1 (Munich: Beck, 1998), 797.

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which struggled to perpetuate a normative new Germanness rooted in the democratic parliamentary system and its institutions. Established in 1919, the UPO fashioned itself as an agency independent of party politics, and its staff reported directly to the chancellor. Working in the interest of the Republic, the office staff aspired to help unite the country and increase its wavering political legitimacy.

These efforts of the UPO came to an end with Hitler's chancellorship in early 1933. The Nazi-led government swiftly established new agents of language control and initiators of change. These state institutions included the Propaganda Ministry under party chief propagandist Joseph Goebbels, which grew into a massive bureaucracy, taking over and radicalizing the Weimar UPO's means of influencing the country's newspapers. In the emerging racial state, the Nazi leadership charged a likewise novel Office of the Expert in Racial Research at the Reich Minister of the Interior (Sachverständiger für die Rasseforschung beim Reichsminister des Innern, SfR), later renamed to Reich Kinship Office (Reichssippenamt, RSA), with determining people's "racial descent" in cases of doubt. Like Goebbels' staff, those of Achim Gercke and later Kurt Mayer perpetuated and gave meaning to the regime's frantic attempts to define the racial Other in key legal initiatives such as the infamous Nuremberg Racial Laws. The Propaganda Ministry's "directives for the use of language" (*sprachregelnde Anweisungen*) to journalists and the Kinship Office's enforcement of racial categories in its "decisions on descent" (*Abstammungsbescheide*) played an unmatched role in the transformation of the meanings of Germanness and Jewishness in everyday public discussion. Indeed, these practices represent a crucial linguistic dimension of the regime's projects to resegregate and "stringently separate" what and who they defined as German and Jewish through government directives and laws. These directives and projects greatly reduced the plurality of language use, instead determining the legitimacy of racialized norms and categories that the Nazis employed to underpin the actions of their new regime. The Nazi language directives altered language use at the widest societal level, helping create a political culture in which genocide was possible.

The study concludes its focus on language control agents with an analysis of the early postwar years, especially of the American occupational zones in the German South and the four-power-controlled city of Berlin, where the Office of Military Government for Germany – United States (OMGUS) and its Information Control Division (ICD) under the command of Brigadier General Robert McClure launched new directives and projects to denazify Germany and the German language. Their efforts found support in the work of newly established German administrations. Official and semi-official institutions that aided survivors of the Nazi regime's policies also eagerly launched campaigns in newly licensed newspapers to help delegitimize Nazi racist discourse and propagate a new antifascist Germanness. Berlin's Main "Victim of Fascism" Committee (Hauptausschuß "Opfer des Faschismus," OdF), headed by the Communist politician Ottomar Geschke, was particularly influential and reached many parts of the fractured and occupied country. Their languages of a

“new Germany” added new layers of competing constructs that were rooted in the new power relations of the postwar era.

These agents of language control continually interacted with publishers and editors of the nation’s newspapers, which communicated their constructions to the public and often added further alterations. Until recently, historians of Nazism have only used these sources sparingly, often portraying them solely as vehicles of Nazi lies. My work follows in the footsteps of newer studies that illustrate the crucial importance of the mass-market publications in communicating anti-Semitic language and allowing newspaper readers, as Robert Gellately put it, to “experience the Gestapo, the courts, and the camps.”¹⁰ Indeed, even more so than radio and film, newspapers provided an unmatched cultural medium that aided their readers to navigate their sense of self and conceptualize their worlds. Particularly in urban areas, newspapers were readily available at newsstands, libraries, pubs and cafés. Passersby could also read the press in shop window displays and newspaper publishers’ special display boards.¹¹

To determine the impact of Nazi projects of linguistic control and the languages of Germanness and Jewishness available to readers, in its second layer this book examines a number of significant supraregional newspapers. For voices from the political and *völkisch* right, it analyzes the *Völkischer Beobachter* (VB, Munich, 1887/1920–1945) and the *Passauer Neue Presse* (PNP, 1946–). The Nazi movement purchased the VB in 1920, and the paper became its official organ and highest circulating daily in Germany. Also based in Bavaria, the PNP emerged as one of the most popular papers in the U.S. zone and repeatedly clashed with ICD officials over its use of anti-Semitic and Nazi phrases. My examination unpacks stances from the liberal-bourgeois and leftist spectrum by investigating the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (FZ, 1856–1943) and the *Frankfurter Rundschau* (FR, 1945–). The FZ was one of the most distinguished liberal newspapers in early twentieth-century Germany. However, after its editorial board decided not to leave the country in 1933, the paper became increasingly Nazified. The early postwar FR, the first licensed newspaper in U.S.-occupied Hesse, was particularly outspoken in its endorsement of an antifascist new Germanness. Its first editorial board was dominated by former political prisoners, especially Communists and Social Democrats.

To address major prewar voices from German-Jewish communities themselves, this work also analyzes the Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau* (JR, Berlin, 1895–1938) and the liberal-“assimilationist” *C.V. Zeitung* (CV-Z, Berlin,

¹⁰ See, for example, Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), vii, 6, 51–69; Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 14, 117–22, 221–52; and Corey Ross, “Writing Media into History,” *German History* 26 (2008): 299–313.

¹¹ See also Karl Christian Führer, “Die Tageszeitung als wichtigstes Massenmedium der national-sozialistischen Gesellschaft,” *ZfG* 55 (2007): 411–12.

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1922–1938). The *JR* was the official newspaper of the Zionist Organization for Germany (Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland, ZVfD) and communicated German Zionists' understanding of a failed Jewish "assimilation" and the need to build a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The leadership of the defense organization Central Organization of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith (Centralverein Deutscher Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens, CV) published the *CV-Z*. The paper sought ongoing German-Jewish acculturation and integration into German mainstream society.

For important postwar voices, this work turns to the autonomous Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau* (*JRM*, Marburg, 1946–1948) and the semi-independent Berlin community paper *Der Weg* (Berlin, 1946–1951/53). The new *JRM* was one of the short-lived but influential Zionist-leaning journals published by and for the remaining Jews in and outside the U.S. zone's DP camps. *Der Weg*, by contrast, served more as a discussion forum for the reconstituted religious community in Berlin, 59 percent of whose members were married to Gentile Germans and more inclined to remain in the country.¹² As a result, Zionist-leaning discourses were much less prominent in this publication.

At the third and final layer of analysis, my study explores how the dissemination of social aggression via racialized categories in the country's newspapers affected the ways readers used language to navigate social worlds that became increasingly violent, starting in the late Weimar years. My study specifically focuses on German Jews and other Germans of Jewish ancestry, the very group that the Nazis sought to alienate and ultimately murder. No other imagined grouping reveals the arbitrariness and constructedness of Nazi racial categories so distinctly than Germans of Jewish ancestry, whom the emerging Nazi dictatorship recategorized first as "non-Aryan" and later as "full Jews," "*Mischlinge*," or "designated Jews" (*Geltungsjuden*). Their practices and struggles now illustrate and then affected the constantly shifting and contested boundaries between Jewishness and Germanness.

The study's umbrella term "Germans of Jewish ancestry" refers not only to the more than 450,000 men and women who, in the mid-1920s, were members of the Jewish religious communities and citizens of the Weimar states and who thought of themselves mostly as liberal Germans. This term also denotes German-Jewish dissidents, converts to Christianity, and their descendants who were fully acculturated and identified as being part of mainstream Gentile society and German. No precise reliable data on conversions are available. However, contemporary estimates for the years from 1880 until 1928 put the number at more than 18,000 for Prussia alone, not including dissidents who exclusively left a specific religious community but remained part of the larger Jewish community. Many conversions took place as part of interfaith marriages. According to internal German-Jewish community sources, from

¹² Sigmund Weltlinger, "Bericht über die Neubildung der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Berlin," 13 November 1946, LAB E Rep. 200–22, Nr. 100.

1928 to 1932, between 50 and 60 mixed marriages took place for every 100 Jewish weddings. Most couples in mixed marriages raised their children as Christians.¹³

Faced with the onslaughts of *völkisch* and Nazi activists who sought to redefine them as non-German from the onset of the Hitler movement, Germans of Jewish ancestry reaffirmed and renegotiated their sense of self. Of a predominantly middle-class background, they engaged in autobiographical and diary writing, genres that had become increasingly popular among members of this class and were endorsed by parents, teachers, and writers. In these acts of self-definition, these individuals drew extensively on the language of the press to render their biographies intelligible and make sense of their worlds. These semi-private practices also served as test grounds for public engagements with representatives of a broad array of institutions and ordinary Germans alike, including government administrators, scientists, newspaper editors, police officers, and Jewish community officials. Not lofty intellectual pursuits or cultural habitus, these personal writing projects, with the rise of the Nazi dictatorship, provided Germans of Jewish ancestry with the means for self-care and the ability to maintain a public identity of Germanness, which meant the difference between integration and “social death.” During the Nazi genocide, public identity became a matter of sheer survival. In the Third Reich, as historian Michael Burleigh has keenly noted, “suffering was determined by categories.”¹⁴

This book not only traces care of the self by Germans of Jewish ancestry in their diaries and engagements with the press via letters to the editor. It also examines their quest for Germanness, belonging, and survival at the level of their interaction with Gentile administrators, who were involved in language control and the implementation of the Nazi regime’s racial policies. Tens of thousands petitioned Nazi administrations. Like Bettina Moralat’s mother on behalf of her daughter, these individuals attempted to “prove” their non-Jewish descent to the Reich Kinship Office for a decision. Others sought “applications for parity of treatment” (*Gleichstellungsanträge*) with people the Nazis defined as “of German blood” (*Deutschblütigen*).¹⁵ Many Jewish community members, particularly Zionists, despised these steps as acts of betrayal, as the actions often

¹³ Franklin A. Oberlaender accepts estimates that speak of 350,000 to 400,000 people of mixed ancestry in 1933 Germany. See his “*Wir aber sind nicht Fisch und nicht Fleisch.*” *Christliche ‘Nichtarier’ und ihre Kinder in Deutschland* (Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 1996), 61. The 1939 census that included race as a key category produced a figure of about 100,000. See CV-Z, 16 May 1935; Monika Richarz, ed., *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1982), 17–8, 25; Avraham Barkai and Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, *Renewal and Destruction, 1918–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 31–2, 252; and Stephan Behr, *Der Bevölkerungsrückgang der deutschen Juden* (Frankfurt/Main: Kauffmann, 1932), 105.

¹⁴ Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 18. On the notion of social death see Claudia Card, “Genocide and Social Death,” *Hypatia* 18 (2003): 63–79 and Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair. Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5.

¹⁵ Bettina and Bertha Moralat, interview by author.

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involved questioning the identity of a petitioner's Jewish parent. Yet, at a time of genocide and war, these steps held the prospect of a reprieve from violence not only for the petitioners but also for their children and other relatives. In a time of great upheaval and persecution, speaking "Nazi" promised to strengthen the applicant's case. Ultimately, there were few, if any good choices.

The collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945 did not end these conflicts over naming. Like Germanness itself, Jewishness and German Jewishness remained in a contested space of legal, religious, and cultural definitions reshaped by the Allied Powers, local German bureaucracy, and Jewish organizations. As German-Jewish survivors and other Germans of Jewish ancestry who escaped the Nazis struggled to stay alive in the early postwar chaos and attempted to gain recognition as victims of fascism to obtain some meager material support, they continued to grapple with the racial categories and markers imposed on them by the Hitler regime. Although temporarily in a position of limited symbolic power, as they then had the ability to verify the new Germanness of Gentiles who had been part of Nazi society, these men and women had limited choice but to reemploy Nazi parlance to stake their claim to ODF status, reifying the very categories that had been used to inflict violence and death upon them.

Studies have discussed in great detail the political violence of the Nazi Party's storm troopers (Sturmabteilung, SA) in the Weimar Republic, the Hitler regime's brutalities against political enemies and racialized opponents in the 1930s, and the Nazi Protection Squad (Schutzstaffel, SS) and police's genocidal violence against the European Jews during World War II.¹⁶ Before, during, and after these physical mass crimes, however, the regime and its supporters engaged in violence inflicted via language and discourse that made possible physical violence against racialized minorities in Germany and Central Europe.

The interdisciplinary research on violence has extensively focused on the intersections of language and violence. One influential model that pervades the work of Hannah Arendt, for example, draws sharp distinctions between language and physical violence and portrays them as phenomena of fundamentally different orders. Speaking and language emerge as means of manipulation and vehicles to establish a will to act that, in liberal-democratic societies, forms an opposing pole to physical violence and even has the potential to prevent these outbursts.¹⁷ More recent models have rejected this strict separation between language and violence. These readings explicitly challenge interpretations of war and mass murder as "voiceless" acts of violence and point out that no human action unfolds without linguistic and symbolic meanings and contexts. Strong versions of this approach directly merge the two phenomena and orders,

¹⁶ See, for instance, Dirk Walter, *Antisemitische Kriminalität und Gewalt* (Bonn: Dietz Nachfolger, 1999); Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews. The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997); and Christopher R. Browning with contributions by Jürgen Matthäus, *The Origins of the Final Solution* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

¹⁷ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, 1969), 45–6, 65–6. See also Bat-Ami Bar On, *The Subject of Violence. Arendtean Exercises in Understanding* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), xv, 12–18, 153–6.

referring to a transcendental violence of written language that constitutes the beginning of physical violence.¹⁸

This book incorporates insights from both models. Without equating linguistic and physical violence, my approach continues the assumption of overlapping and intersecting manifestations of language and bodily brutalities, proposing a direct relation between physical and linguistic injuries. Linguistic violence then denotes the discursive process of isolating and creating a victim population. This process inflicts linguistic injuries by means of removing self-control from individuals and communities and denying them the determination of their own concepts of the self. Emanating from language control agencies, their staff, and the projects of the Hitler state's policymakers, Nazi discourses imposed racial categories on the population. Although these categories constructed millions of German citizens as part of the "community of the *Volk*," they simultaneously excluded hundreds of thousands of people by reconstituting them as lying outside the boundaries of national life, ending their previous realities of cultural integration and identity as German nationals. In this sense, discourses and their terms and symbols were "productive" and cannot simply be equated with notions like spirit or meaning.¹⁹ This linguistic violence created and identified the very targets of Nazi racial policies. It both made possible and interacted with the Nazis' increasingly radical physical onslaughts throughout the 1930s, culminating in the Nazi genocide of the European Jews during the war.

This approach also makes it possible to come to a new understanding of the complex reading and writing practices of Germans with Jewish ancestry in the Hitler state as they confronted the *völkisch* and Nazi language of exclusion. The book introduces the concept of "discursive contestation" to capture and analyze these men and women's practices, which repeatedly were aimed at defying racial categories imposed on them by official discourse. Acts of discursive contestation denote interventions in the thematic discourses on Germanness and Jewishness in the press and in guidelines on determining racial descent at state agencies like the Reich Kinship Office. These interventions could, for example, take the form of references to semantic contradictions in Nazi terminology. Such interventions cited the contradictory terms, submitted them to "subversive repetitions," and tried, as conceptualized by Philipp Sarasin, to bring about a "rupture" in the discourses on race. This rupture provided the space for "reinscriptions." In this process, these men and women attempted, however slightly and in the hope of escaping persecution, to shift the imagined boundaries between Germanness and Jewishness in ways that would allow the

¹⁸ Franz Januschek and Klaus Gloy, "Sprache und/oder Gewalt," *Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Sprachtheorie* 57 (1998): 8; Alfred Hirsch, "Sprache und Gewalt. Vorbemerkungen zu einer unmöglichen und notwendigen Differenz," in *Sprache und Gewalt*, eds. Ursula Erzgräber and Alfred Hirsch (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2001), 12; and Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 3, 280–1.

¹⁹ Philipp Sarasin, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Diskursanalyse* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 37 and Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 4–5.