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## Carl Goerdeler and the Jewish Question, 1933–1942

In the 1930s, Carl Goerdeler, the mayor of Leipzig and, as prices commissioner, a cabinet-level official, engaged in active opposition against the persecution of the Jews in Germany and Eastern Europe. He did this openly until 1938 and then secretly in contact with the British Foreign Office. Having failed to change Hitler's policy against the Jews, Goerdeler joined forces with military and civil conspirators against the regime. He was hanged for 'treason' on 2 February 1945. This book describes the actions of Carl Goerdeler, the German Resistance leader, who consistently engaged in efforts to protect the Jews against persecution. Using new evidence and thus-far underresearched documents, including a memorandum written by Goerdeler at the end of 1941 with a proposal for the status of the Jews in the world, the book fundamentally changes our understanding of Goerdeler's plan and presents a new view of the German Resistance to Hitler.

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PETER HOFFMANN

*McGill University*



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## Prologue

The discrimination, persecution, and murder of Jews have a long history. Protection schemes in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern era tended to have economic and political motivations. Still, European and Near Eastern societies treated Jews as subjects with lesser rights, and most social and political classes were closed to them. The age of rationalism and enlightenment since the Reformation, and the principles of the French Revolution and Napoleon's wars, gave impulses to the gradual emancipation of the Jews. In Prussia, a royal decree in 1812 declared: 'The Jews and their families who are currently residents in Our States and are provided with general privileges, naturalisation patents, letters of protection and concessions are to be regarded as native residents and Prussian state-citizens'.<sup>1</sup>

Three main directions developed: acculturation, assimilation, and Zionism. Acculturation is defined as the Jews' attainment of legal equality, as 'integration into the economic, social and institutional life of their respective nations'. Acculturation was generally combined with the expectation of the retention of cultural and religious identities. Marion Kaplan put it pointedly: 'Jews flaunted their Germanness as they privatized their Jewishness'. Assimilation is understood as a stage beyond the development from emancipation to acculturation, to the extent of merging in a society and abandoning other cultural and religious

<sup>1</sup> 'Die in Unseren Staaten jetzt wohnhaften, mit General-Privilegien, Naturalisations-Patenten, Schutzbriefen und Konzessionen versehenen Juden und deren Familien sind für Einländer und Preussische Staatsbürger zu achten'. In 'Edikt betreffend die bürgerlichen Verhältnisse der Juden in dem Preussischen Staate', in Ernst Rudolf Huber, ed., *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*, vol. 1, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1961, p. 45.

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identities than those dominant in a given society.<sup>2</sup> Zionism advocated the establishment of a Jewish homeland and state in 'Palestine', describing this as a 'return'.<sup>3</sup>

In Europe and elsewhere, hostilities against Jews soon accompanied evolving emancipation in the nineteenth century. Pogroms and riots occurred mainly in East European countries, including Russia, in the decades before and after the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> Jews were expelled from Moscow in 1891, the Kishinev massacre occurred in 1903, and pogroms followed the revolution of 1905. The Dreyfus affair was a symptom in France.<sup>5</sup> Religion-based anti-Jewish views intermingled with vulgar antisemitism in Germany. Both found literary expressions in the works of Paul de Lagarde, Karl Marx, Heinrich von Treitschke, Julius Langbehn, Benedikt Momme Nissen, and Friedrich Delitzsch.<sup>6</sup> Heinrich Class, president of the Pan-German League, in his *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär* (If I Were Emperor), first published in 1912, demanded

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Frankel, 'Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography?' in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 21–23; Marion A. Kaplan, 'Gender and Jewish History in Imperial Germany', in Frankel and Zipperstein, pp. 201, 205; Paula E. Hyman, 'The Social Contexts of Assimilation: Village Jews and City Jews in Alsace', in Frankel and Zipperstein, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> 'Zionism', in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 21, Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007, pp. 540–43.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 16, Detroit: Keter, 2007, pp. 279–82; Gershon David Hundert, ed., *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, vol. 2, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 1375–81.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Phyllis Cohen Albert, 'Israelite and Jew: How Did Nineteenth-Century French Jews Understand Assimilation?' in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 89, 95, 101.

<sup>6</sup> Paul de Lagarde, *Ueber die gegenwärtige lage des deutschen reichs, ein bericht, erstattet von Paul de Lagarde*, Göttingen: Dieterichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1876; Paul de Lagarde, *Deutsche Schriften*, Göttingen: Dieterichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1878; Paul de Lagarde, *Deutsche Schriften: Gesamtausgabe letzter Band*, Vierter Abdruck, Göttingen: Dieterichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892; Paul de Lagarde, *Das verborgene Deutschland*, Offenbach a.M.: [Privatdruck der Schriftgießerei] Gebr. Klingendorfer, 1920; Karl Marx, *Zur Judenfrage*, ed. Stefan Grossmann, Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt Verlag, 1919; Heinrich von Treitschke, 'Herr Graetz und sein Judentum', in *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*, Meersburg: F.W. Hendel Verlag, 1929, pp. 483–93; [Julius Langbehn; published anonymously], *Rembrandt als Erzieher: Von einem Deutschen*, Leipzig: Verlag von C.L. Hirschfeld, 1890; Benedikt Momme Nissen, *Der Rembrandtdeutsche Julius Langbehn*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder and Co.G.m.b.H. Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927; Friedrich Delitzsch, *Babel und Bibel: Ein Vortrag*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1903; Friedrich Delitzsch, *Zweiter Vortrag über Babel und Bibel*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1903.

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the exclusion and expulsion of the Jews.<sup>7</sup> Adolf Hitler, in a speech in Munich's Hofbräuhaus on 13 August 1920, threatened to kill the Jews, and he repeated his threat several times, and implicitly throughout his book *Mein Kampf* in 1925.<sup>8</sup> He reiterated it three years after he became chancellor, in his August 1936 Four-Year Plan memorandum, and again in his speech on 30 January 1939.<sup>9</sup> In September 1939 he initiated the largest campaign of genocide the world had ever witnessed.

In response to discrimination, mistreatment, and movements of persecution, there arose discussions, debates, and counter-efforts seeking solutions to what was known as the Jewish Question. British imperial geopolitical considerations led to the famous declaration of intent, the 'Balfour Declaration' of 2 November 1917.<sup>10</sup> In response to anti-Jewish pogroms particularly in Poland, East European Jewish groups petitioned the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 for 'the recognition of the national community of Judaism'.<sup>11</sup> When Adolf Hitler's appointment as *Reich* chancellor launched the acute phase of the persecution of Jews in Germany, politicians and others in the United Kingdom and America endeavoured to move their governments to counteract the mistreatment of the Jewish minority. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, having been beseeched in vain for years, finally, responding to Hitler's annexation of

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Frymann [=Heinrich Class], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär: Politische Wahrheiten und Notwendigkeiten*, Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Theodor Weicher, 1912, pp. 74–78.

<sup>8</sup> Adolf Hitler, 'Warum sind wir Antisemiten?' in Eberhard Jäckel, ed., *Hitler: Sämtliche Aufzeichnungen 1905–1924*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1980, pp. 195–96; Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 3rd ed., Munich: Verlag Franz Eher Nachfolger, 1930, pp. 70, 225, 382, 772.

<sup>9</sup> Wilhelm Treue, 'Hitlers Denkschrift zum Vierjahresplan 1936', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1955): 184–210, here 210; *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945: Series C (1933–1937)*, vol. 5 (DGFP C V), London: HMSO, 1966, no. 490, pp. 853–62, here 861; *Völkischer Beobachter* 10 September 1936, pp. 1–2, and 1 February 1939, p. 9; Max Domarus, *Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945*, Neustadt a.d.Aisch: Verlagsdruckerei Schmidt, 1963, p. 1058; Max Domarus, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932–1945: The Chronicle of a Dictatorship*, Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1997, pp. 1448–49; cf. Norman H. Baynes, ed., *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922–August 1939*, vol. 1, New York: Howard Fertig, 1969, pp. 736–41.

<sup>10</sup> *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1931: First Series*, vol. 4, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952, no. 242, pp. 340–49 ('Memorandum by Mr. Balfour (Paris), respecting Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, August 11, 1919'); *Treaty of Peace with Turkey: Signed at Sévres, August 10, 1920. [With Maps.] Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty. [Cmd. 964.]* London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920, section 7, articles 94–97.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 3 'Antecedents', herein.

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Austria in March 1938, took an initiative that led to the international conference at Évian-les-bains on the French side of Lake Geneva. This failed to bring relief to German and Austrian Jews; it may even have spurred Hitler on.

The subject of the present study is the endeavour of Carl Goerdeler – the leading civilian personage in the German Resistance to Hitler and the candidate to succeed the dictator as chancellor – to find an alternative to the National Socialists’ murder campaign against the Jews. One reading of what Isaiah 8.14 refers to as ‘a stone of offense, and a rock of stumbling’, which Paul quotes in his letter to the Romans 9.33 (λίθον προσκόμματος πέτρων), is the offence of the mass murder of the victims and of those who felt challenged to end it. The scandal of the greatest crime in the twentieth century is not controversial.

Carl Goerdeler’s response to it is, however, controversial because it differentiates active opponents from those who stood by, those who assented, and those who were perpetrators. It embarrasses persons whose background does not include opposition to the regime, and those who prefer a form of collective guilt. In Hannah Arendt’s words, ‘where all are guilty, no one is’.<sup>12</sup> Goerdeler’s views on ‘the status of the Jews’ in the world<sup>13</sup> (the issue he addressed in the central document of the present study, his memorandum ‘The Aim’ [*Das Ziel*] written in late 1941/early 1942) have to be examined with care and in their own context. This context is a global as well as a German one. Goerdeler’s views and proposals are part of a wider consideration of the Jewish Question in the Western world.

The main sources for this study are Goerdeler’s memoranda in the years from 1933 to 1944, communications with the British Foreign Office in 1938, and writings in prison in 1944 and 1945. They are in Goerdeler’s papers in the German Federal Archives in Koblenz, in the Leipzig City Archive, and in the papers of Arthur Primrose Young, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick Library. Most of Goerdeler’s important memoranda appeared in a recent two-volume publication; Goerdeler’s communications with the British Foreign Office have long been available.<sup>14</sup> Other sources in the international context were used where appropriate.

<sup>12</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, New York: Schocken Books, 2003, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> Sabine Gillmann and Hans Mommsen, *Politische Schriften und Briefe Carl Friedrich Goerdelers*, vol. 2 (continuous pagination through vols. 1 and 2), Munich: K.G. Saur, 2003; cf. Peter Hoffmann, ed., *Behind Valkyrie: German Resistance to Hitler: Documents*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011, pp. 263–83.



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The leading historians who have concerned themselves with Goerdeler have seen most of these documents, yet they virtually ignored all but one of them, and they never carefully analysed the one upon which they directed their attention, Goerdeler's ninety-nine-page memorandum 'The Aim' (*Das Ziel*) of late 1941/early 1942. On the basis of Goerdeler's concept of a global solution for the Jewish Question, they have classified him as a 'dissimulatory' antisemite.<sup>15</sup>

The historian has the task of discovering, understanding, and describing – to the extent that the sources and his or her analytic powers allow it – past events. Confronted with cases of unequivocal violations of natural justice and of universally accepted statutes (as against murder), or with fundamental ethical (non-ideological) imperatives, the historian may be compelled to take a position of disapproval or approval, as the case may be. Judging, however, with the benefit of hindsight what an agent in the past should have done – based on the historian's own contemporary social, ideological, and political persuasions such as a preference for or rejection of a socialist policy – is to act in an unprofessional manner, and it puts the historian in a false position.

When the leaders of the attempts to overthrow the German dictator first began to form a conspiracy with that goal in 1938, they sought to prevent a new war, to restore the rule of law, and to end discrimination; in 1938 they were spurred into action mainly by the present threat of war. They argued that a new war would end in Germany's destruction. As the Chief of the General Staff of the Army Lieutenant-General Ludwig Beck then predicted, Germany would face a coalition that would include the United States of America, and at the end of it the victors would insist on firmer guarantees for peace than in 1919. To many of Hitler's German opponents, including General Beck, a war of aggression was also morally wrong.

Hitler, from the summer of 1936, was setting dates for the war he intended to wage. In 1937 and 1938, using the mistreatment of the three million ethnic Germans in the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia and their presumed wish to belong to Germany, he openly threatened war against that state. General Beck in 1937 and Carl Goerdeler in 1938 warned the French and British governments of Hitler's plans. Beck and Goerdeler

<sup>15</sup> Hans Mommsen, 'Gesellschaftsbild und Verfassungspläne des deutschen Widerstandes', in Walter Schmitthenner and Hans Buchheim, eds., *Der deutsche Widerstand gegen Hitler: Vier historisch-kritische Studien*, Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch 1966, pp. 269–70; Hans Mommsen, *Alternative zu Hitler: Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Widerstandes*, Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2000, p. 389.

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committed what German law at the time defined as treason against the country (*Landesverrat*, differentiated in German law from treason against the government, *Hochverrat*). Other prominent opponents of Hitler did the same.<sup>16</sup> At the time, however, in 1938, only Goerdeler made the persecution of the Jews a central concern in his contacts with the British government. Goerdeler was also the only one among the leading German opponents of Hitler who saw the situation of the Jews in global terms.

The Resistance leaders were motivated by all that was wrong with the regime and with the war – the general brutality, contempt for the rule of law, arbitrary arrests, secret police arbitrariness and violence, secret and ‘special’ courts, abolition of civil liberties, arbitrary imprisonment and murder of political dissidents and opponents on religious and ethical grounds and on grounds of their being ‘social outcasts’ or ‘un-German’ writers, mistreatment of civilians in occupied territories, and mass starvation of Soviet-Russian prisoners of war. Since the beginning of Hitler’s wars on 1 September 1939 with the attack upon Poland and the beginning of killing operations against Polish intellectuals, professors, priests, and Jews; the systematic killing of hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Soviet Union from 22 June 1941; and the deliberate mass murder of the European Jews, the Resistance leaders saw the violence against the Jews as a crime of a different order. They did not know the numbers, but they knew they were in the hundreds of thousands. It is estimated that by the end of the war in 1945, the German murderers and assisting Ukrainian, Romanian, and other murderers had killed six million Jews. The SS’ own statistic for Jews killed under German authority is 5.1 million.<sup>17</sup> A substantial number of the anti-Hitler conspirators are on record as having stated, when interrogated by the secret state police (*Geheime Staatspolizei*, *Gestapo*), that their ultimate motive, from the beginning of the war in 1939, was the violent persecution and mass murder of the European Jews.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Hoffmann, ed., *Behind Valkyrie*, pp. 231–37, 263–319; Peter Hoffmann, *The History of the German Resistance 1933–1945*, 3rd Eng. ed., Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996, pp. 60–62.

<sup>17</sup> Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, New York, London: Holmes and Meier, 1985, pp. 1219–20.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Hoffmann, ‘The German Resistance and the Holocaust’, in John J. Michalczyk, ed., *Confront! Resistance in Nazi Germany*, New York: Peter Lang, 2004, p. 117; Peter Hoffmann, ‘The German Resistance to Hitler and the Jews: The Case of Carl Goerdeler’, in Dennis B. Klein, Richard Libowitz, Marcia Sachs Littell, and Sharon Steeley, eds., *The Genocidal Mind: Selected Papers from the 32nd Annual Scholars’ Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches*, Saint Paul: Paragon House, 2005, p. 283.

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At the same time, most of Hitler's German opponents had a clear sense of responsibility and guilt. Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, who placed a briefcase with explosives under Hitler's map table on 20 July 1944, expressed it thus: 'As General Staff officers we must all carry a share of the responsibility'.<sup>19</sup> His cousin, Peter Graf Yorck von Wartenburg, wrote two days before his execution for his part in the plot that he had been driven to act 'by the feeling of the guilt which lay so heavy on us all'.<sup>20</sup> In prison in January 1945, Carl Goerdeler wrote repeatedly of the hundreds of thousands of murdered Jews (he had no clear grasp of the true numbers, which the SS statisticians kept secret). Two days before he was hanged, he wrote that his motivation had been above all 'to bring to an end the horrible sacrifices for all nations, the senseless destruction in Europe', and that 'God would sit in judgement of the horrendous exterminations of the Jews'.<sup>21</sup> Many of the other resisters equally felt the burden of guilt.

The difficulties of writing the history of a recent past are well known. Historians are not free of contemporary influences. Prevailing political tendencies in any given period can have striking parallels in historiography. The historiography of the German Resistance is no exception to such influences and resulting difficulties. Five main post-Second World War historiographic phases may be distinguished. They ran nearly parallel to political and international developments.

The first and second phases partially ran simultaneously. The National Socialist minister for popular enlightenment and propaganda Joseph Goebbels had the advantage to be first to present his version of the failed uprising of 20 July 1944, with which he branded all resisters as traitors. It remained a dominant view among the general population in Germany for years after Germany's defeat in 1945.<sup>22</sup> In the second

<sup>19</sup> Nina Schenk Gräfin von Stauffenberg, from interview quoted in Joachim Kramarz, *Stauffenberg: The Architect of the Famous July 20th Conspiracy to Assassinate Hitler*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967, p. 122.

<sup>20</sup> Marion Gräfin Yorck zu Wartenburg, letter to the author 10 August 1972.

<sup>21</sup> Gillmann and Mommsen, *Politische Schriften*, pp. 1184, 1222, 1228, 1236, 1239-40, 1251-52.

<sup>22</sup> *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955*, ed. Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, 3rd ed., Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956, p. 138; *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1957*, ed. Elisabeth Noelle und Erich Peter Neumann, Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1957, pp. 144-45; *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1958-1964*, ed. Elisabeth Noelle und Erich Peter Neumann, Bonn: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1965, p. 235; Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach: Der 20 July 1944, Ergebnisse einer Bevölkerungs-Umfrage über das Attentat auf Hitler [Allensbach 1970]; Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach to the author, 20 November

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phase, while Goebbels' line lingered, resisters not associated with the 20 July 1944 movement (and presumably not tainted by having initially approved of Hitler's government), Social Democrats, Communists, trades-union leaders, clergymen, and students were honoured by their political friends, although Social Democrats and Communists continued to be in discord and many nationalist pastors tended toward Goebbels' line. The actions of the plotters of the 20 July movement, of whom about two hundred were hanged, met with broad disapproval.<sup>23</sup> When surviving diaries, letters, and testimonies began to appear, and when memoirists and historians began publishing accounts, strong differences in the evaluation of the Resistance emerged between the versions prevalent in the zones of Germany occupied by Britain, the United States, and France, on the one side, and the Soviet-occupied zone, on the other.

In a third phase, in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), as the Soviet-occupied zone was constituted from 1949, Communists who had followed the approved Stalinist line were long regarded as the only legitimate resisters. GDR historiography divided the non-Communist Resistance into reactionary and progressive wings after 1965, that is, after a Soviet writer, Professor Daniil Mel'nikov, had included four leading non-Communist resisters (Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, Colonel Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim, Carl Goerdeler, and Helmuth James von Moltke) among those leaning toward left-wing 'progressiveness'.<sup>24</sup> East German historiography did not stop short of forgery when it wished to claim that a resister was really or latently 'one of them', as in the case of Mertz von Quirnheim. Conservatives and military officers, however, received mostly negative assessments in the GDR.<sup>25</sup>

In the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, also constituted in 1949 out of the three western zones of occupation) as well as in the GDR, all that suggested German 'greatness' was deprecated as nationalist, imperialist,

1978; Allensbacher Archiv, IfD-Umfrage 4056, April 1985; Claus Wiegrefe, 'Helden und Mörder', *Der Spiegel* 29 12 July 2004): 34-35, 44; Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach to the author 27 November 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955*, Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956, p. 138.

<sup>24</sup> Daniil Mel'nikov, *Zagovor 20 ijulja 1944 goda v Germanii: Pričiny i sledstvija*, Moscow: Meždunarodnye otnošenija, 1965; Daniil Mel'nikow, *20. Juli 1944: Legende und Wirklichkeit*, Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1964.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Sigrid Wegner-Korfes, 'Der 20. Juli 1944 und das Nationalkomitee "Freies Deutschland"', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 27 (1979): 535-44.

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aggressive, reactionary, and revengist. This dominant current has become subtly moderated since Germany's economic and political weight, not just in Europe, became undeniable.

The government of the German Federal Republic began in 1951, hesitantly, to honour the dead of the Resistance. The resistance of the few was, of course, an embarrassment to the many who had supported Hitler's regime or cooperated with it. Gradually, honouring the Resistance became an annual ritual although by no means a universally accepted one. Works of historiography contributed to this development.

In 1948, Hans Rothfels – a German Jew at the University of Chicago, a decorated veteran of the First World War, and moderate nationalist who had emigrated to England and later to America – published the first comprehensive historiographic assessment of the Resistance.<sup>26</sup> Eberhard Zeller in 1952 published a factual and enthusiastic history of the events culminating in the uprising of 20 July 1944, based on many interviews and the documentary sources then available.<sup>27</sup> Gerhard Ritter followed with a comprehensive and un superseded biography of Carl Goerdeler in 1954.<sup>28</sup> There were also collections of short biographic portraits of resisters, and other miscellaneous accounts.<sup>29</sup>

The fourth phase may be said to have begun after the Wall had gone up between East and West Germany on 13 August 1961, as national elections brought the conservative Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union, CDU/CSU*) and the Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei, FDP*) into a Grand Coalition with the Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD*) in 1966, and as the worldwide phenomenon of the Student Rebellion, opposition to the American war in Vietnam, and the 'extra-parliamentary opposition' (*Ausserparlamentarische Opposition, APO*) in Germany and the terror attacks and murders by the Baader-Meinhof Gang and the Red Army Faction (*Rote Armee Faktion*) emerged. A younger cohort of historians were concerned to analyse the 'social forces' – conservatism,

<sup>26</sup> Hans Rothfels, *The German Opposition to Hitler*, Hinsdale IL: Henry Regnery, 1948.

<sup>27</sup> Eberhard Zeller, *Geist der Freiheit: Der zwanzigste Juli*, Munich: Verlag Hermann Rinn, 1952.

<sup>28</sup> Gerhard Ritter, *Carl Goerdeler und die deutsche Widerstandsbewegung*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1954.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Annedore Leber, *Das Gewissen steht auf. 64 Lebensbilder aus dem deutschen Widerstand 1933–1945*, Berlin: Annedore Leber, 1954; Hoffmann, *The History of the German Resistance*, bibliography.

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antimodernism, capitalism, fascism, imperialism, ‘social imperialism’, Marxism – to which they attributed the policies of governments before, during, and after the First and the Second World Wars. Many historians were, and remain, confused by a perceived need to choose between fundamental ethical principles on the one hand, and an ideological belief system on the other. A benevolent view of the GDR became widely adopted – a benevolent view of an oppressive regime that trampled democracy and basic human rights, that held its citizens imprisoned behind a heavily armed and guarded wall and ordered the guards to shoot citizens who attempted to leave the First German Workers’ and Farmers’ State.

Since the 1960s, many historians looked for evidence that conservative resisters to National Socialism – the majority in the 20 July 1944 plot – did not follow the dictate of their consciences as they and their surviving relatives and friends claimed, and that they had not deliberately accepted that they would be tortured, prosecuted, and executed for their resistance. Historians tried to persuade their readers that all or most Germans, including those who gave their lives in the Resistance, really shared the National Socialists’ and Hitler’s aims, that the ideas of the Resistance were little better than those of the Nazis, that the resisters were ‘not democrats’ but authoritarians, and, the most damning judgement, that they had no fundamental objections to the regime’s anti-Jewish policies, that in the German Resistance there had been a ‘fundamental anti-Semitic sentiment’ (*antisemitische Grundstimmung*); others parroted this line.<sup>30</sup> A few historians concentrated on indicting the leading resisters Carl Goerdeler, Henning von Tresckow, and Ludwig Beck. By discrediting the most prominent leaders, the entire Resistance would be implicated and discredited.<sup>31</sup> Many historians and other publicists regard Goerdeler as an

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Hans Mommsen, ‘Der Widerstand gegen Hitler und die nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung’, in Mommsen, *Alternative zu Hitler*, pp. 386–91. Hans Mommsen, *Alternatives to Hitler: German Resistance under the Third Reich*, London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003, pp. 258–62, esp. 259 (the same collection of essays, with identical pagination, was republished by Tauris in 2009 under the title *Germans against Hitler: The Stauffenberg Plot and Resistance under the Third Reich*; these essays deal only marginally with ‘the Stauffenberg plot’).

<sup>31</sup> Mommsen, ‘Gesellschaftsbild und Verfassungspläne’, pp. 269–70n109; Mommsen, *Alternative zu Hitler*, pp. 386–91; Mommsen, *Alternatives to Hitler*, pp. 258–62; Christof Dipper, ‘Der Deutsche Widerstand und die Juden’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9 (1983): pp. 360–68; Christof Dipper, ‘The German Resistance and the Jews’, *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984): 65–67, 70–75 (there are numerous misstatements, errors, and evidences of imprecise research in Dipper’s work, too numerous to address each in turn; the object here is the correct reading of Goerdeler’s concepts and proposals); Christian Gerlach, ‘Männer des 20. Juli und der Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion’, in Hannes

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antisemite and ‘dissimilationist’ because he regarded the Jewish people as an ethnic entity, and they assert that he intended to deprive the majority of German Jews of their citizenship rights. The memorandum ‘The Aim’ that Goerdeler wrote in 1941 and 1942 proposing a secure status for the Jews in the world has held a central place in accusations of antisemitism against Goerdeler.<sup>32</sup> One historian in 2004 indicted Tresckow of opportunism, averring that Tresckow’s conscience had been dormant while the campaign against the Soviet Union appeared to be succeeding, only to awaken when it turned out otherwise.<sup>33</sup> In the absence of conclusive evidence to convict individuals of such charges, historians used collective-biographic and social-history approaches, suppositions and assumptions, and unsubstantiated allegations.

This historiographic trend ran parallel with successive coalition governments led by the Social Democrats from 1969 to 1982; with social reform, renewed prosecution of Nazi criminals, a broad rejection of ‘traditional’ and ‘conservative’ values, and a struggle to come to terms with the National Socialist past, these topics expressed the *Zeitgeist*. The

Heer and Klaus Naumann, eds., *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1944*, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1995, pp. 427–46; Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrussland 1941 bis 1944*, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1998, pp. 1106, 1124–26; Johannes Hürter, ‘Auf dem Weg zur Militäropposition. Tresckow, Gersdorff, der Vernichtungskrieg und der Judenmord: Neue Dokumente über das Verhältnis der Heeresgruppe Mitte zur Einsatzgruppe B im Jahr 1941’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 52 (2004): 527–62; Theodore S. Hamerow, *On the Road to the Wolf’s Lair: German Resistance to Hitler*, Cambridge, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 296.

<sup>32</sup> Dipper, ‘Der Deutsche Widerstand’, pp. 364–65; Dipper, ‘German Resistance’, p. 72; Dipper’s treatise is marred by omissions, distortions, and incorrect statements; cf. Fritz Kieffer, ‘Carl Friedrich Goerdeler’s Vorschlag zur Gründung eines jüdischen Staates’, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 125 (2008): 474–500. Mommsen, ‘Der Widerstand gegen Hitler’, pp. 388–91; Mommsen (*Alternatives to Hitler*, pp. 258–62, esp. 259) wrote that Goerdeler ‘wanted to treat all Jews living in Germany as registered aliens and to deprive them of citizenship, the right to vote and access to public office’. In an address upon the presentation of the publication of Goerdeler’s main political writings and letters in Leipzig on 30 October 2003, Mommsen said that Goerdeler had demanded equal human rights for Jews and restitution of their assets, but added without citing evidence that Goerdeler had admitted that he was guilty of not having opposed the inhumanity of the persecution of the Jews; Hans Mommsen and Hinrich Lehmann-Grube, *Reden anlässlich der Präsentation der Edition ‘Politische Schriften und Briefe von Carl Friedrich Goerdeler’ in der Deutschen Bibliothek in Leipzig am 30. Oktober 2003*, Königswinter: Forschungsgemeinschaft 20 July, 2004, p. 3. Theodore Hamerow wrote that Goerdeler wanted to ‘place most German Jews in the category of resident aliens’; Hamerow, *On the Road*, p. 296.

<sup>33</sup> Johannes Hürter, ‘Auf dem Weg zur Militäropposition’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 52 (2004): 531.

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SPD-led coalition governments hoped to change the Communist-Stalinist GDR regime through a policy of contacts and ‘small steps’, in tandem with the American-Russian policy of Detente. This period ended in the 1980s in an East–West confrontation about armaments – about the stationing of medium-range nuclear-armed Soviet (Sam-20) and American (Pershing II) missiles in Europe – and an unexpected resolution through historical personages and an episode of reason prevailing, an episode in which the American president Ronald Reagan and the Soviet-Russian secretary-general of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Mikhail Gorbachev were the protagonists.

While the third and fourth phases of historiography on the Resistance continue unabated to the present, a fifth phase can be distinguished. The social-forces and social-structures school of historiography had its ambivalent, contradictory side in the attacks upon individuals (Goerdeler, Tresckow) with the aim of convicting a larger group (conservatives, patriots denounced as ‘nationalists’) collectively, without building cases against most of the individuals in the group. The Governing Board of the German Historical Association (*Verband der Historiker Deutschlands*) planned a section on biography for their 1984 annual conference in Berlin.<sup>34</sup> While a number of major biographies appeared – on Stauffenberg, Hermann Göring, William II, Hitler, Thomas Mann, Adolf Heusinger, Mildred Harnack, Friedrich Fromm, Beck, Heinrich Himmler, Adam von Trott zu Solz, Stefan George – the advocates of social-forces, structural, and collective historiography regrouped. In 1994, when the fiftieth year after Stauffenberg’s assassination attack and coup was widely commemorated, leading critics of the Resistance repeated their assault upon the integrity of the resisters and simultaneously launched a comprehensive attack upon the German Armed Forces with a travelling exhibition of photographs, the *Wehrmachtausstellung*, which purported to show crimes committed by German soldiers. It included numerous false identifications and attributions – too numerous to be readily accepted as accidental, and in the eyes of many, it remains disgraced; modifications corrected false identifications, but not the general tendency of the exhibition.<sup>35</sup> All this fit into what Joachim Fest called

<sup>34</sup> Rudolf Vierhaus (secretary), minute 24 February 1983, Archiv des Verbandes der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands, Trier; the final programme did not include such a section; *Bericht über die 35. Versammlung deutscher Historiker in Berlin. 3. bis 7. Oktober 1984*, Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1985; cf. Jürgen Kocka, ‘Bismarck-Biographien’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 7 (1981): 572–81.

<sup>35</sup> Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, ed., *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944: Ausstellungskatalog*, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition 1996, 3rd ed. 1997;



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‘the dominant denunciatory caprice toward the Resistance’, the denial that they had honourable motives.<sup>36</sup>

This is the position. This study examines the evidence that tells a different story. The new examination and close reading of the evidence in the present work will reveal what Goerdeler in fact wrote and intended between 1933 and 1945. It will show also that Goerdeler was part of a global discussion on the Jewish Question.

I thank archivists, most of all Professor Dr Hartmut Weber, President of *Bundesarchiv*, and librarians in Europe and in Canada for their untiring assistance in my research. My special gratitude goes to Dr Fritz Kieffer, whose juristic examination of Goerdeler’s 1941/1942 proposal has greatly advanced the understanding of this proposal and its implications, and who has since its publication corresponded with me about some hitherto unsolved questions. I thank Readers A and B, and Peter F. Hoffmann, for their careful reading of the typescript and their valuable suggestions, and Eliza R. Wood for her help in the preparation of the Index. I wish to express my appreciation to the *Landesstiftung Baden-Württemberg* for its support in defraying some of the costs of research.

Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann, eds., *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1944*, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1995; Bogdan Musiał, “‘Konterrevolutionäre Elemente sind zu erschiessen’: Die Mordaktionen des sowjetischen NKWD nach dem Einmarsch der deutschen Truppen”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 30 October 1999, p. 11; Kriztián Ungváry, ‘Echte Bilder – problematische Aussagen: Eine quantitative und qualitative Fotoanalyse der Ausstellung “Vernichtungskrieg – Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944”’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 50 (1999): 584–95; Dieter Schmidt-Neuhaus, ‘Die Tarnopol-Stellwand der Wanderausstellung “Vernichtungskrieg – Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944”’: Eine Falluntersuchung zur Verwendung von Bildquellen’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 50 (1999): 596–603; Hamburg Institute for Social Research, ed., *The German Army and Genocide: Crimes Against War Prisoners, Jews, and Other Civilians in the East, 1939–1944*, New York: The New Press, 1999; Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, ed., *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944: Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges 1941–1941: Ausstellungskatalog*, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Joachim Fest, ‘Das verschmähte Vermächtnis: Rede zur Verleihung des Eugen Bolz-Preises am 24.1.04’, typescript, from J. Fest 18 June 2003.