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0521025419 - Heinrich Brüning and the Dissolution of the Weimar Republic

William L. Patch

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Heinrich Brüning and the Dissolution of the Weimar Republic

Scholars have long debated whether Heinrich Brüning, head of the German government from 1930 to 1932, was the “last democratic chancellor” of the Weimar Republic or the trail-blazer of the Nazi dictatorship. His memoirs (published in 1970) damaged his reputation badly by terming the restoration of monarchy the “crux” of his policies. This book is the first scholarly biography of Brüning in any language and offers a systematic analysis of the economic, social, foreign, and military policies of his cabinet as it sought to cope with the Great Depression. With the help of newly available sources, it clarifies the peculiar distortions in the memoirs, showing that Chancellor Brüning intended to restore parliamentary democracy intact when the economic crisis passed. He was curbing the Nazi menace successfully when President Hindenburg, reactionary landowners, and army generals eager for massive rearmament made the disastrously misguided decision to topple him.

William L. Patch, Jr., is Associate Professor of History at Grinnell College and the author of *Christian Trade Unions in the Weimar Republic, 1918–1933*. While a student at the University of Göttingen, he observed the challenges to German democracy posed by Red Army terrorism, the second oil shock, and student radicalism. Patch was also educated at the University of California at Berkeley, Yale, and the University of Bochum. He has taught at Yale and Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, in addition to Grinnell.

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An official portrait of Chancellor Brüning at his desk. (Bundesarchiv Koblenz-102-75/66/3)

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BAK	Bundesarchiv Koblenz (German National Archive, Koblenz)
BAP	Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Potsdam (Potsdam branch of the German National Archive)
BVP	Bayerische Volkspartei (Bavarian People's Party)
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union)
DDP	Deutsche Demokratische Partei (German Democratic Party)
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (German Labor Federation)
DHV	Deutschnationaler Handlungsgehilfen-Verband (German Nationalist Union of Commercial Employees)
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei (German Nationalist People's Party)
DVP	Deutsche Volkspartei (German People's Party)
HUG	Harvard University Archive
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte (Institute for Contemporary History, Munich)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
NL	Nachlass (collection of personal papers)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
ÖSA	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Austrian State Archive)
RDI	Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie (Reich Association of German Industry)
RLB	Reichslandbund (Reich Agrarian League)
SA	Sturmabteilung (Nazi Stormtroopers)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)