

# The “Jewish War”: Goebbels and the Antisemitic Campaigns of the Nazi Propaganda Ministry

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**How the Nazi leadership translated radical antisemitism into a narrative of an innocent, besieged Germany striking back at an “international Jewry” it accused of starting and prolonging World War II forms the subject of this study. In the Nazis’ paranoid conspiracy theory “Jewry” comprised powers behind the scenes in London, Moscow, and Washington. In response to the “war of extermination” that Jewry had supposedly launched against Germany, the Nazi leadership publicly threatened to “exterminate” and “annihilate” the Jews as an act of justified retaliation. In their minds and in their policy, the ideological connection between the “Final Solution” and the Second World War was inherent, rather than contingent. The following analysis suggests why a centuries-old hatred led to mass murder between 1941 and 1945.**

In 1975 Lucy Dawidowicz argued in *The War against the Jews, 1933–1945* that historians of that period needed to pay attention to a second war waged by the Nazi regime.<sup>1</sup> Dawidowicz called for incorporating the history of what soon was generally known as the Holocaust into general histories of the period. In the following two decades, with some exceptions, two scholarly communities emerged, one focused on conventional battlefield narratives—of Pearl Harbor, Stalingrad, D-Day—and another on the Holocaust: the Wannsee Conference, the Warsaw and other ghettos, the extermination camps. In the 1990s, in the work of Christopher Browning, Richard Breitman, Omer Bartov, Gerhard Weinberg, Philippe Burrin, and most recently Ian Kershaw, a scholarship has emerged that seeks to integrate the two wars in time and place.<sup>2</sup> Yet Dawidowicz’s powerful phrase “the war against the Jews” continues to evoke specifically the mass murder of European Jewry as an event distinct from World War II.

One purpose in this essay is to draw renewed attention to and offer greater detail about the more all-encompassing meanings of that phrase, as well as about the meanings that the related term “the Jewish War” (*der jüdische Krieg*) possessed for Hitler and Nazi wartime propaganda. I explore how the Nazi leaders and propagandists

translated the latter fundamental ideological concept into a narrative.<sup>3</sup> Between 1939 and 1945 Hitler himself, Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, and dozens of other Nazi officials and propagandists presented the war as one waged between Nazi Germany and an actually existing international Jewish conspiracy. This idea was repeated in numerous secret directives concerning broad themes and small details of how the press should cover and interpret unfolding events. These were dispatched daily and weekly to journalists and editors at several thousand newspapers and magazines by Otto Dietrich, the director of the Reich Press Office, and his staff.

Dietrich's role in the ongoing narrative of the war was far more important than is generally recognized in scholarship and popular perception. Unlike Goebbels, whose celebrity was vastly greater, Dietrich worked in Hitler's office every day. Every morning, after speaking with Hitler, he elaborated instructions to his staff in Berlin, who then conveyed directives to the press.<sup>4</sup> As Hitler's public appearances grew less frequent, Goebbels stepped forward to make the argument in major speeches, prominent print publications, and national radio broadcasts. Other leading figures such as Hermann Göring and Robert Ley made the argument as well, as did less well-known authors of articles and editorials in the Nazi daily *Völkischer Beobachter*. The Jewish War was a key theme of dozens of propaganda essays, pamphlets, and pseudo-scholarly book-length works emerging from the Ministry of Propaganda and antisemitic "research institutes." Posters and "wall newspapers" in public places integrated text and striking imagery to drive the point home. Yet despite the millions of words and accompanying images, the translation of Nazi antisemitic ideology into the Nazi narrative of World War II as "the Jewish War," the meaning of the phrase "the war against the Jews" has yet to fully enter the historical scholarship on the Nazi era. We have yet to examine the translation of ideology into narrative and the connection between antisemitism as simultaneously a bundle of hatreds and an explanatory framework.

A second purpose of this essay is to deepen our understanding of the role of Nazism's conspiracy theory during World War II. In 1967 Norman Cohn's *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* examined the origins of the Nazi belief in an international Jewish conspiracy as well as the genocidal implications of that belief.<sup>5</sup> More recently, Saul Friedländer developed the thesis of "redemptive anti-Semitism" to describe Nazi ideology and policy in the 1920s and 1930s, drawing renewed attention both to the importance of belief in an international Jewish conspiracy and to that belief's political impact in the "era of persecution" from 1933 to 1939.<sup>6</sup> It was the distinguished British art historian E. H. Gombrich who first examined the connection between the conspiracy theory and Nazi wartime propaganda. In a 1969 lecture Gombrich drew on his BBC experience monitoring German wartime radio broadcasts to observe that "what is characteristic of Nazi propaganda is less the lie than the imposition of a paranoid pattern on world events."<sup>7</sup> In that effort, Nazi propaganda created a mythic

world by “transforming the political universe into a conflict of persons and personifications” in which a virtuous Germany fought manfully against evil schemers, above all the Jews. The notion of “The Jews” established the consistency of this myth first in accounts of political battles within Germany and then on the international plane. It was, Gombrich continued, “this gigantic persecution mania, this paranoiac myth that . . . [held] the various strands of German propaganda together.”<sup>8</sup> Gombrich argued that for the Nazis “the war is only a war against the devil, the Jew,” who is the real power behind the sovereign states of the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. The myth was “self-confirming”: once a person was trapped within it, it became reality, “for if you fight everybody, everybody will fight you, and the less mercy you show, the more you commit your side to a fight to the finish.”<sup>9</sup>

An impressive scholarship has pioneered work on Nazi propaganda. In studies published during the 1960s and 1970s Jay Baird, Ernest Bramsted, Erich Goldhagen, E. H. Gombrich, Jürgen Hagemann, and Robert Herzstein presented key themes, institutional structures, channels of influence, and patterns of diffusion.<sup>10</sup> In an important study of the impact of Nazi antisemitic propaganda, David Bankier concluded both that the ability of Nazi propaganda “to penetrate the German population has been exaggerated” but also that it was effective in fostering indifference and hostility to the Jews “because large sectors of German society were predisposed to be antisemitic.”<sup>11</sup> However skeptical some Germans may have been about messages emanating from the Ministry of Propaganda, they had no access to alternative interpretations of events.<sup>12</sup> Most recently, Yehuda Bauer and Robert Gellately have examined the reception of the regime’s message among German elites and non-elites to understand what Bauer called the creation by the late 1930s of a “consensus” among political elites that included radical antisemitism.<sup>13</sup> Claudia Koonz has argued that much Nazi propaganda in the 1930s built consensus with only modest and intermittent appeals to explicit antisemitic themes.<sup>14</sup> The picture that emerges from this scholarship is that of a radical Nazi minority operating in a society with a less radical but broad antisemitic consensus, a consensus broad enough to render people indifferent to rumors and facts of varying clarity indicating that mass murder was taking place. Moreover, the consensus in support of Hitler was greater still because of his presumed successes up to 1939 in economic recovery, restoration of national pride, and foreign policy.

A third purpose is to show how the Nazi propaganda apparatus “modernized” the vast conspiracy theory, filling it with people and events of the time. Nazi antisemitism became a way of making both sense and nonsense of ongoing events. In the last several decades, intellectual historians have devoted a great deal of attention to the narratives *we* tell in our reconstructions of the past. I focus attention on the translation of ideology into a daily and weekly narrative by historical actors themselves. This phenomenon is an important yet underexamined aspect of the history of political culture. Political ideologies are not merely assertions of first principles. Their validity to believers and potential followers also rests on an ability to offer plausible explanations

of what is going on in the world. Nazi propaganda, repetitive as it was, did not consist primarily of endlessly repeated quotations from *Mein Kampf*. In addition to creating a myth of infallibility surrounding Hitler and his basic texts, the regime continuously translated hatred into an interpretive framework. Through the prism of radical anti-semitism the Nazis explained what seemed to them a central paradox of World War II, namely, the emergence, deepening, and persistence of the alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies. Both President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill had decided to make a pact with the lesser evil, the Stalin regime, in order to defeat what they viewed as the greater evil, Hitler's Germany. For the Nazi propagandists, however, only international Jewry could have brought these strange bedfellows together. Nazi propaganda was thus simultaneously a cynical, utilitarian political instrument as well as a fanatical and deeply believed interpretive framework.<sup>15</sup> It projected Nazi Germany's aggression and murderousness onto the enemy, thereby justifying (preemptive) German response in kind; it deepened loyalty within the regime by bonds forged of complicity in crime; it sought to undermine support for the war effort in Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union by presenting World War II as a war waged by and for the Jews; and it attempted to split the anti-Nazi coalition by charging that its members were puppets of the Jews.

Fourth, I advocate a revision of some traditional views about the nature of language in the Nazi regime. Conventional wisdom holds that Hitler and other mass murderers did not publicly reveal the crimes they intended to commit or were in the process of committing, but obscured them in a cloud of lies and bureaucratic euphemism. Hence work in the archives on secret memorandums or the diaries of leading officials such as Heinrich Himmler or Goebbels would reveal details of mass murder that the Nazis kept out of public view. While a rich scholarship has indicated the value of such research, as an intellectual and cultural historian concerned with German political culture, I want to underscore the importance of Nazism's public record. For amid the lies and in the absence of proper names and specific places, Nazi leaders and propagandists spoke in public to millions of people in a more blunt, forthright, and perversely honest manner about their intentions toward the Jews than many officials and journalists at the time as well as historians since have acknowledged. Not only did the Nazis mean what they said when it came to their plans for European Jewry, they said what they meant in print and on the radio, reaching hundreds of thousands of readers and millions of listeners. In public discourse they did so without the euphemisms that became so famous in postwar analysis of the language of totalitarianism.<sup>16</sup>

George Orwell famously wrote that the language and propaganda of totalitarian dictatorship is that of "euphemism, question begging and sheer cloudy vagueness." He argued that in efforts to "defend the indefensible" totalitarian regimes substitute clinical abstractions for straightforward proper nouns and visceral verbs.<sup>17</sup> The bureaucratic language of internal memos of the Reich Security Main Office, the

agency of the Nazi regime that implemented the genocide, has long entered our common knowledge with now infamous abstractions as “Final Solution” (*Endlösung*), “special handling” (*Sonderbehandlung*), or “resettlement to the East” (*Aussiedlung nach Ost*).<sup>18</sup> More recently, Berel Lang has referred to “the blatant disparity between the normal connotation of the word and its reference” in Nazi vocabulary, and to “‘language rules’ explicitly designed to conceal literal meaning.”<sup>19</sup> He continues that the language of euphemism and deception served not only in internal communications among officials or in messages intended to deceive the Jews, but that “also in addresses to the outside world . . . the orders for larger and more abstract plans of killing under the general aegis of the Final Solution were almost always couched in diffuse and abstract terms.”<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, the language of euphemism and deception was a crucial aspect of the Holocaust, but it was not the predominant way in which leading Nazis discussed their policies toward the Jews. Caesar Aronsfeld’s work on “the text of the Holocaust” presented the noneuphemistic language of the Nazi regime but did not shatter the conventional wisdom. In an insight that she did not fully develop, Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* also hinted at another way of thinking about Nazi language. She wrote that “in order not to overestimate the importance of the propaganda lies one should recall the much more numerous instances in which Hitler was completely sincere and brutally unequivocal in the definition of the movement’s true aims, but,” she continued, these assertions “were simply not acknowledged by a public unprepared for such consistency.”<sup>21</sup> Over time, however, Arendt herself pushed this insight to the periphery, as she also focused increasingly on the role of bureaucratic logic and the “banality of evil.” There persists the image of a regime that spoke publicly in code, replaced clear speech with euphemism, and gave little clue to its intentions.<sup>22</sup>

I want to recast the issue of euphemism in and clarity of Nazi public language. In fact, the public language of the Nazi regime was often a crude declaration of murderous intent always associated with projections of its own policies of mass murder onto “international Jewry.” Two key verbs and nouns were the core of this language of mass murder. Not one, in any context, is a euphemism. They were the verbs *vernichten* and *ausrotten*, which are synonyms for “annihilate,” “exterminate,” “totally destroy,” and “kill,” and the nouns *Vernichtung* and *Ausrottung*, meaning “annihilation,” “extermination,” “total destruction,” and “killing.” Whether taken on their own from the dictionary meaning or placed in the context of the speeches, paragraphs, and sentences in which they were uttered, the meaning of these terms was unambiguous. When Hitler and other Nazi leaders and propagandists uttered them, they invariably did so in the context of projecting these very intentions and plans onto “world Jewry” in its plans to “exterminate” (*ausrotten*) or “annihilate” (*vernichten*) not the Nazi regime or Nazi Party or the German armies, but the German people as a whole. When the Nazis imputed a policy of *Vernichtung* or *Ausrottung* to the collective singular noun “international Jewry,” the clear meaning of the words in that

context was that the Jews were pursuing a policy of mass murder of the German people as a whole. Whether or not we rely on dictionary definitions, on the meaning of the words in individual sentences and paragraphs, or on the context in which texts as a whole appeared, the texts—written and spoken—offer powerful evidence of the noneuphemistic and nonmetaphorical meaning of these words. Both when they imputed such intentions to the Jews and when they spoke of their own intentions, the evidence does not support the view that the Nazi leaders were speaking euphemistically. The meaning of their words, *for those who took them seriously*, was plain. The Nazis said what they meant and meant what they said.<sup>23</sup>

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Hitler, the central Nazi propagandist and decision-maker, exerted his will at times through public statements that informed other Nazi leaders what “working towards the Führer” meant, and at other times through more explicit private conversations with them.<sup>24</sup> In his speech to the Nuremberg Party Rally of September 1937, Hitler imputed to “Jewry” the intention of “exterminating” Germany’s “national intelligentsia.”<sup>25</sup> At the 1938 rally he accused “the Jewish world enemy” of the attempted “annihilation of the Aryan states.”<sup>26</sup> In his speech to the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, he uttered his infamous prophecy: “If international finance Jewry inside and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation [Vernichtung] of the Jewish race in Europe!”<sup>27</sup> He repeated the “prophecy,” minus the word *Vernichtung*, on January 30, 1941, when he said that the Jews’ role in Europe was finished.<sup>28</sup> In a speech in the Berlin Sportpalast on September 30, 1942, he said (to the accompaniment of applause) that it would be the Jews and not the “Aryan peoples” who would be “exterminated” (*ausgerottet*).<sup>29</sup> A few weeks later (November 8, 1942) at the Löwenbräukeller in Munich he repeated that the results of the war would not be the “extermination [Ausrottung] of the European races but rather the extermination of Jewry in Europe.”<sup>30</sup> On January 1, 1944, when about five million Jews had already been killed, Hitler’s annual radio address (from his East Prussian wartime headquarters), imputed to “Bolshevism” the war aim of “the complete extermination” (*völlige Ausrottung*) of the German nation.<sup>31</sup>

Each of these speeches was front-page news in the official government newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, and other major papers, was broadcast on national radio, and was repeated in pamphlets. Some were excerpted in thousands of posters placed each week in public places in German cities. Though Hitler couched these threats in convoluted sentences with passive verbal structures and impersonal subjects, it was clear that he was saying if a war in Europe broke out he was intending to exterminate, that is murder, the Jews of Europe. There was nothing ironic about his threats. Indeed, only “sophistication,” whether inspired by Marxism, liberalism, or

conservatism, was a barrier to understanding that the literal meaning of words were their actual meaning. The publication in 1996 by German historians working with the German Radio Archive (Deutschen Rundfunkarchiv in Frankfurt am Main) of the transcripts of about 160 antisemitic speeches Nazi leaders broadcast over national radio offers telling examples of this bluntness.

During the war years, Hitler gradually retreated from public view. Increasingly Goebbels became the key voice and face of the regime. In speeches and essays carried live on German radio and published in the press, Goebbels also used the words *Vernichtung* and *Ausrottung* to describe what “Jewry” intended to do to the German people, but also what the Nazi regime was going to do and was doing to it. Some of these threats appeared in four tirades devoted specifically to the Jews and the war: an editorial in *Das Reich* of November 16, 1941, “The Jews Are Guilty”; the “Iron Heart” speech to the Deutschen Akademie meeting at Friedrich Wilhelm University on December 1, 1941; the “Do You Want Total War?” speech in the Berlin Sportpalast of February 2, 1943; and Goebbels’s essay “The War and the Jews” of May 9, 1943, published in *Das Reich* and then read over German radio.<sup>32</sup> He repeated these projections, threats, and assertions of ongoing policy on numerous other occasions as well as in speeches dealing with subjects other than the “Jewish Question.”

Before turning to several of these texts, we should bear in mind that Hitler and Goebbels were not alone. The regime, sometimes described by German historians as a “polycracy” riven by internal disputes and rivalries, spoke with one public voice when it came to the Jews and the nature of World War II. Hundreds of antisemitic public statements broadcast on German radio convey this consensus. In a speech at the Berlin Sportpalast on October 4, 1942, Hermann Göring, Hitler’s designated successor, director of the Four-Year Plan, chief of the Luftwaffe, and generally regarded as the second most powerful figure in the Nazi regime, said to applause, “If we lose the war, you [Germans] will be annihilated [*vernichtet*]. . . . This is not the Second World War. This a great race war. It’s about whether the German and Aryan will survive or if the Jew will rule the world, and that is why we are fighting abroad.”<sup>33</sup>

While no one would describe Hitler, Goebbels, or Göring as subtle thinkers, their evocations of the “extermination” of the Germans and the “annihilation” of the Jews were masterpieces of indirection compared to the blunt assertions of German Labor Front head Robert Ley. In December 1939 Ley warned in German-occupied Lodz that if England won the war, “the German people, man, woman, and child would be exterminated [*ausgerottet*]. . . . The Jew would be wading in blood. Funeral pyres would be built on which the Jews would burn us.” The Jews would do this in the name of God, but “we want to prevent this. Hence it should be rather the Jews who fry, rather they who should burn, they who should starve, they who should be exterminated.”<sup>34</sup> These words elicited strong applause and calls of “Sieg Heil.” Ley repeated as much in speeches during 1941 and 1942.<sup>35</sup> Speaking to German and Dutch workers in Amsterdam on May 10, 1942, Ley did not mince words:

Comrades, believe me. I'm not painting too grim a picture. It is bitter for me, bitterly serious. The Jew is the great danger to humanity. If we don't succeed in exterminating him [*ihn auszurotten*], then we will lose the war. It's not enough to bring him someplace [*ihn irgend wohin zu bringen*]. That would be as if one wanted to lock up a louse somewhere in a cage. (Laughter) They would find a way out and again they come out from under and make you itch again. (Laughter) You have to annihilate [*vernichten*] them you have to exterminate them [for what] they have done to humanity . . . (interrupted by ongoing applause).<sup>36</sup>

In Amsterdam Ley went so far as to assert publicly that moving the Jews from one place to another would not suffice. The radio transcript indicates not only that Ley meant what he said but that the audience understood and agreed. The point is that Hitler set the public tone and that many of the regime's leaders spoke even more bluntly. In Caesar Aronsfeld's formulation, the public "text of the Holocaust," though bereft of crucial details, was more frank than were the oft-cited euphemisms of secret memos. Masters of indirection and plausible deniability, Nazi leaders were nonetheless as clear on general policy as vague on details of implementation. Readers and listeners might dismiss their assertions with the rationalist biases of a cynical era, but those who took them at face value understood the connection between word and deed.

Antisemitic propaganda in Nazi Germany was pervasive, but readers and listeners were not bombarded with it every day. Rather, the regime launched a series of campaigns. Examination of the headlines and front-page stories containing anti-semitic themes in *Völkischer Beobachter* from 1939 to 1945 offers one indicator of the timing of these often long-running barrages that appeared in response to particular developments in the war. Over this whole period, only four percent (84 of 2,100) of front-page stories expressed standard antisemitic denunciations: the Jews started World War II; they planned to exterminate the Germans; Churchill, Stalin, and especially Roosevelt were tools of Jewish power; the alliance of the democracies and the Soviet Union was evidence of a world Jewish conspiracy. There were two such headlines in 1939, none in 1940, seventeen in 1941, four in 1942, fifty in 1943, ten in 1944, and two in spring of 1945. Four periods accounted for most of the front-page stories: July–August 1941 (seven), April–July 1943 (twenty-six), October–November 1943 (thirteen), and May–June 1944 (nine); twenty-six appeared at other points during the war and Holocaust.

It should be kept in mind that such articles were coordinated by a completely controlled press and media. Their contents could appear in speeches by Hitler or more likely Goebbels, in articles in leading newspapers and magazines, and in posters pasted up in prominent public places such as train stations and post offices. Of course the media carried no items at all about the "Final Solution." A reader of the press or a radio listener would know, however, that the Nazi regime had declared the Jews "guilty" for the war and all the suffering it caused, and that it was implementing



Hitler's pre-war prophecy that it would exterminate the Jews should a new world war break out.<sup>37</sup>

As the timing of the above campaigns indicates, campaigns burst forth both when the tides of war were in the regime's favor (July–August 1941) as well as when the tide turned against it in spring 1943. Following Roosevelt and Churchill's affirmation at Casablanca of the goal of unconditional surrender, and the capitulation of the German Sixth Army before Stalingrad in January 1943, Reich Press Office press directives called for an intensified focus on antisemitism. They held "Jewish commissars" responsible for the murder of Polish officers in Katyn and pressed home the message that World War II was a "Jewish War" against Germany. Similarly, the Normandy invasion of June 1944 and the weeks of anticipation before it elicited ten antisemitic headlines in May and June. These presented the invasion as further proof that a world Jewish conspiracy was directing the war and that Roosevelt and Churchill were Stalin's dupes in a "Jewish-Bolshevik plot" to dominate Europe.<sup>38</sup>

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The headline stories of the *Völkischer Beobachter* were only one part of the Ministry of Propaganda's coordinated campaigns. Every morning in wartime Berlin, Goebbels held a minister's conference at which he delivered a monologue about the events of the day and conveyed instructions regarding how the press and radio should present the news to domestic and foreign audiences.<sup>39</sup> Shortly thereafter chief of the Reich Press Office Otto Dietrich or one of his officials held a "press conference." At the daily conferences Dietrich, or more often one of his staff, conveyed *Presseanweisungen* (press directives), also called the *Parole des Tages*, or word of the day, in oral and written form to several hundred journalists and editors.<sup>40</sup> They in turn conveyed these orders to editors and publishers working at the 3,000-plus newspapers in the country.<sup>41</sup> The directives were regarded as top-secret and were to be destroyed or returned after they had been studied. Revelation of their contents might lead to severe punishment. The coordination of the German press was thus a daily (for magazines weekly) exercise of direct and detailed control.

A discussion of the directives themselves is beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice it to say that they provide abundant evidence that regime propagandists took seriously their public narratives concerning an international Jewish conspiracy. Conversely, memos meant to be secret offer no evidence that their authors in Berlin were cynics about their own propaganda. For example, in the press directive of August 13, 1943, Dietrich expressed the seriousness with which he took the Jewish conspiracy thesis (albeit complaining about some editors' lack of enthusiasm for the latest press campaign):

The word of the day from the Reich Press Chief of August 9, 1943 again clearly pointed out that Bolshevism and capitalism are components of the identical Jewish world swindle only operating under different names. Yet in the treatment of Bolshevik themes the

newspapers repeatedly succumb to the illusion that capitalism and Bolshevism are two different and antagonistic perspectives. In particular, communist agitation is repeatedly given a boost because the press takes Bolshevik statements seriously, as if Bolshevism really wanted to destroy capitalism. In reality, both of these Jewish systems are working hand in hand with one another. Now the German press must finally put an end to this false and dangerous tendency which sabotages the line of our policy. Editors who violate this word of the day will be held personally responsible for doing so.<sup>42</sup>

Numerous similar statements from Ministry of Propaganda internal documents testify to the ideological conviction underlying assertions intended for a mass audience. The evidence for the pervasiveness of fanatical belief among leaders and propagandists is powerful.

The following examination of Goebbels's public statements from the prewar years to 1945 underscores the continuity and consistency of his own fanaticism. Whether one studies the thirty-odd volumes of his diaries, or the hundreds of editorials he wrote and speeches he made, one is struck with the unshakable character of his (Foucault's expression) "delirious discourse."<sup>43</sup> Goebbels's narrative responds to ongoing events by placing them into a preestablished framework of a conspiracy theory that, by definition, was immune to refutation. If hidden forces were behind events, then there was no way to disabuse Hitler or Goebbels of the idea that a powerful international conspiracy of Jews was the driving force of world history. Once inside the delirium of discourse, everything could be made to fit logically into a seemingly coherent pattern free of the contingencies and confusions of alternative explanations.<sup>44</sup> Part of the accomplishment lay in repeating basic themes while apparently explaining novel events.

The regime's antisemitic narrative was firmly in place before Hitler started World War II. At the Nuremberg rally of 1935, named the *Parteitag gegen den Bolschewismus* (Party Congress against Bolshevism), Goebbels's speech to the faithful stressed the link between Nazi anticommunism and Nazi antisemitism. The party publishing house reprinted the speech in pamphlet form as *Kommunismus ohne Maske* (Communism without a Mask).<sup>45</sup> Goebbels described Bolshevism as the Jews' "declaration of battle" (*Kampfansage*) against culture.<sup>46</sup> Bolshevism was calculated to bring about "the absolute destruction" (*die absolute Vernichtung*) of the accomplishments of the West (*Abendlandes*) in the interest of a "rootless and nomadic international clique of conspirators."<sup>47</sup> A small Jewish clique dominated the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup> National Socialism's mission was to prevent the "Bolshevization of the world."<sup>49</sup> In fact, "the Bolshevik international" was "a Jewish international."<sup>50</sup> "International Jewry" was an existing historical subject that posed a threat to Europe and the West. Bolshevism was a threat because it served the interests of international Jewry that, in Hitler and Goebbels's view, comprised the racial foundations on which communist theory and practice rested. The anti-Bolshevism of the Nazi leadership was the consequence of their antisemitism. Eradicating Bolshevism meant attacking it at its

supposed roots in the Jews. Hitler had saved Germany and Europe by establishing a “dam,” or bulwark, against the spread of Bolshevism.<sup>51</sup> National Socialism, far from being a party or state with aggressive designs against others, was rather a defensive effort to save not only Germany but European and Western culture from destruction at the hands of a previously existing but now at least partially vanquished threat.

Goebbels’s speech at the 1936 Party Congress, “Weltgefahr des Bolschewismus” (World Danger of Bolshevism), repeated the essentials of his 1935 address.<sup>52</sup> The Jews were threatening Europe with *Vernichtung*.<sup>53</sup> National Socialism had to lead the battle against “Jewish Bolshevism” because the European bourgeoisie had become incapable of doing so.<sup>54</sup> The Nazis’ task was to convince Germany of “the parasitic danger of this race” and to open the world’s closed eyes to the true nature of Jewry and Bolshevism. Hence the Nazi regime would never tire of publicly stating that “the Jews are guilty, the Jews are guilty.”<sup>55</sup> The guilt in the context of the Nuremberg Party Rally lay in the presumed link between the Jews and communism. These “anti-Eastern” elements of Nazi ideology and propaganda merit as much attention as the attacks on Western modernity that have received more attention in the cultural and intellectual history of Nazism.<sup>56</sup> Goebbels’s presentation of Nazi Germany as defender of the West against Jewish-Bolshevism coming from the East remained a leitmotif of wartime propaganda.

From 1933 to the 1940s, Goebbels published articles with some regularity in *Völkischer Beobachter*. In 1940 he founded a weekly political and cultural journal aimed at an intellectual readership in Germany and abroad. *Das Reich*, published from May 26, 1940, to April 15, 1945, had a circulation that grew from 500,000 in October 1940 to 800,000 in 1941 and over 1,400,000 by 1944.<sup>57</sup> In 1940 Goebbels published only four of its thirty-two editorials. However, beginning in 1941, he wrote the editorials almost every week until the end of the war. He or others then read them on national radio every Friday evening.<sup>58</sup> *Das Reich* became the most important journal read by the Nazi-oriented political and intellectual establishment. German radio, film, and print media diffused its themes to a broader public.

Goebbels frequently included antisemitic themes in the editorials. Of the 218 editorials that included denunciation of the Jews, three focused exclusively on them: “Mimikry” (Mimicry), on July 20, 1941; “Die Juden sind Schuld!” (The Jews Are Guilty!), on November 16, 1941; and “Der Krieg und die Juden” (The War and the Jews), on May 9, 1943.<sup>59</sup> These editorials structured key arguments that could be inserted into other editorial statements, whether the topic was England, the United States, the Soviet Union, the Allied bombing of German cities, the need for national unity in “total war,” the alliance between Western “plutocracies” (a frequent Nazi term for the Western democracies) and “Jewish Bolshevism,” or the war’s origins and its continuation, escalation, and eventual outcome. The readership of *Das Reich* and regular listeners to Goebbels’s radio speeches received a consistent narrative of events in which radical antisemitism played a central role.

From August 1939 to June 1941, the period of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Goebbels and the Nazi propaganda machine dropped the assault on “Jewish Bolshevism.” However, the antisemitic propaganda continued, now directed at Great Britain, the United States, and the Jewish “men behind the scenes” (*Hintermänner*).<sup>60</sup> If, as the Nazis claimed, they were defending Europe against the Bolshevik threat, then it was in the interest of the majority of the peoples of Britain and the United States to at least remain neutral and at most to support Nazism’s great service for the West. Yet Roosevelt, and following the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939 (the new puppet state of Slovakia was not occupied until 1944), British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, warned against further German expansion. The message from the Ministry of Propaganda was that American and British anti-Nazism was not due to German expansion and aggression but to Jewish influence on the governments of the “plutocracies.”

Roosevelt viewed Nazi domination of the European continent, threats to invade Britain, and threats to attack shipping in the Atlantic as direct challenges to the national security of the United States. Should Britain and the British Navy fall into the hands of Hitler’s Germany, the threat to the United States would, he believed, be dire. Though Roosevelt was appalled by Nazi anti-Jewish persecution, he never presented American intervention in a European war as rooted primarily in opposition to Hitler’s assault on the Jews.<sup>61</sup> Yet Goebbels’s articles and speeches of 1939–41 dismissed the notion that American resistance was based on national interest. Instead he asserted that it was indeed the influence of the Jews, combined with what he denounced as American economic imperialism, that was driving the United States and Great Britain to oppose Nazi Germany. In “Was will eigentlich Amerika?” (What Does America Really Want?), an essay in the *Völkischer Beobachter* on January 21, 1939, Goebbels wrote that hatred and lies about Nazi Germany were being spread in “almost all the American press, above all in its Jewish-dominated parts.”<sup>62</sup> The Jews were the “inspirers and beneficiaries of this witch-hunt.”<sup>63</sup> The Jews controlled “the New York press”; “almost all press . . . radio . . . and film” in the United States served the anti-German witch hunt.<sup>64</sup> The Nazi regime, he continued, understood that the American people had “absolutely nothing to do with” this campaign. Indeed, non-Jewish America had become “the victim” of the Jews.<sup>65</sup> As Nazi Germany had nothing against the American people as a whole, the obvious route to good relations between the Third Reich and the United States was for the non-Jewish majority to reject “Jewish” urgings to oppose Nazi policy.

“Was will eigentlich Amerika?” displayed the dual nature of antisemitism as both ideological postulate and political tool. The former asserted Jewish influence over Roosevelt. The latter sought to turn this supposed fact into a political lever to undermine support for Roosevelt’s assistance to Great Britain and support for possible intervention against Nazi Germany. By placing Jewish influence on American foreign policy at center stage, Goebbels sought to exploit and deepen already existing

antisemitism in the United States, hoping that the non-Jewish majority would hold Jewish influence on Roosevelt responsible for any potential war between Germany and America. While Roosevelt focused on the threat that Nazi expansion and aggression posed to the United States and other states in Europe, Goebbels wanted to place “the Jewish Question” in the center of discussion in order to foster opposition to Roosevelt in American domestic politics.<sup>66</sup> Given the extent of antisemitism in American life, such a policy fell on some sympathetic ears. Four surveys conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation from 1939 to 1941 found that about one-third of the American population answered “yes” when asked whether “the Jews in this country would like to get the United States into the European war.” In light of the strength of indigenous American antisemitism, Goebbels’s attempt to present World War II as a war for or against the Jews combined Nazi conviction with plausible political tactics.<sup>67</sup> Nazi propagandists interpreted British or American official criticism of Nazi anti-Jewish policies as evidence that “international Jewry” was conspiring against the Third Reich.<sup>68</sup> In fact, the Roosevelt administration’s much-examined rhetorical reticence on the Jewish issue did not prevent Goebbels from asserting that it was the Jews who were driving the United States to war.<sup>69</sup> Nazism’s familiar ideological postulates were adapted to offer an apparent explanation of American foreign policy.

Hitler’s “prophecy” of January 30, 1939, comprised the core of Nazism’s narrative of World War II. A historical subject called “international Jewry” had launched World War II with the intent of bringing about the “Bolshevization” of the world. It would fail. Instead, Nazi Germany would retaliate for this aggression and annihilate the Jews. It would wage a “war” against the Jews in response to the “war” the Jews had started. This reversed logic of self-righteous retaliation constituted the core of Nazi antisemitic propaganda between 1939 and 1945. In fashioning this propaganda, Goebbels both expressed his own beliefs and offered an example of what Ian Kershaw has described as “working towards the Führer.”<sup>70</sup>

In violation of the Munich agreements, Germany invaded and occupied most of Czechoslovakia on March 14, 1939. Now that Hitler’s plans for expansion were undeniable, Britain and France declared their willingness to defend Poland, should Germany invade. But in an April 1 essay titled “Wer will den Krieg?” (Who Wants War?), Goebbels offered a contrasting explanation of the sources of a new war.<sup>71</sup> The essay contained a now familiar integration of utilitarian and ideological elements of antisemitism that characterized German wartime propaganda. He wrote that all criticism of Nazi policy coming from Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union was due to Jewish power. The Jews had “an interest in a war.” Jewish advisers surrounded Roosevelt.<sup>72</sup> They were the

anonymous power that stands behind everything. . . . The Jews are guilty. If in a dark hour a war should break out again in Europe, the call must go out around the earth: the Jews are guilty! They want the war and they are doing everything in their power to push

the peoples into war. They believe they won't be victims but beneficiaries of such a war. That is why they fan this infernal witch-hunt against Germany and Italy and call for a fighting block of democratic against authoritarian states.<sup>73</sup>

The element of projection, for example accusing the Jews of wanting a war just as Nazi Germany was launching one, remained a continuing feature of Nazi propaganda.<sup>74</sup>

While British resistance from summer 1940 to early 1941 frustrated Hitler's plans to win a quick victory, Goebbels escalated his attacks on Winston Churchill in *Das Reich*. In "The Object of the World's Laughter" ("Im Gelächter der Welt," February 16, 1941) Goebbels drew parallels between the English and the Jews. The former were not so clever as often assumed. Many Germans had made the mistake of exaggerating the cleverness of the Jews in Germany. The English were "the Jews among the Aryans"; they would collapse under strong blows.<sup>75</sup> In "Britannia Rules the Waves" (March 30, 1941) Goebbels imputed murderous intentions to Nazi Germany's enemies, as he had done before and would do again. If Churchill could, he would "exterminate Germany [*Deutschland ausrotten*], destroy our people [*unser Volk vernichten*], and leave our country in soot and ashes."<sup>76</sup>

For the Nazis, the emergence and persistence of the anti-Hitler coalition encompassing the Soviet Union and the Western democracies constituted one of the central riddles of World War II, as well as the most emphatic proof of the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy. In this regard Goebbels's response to Churchill's BBC address of June 22, 1941 (the day Germany invaded the Soviet Union), is illuminating. The British prime minister stated that "we have but one aim and one single, irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime."<sup>77</sup> As a result, Churchill offered an alliance with the Soviet Union in common cause against the Third Reich. In declaring that the "the Russian danger is our danger" Churchill focused on the threat Nazi Germany posed to Britain and the United States, and made the case for alliance with the Soviet Union based on British national interests and a shared antagonism to Hitler's Germany. Ineffective, disunited responses to Nazi aggression from the major European powers in the pre-war years and then during the Hitler-Stalin nonaggression pact of 1939–41 had made it easier for Hitler to unleash the war. Churchill's speech proposed that the West and the Soviet Union needed to overcome their divisions and create an alliance—that each must ally with "the lesser evil"—if Nazi Germany was to be defeated.

In "Die alte Front" (*Völkischer Beobachter*, June 26, 1941) Goebbels denied Churchill's rationale for the anti-Hitler coalition, restating the now familiar conspiracy theory.<sup>78</sup> While political neophytes were stunned by the "Moscow-London conspiracy against the Reich caught between plutocracy and Bolshevism," it confirmed long-standing Nazi suspicions.<sup>79</sup> Both Britain and the Soviet Union supposedly sought a long war, the former to keep Europe weak and divided, the latter to prepare it for Bolshevism.<sup>80</sup> Now the "carefully woven network of lies of old enemies was torn apart. A thousand pieces of evidence pointing to the fact of a secret cooperation

between Moscow and London” were confirmed when “one of the accused,” that is, Churchill, admitted as much in his BBC speech.<sup>81</sup> The same alliance between plutocracy and communism that opposed the Nazis during the Weimar era within Germany had reconstituted itself internationally in the June 1941 British-Soviet alliance. But just as the Nazis had triumphed over their domestic foes, so they would vanquish this new form of the “old front.”<sup>82</sup>

The conspiracy theory offered a simple explanation for a most improbable development. Churchill, one of Europe’s leading anticommunists, had led democratic and capitalist Great Britain into an alliance with Stalin’s communist dictatorship based on common hatreds, fears, and interests in the face of Nazi Germany’s aggression. Goebbels’s conspiratorial explanation pictured Nazi Germany as an innocent victim at the very moment it was invading the Soviet Union. Though the conspiracy theory emboldened the ideological hard core, it fostered ideologically-driven strategic miscalculations, as did antisemitism as a whole. Over the following four years, Nazi ideology, policy, and propaganda, which had served to enhance Hitler’s power quite well up to 1941, deepened the solidarity of the anti-Hitler coalition while contributing to the regime’s loss of touch with reality.<sup>83</sup> The conspiracy theory gave the Nazi leadership the conviction that they had seen beneath the surface to deeper currents, realities they believed they had already mastered domestically. They thus processed all new information into an already established narrative, making current developments variations on familiar themes.

With Operation Barbarossa, Goebbels and his propagandists renewed their offensive against “Jewish-Bolshevism.” In an article for *Das Reich* of July 20, 1941—a month following the invasion of the Soviet Union—Goebbels returned to familiar themes in the article “Mimikry.”<sup>84</sup> The Jews, he wrote, were masters at adapting to surroundings “without losing their essence. They practice mimicry.”<sup>85</sup> One had to be “an experienced Jewish expert” to unmask them. Had the Nazis not come to power in Germany, “our country would be ripe for Bolshevism, the most devilish infection which Jewry can bring.”<sup>86</sup> Were the Soviet Union to expand its power,

the result would be the domination of Jewry over the world. . . . After the leading circles of international Jewry had to realize that it was impossible to bring about the Bolshevization of the individual countries of Europe through the path of [political] agitation, they decided to wait for the great opportunity of a coming war, then chose their position so that the war lasted as long as possible. They did so in order to attack [and Bolshevize] an exhausted Europe at the end of the war. . . . The tactics of Moscow Bolshevism have been directed at this goal since the beginning of this war.<sup>87</sup>

The Soviets had tried to keep the “Jewish leaders” in the background and to convince the Germans that

the Jewish Bolsheviks in Moscow and the Jewish plutocrats in London and Washington were deadly enemies. In fact [the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States]

drew ever closer to make the encircling grasp with which they wished to crush us ever stronger. Above all it is the same Jews, on both sides, whether open or camouflaged, who establish the tone and establish the line. When they pray in Moscow and go to London to sing the International, they are doing what they have done for ages. . . . They adapt to the respective conditions and situation and slowly, naturally, and step by step so that the peoples will not be suspicious and vigilant. They are naturally so furious with us because we unmask them.<sup>88</sup>

It was during these weeks and months that the mass murder of European Jewry began, spearheaded by the Einsatzgruppen murders behind the lines of the German Army in Poland and the Soviet Union. Though Goebbels was not a part of the inner circle of decision-makers who implemented the Holocaust, his diary strongly hints that he was kept informed. In “Mimikry” he wrote that “the blow must be delivered without pity or grace. The world’s enemy [*Weltfeind*] is collapsing and Europe will have its peace.” These words of justification and incitement hinted at a terrible policy aimed at the Jews but, as would be the case throughout, left out any details of the ongoing murders.<sup>89</sup>

In meetings with Hitler on August 19, 1941, and Reinhard Heydrich on September 24, 1941, Goebbels learned more about Hitler’s determination to realize the “prophecy” and of Heydrich’s plan to deport Jews to the East.<sup>90</sup> He turned to the Jewish issue in public again in November and December 1941, first in *Das Reich* and on the radio, and then in a lecture at a prestigious gathering of academics and government officials at the Deutsche Akademie in Berlin. “Die Juden sind Schuld!” was published in the November 16, 1941, issue of *Das Reich*. It was one of Goebbels’s most important contributions to the Holocaust, repeating past assertions and setting the framework for subsequent attacks.<sup>91</sup>

By then, according to most historians of Holocaust decision-making, Hitler had ordered Himmler to expand the mass shootings of Jews on the Eastern Front into a program of killing all European Jews.<sup>92</sup> The text would mark the first time that a leading official of the Nazi regime publicly announced that the “extermination” (*Verichtung*) of European Jewry was taking place. Goebbels dispensed with the if-then, conditional tense of Hitler’s famous prophecy, replacing it with the simple declarative verb tense referring to an ongoing action. Three weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Goebbels said that “the historical guilt of world Jewry for the outbreak and expansion of this war has been so extensively demonstrated that there’s no need to waste any more words on it. They wanted their war, and now they have it.”<sup>93</sup> In the past, Hitler had held the Jews responsible for Germany’s loss of World War I, the Treaty of Versailles, the hyperinflation of the postwar years, and the Great Depression. In fall 1941 Goebbels argued that “international Jewry” was continuing its offensive against a victimized Germany. But now Germany was going to strike back. It would, at last, wage war on the Jews in response to the war the Jews had launched against it. Though Goebbels never mentioned the “Final Solution,” he



repeatedly used verbs meaning “exterminate,” “annihilate,” “destroy,” and “murder” to refer to ongoing Nazi Jewish policy as one front in an overall war of national self-defense:

By unleashing this war, world Jewry completely misjudged the forces at its disposal. Now it is suffering a gradual process of annihilation that it had intended for us and that it would have unleashed against us without hesitation if it had had the power to do so. It is now perishing as a result of its own law: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. In this historical dispute every Jew is our enemy, whether he vegetates in a Polish ghetto or scrapes out his parasitic existence in Berlin or Hamburg, or blows the trumpets of war in New York or Washington. Due to their birth and race, all Jews belong to an international conspiracy against National Socialist Germany. They wish for its defeat and annihilation and do everything in their power to help bring [them] about.<sup>94</sup>

He concluded “Die Juden sind Schuld!” with a ten-point indictment. The Jews had started the war and wanted to destroy the German Reich and people. All Jews without exception were “sworn enemies” of the German people. The death of every German soldier “was listed in the guilt account [*Schuldkonto*] of the Jews. It is on their conscience and they must therefore pay for it.” Because the Jews bore the guilt for starting the war, the treatment the Germans were meting out to them was not an injustice. “They have more than deserved it.” Thus it was “the government’s policy to finally be done with them.”<sup>95</sup>

Published in *Das Reich* and broadcast over the radio, these assertions illustrate that the public language of Nazi Germany was anything but “ordinary” or “banal”; however ordinary German citizens or officials may have been, the statements they heard from Goebbels were extraordinary. Minus confirming details of date and place, Goebbels told his readers and listeners in clearly understood German that their government was murdering the Jews of Europe. That such assertions became ordinary by repetition is in itself evidence of how extraordinary Nazi discourse was. Many Germans certainly found ways to explain away such assertions; but, at least for those 6 million-plus who had joined the Nazi Party by fall 1941, and who naturally paid close attention to the words of its leaders, Goebbels was speaking a language they understood.<sup>96</sup>

On December 1, 1941, Goebbels delivered a two-hour lecture to diplomats, government officials, party members, Wehrmacht officers, journalists, industrialists, and members of the Deutsche Akademie assembled in the main lecture hall of the Friedrich Wilhelm University of Berlin. It was published in pamphlet form as “Das Eherne Herz” (The Iron Heart).<sup>97</sup> He called the invasion of the Soviet Union a necessary preemptive strike. If the Soviets had struck first, the Red Army’s “first task would have been to exterminate the national intelligentsia and the spiritual leadership of the nation.”<sup>98</sup> Germany’s invasion was therefore a defense of culture and civilization. Britain and the United States were betraying Europe by leaving it to the mercy of Bolshevism.<sup>99</sup> The Jews had launched and expanded the war but had miscalculated. In front of this elite audience Goebbels stated bluntly that Hitler’s prophecy

was now being realized. The Jews were experiencing “a gradual process of extermination.”<sup>100</sup> He used the noun “Vernichtung” to mean that the Soviet Union would have murdered masses of Germans; the Jews’ extermination might be “gradual,” but this sophisticated audience understood what the fulfillment of Hitler’s prophecy meant. Over the years, much has been made of euphemism, bureaucratic indirection, and even banality in Nazi discourse. Yet in public Goebbels was forthright regarding a policy of systematic murder.

The Germans could not turn back from this confrontation. It was at the heart of the war Germany was now waging. “One of the first and most important tasks of the coming period,” Goebbels told the assembled, was “the definitive and final [*endgültig*] solution of the Jewish Question.”<sup>101</sup> He reminded any doubters that if Germany were to lose, her enemies were united “in the firm will that Germany must be subjugated, exterminated, killed, and wiped out.”<sup>102</sup> The Germans must unite behind Hitler and the Nazi regime.

In evoking this nightmare, Goebbels obscured the nature of the “Final Solution” by presenting the intent to wipe out the enemy as the aim of Germany’s enemies. Goebbels’s speech at the Deutsche Akademie had given enough indication of the ongoing mass murders to bind the educated elite, and subsequently broader circles, to the regime, if yet remaining sufficiently unspecific to provide a fig leaf of plausible deniability. That evening Goebbels wrote in his diary that he was “extraordinarily satisfied” with the reception of his talk by the “Berlin intelligentsia.”<sup>103</sup>

In his diary of December 12, five days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the entry of the United States into the war, Goebbels described Hitler’s speech to a meeting that day of Nazi gauleiters in Berlin.<sup>104</sup> There Hitler had told his listeners that, as world war was now here, “the extermination of Jewry must be the necessary consequence.” In view of the “160,000” German deaths on the Eastern Front, “the originator of this bloody conflict must pay with his own life.”<sup>105</sup> The longer the war continued and the more Germans who died, the more the Jews deserved to be punished. Hitler thereby gave the “Final Solution” a causal and inherent, not contingent or accidental, connection to World War II. As the number of German soldiers dying increased, and later the number of German civilians during Allied bombing, the Nazi leadership focused on the supposed connections between an international Jewish conspiracy; the anti-Hitler coalition of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States; the death and suffering of the German people; and the resulting necessity of realizing Hitler’s prophecy.

For every family who lost a loved one during the war, Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda pointed an accusing finger at the easily identifiable culprits and offered a personal, intimate reason to “retaliate.” In this way for millions of Germans, the abstract slogan “the Jews are guilty” assumed direct emotional significance. Goebbels’s narrative fostered deeper hatred of the Jews as the devastation Germany suffered at the hands of the Allies grew. As the genocide of the Jews continued, Nazi

propaganda spoke of their growing power and the suffering they were inflicting on the Germans. As the Allies turned the tide, Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda stepped up their assertions that “the Jews are guilty.”

These themes appeared in Goebbels’s most famous speech of the war, the three-hour oration, “Do You Want Total War?,” delivered in the Berlin Sportpalast on February 18, 1943, and broadcast over German radio.<sup>106</sup> In the wake of the German defeat at Stalingrad, Goebbels raised the threat of a Europe abandoned to Bolshevism by Great Britain and the United States. “Jewry has intellectually and politically so deeply penetrated the Anglo-Saxon states” that they had lost their will or desire to resist communism or even to acknowledge that a threat exists.<sup>107</sup> From the beginning the Nazis had pointed out that “the connection between international plutocracy and international Bolshevism was not a contradiction. Rather it had a deep and causal meaning. The superficially civilized Jewry of Western Europe and the Jewry of the Eastern ghettos have already grasped hands over our country. That is why Europe is in danger.”<sup>108</sup> Just as the Jewish press in Weimar Germany had dulled and paralyzed the struggle against communism, so Jewry was bringing about a similar “intellectual and cultural paralysis in the West European democracies.” But the war was not only to save European or Western civilization from the Jewish Bolshevik threat, it was now a war for Germany’s survival.<sup>109</sup> The Germans had to respond by waging a total war. Goebbels drove himself and his audience to a frenzy, and to his rhetorical question, “Do you want total war?,” the audience bellowed “Yes.”

“Der Krieg und die Juden” (The War and the Jews), published in *Das Reich* on May 9, 1943, was the third of Goebbels’s wartime essays devoted exclusively to the Jews.<sup>110</sup> He expressed exasperation that there were still people who were too naive to understand what the war was about and what role the Jewish Question played in it. The “Jewish race” and its “helpers” were waging war against “Aryan humanity as well as against Western culture and civilization.”

Jewry wanted this war. Wherever you look in the enemy camp, be it on the plutocratic or on the Bolshevistic side, one sees the Jews as inspirers and agitators working behind those exponents standing in the foreground. . . . [The Jews] organize the enemy war economy and develop the programs for annihilation and extermination aimed at the Axis powers. It is from their ranks that the bloodthirsty, enraged, and revenge-seeking agitators and political wild men in England and the United States and the terrorist GPU commissars in the Soviet Union are recruited. Hence, they form the glue that holds the enemy coalition together.<sup>111</sup>

The “Old Testament threats of revenge with which they fill their newspapers and radio broadcasts” were not “mere political literature. If they had the power to do so, they would fulfill these desires down to the last point.” The Jews had started a “race war” that had “no other goal but the annihilation and extermination of our people. We stand now as the only barrier against Jewry on its path to world domination. If the Axis powers were to lose this struggle, then the dam that could rescue Europe

from the Jewish-Bolshevik danger would no longer exist.”<sup>112</sup> Either Germany and its allies would win the war or “countless millions of people in our own and other European countries . . . would be delivered without defense to the hatred and will for extermination [*Vernichtungswillen*] of this devilish race.”<sup>113</sup> Hence, in May 1943 Goebbels assured his thousands of readers and millions of listeners,

we are moving ahead. The fulfillment of the Führer’s prophecy, about which world Jewry laughed in 1939 when he made it, stands at the end of our course of action. Even in Germany, the Jews laughed when we stood up for the first time against them. Among them laughter is now a thing of the past. They chose to wage war against us. But Jewry now understands that the war has become a war against them. When Jewry conceived of the plan of the total extermination of the German people, it thereby wrote its own death sentence. In this instance as in others, world history will also be a world court.<sup>114</sup>

Goebbels continued to elaborate on this core narrative until the end of the war. On February 28, 1945, with Allied armies closing in, Goebbels spoke to the nation over the radio to bolster morale, denounce the enemy, and explain why Nazi Germany was suffering such serious setbacks.<sup>115</sup>

We are not ashamed. . . . [Our setbacks] were possible only because the European West and the plutocratically-led U.S.A. gave the Soviet military backing on [our] flanks and tied [the] hands with which we are still today trying to strike Bolshevism to the ground. The plutocrats’ plans for blood-soaked hatred and revenge against the Reich and against the German people are in no way inferior to those of the Soviets. . . . It will be the eternal shame and disgrace of this century that in the moment of its greatest threat from the East, Europe was shamefully left in the lurch and abandoned by the Western countries. Indeed, these nations sank so low that they even encouraged the storm from inner Asia and at the same time tried to break apart the last protective dam on which it could have been broken. In any case, we expected nothing else. Through years of systematic labor of disintegration and subversion international Jewry so poisoned public opinion in these countries that they were no longer capable of thinking—not to mention acting—for themselves.<sup>116</sup>

Even in the final months, Goebbels found in antisemitism the explanation for Nazi Germany’s impending defeat, abandoned—one might say “stabbed in the back”—by a West that had succumbed to Jewish domination. For the Nazi hardcore, World War II was ending as had World War I, with a noble Germany betrayed, perhaps this time not from within, but in any case from without at the hands of the Western Jewish-dominated “plutocracies.” If the Jews had not been allowed to exert their sway over policy in London and Washington, Nazi Germany could have won the war. In February 1945 Goebbels was still holding the Jews responsible for the Third Reich’s impending defeat. And as chroniclers of the death marches of spring 1945 have shown, widespread popular participation in Germany’s revenge against its relentless and soon-to-be victorious “foe” continued up to the very end.<sup>117</sup>

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Social and intellectual historians have documented the fact that after the defeat in Stalingrad in February 1943, disillusionment and deradicalization spread in parts of German society.<sup>118</sup> Hitler had turned out not to be an infallible genius. The master race was not winning the war. The international Jewish conspiracy never existed beyond the imaginations of the Nazi leaders. The army was clearly defeated on the battlefield. There was no second stab in the back. Yet for the Nazi hardcore and its leading propagandist, impending defeat reinforced the conviction that the international Jewish conspiracy did indeed exist. In the alliance between the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States, it was about to win World War II. It is no wonder Victor Klemperer, among Goebbels's most acute and perceptive listeners within Germany, wrote in his diary soon after D-Day that "however much I resisted it, *the Jew* is in every respect the center of [the language of the Third Reich] and *of its whole view of the epoch*."<sup>119</sup>

My intent has been to give renewed attention to the main themes of the Nazi antisemitic narrative and to encourage a rethinking of the meaning of the now famous phrase, "the war against the Jews." The antisemitic narrative in Goebbels's articles and speeches, which reflected Hitler's wishes and were repeated in other organs of Nazi propaganda, focused on the following central point: Nazi Germany was not fighting two separate wars, one against the nation-states of the anti-Hitler coalition and a second, separate "war" against the Jews. Rather, in their own imaginations World War II and the "Final Solution" were different aspects of one war fought between Nazi Germany, or "Aryan humanity," on the one hand, and an international Jewish conspiracy on the other. While the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States fought the war to defend their national interests, the Nazi leadership believed and publicly declared from its origins to its end that World War II was a war waged by international Jewry against Nazi Germany.<sup>120</sup> Nazi propaganda presented the regime's threats to exterminate the Jews as part of a policy of massive retaliation against those who had waged war against Germany. During the war years, as had been the case since the campaign to bring down the Weimar Republic, Nazi anti-semitism was simultaneously an effective political instrument as well as, for its adherents, a powerful and simple framework of interpretation with which to make sense (or nonsense) of the course of events.

The details of the "Final Solution" remained shrouded in secrecy. One of the main accomplishments of the Ministry of Propaganda was to impose a censorship that prevented information from reaching the German public. Yet Goebbels publicly, to millions of listeners and thousands of readers, repeatedly and passionately both made the case for mass murder and announced that "now" Hitler's prophecy was being carried out. He did so at the beginnings of the war in 1939, following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, during the months of euphoria in 1941 and early 1942, as the tide turned in spring and summer 1943, and as defeat loomed in 1944 and 1945.

Millions of Germans who read newspapers or listened to the radio between 1939 and 1945 heard Goebbels use explicit verbs such as *ausrotten* and *vernichten* referring to extermination, annihilation, and murder in connection with the “fulfillment” of Hitler’s infamous prophecies. The paranoid projection at the core of Nazi antisemitism found in the war’s death and suffering millions of reasons for Germans to deepen their murderous antisemitism. Concentration on what Hannah Arendt long ago called the “lying world of consistency” of Nazism’s totalitarian ideology and propaganda remains indispensable for understanding the Holocaust and its connection to World War II.

## Notes

1. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews, 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975).
2. See, for example, Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Browning (with contributions by Jürgen Matthäus), *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (Lincoln; Jerusalem: University of Nebraska Press; Yad Vashem, 2004), reviewed in this issue; Richard Breitman, *Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York: Knopf, 1991); Philippe Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews: The Genesis of the Holocaust* (London: Arnold, 1994 <French. ed. 1989>); Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936–1945: Nemesis* (New York: Norton, 2000); Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996), probably the most widely read American work about the Holocaust after Dawidowicz, focused on the extent of antisemitic belief among the Germans, not on the connection between the Holocaust and World War II or the antisemitic understanding of the war.
3. This research draws on my work for a forthcoming book on antisemitism and Nazi wartime propaganda, to be published by Harvard University Press in 2005.
4. On Dietrich and the daily press conference see Alexander Hardy, *Hitler’s Secret Weapon: The Managed Press and Propaganda Machine of Nazi Germany* (New York: Vintage, 1967). Hardy was one of the prosecutors in Dietrich’s postwar trial at Nuremberg for war crimes and crimes against humanity.
5. Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).
6. Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, vol. 1, *The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), esp. pp. 99–101.
7. E. H. Gombrich, *Myth and Reality in German War-Time Broadcasts* (London: Athlone, 1970), p. 18.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.
10. The earliest study is the wartime work of Derrick Sington and Arthur Weidenfeld, *The Goebbels Experiment: A Study of the Nazi Propaganda Machine* (New Haven, CT: Yale

University Press, 1943). For the postwar work, see Ernest Bramsted, *Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda, 1925–1945* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1965); Gombrich, *Myth and Reality in German War-Time Broadcasts*; Jay W. Baird, *The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda, 1939–1945* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974); Robert Edwin Herzstein, *The War That Hitler Won: The Most Infamous Propaganda Campaign in History* (New York: Putnam, 1978); Jürgen Hagemann, *Die Presselenkung im Dritten Reich* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1970); Erich Goldhagen, “Obsession and Realpolitik in the Final Solution,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 12:1 (1978), pp. 1–16; Caesar C. Aronsfeld, “Perish Judah! Extermination Propaganda,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 12:5 (1978), pp. 17–26; and Aronsfeld, *The Text of the Holocaust: A Study of the Nazis’ Extermination Propaganda, 1919–1945* (Marblehead, MA: Micah, 1985).

11. David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 154–55. See also Ian Kershaw, *The “Hitler Myth”: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).

12. As a young woman, the prominent German public opinion expert Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann worked in the Ministry of Propaganda. Later she published a classic study of public opinion that focused on a “spiral of silence” in which people are reluctant to speak publicly out of fear of ostracism. The study illuminated the formation of public opinion in democratic societies. The basic thesis regarding spirals of speech and spirals of silence applies with even greater force to conditions of totalitarian dictatorship in which the government possesses a monopoly on the press and media. However skeptically individuals in Nazi Germany may have regarded regime propaganda, they did not hear any alternative interpretations of events. See Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann, *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion, Our Social Skin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993 <1984>).

13. Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

14. Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004 <2003>).

15. The Nazi regime’s antisemitic propaganda was, as Erich Goldhagen put it, “a complex and singular blend of rational calculation and unreasoning fanaticism” (“Obsession and Realpolitik in the Final Solution,” p. 1). For a recent discussion of the simultaneity of ideological and utilitarian motives in the Holocaust, see Ulrich Herbert, “Extermination Policy: New Answers and Questions about the History of the ‘Holocaust’ in German Historiography” in *National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies*, ed. Ulrich Herbert (New York: Berghahn, 2000), pp. 1–54. See also David Bankier, “The Uses of Antisemitism in Nazi Wartime Propaganda” in *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 41–55.

16. This not only is an issue of scholarship after the fact but also concerns the massive “intelligence failure” at the time by the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which failed to understand or focus on the mass murder of the Jews. This was all the more striking as the OSS Research and Analysis Division was staffed by some of the most brilliant left-wing German refugee intellectuals of the period, including Franz Neumann, Herbert Marcuse, and Carl

Schorske. Examining the links between left-wing social theory and the intelligence failure of the OSS goes well beyond the scope of this essay but offers intriguing possibilities for future research. Richard Breitman's past and current work on wartime intelligence offers important insights on this issue.

17. The classic texts are George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" in *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell*, vol. 4, *In Front of Your Nose, 1945–1950*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Janovich, 1968), pp. 136, 127–40; and, of course, Orwell's 1984.

18. See "Endlösung der Judenfrage" and "Sonderbehandlung," in Cornelia Schmitz-Bering, *Vokabular des National-Sozialismus* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), pp. 174–76, 584–87. See also Berel Lang, *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

19. Lang, *Act and Idea*, p. 88. Lang points to infamous euphemisms for killing, such as *entsprechend behandelt* ("treated appropriately"), *Aussiedlung* ("evacuation" or "resettlement"), *Befriedigungsaktion* ("special pacification"), or *Ausschaltung* ("removal").

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 92–93.

21. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian, 1958 <1951>), p. 343.

22. For evidence to the contrary, see Aronsfeld, "Perish Judah!" pp. 17–26; and Aronsfeld, *Text of the Holocaust*.

23. On the problem of the failure of Nazism's adversaries to take National Socialist ideology seriously, see Karl Dietrich Bracher's now classic essay, "The Role of Hitler: Perspectives of Interpretation" in *Fascism: A Reader's Guide: Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography*, ed. Walter Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

24. For a valuable collection of transcripts of Nazi antisemitic speeches and essays broadcast on German radio from the early 1930s to statements from the Nuremberg trials, see Walter Roller and Susanne Höschel, eds., *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben unter den Bedingungen der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft*, vol. 1, *Tondokumente und Rundfunksendungen, 1930–1946* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1996). On "working toward the Führer," see Kershaw, *Hitler*. For a valuable study of Hitler's antisemitic statements and decisions to implement antisemitic policies, see Peter Longerich, *The Unwritten Order: Hitler's Role in the Final Solution* (Stroud, UK: Tempus, 2001).

25. The publication in 1996 by German historians working in connection with the German Radio Archiv (Deutsche Rundfunkarchiv in Frankfurt am Main) of the transcripts of about 160 antisemitic speeches by Nazi leaders broadcast on national German radio offers telling evidence of this verbal bluntness. See "13.9.1937, Adolf Hitler, Ansprache auf dem Reichsparteitag der NSDAP in Nürnberg" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, p. 98.

26. "6.9.1938, Adolf Hitler, Ansprache auf dem Reichsparteitag der NSDAP in Nürnberg" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, p. 113.

27. Max Domarus, ed., *Reden und Proklamationen, 1932–1945*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Löwit, 1973), p. 1058.

28. "30.1.1941, Adolf Hitler, Kundgebung im Berliner Sportpalast zum 8. Jahrestag der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, pp. 165–66.



29. "30.9.1942, Adolf Hitler, Ansprache auf einer Kundgebung im Berliner Sportpalast zur Eröffnung des Kriegswinterwerks" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, pp. 216–17.
30. "8.11.1942, Adolf Hitler, Ansprache im Münchener Löwenbräukeller anlässlich einer Gedenkfeier zum Marsch auf die Feldhermhalle 1923" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, p. 219.
31. "30.1.1944, Adolf Hitler, Rundfunkansprache zum Jahrestag der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, p. 239.
32. Joseph Goebbels, "Die Juden sind Schuld!" in *Das Eherne Herz: Reden und Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1941–42* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943), pp. 85–91; Goebbels, *Das Eherne Herz: Reden vor der Deutschen Akademie* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1942); Goebbels, "Nr. 17. 18.2.43—Berlin, Sportpalast—Kundgebung des Gaues Berlin der NSDAP" in *Reden, 1939–1945*, vol. 2 (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1972), pp. 172–208; Goebbels, "Der Krieg und die Juden" in *Der Steile Aufstieg: Reden und Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1942/43* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Franz Eher, 1944), pp. 263–70.
33. "4.10.1942, Hermann Göring, Ansprache auf einer Feier zum Erntedankfest im Berliner Sportpalast" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, p. 217.
34. "Ende 1939, Robert Ley, Ansprache vor deutschen Arbeitern in Lodz" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, p. 158.
35. "3.9.1941, Robert Ley, Ansprache in Troisdorf anlässlich der erstmaligen Verleihung von Kriegsverdienstkreuzen an Frauen" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, p. 189; "6.2.1942, Robert Ley, Schulungsappell der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Unterführer des Hauses Siemens im Berliner Sportpalast" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, pp. 206–7.
36. "10.5.1942, Robert Ley, Ansprache auf einer gemeinsamen Kundgebung der NSDAP und der NSB in Heerlen" in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben*, p. 210: "*Mein Kameraden, glauben Sie mir, ich male Ihnen das nicht zu schwarz, und es ist mir auch bitter, bitter ernst. Der Jude ist die große Gefahr der Menschheit. Und wenn uns nicht gelingt, ihn auszurotten, dann haben wir den Krieg verloren. Es genügt nicht, ihn irgendwohin zu bringen, es ist genauso, als wenn man die Läuse irgendwo in einen Käfig hineinsperren wollte. (Gelächter). Sie finden auch einen Ausweg und kommen wieder unten hervor, auf einmal da jucken sie einen wieder (Gelächter) und sind wieder da. Man muß sie vernichten, man muß sie ausrotten, sie haben die Menschheit. . . . (langanhaltender Beifall).*"
37. Newsreels, which played a key roll in the unfolding Nazi narrative of the war, are beyond the scope of this essay. The famous Nazi anti-Semitic films, notably *Jud Süß* and *Der Ewige Jude*, were more important in deepening hatred of the Jews as a broad ideological and emotional framework than in contributing to a narrative of ongoing events.
38. For example see "Der grosse Entschluss des Führers: Wie jüdische-bolschewistische Weltverschwörung vereitelt wurde: Invasion—der Weg zum Ziel Moskaus," *Völkischer Beobachter* (Münchener Ausgabe), June 22, 1944, p. 1.
39. On the daily press conferences see below but also Ralf Reuth, *Goebbels: Eine Biographie* (Munich: Piper, 1995); and Ernest K. Bramsted, *Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda 1925–1945* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1965).

40. For the *Presseanweisungen* of 1939–1945, see the “Sammlung Oberheitmann” ZSg 109 (*Zeitgeschichtliche Sammlung*), Bundesarchiv Koblenz. A detailed examination of the directives will be part of the work in progress from which this article comes.
41. On Dietrich see material presented by the prosecution in “The Ministries Case,” *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals*, vol. XII, Nuremberg, October 1946–April 1949 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 198–99. For the *Presseanweisungen* of 1939–1945, see the “Sammlung Oberheitmann” ZSg 109 (*Zeitgeschichtliche Sammlung*), Bundesarchiv Koblenz.
42. Otto Dietrich, *Parole des Tages* (August 13, 1943), cited in Helmut Sünderman, *Tagesparolen: Deutsche Presseanweisungen 1939–1945: Hitlers Propaganda und Kriegführung* (Leoni Am Starnberger See: Druffel-Verlag, 1973), pp. 255–56.
43. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Random House, 1965).
44. The immunity of conspiracy theories to refutation by discordant realities is a familiar theme. See the classic study by Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965). On paranoia, the Jacobins, and the French Revolution see the valuable discussion in Francois Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
45. Joseph Goebbels, “Rede des Reichsministers Dr. Goebbels auf dem Nürnberger Parteitag am 13. September 1935 gegen den Bolschewismus” in *Dokumente der Deutschen Politik: Deutschlands Weg zur Freiheit 1935*, vol. 3 (4 vol.), ed. Axel Friedrichs (Berlin: Junker and Dunnhaupt, 1939), pp. 3–20; see also Joseph Goebbels, *Kommunismus ohne Maske* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935).
46. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
51. Goebbels, “Rede des Reichsministers Dr. Goebbels auf dem Nürnberger Parteitag am 13. September 1935 gegen den Bolschewismus,” p. 19.
52. Goebbels, “Rede des Reichsministers Dr. Goebbels auf dem Parteikongress in Nurnberg über die Weltgefahr des Bolschewismus, vom 10. September 1936” in *Dokumente der Deutschen Politik: Band 4 Deutschlands Aufstieg zur Grossmacht*, ed. Axel Friedrichs (Berlin: Junker and Dunnhaupt, 1937), pp. 53–77.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
56. See for example, George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964); Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (New York: Anchor Doubleday,

1965); and Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

57. See Angelika Heider, "Das Reich" in *Enzyklopädie des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Wolfgang Benz, Herman Graml, and Herman Weiß (Stuttgart: DTV, 1997), p. 663; and Carin Kessemeier, *Der Leitartikler Goebbels in den NS-Organen 'Der Angriff' und 'Das Reich'* (Munster [Westf.]: Verlag C.J. Fahle, 1967), pp.136–37. On the founding of *Das Reich* also see Ralf Georg Reuth, *Goebbels: Eine Biographie* (München: Piper Verlag, 1995), pp. 447–49. Also see Baird, *The Mythical World of Nazi Propaganda*, p. 25.

58. Kessemeier, *Der Leitartikler Goebbels*, pp. 141–42.

59. See Joseph Goebbels, "Mimikry, 20. Juli 1941" in *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel: Reden und Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1939/40/41* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Franz Ever, 1941), pp. 526–31; idem, "Die Juden sind Schuld!," pp. 85–91; "Der Krieg und die Juden," pp. 263–70; idem, *Der Steile Aufstieg: Reden und Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1942/43* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Franz Eher, 1944). For a full listing of titles of Goebbels's editorials in *Das Reich* see Kessemeier, *Der Leitartikler Goebbels*. . . . , pp. 319–37.

60. Goebbels, *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel*.

61. On Roosevelt's perceptions of Nazi Germany's threat to the United States, see Robert Dallek, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt and American Foreign Relations, 1932–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Saul Friedländer, *Prelude to Downfall: Hitler and the United States: 1939–1941* (New York: Knopf, 1967); Warren F. Kimball, *Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill and The Second World War* (New York: William and Morrow, 1997); and Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence I: Alliance Emerging* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). For a comprehensive study of the view of the United States in Nazi Germany, see Phillip Grassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich: Ideologie, Propaganda und Volksmeinung, 1933–1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997). For Hitler's geopolitical views of the United States see Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler and World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

62. Goebbels, "Was will eigentlich Amerika?" in *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel*, p. 24.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

66. On the concerns of American government officials that World War II would be interpreted within the United States as a war to save the Jews, and thus undermine public support for the war effort, see Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1999); and Friedländer, *Prelude to Downfall*.

67. On the extent of antisemitism in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, see Charles Herbert Stember, et al., *Jews in the Mind of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), pp. 114–115.

68. This mixture of antisemitism and anti-Americanism is evident in the flood of pamphlets and books published by the Nazis. See Hans Diebow, *Die Juden in den USA* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1941); Theodor Siebert, *Das amerikanische Rätsel: Die Kriegspolitik der*

*USA in der Ära Roosevelt* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1941); Johan von Leers, *Kräfte hinter Roosevelt* (Berlin: Theodor Fritsch Verlag, 1941); Hans Schadewalt, *Was will Roosevelt?* (Dusseldorf: Völkischer Verlag, 1941); P. Osthold and R. Wagenführ, *Roosevelt zwischen Spekulation und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin: Verlag E.S. Mittler & Son, 1943). For analysis of these and other texts see Grassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich*; and Diner, *Feindbild Amerika: über die Beständigkeit eines Ressentiments*.

69. On the controversy about what the United States and Britain did and did not do to save the Jews of Europe see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews* (New York: New Press, 1984); Dallek, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*; Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939–1945*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1999).

70. On “working toward the Führer” see Kershaw, *Hitler*.

71. Goebbels, “*Wer will den Krieg*, 1. April 1939,” in *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel*, pp. 90–96.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 93–94.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

74. See Kershaw, *Hitler*, and Weinberg, *World at Arms*.

75. Goebbels, “Im Gelächter der Welt, 16. February 1941” in *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel*, pp. 394–95. The Propaganda Ministry published several pamphlets and books developing the theme of the elective affinity between English Puritans and the Jews. See, for example, Wolf Myer-Christian, *Die englisch-jüdische Allianz: Werden und Wirken der kapitalistischen Weltherrschaft*, 3rd ed. (Berlin Leipzig: Nibelungen-Verlag, 1942).

76. Goebbels, “*Britannia Rules the Waves*, 30. March 1941” in *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel*, pp. 441–45 (quote, p. 444). The German reads as follows: “*Ihm trauten wir schon zu, daß er Deutschland ausrotten, unser Volk vernichten und unser Reich in Schutt und Asche legen würde, wenn er das könnte.*”

77. Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume Three*, pp. 371–73.

78. Goebbels, “*Die alte Front*, 26. Juni 1941” in *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel*, pp. 508–13.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 508.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 511.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 512.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 512–13.

83. The gap between Nazi ideology and conventional power politics was a key theme of Andreas Hillgruber’s *Hitlers Strategie: Politik und Kriegführung, 1940–1941* (Munich: Vernard and Graefe, 1965).

84. Goebbels, “*Mimikry*,” pp. 526–31.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 526.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 527.

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 527–28.

88. Ibid., p. 528.
89. Ibid., p. 531.
90. See the diary entries for August 19 and September 24, 1941 in Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels, Teil II, Diktate 1941–1945, Band I, Juli–September 1941* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1996), pp. 268, 480–81. See Richard Breitman, *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), p. 68.
91. Goebbels, “Die Juden sind Schuld!,” pp. 85–91.
92. Breitman argues in *Architect of Genocide* that the crucial decisions had been taken by spring 1941, while Browning argues in *The Path to Genocide* that a two-stage set of decisions leading to a continent-wide genocide was completed by early fall 1941. See also Browning (with Matthäus), *The Origins of the Final Solution*.
93. Goebbels, “Die Juden sind Schuld!”
94. Ibid., p. 88.
95. Ibid., p. 91. The German of the last phrase is: “*Mit ihnen endgültig fertig zu werden, ist Sache der Regierung.*”
96. On Nazi party membership, see Michael Kater, “Figure 1. Growth of Nazi Party Membership, 1919–1945” in *The Nazi Party: A Social Profile of Members and Leaders, 1919–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 263.
97. Goebbels, *Das Eherne Herz: Reden vor der Deutschen Akademie*. On Goebbels’s pleasure with the reception of the speech, see the diary entries for December 2 and 3, 1941 in Fröhlich, *Oktober–Dezember 1941*, pp. 416, 420.
98. Ibid., p. 23. The German reads as follows: “*erste Aufgabe darin bestanden hätte, die nationale Intelligenz und die geistige Führung der Nation auszurotten. . . .*”
99. Ibid., p. 25.
100. Ibid., pp. 34–35.
101. Ibid., p. 37. German: “*Die Judenfrage endgültig zu lösen, wird eine der ersten und wichtigsten Aufgaben der kommenden Zeit sein.*”
102. Ibid., p. 41. German: “*in dem festen Willen und Entschluß daß Deutschland, gelingt es noch einmal uns niederzuwerfen, vernichtet, ausgerottet und ausgelöscht werden muß.*”
103. See the diary entry for December 2, 1941 in Fröhlich, *Oktober–Dezember 1941*, p. 417.
104. Kershaw, *Hitler 1936–1945: Nemesis* (New York: Norton, 2000), p. 448–49.
105. See the diary entry for December 13, 1941 in Fröhlich, *Oktober–Dezember 1941*, pp. 498–99. On this see Christian Gerlach, “Die Wannsee Konferenz, das Schicksal der Deutschen Juden und Hitlers Politische Grundsatzentscheidung, Alle Juden Europas zu Ermordern,” *Werkstatt Geschichte* 18 (1997), pp. 7–44; and “The Wannsee Conference, the Fate of German Jews and Hitler’s Decision in Principle to Exterminate All European Jews,” *Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998), pp. 759–812.

106. Joseph Goebbels, *Reden, 1939–1945, Band 2* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1972); idem, “Nr. 17. 18.2.43—Berlin, Sportpalast—Kundgebung des Gaues Berlin der NSDAP,” pp. 172–208. Also see Günter Moltmann, “Goebbels Rede zum Totalen Krieg am 18. February 1943,” *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1964.
107. Ibid., p. 181.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., p. 195.
110. Goebbels, “Der Krieg und die Juden,” pp. 263–70.
111. Ibid., pp. 263–64.
112. Ibid., p. 264.
113. Ibid., pp. 269–70.
114. Ibid., p. 270.
115. Goebbels, “Nr. 30, 28.2.45—Rundfunkansprache” in Heiber, *Goebbels Reden, Band 2*, pp. 429–46.
116. Ibid., p. 433.
117. On the death marches see Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler* (New York: Oxford, 2001); and Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (New York: Knopf, 1996).
118. On disillusionment and deradicalization in popular and elite opinion see Martin Broszat, Klaus Dietmar Henke, and Hans Woller, eds., *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Sozialgeschichte des Umbruch in Deutschland* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1988); Jerry Z. Muller, *The Other God that Failed: Hans Freyer and the Deradicalization of German Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Klaus Dietmar Henke, “Die Trennung vom Nationalsozialismus: Selbstzerstörung, politische Säuberung, ‘Entnazifizierung,’ Strafverfolgung” in *Politische Säuberung in Europa*, ed. Hans Woller (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991), pp. 21–83; and Kershaw, *Hitler*, chs. 12–17.
119. Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness, 1942–1945*, trans. Martin Chalmers (New York: Knopf, 2000), p. 335; and Victor Klemperer, *Tagebücher 1944* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1995), p. 85. German: “Sosehr ich mich dagegen gesträubt habe, der Jude ist in jeder Hinsicht Zentralpunkt der LTI, der ganzen Epochen-Betrachtung.”
120. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), p. 353.