

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xii
1. Prologue	3
2. Harry's Home, Harry's Harvard	11
3. The Young Scholar in a New (Old) World	33
4. Germany 1933	83
5. The Dispersal of the Berlin Friends	139
6. Harry and the Communists	177
7. The Knock on the Door: Harry before HUAC	215
8. Harry as Academic	251
<i>Timeline of Events in Germany</i>	269
<i>Notes</i>	279
<i>Bibliography</i>	347
<i>Index</i>	365

4

Germany 1933

Part 1. The New Order Begins

Hitler becomes chancellor

"All through January 1933 Germany fermented," Harry later recalled, "until at the end of the month Hindenburg's cronies had persuaded him to appoint the Bohemian pfc, whose loud voice and startling manners he despised, to the post of Reichskanzler."¹ Anti-Nazis and German patricians may have scorned the Austrian-born Hitler as a mere "Austrian corporal"—equivalent to "private first class" (pfc)—but a "wave of enthusiasm and frenzy swept over Germany" on 30 January when he was named chancellor. It was all "hard to believe," the journalist Bella Fromm

wrote in her diary, "if your mind has a leaning toward sanity."² Many Germans, agreeing with Harry's prediction that responsibility would make Hitler more moderate, found him laughable. A few days later, attending a performance of Part I of Goethe's *Faust*, Harry was pleased to hear "hearty clapping and chuckles" when a character rejoiced "*Dass ich nicht Kaiser oder Kanzler bin*" (that I'm neither Kaiser nor Chancellor).³ The chuckles were short-lived. On the eighth anniversary of his *Machtergreifung* (seizure of power), Hitler recalled the Jews' initial "uproarious" laughter; now, he boasted, they were "laughing on the other side of their face."⁴ "We believed for a long time that Hitler would not last," said a German Jewish refugee: "But how could we know?"⁵ Some people did know, even before the *Machtergreifung*. "To listen to Dr. Freyhan," Harry wrote in 1932, "you'd think the Nazis meant to carry through their pogrom program."⁶

Hitler rose to power through his oratory. Ernst Hanfstaengl, whose antics at Harvard are described in Chapter 6, first heard him in the early 1920s and was enraptured: "He spoke mezzo voice, quietly, soothingly,...words which burned all the more for their softness."⁷ Once in power, he took to the air waves. On the evening of 10 February, "all German broadcasting stations were required to transmit the Nazi demonstration in the Sportpalast in Berlin." Harry listened:

Dr. [Joseph] Goebbels, the editor of the *Angriff*..., did the announcing; it was something like a football announcement—superlatives poured forth in a fluent rattle, we were told that all Germans were being spoken to, including those beyond the boundaries, we heard them sing *Deutschland über Alles*, and the cheers when Hitler "took the word."

Speaking "in a brown chocolaty voice, very emotional, in content perfectly vacuous—but restrained in his inanities," Hitler

sang, he ranted, he used invective crashing thru to gain effects, he'd go up to a peak notch by notch and explode, and then begin all over again. And all during the entire hour he literally said not a thing. Not a single thing. He counted numbers and called it a program. He blamed some vague beast called "Marxismus" for 14 years of misery, degradation, etc., and promised a land of milk and honey.

Harry's host was among the "millions of people who are captivated by such stuff"; such was the mesmerizing power of Hitler's voice that after a while, "one no longer listened to his words so much as to his voice." Ernst Meyer, although "not typical in as much as he is Jewish," was otherwise representative of "the typical shortsighted *Kleinbürger* [petty bourgeois], uneducated, honest, and dimwitted." Herr Meyer wondered "whether Hitler might not be better than he is painted: only a few changes of personnel in the ministries to give his friends jobs, but as for anything worse—no, unlikely. And if he can do anything to help us, why he should have the chance."⁸ In speaking of "us," Herr Meyer meant "us Germans." Before long, Jews were not "Germans."

Harry soon noted indicators of the rising Nazi tide. The right of habeas corpus was effectively eliminated; SPD and KPD leaders were jailed; auxiliary police were mobilized; and

“a regular wave of communophobia is being created—the Reichsbahn [railroad] setting armed men to guard bridges & tunnels, the water works being under guard.” “Pathological mysticism” spread over Germany, making “for a rejuvenated, purified, guaranteed Aryan Germanic culture.”⁹ The Prussian Academy of the Arts fell victim to censorship. Two of its prominent members, the writer Heinrich Mann and the artist Käthe Kollwitz, had signed a placard that was posted on kiosks, urging the KPD and SPD to join in “a united proletarian front.” Bernhard Rust, the Prussian Minister of Cultural Affairs (*Kultusminister*), told the president of the Academy that it would be shut down unless Mann and Kollwitz were expelled. Called before a special meeting of their peers, Harry reported with irony, “both betrayers of Germany voluntarily resigned rather than cause the whole circus to be closed up.”¹⁰

Other cultural institutions and individuals met similar fates. Principled resistance was not part of German culture; nearly everyone caved or fled. In World War I “there were millions [of Germans] with courage enough to fight & die—but how few—how unbelievably few—with the greater courage not to fight & die.” The Free Speech Congress, a mass demonstration attended by 900 people at the Kroll Opera House, included “the anti-anti-Semitic *Altmeister* [old master] of German sociology, Ferdinand Tönnies, who spoke about freedom of teaching [*Lehrfreiheit*].” The Congress was shut down when Rust’s SPD predecessor spoke in an “insulting & maliciously contemptuous [way] of the present *Kultusminister*, the valiant school teacher Rust.”¹¹ Fritz Busch, the director of the Dresden Opera and “a pure bred Aryan, was met by a deputation of S.A. & Nazis asking for his resignation” because he had refused to join the NSDAP; at a rehearsal of Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, a “bedlam of whistles” made it impossible for him to conduct.¹² The prominent (and Jewish) conductor Bruno Walter was “as good as without an occupation” in Germany; from other quarters, however, “invitations poured down” on Walter, without mitigating his sadness that his birth country rejected him.¹³ The renowned Theater am Gendarmenmarkt, which had been without a director for months, “got two Nazis recently.” Nazis professed cultural appreciation: “Many S.A. officers in their best uniforms” attended a performance of *Don Giovanni* at the *Städtische Oper* (City Opera), which the Nazis had just “wrecked” by suspending Carl Ebert, its head, as well as two conductors and other staff.¹⁴

Nazi displays became an everyday matter. One evening at the Meyers’, they heard noise and looked out the window to see “a form of mass lunacy”: hundreds of Nazis parading four abreast, accompanied by a “heavy police guard, armed with carbines.” Police trucks were “flashing their searchlights at the windows of the houses on the streets—looking for anyone interested in peppering the marchers.” At the university, Fräulein Brose evinced “rather reactionary” views. She was no Nazi, she said, but “she wasn’t so opposed to them as before.” She and Harry discussed the “reorganization”—a euphemism for “destruction”—of the Karl-Marx School, a progressive public school that led pupils “towards independence instead of toward the classical Prussian virtue of sheep-like obedience.” Fräulein Brose, who had observed democracy while studying in the United States, thought that it was “a fine thing, but not for the Germans.” In her view, “free discussion & debate” undermined authority; “the kids should be taught some hard Facts—but which ones, I asked.”¹⁵ To Harry, the Karl-Marx School represented the values of his father’s P.S. 64.

The closing of liberal schools, the Nazis on the streets collecting money for the upcoming election, the suppression of newspapers—all this, Harry said, was “making an impression on me,

the impression of some bad dream where all sorts of foolish things happen without your being able to move a finger. Captive in a daze, you watch the impossible and frightful occur before your eyes." Germany was a *Hexenkessel*, a witches' cauldron. He felt he was witnessing "the end of legalism, the end of order and the birth of chaos," something like "the conquest of Rome by the barbarians." Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* needed retitling as "The Decline of Western Culture in Germany." The mood of horror colored everything. Harry admitted a "morbid" fascination with "Pfülf's book on the Jesuits in Germany...a tale of conspiracy, a tale of mysterious organization."¹⁶

In this "madhouse where the inmates are reckoned by the millions and run around loose," language was ever more perverted.¹⁷ Magnus von Levetzow, the newly appointed police president of Berlin, denounced "poison plants of Asiatic origin, these murderous political rogues." A person "initiated in the new tongue" would understand a reference to Jewish politicians. It was bitterly amusing "that in ostensibly combating the oriental deficiencies by which Jews defile pure Teutonic culture, the government should gradually assume more and more the traits of an oriental despotism."¹⁸ When Levetzow, in order to promote "traditional Teutonic moralities," issued an order against prostitution, Harry decided to see if he was obeyed. Surveying Friedrichstrasse, a famous haunt of *Nutten* (prostitutes), he found two *Schupos* and two prostitutes. Evidently the prostitutes "hadn't read the newspaper reports of [Levetzow's] indignation. Or maybe they were Nazi *Nutten*?" Two months later, coming home by way of Kantstrasse, another locale favored by prostitutes, he observed "clouds and swarms" of them. Nazi morality took weird twists. All "Germans" were equal under the law, for example, but there was a coda: "Jews are not Germans, and Communists are subhuman (*Unmenschen*), and these must be rooted out."¹⁹ Actually, it was the Jews who were "subhuman"; as *Unmenschen*—literally, inhuman persons, or brutes—the Communists were not human at all.

The Reichstag fire

On 27 February, there occurred one of the signature events of the early Hitler period: a fire at the Reichstag, the parliament building. The next morning, Harry's neighborhood newspaper vendor "derided the government's official attribution of the fire to Communist arsonists. Only the Nazis benefited from the fire, he remarked." The fire gave an excuse to suppress the KPD and suspend constitutional guarantees of free speech and the press, leaving "the Storm Troopers...free to bully, assail, imprison, and kill at will."²⁰ Was it likely that Marinus van der Lubbe, the simple-minded Dutch man accused of arson, could have brought "immense quantities of inflammables...into the house" without being seen?²¹ Was it plausible that the KPD would create its own doom in Germany? From the Stadtbahn, Harry saw "the burnt-out Reichstag...—smoky, sooty, facade projecting, golden dome smoked & without the glass inlays."²² The fire inspired mordant jokes. In one, Hitler and Moses meet in Heaven, and Hitler asks: "But you can tell me in confidence, Herr Moses. Is it not true that you set the bush on fire yourself?"²³

In the aftermath of the fire, the authorities pasted orange-and-white paper over SPD and KPD posters on street kiosks and shuttered all the Communist pubs. The police searched Karl

Liebknecht Haus, the KPD headquarters, and “turned up hundreds of pounds of ostensibly traitorous & bloody literature.... The whole business smells a little foul, more than a little.” Over Berlin there settled a “dull soggy absence of reaction to the most violent changes that a violent government can execute.” What was an American to make of all this? Harry thought that “the discrimination here today against Jews doesn’t begin to compare with what the Land of the Free exercises towards Negroes.”²⁴ A similar point was made by Sherwood Eddy, an American pacifist evangelist. Speaking in Berlin in 1933, Eddy charged Germany with “acting against the principles of justice.... Don’t say it’s your affair. It concerns the whole world when we in the United States conduct a lynching.... The world is also concerned when you commit similar injustice.”²⁵ “[T]orrents of applause” flowed from the foreigners in Eddy’s audience while the “Nazis, pale with rage, sat immobile, in cold silence.” The German habit of fighting political battles with flags continued, but now there was “only a thicket of *Hakenkreuz* [swastika] banners and a waving mass of imperial black-white-red flags of the anti-republicans.” Anyone who was “so ill advised as to show” the flag of the Weimar Republic was visited by “troops of Nazis,” who trampled the flags and set them on fire, “while howling mobs yelled ‘*Heil Hitler!*’”²⁶ After the election, a “Berlin flag & banner manufacturer...work[ed] overtime to supply the huge demand” for Nazi flags.²⁷

Prominent intellectuals were already “buying one-way tickets out of Berlin,” among them Alfred Kerr, the drama critic of the *Tageblatt*, and its editor, Theodor Wolff; Albert Einstein; and the writers Erich Maria Remarque, Emil Ludwig, Heinrich Mann, and Thomas Mann.²⁸ Grete Meyer wished “she were in Brussels again—and doubtless her wishes are shared by many.” At the College of Music, the “left-wing and Jewish teachers” were already “planning to set up a private Conservatory when they finally get bounced”; “reorganization” was expected at the university.²⁹ All this took place *before* the Reichstag election on 5 March 1933.

Consolidating Nazi control

“This is the morning after the night before,” Harry wrote his parents on 6 March. The Nazis won 43.9% of the vote; an alliance with the DNVP, “the party of big business and Junkers,” provided an additional eight percent and gave a decisive majority that was solidified, ironically on Bastille Day, 14 July: according to the new mathematics, 43.9%+8% = “100% ‘*Legal zur Macht*’”—legally in power.³⁰ In the immediate aftermath of the election, Minister of Cultural Affairs Rust proclaimed a holiday, “so that the children could celebrate the Nazi victory”; they marched and sang in the city center “dressed in brown shirts, carrying *Hakenkreuz* flags, and wearing *Hakenkreuz* arm bands.”³¹ Nazi flags sprouted on official buildings and bedecked the famous equestrian “*Quadriga*” atop the Brandenburg Gate.

The first “legal” step to consolidate Nazi control took place on 23 March, when the Reichstag passed the Enabling Act suspending the Weimar Constitution and thus abolishing all freedoms of press and person.³² After twenty-six of the 120 SPD deputies were arrested, the remaining ninety-four voted against the Enabling Act. In their vote, Harry wrote later, the SPD deputies

proved to the world that Germany was not a monolithic block of barbarians; they took the first step—in public and at risk of their lives—to defy the Evil that was enveloping Germany, a first step toward the heroic anti-Nazi movement...[of Germans who felt a] moral allegiance to—let's call it—Germany and decency.³³

There was other, sometimes surprising, resistance. A Nazi patient warned his Jewish doctor “to flee before his colleagues came to seize her and throw her into a concentration camp.”³⁴ Several camps were established early in the Nazi period to hold political prisoners: Dachau (near Munich), Oranienburg (including Sachsenhausen, both near Berlin), and Osthofen (in the Rhineland) were founded in March 1933. Before long, they also held Jews.

The SPD deputies and likeminded Germans constituted the “nation of *Dichter und Denker*” (poets and thinkers) revered by Harry and his friends, while the Nazis had “relinquished the *Denken* and content[ed] itself with *Dichtung*.” Nazi *Dichtung* was mere hypnotic rants, “poetry” shorn of meaning. With official pronouncements unreliable, Harry now valued hearsay, “the things I happen to hear at the table or in talking with people.” There was, for example, the treasurer of a Jewish hospital,

a harmless, non-political, not excessively Jewish-looking man, [who] was stopped on the street and his briefcase gone through, doubtless with the hope of finding documents proving that the hospital is the scene of “ritual murders,” a...refuge for firebugs, a printing plant for illegal propaganda, and a branch of the Internationale. The poor man had...neglected to bring such documents with him, and was allowed to continue on his way.³⁵

Repression was omnipresent. SPD supporters were routinely attacked. A doctor who “made the mistake of going last year to operate (or consult) on Stalin...is said to have been beaten up a day ago and may have already lost his job.”³⁶ To the delight of the small businessmen who were a major part of the Nazi base, armed S.A. and S.S. men shut down department and chain stores; department stores “ruined the small businessman,” it was claimed, and all of them were supposedly owned by Jews.³⁷ The Tietz department stores, which were indeed Jewish-owned, were immediately “Aryanized.” Other anti-Semitic measures quickly occurred. An invasion of the courts in Breslau by S.A. and S.S. men was puzzling until it became clear that “only Jewish lawyers & judges were threatened.”³⁸ When the courts reopened, all but seventeen of the 364 Jewish lawyers who had practiced there were forbidden entry. In Berlin, where 73.5% of the legal profession was Jewish, nearly all were shut out by a decree limiting Jewish lawyers to the percentage of the total population, which was 3.87%.³⁹

Finding out what was happening

Within weeks of the Reichstag election, newspaper editors were required to present themselves twice daily at the Propaganda Office to learn “Nazi newspaper technique.”⁴⁰ Newspapers that printed something offensive were suspended, so they “all print agency reports and mostly nothing else.” Bad news was forbidden: an attack on the apartment of the Berlin correspondent

of *Izvestia* went unreported in the German press. Two of the major liberal newspaper publishers, the Ullstein and the Mosse families, were Jewish, spelling doom for their papers. Even before the Reichstag election, one of the Mosse papers, the *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, was suspended “for an indefinite period—with no reason assigned.” Harry heard an “incredible rumor that the government is going to buy the *Berliner Tageblatt*,” another Mosse paper; he supposed that the rumor showed “the extent to which fantasy is nurtured in the dark.” But the line between “fantasy” and reality blurred more and more. When the *Tageblatt* failed to note the fiftieth anniversary of Marx’s death, Harry thought it had sold its soul.⁴¹ It had not. The historian George Mosse, then a teenager, later constructed an account of the collapse of his family’s newspaper.⁴² It was on 21 March, the day that Harry condemned the *Tageblatt* as “practically worthless,” George Mosse learned, that Wilhelm Ohst, a Nazi commissar, brandished a revolver at Hans Lachmann-Mosse, George’s father, forcing him to agree to expropriation. The firm was taken over by a fake “foundation that supposedly aided war veterans.” Within two years, circulation of the emasculated *Tageblatt* had fallen by ninety percent.⁴³ Other papers went under fast. On vacation in Kassel, Harry “saw the broken windows of the now deserted Sozialdemocratic newspaper,” which was as ruined “as if it had been struck by lightning, as it has.” By May the shelves of the *Staatsbibliothek* newspaper reading room were “pretty empty in some sections—domestic periodicals shut down, foreign ones banned.”⁴⁴ The *Vossische Zeitung* lasted until April 1934. Countering the loss of credibility of other papers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* retained its allegiance to truth for a time.

Because editors of Nazi papers had less to fear, they sometimes printed news that the “liberal” press did not dare mention. The *Völkischer Beobachter* (National Observer) noted the “probably frequent” house searches that the foreign press considered too minor to report, or dared not report. The *Beobachter* produced “a flood of vituperation against Jews in general and Einstein, [Lion] Feuchtwanger, & others, in particular—but nothing about the breaking into Feuchtwanger’s home in Grunewald, the theft of the manuscript of his next book, and destruction of other papers.”⁴⁵ Anyone wanting full information had to consult foreign papers, even before the *Machtergreifung*.⁴⁶ On 6 March, the day after the election, Harry bought Dutch, Italian, French, and English papers to cobble together an understanding of the results. Yet foreign papers also fell victim to the Nazis; leading foreign journalists were “followed religiously, and their apartments watched and reported on.”⁴⁷ “There is always the possibility of expelling troublesome foreigners,” the *Angriff* observed. By early August, German-language newspapers from Czechoslovakia and Austria were largely banned, but “every newsstand [carried] Swiss papers—the *Basler Nachrichten* or the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*”; the circulation of the latter in Berlin was several times that in Zurich itself.⁴⁸

Harry rarely read American papers while he was abroad, although he went occasionally to the *New York Times* reading room, until it closed soon after the Reichstag election. He predicted correctly that when the Nazis discovered that Adolph Ochs, the publisher, was Jewish, they would cite the *Times* as an example of “Jewish world finance.”⁴⁹ Among American reporters, Harry particularly admired Edgar Ansel Mowrer of the *Chicago Daily News*. Mowrer’s book *Germany Sets the Clock Back* was banned in Germany soon after its publication in 1933, but Harry already had his copy. Ambassador William E. Dodd advised Mowrer to leave Germany by 1 September for his own safety; he was, in effect, expelled.⁵⁰ Hoping to meet him, Harry visited

Mowrer's office. He was out, but his deputy, an "Urberliner [a Berliner through and through] and a hardboiled leftist," was glad to chat. The deputy expected, "as I do, that incompetency will overthrow the present government" and anticipated that in the meantime the paper would have "to use couriers to get the news out of the country"; he discussed attacks on Americans, a topic Harry omitted when describing his visit in a letter.⁵¹

Harry didn't wish to disturb his parents, but they were already well informed. Attacks on foreigners were not reported in the German papers, but they were in the American press. On 7 March, Louis and Sophie Marks cabled Harry, begging him to be careful. After Nazi officers savagely beat the American writer Edward Dahlberg, Harry attempted to relieve his parents' anxiety with wit: now Dahlberg could "write articles for *Scribner's* from his own experience."⁵² Another lodger in the Meyers' home, a student from Los Angeles, received a cable from her parents imploring her to return immediately and to "make every effort to save her life. We all had a good laugh," Harry reported, "and I helped her compose a suitable reply, observing that it was safer here than in Los Angeles of the earthquakes." He himself was "in as much danger as in such perilous metropoli as NY or Boston." In fact, there *was* menace in the air. Frau Meyer "seriously suggested that I pack up & send off some of my books lest they be confiscated."⁵³ Harry's innate recoil from danger protected him during the remaining six months of his stay.

Writing to his parents, he began to couch his views in euphemisms—"very reticent on affairs here"—and in April started numbering his letters so that any interruption in the series would indicate capture by a censor. When one of his letters arrived in New York with a sticker reading "opened for customs inspection," Harry suspected that the censor had removed a Nazi questionnaire that he had enclosed, which was devised to enable undesirable students to be expelled.⁵⁴ The questionnaire had arrived, however. Letters *were* opened. Sometimes people asked someone who was traveling abroad to carry a letter, as when Harry's teacher Hajo Holborn asked Paul Gottschalk to take a letter to Paris.⁵⁵ Ambassador Dodd's letters, bearing "the stamp and seals of the United States," were opened; he omitted potentially dangerous names from his private diary and knew that his house was bugged.⁵⁶

In these circumstances, anecdotes and rumors flourished. One day an electrician working at the Meyers' apartment told Harry that a man on Uhlandstrasse "was arrested because someone overheard him say he didn't believe the official version of the Reichstag fire. The greatest virtue today is *Mund halten*"—keeping your mouth shut. Official statements required decoding. If the government denied "that the political prisoners, now to be numbered by the thousand, are cruelly treated, mishandled, or abused," that meant "that their lot is a continuous 3rd degree." Harry's visit to the dentist concluded with a half-hour discussion of politics. One of Dr. Stock's patients, a Jewish conductor of an opera company patronized by the Prince of Reuss, "lost his job, despite the Prince of R.'s powerful intervention."⁵⁷

A single, long, intense sentence summed up the seriousness of the situation. Referring to a famous Jewish-owned department store in New York, he asked his parents to

imagine a crowd of uniformed men standing in front of Macy's, threatening customers who want to enter, forging letters purporting to prove that Macy was supporting the Communist party, closing up the Jewish stores on Broadway, closing Woolworth's, flying their own flags from the City Hall, the Municipal Building, the court houses, and

the customs houses, forcing peaceful citizens by threats of violence not to show the American flag, controlling the police so that on inquiring the way from a cop you would be directed to “go back to Jerusalem,” where the cops would refuse to [allow] you to enter Macy’s, where half the newspapers in New York were forbidden to appear, and theaters showing plays not glorifying warfare would be simply closed, where you would find parades of uniformed men under party insignia—with police participating under the same insignia; with Messrs. Marks and Levy dropped from the Board of Examiners, with the director of the Stock Exchange invited by uniformed forces to resign....⁵⁸

Imagine all this, he said, “and you will have some mild idea of how a nation can be led under flying flags and with striking slogans direct into barbarism.” Mistrust dug gulfs between people afraid to share their fears:

Whisper it. Look over your shoulder to see if anyone heard you. Are you sure the servant in your friend’s home isn’t a member of the “elevating forces”? Wonder, when you hear auto cut-out explosions at night, if those were shots?

Harry documented the developing disaster through film as well as diary and letters. He photographed a fence on which adherents of the now-suppressed KPD “had painted *Kämpfet gegen das Rote Fahne Verbot*”—Fight against Suppression of the *Red Flag*.⁵⁹ The graffito had been “repainted, rerepainted, and so on,” and soon would be definitively obliterated despite clandestine efforts by the KPD to repaint it yet again. Most of Harry’s documentary effort was expended on current news. He took special note of the victory (at Yankee Stadium in New York) of the American boxer Max Baer over the German heavyweight champion, Max Schmeling. Baer’s triumph posed a challenge to Nazi propaganda because he had a German Jewish grandparent. The *Völkischer Beobachter*, celebrating Baer as a German American, did not print a photograph of his boxing trunks, which featured a Star of David. Harry imagined a headline in keeping with the *Beobachter* mind set: “*nicht arysche Abstammung* [not of “Aryan” descent]: Jewboy Assaults German Patriot.”⁶⁰

Harry was particularly alert to the Nazi assault on Jewish cultural figures. A few escaped immediate attack. Two Jews performed in Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* at the Staatsoper: “Emanuel List, the grand bass,” who emigrated to the United States later that year; and the popular conductor Leo Blech, who the *Beobachter* said was “constitutionally unable to understand or appreciate Wagner’s nordic music.” Because Blech was favored by Göring, who took it upon himself to “decide who is a Jew,” he continued (in Harry’s words) “misinterpreting the government’s favorite composer” until 1938, when he left Germany. Such Nazi inconsistencies were not unusual. Even though the renowned Polish Jewish violinist Bronislaw Huberman “was forbidden to give a recital in Berlin,” Wilhelm Furtwängler, the Nazi-leaning Berlin Philharmonic conductor, tried to inveigle him into cooperating. Huberman reportedly “wired his refusal back: ‘I refuse to do anything which might suggest that everything was in order in Germany today.’” Most foreign musicians, “Aryan” and Jewish alike, refused to perform in Germany. One exception was Richard Strauss, who though an Austrian was very active in

Germany—indeed, “the Nationalist general-utility man,” in Harry’s phrase.⁶¹ When the “Aryan” violinist Adolf Busch, whose wife was Jewish, was summoned to play, he replied: “My name isn’t Strauss.” Thomas Mann recorded in his diary that Busch had “left Germany though he is considered to be *the* German violinist. Very gratifying.”⁶² At the same time, *The Threepenny Opera*, with music by the Jewish Communist Kurt Weill, was still being performed. The “little house was packed,” Harry reported, finding “many brilliant touches, with the incomparable Lotte Lenya as Jennie. But above all the music!” The film industry was Aryanized faster than musical culture. Harry attended a new film, *Storm Trooper Brand, a Picture of Life in Our Times* (*S.A. Mann Brand*), which contrasted evil Communists and noble Nazis.⁶³ In the film, the Nazi salute and shout of “*Sieg heil!*” (“Hail to victory!”) were “noble and dignified”; the corresponding Communist gesture and shout of *Sieg Moscou!* (“Victory to Moscow!”) were “laughably absurd.” The “German greeting,” as the sociologist Tilman Allert remarks, was “not only a product of those dark and sinister times but...a contributor to them.”⁶⁴

The “gentlemen” take charge

Harry heaped scorn on the “*feine Herren*,” or “fine gentlemen,” catalogued their deeds, and became preoccupied by the effects of the *Machtergreifung*.⁶⁵ Three crucial laws that were passed on 7 April bore down on several of his friends: the Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service; the Law Regarding Admission to the Legal Profession; and the Law Regarding New Election of Assessors, Jurors, and Judges.⁶⁶ The first of these disqualified from public employment—which included all universities—anyone with a Jewish parent or grandparent; it was extended on 30 June to cover anyone married to a Jew. The blow to the universities was immediate: the German tradition of *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit* (freedom to teach, freedom to learn) “was killed on 7 April 1933.”⁶⁷

Other laws soon followed. A decree issued on 22 April excluded Jewish physicians from the public health insurance plans (*Krankenkassen*). Three days later, the government passed a Law Regarding the Overcrowding of German Public Schools and Schools of Higher Education. Requiring all students to manifest “moral character” and “political reliability,” this law was aimed at Jews, Communists, Socialists, and pacifists; it was also intended to limit enrollment of women.⁶⁸ A law passed on 14 July was the first of many regulations meant to impoverish German Jewry; it was entitled “Law requiring the confiscation of national wealth in the hands of state enemies.” To all these impositions there was no organized opposition. “Each person is searching for a hole to crawl into, a spot all to himself,” said the artist Oskar Schlemmer.⁶⁹

The anti-Semitic regulations supposedly exempted civil servants who had been employed before 1 August 1914, as well as *Frontsoldaten*—men who had fought in World War I “at the front for Germany or her allies”—and those “who lost their fathers or sons in the war.”⁷⁰ These exemptions were meaningless. Victor Klemperer, a *Frontsoldat*, lost his job in 1935 allegedly because of declining enrollment, but he knew the real reason. When Bella Fromm took a book containing the names of 12,000 Jewish soldiers who had fallen in World War I to a Nazi functionary—evidence, one would think, of Jewish *Frontsoldaten* who had given their lives for their country—he explained that these Jews “just died naturally.”⁷¹ Jewish lawyers were unemployable, because “no Gentile (or even Jew) would hire a Jewish lawyer to represent him

before a Nazi judge or jury.”⁷² Jewish professionals either lost their positions entirely or found themselves with greatly diminished income. Nazi policy-makers simultaneously advocated emigration as the most convenient means of making Germany *judenrein* (cleansed of Jews) and created currency controls that made emigration more difficult.⁷³

As the situation worsened, news reports reaching America could hardly convey “the devastating effects of the cold pogrom,” a term describing the “legal” restrictions placed on Jews.⁷⁴ By “devastating,” Harry added, “I don’t mean injurious, I mean ruinous in the deepest sense.” He attempted to fill in the gaps in reportage. Noting that “German Mathematics” (a Nazi term) produced questionable economic statistics, he proved by his own “Jewish mathematics” that “the figures have been doctored.”⁷⁵ A diligent censor who could figure out the verbal cloak lightly thrown over Harry’s views might have still been stumped by mysterious references to a friend of Julia Gottschalk. The friend was to bring certain information to Alfred Hirschbach in New York: “She will present a note of identification from me, intentionally illegible (as if I needed to purpose that!) and will explain all. P.G. says it’s OK.”⁷⁶

Casting caution to the winds, Harry wrote to his parents about anti-Semitism in schools and universities. In the schools, “Gentile kids refuse to sit next to Jewish ones.” University students walk “ostentatiously...out of the lectures of a Jewish professor who legally is [still] permitted to teach.” At the University of Frankfurt, IDs were reportedly taken away from non-“Aryan” students, Germans and foreigners alike. Nazi prejudices might “find some faint reflection in the American mirror”—doubtless there were American “Jewish school children...whose life is made miserable by their ‘Aryan’ classmates”—but no one there would bluntly demand his parentage, as happened when Harry registered for his final semester and had to fill out a form that treated foreigners like Germans. In response to a question about religious affiliation, he wrote: “Non-Aryan” and added: “American.” Privately he exclaimed: “Praise Allah I’m a free man!”⁷⁷ In a prelude to the yellow star, the IDs of the remaining Jewish students bore a yellow stripe.⁷⁸

In Germany, “a kind of Never-Never land where the clock has stopped ticking,” the language of Goethe went further down the path to deformity paved by Germans after the Versailles Treaty concluding World War I forbade their country to rearm. “Versailles treaty” meant two “entirely divergent things” in French and in German: in French, it meant “a system of hard-won guarantees for the quiet of Europe”; in German, it meant “a shameful extortion reducing Germany to a subject power.” On the anniversary of its signing, the Nazis ordered flags on all government buildings to be flown at half mast—Harry photographed the flag at the university, its swastika waving in the breeze—while “S.A. and S.S. men [paraded] with mourning bands over their usual swastika arm bands.” Other meanings changed, too: “The...word freedom...has grown a suffix: ‘Freedom-but.’ I.e.: there must be freedom of the press, but naturally the SPD press must be completely rooted out.”⁷⁹

The “present gentlemen”—a sarcastic euphemism for the Nazi leadership—believed that “the less the people know, the better.” Their anti-intellectual campaign promoted a “graphologist-philosopher” named Ludwig Klages, author of a multi-volume treatise entitled “The Mind as Negation of the Soul.” Harry accompanied Max Freyhan to the university to hear Klages lecture on the ego for an hour and forty minutes. He observed Klages’s “large thin-lipped mobile mouth, gimlet eyes, and...beautiful fluency and cadence of speech,” and condemned his speech

as a farrago of mystical balderdash. Clichés “unreeled from his mouth like the tracks from an observation platform of a fast train. He...was followed with rapt attention by all the 400 [in the audience]—with one exception,” Harry, who “found the last 40 minutes increasingly tedious.” Besides Klages, the ranks of approved crackpots included astrologers, “miracle healers, one of whom achieved his cures by the application of a dollop of cottage cheese to the sufferer’s forehead, and...all sorts of mediums & quacks.”⁸⁰

Harry sought explanations of the current scene. Expressing a common interpretation, Dietrich Gerhard thought “that the sense of inferiority induced by the one-sided peace [following World War I]...was the chief cause” of the Nazi “revolution.” Would there be a counter-revolution? Paul Gottschalk pooh-pooed the belief of the now-illegal KPD “that the present crew will in time slide off the scene and then their [the KPD’s] day will come.” He recalled the mood of the troops in World War I: “We want to eat—we don’t want a hero’s death.” Harry agreed: “[T]he masses...will prefer a full belly and no tanks, military airplanes, or battleships, to armaments and parades and an empty stomach.”⁸¹

In June, Harry summed up the present situation with a witty variant on Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. Transposing the action to the Tiergarten, his scenario featured Hitler’s erstwhile ally, the media mogul and DNVP leader Alfred Hugenberg, who two days earlier had been forced to resign as Minister for Economy, Agriculture, and Food:

It’s getting dizzier and dizzier, said Alice. She never had expected to see a goat with funny whiskers come hurrying through the Tiergarten. But when the goat came nearer she saw that it carried a suitcase labeled “A. Hugenberg, Berlin.” The goat did not run off (and thus avoided being a scapegoat), but the longer Alice looked the more certain she felt the horns were beginning to wobble. One did wobble. Alice felt this was very curious and looked closer. Then she saw that the horns were really ears and the goat seemed to be becoming a donkey. Please, she said politely, are you a goat or a donkey? ... The goat-donkey looked at Alice tearfully, then opened its suitcase and began eating huge quantities of the *Lokal Anzeiger*, *Der Tag*, the *Nachtausgabe*, and reels of Ufa. Lugubriously it half bleated, half heehawed. “My dear Alice,” it said, between munches, “if you ever thought I was a goat you were mistaken: I’ve always been a jackass.”⁸²

Expecting his parents to recognize Hugenberg’s newspapers and film company (Ufa), Harry then interpreted his allegory. He admitted he had been mistaken in predicting a power struggle between the two parties that composed the cabinet, the Nazis and the DNVP. There had been no struggle, “only...an edging out” that ended with Hugenberg’s dismissal and the “voluntary” dissolution of the DNVP. The Nazis thus removed the “fine gentlemen” of Hugenberg’s class, who had helped them win their first major electoral success in 1930.

Harry’s allusion to *Alice in Wonderland* reflects its enormous and widespread popularity, illustrated in Count Harry Kessler’s comment on Papen: “The papers publish his photograph...over the caption ‘The New Look in Chancellors.’ He has the air of an irritable billy goat trying to adopt dignity.... A character from *Alice in Wonderland*.”⁸³ If Papen and Hugenberg were laughable billy goats, what was happening was no comedy. Newspapers reported “a regular wave of suicides—this in the Hitler spring time!”⁸⁴ Some “suicides” were actually Nazi murders. Newspapers reported “that the chairman of the Deutschnationale [DNVP], Dr. [Ernst]

Oberfohren, killed himself a few days ago." Soon the verb "killed himself" needed correction; rather than being "reflexive,...[it was] more probably passive": Dr. Oberfohren did not *kill himself*; rather, he *was killed*—by the Nazis.⁸⁵ An outbreak of Jewish suicides and attempted suicides occurred during the early months of the Nazi period.⁸⁶ A foreign paper reported the attempted suicide, "after three months' solitary confinement and questioning," of a distinguished professor in Munich with whom Heinz Gottschalk had studied—August Mayer, the former director of the Alte Pinakothek.⁸⁷ The effects of repression were coming closer to home. Reading "that the Berlin libraries are being purged," Harry worried that the Nazis might impede his research.⁸⁸ When he went for advice at the American consulate, he learned "that letters were being censored, and that of course my materials might be confiscated."⁸⁹ Passed from one authority to the next, he finally met with the director of the Berlin municipal libraries, "Herr Direktor Professor Dr. Fritz—a small, kindly, harried man, who very amiably received me and cleared the matter up. Nothing would happen to his library."

On vacation: exploring opinion in the hinterland

For three weeks in March and April, Harry took the temperature of Germany outside of the capital. He was in Weimar on the morning of 1 April, the day of a nationwide anti-Jewish boycott.⁹⁰ This roll-out of Nazi power had variable results. In Weimar, Harry "saw nothing except that the local Hermann Tietz [department store] was closed"; in Erfurt later in the day, however, "the picketing and placating" were effective, and most of the stores were closed. Later, back in Berlin, he learned that the Kurfürstendamm, the busy shopping street, was considerably affected, and that Unter den Linden in the heart of touristic and diplomatic Berlin, where Paul Gottschalk's office was located, had been spared "because of the impression it would make on foreigners & the foreign diplomatic offices."⁹¹ In contrast to Harry's cool assessment, Count Harry Kessler raged against the boycott—an "abominable" and "criminal piece of lunacy" that "has destroyed everything" that the Weimar Republic had achieved "during the past fourteen years...to restore faith in, and respect for, Germany." To Kessler, the willing submission of the German nation to Nazism was "the most horrible suicide a great nation has ever committed."⁹²

On his travels, Harry gained insights into popular thinking by overcoming his shyness to chat with strangers. Able to pass for German, he concealed his personal background; to reveal that he was Jewish would have impeded his wish to understand public opinion. A World War I veteran in Leipzig, shabby but clean, expected the Nazis to "improve Germany's economic status, but [he] didn't tell me how"; the veteran said that Jews who had been living in Leipzig for generations "were practically as clean as Germans, but...East Jews were oily and dirty," the same view espoused by anti-Semites at Harvard. Additional instructive conversations took place at an inn in the picturesque village of Stolberg in the Harz Mountains; it was run by a "pure, guaranteed Aryan" family who believed in "Saint Adolf," through whom "all would be reborn." Harry felt like a spy "in enemy territory, or a detective among crooks, or a crook among detectives." As the family told him "how the Jews had infected the body politic, how they should be driven out of Europe and back to Palestine," he began to feel a "sympathy for the right wing which I lacked before. Everything becomes complicated when you get down

close to it, like a drop of water." In Stolberg, too, he gained "a sense of the German minuscule principality" that might come in handy for the history of Germany that he dreamed of writing.⁹³

Continuing to document current events, Harry asked an S.A. police officer in Goslar, his next stop, for permission to photograph "the closed socialist newspaper exterior...with a placard in the window." When the officer asked his purpose, he told him: "To show how effective the government is." The officer replied: "Well, why not?" Another instance of government effectiveness was a Jewish exodus: 1,500 Jewish refugees were reportedly in Holland and another 1,500 in Switzerland, where they were at least temporarily safe. Collecting his mail in Hildesheim, he found five "panicky" letters, four from his mother and one from Deborah Hirschbach, all responding to atrocity reports. He immediately sent a cable: "BANISH FOOLISH FEARS NEWSPAPERS DEMENTED NO ILLEGAL TERRORISM AM PERFECTLY SAFE FINE TRIP BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS LOVE HARRY." His mother, who must have been pleased with the birthday wishes, had in the meantime written another alarmed letter, which elicited another cable. To demonstrate his caution, he began sending his letters not to his parents but "to Mr Debanalf at the Broadmoor," the nearby building where Deborah and Alfred Hirschbach lived. The "Debanalf" ruse seemed excessive, and he soon resumed using his parents' address. Several weeks later, for safety's sake, he began to refer to Gustav Mayer as "P.G.'s cousin."⁹⁴

Changes in educational institutions

Harry returned from his holiday just in time for the scheduled start of the semester on 15 April, only to find the date postponed until 1 May "to allow for reorganization"—meaning the "purge, rejuvenation, filtering, ennobling, and thinning of the faculties." Euphemisms proliferated: rather than being fired, professors were "sent on leave." At Göttingen University, the famed mathematics faculty "seems to have been swept clean"; perhaps, Harry speculated, "math may not be needed in the 3rd Reich," where another field, "German physics," excluded Einstein's theory of relativity.⁹⁵ As described below, three professors whom Harry came to know outside of class were affected: Gustav Mayer, Dietrich Gerhard, and Hajo Holborn. Martin Weinbaum, the medievalist who had teased him in his first semester, was another casualty. Student support of "reorganization" appeared in "Twelve Theses Against the Un-German Spirit"—issued on 8 April, published in the *Völkischer Beobachter* on 14 April, and slapped on kiosks all over Germany. They were the work of the major student organization, the German Student Body (*Deutsche Studentenschaft*), which planned the book burnings on 10 May that took place in Berlin on Bebelplatz, directly across from the university, and all over the country. A few of the "Twelve Theses" give the flavor of the whole:

4. Our most dangerous enemy is the Jew and those who are his slaves.
5. A Jew can only think Jewish. If he writes in German, he is lying....
7. We...regard the Jew as alien and...respect the traditions of the Volk [German people]. Therefore, we demand of the censor: Jewish writings are to be published in Hebrew. If they appear in German, they must be identified as translations.⁹⁶

In schools and universities, Jewish students and teachers were disoriented. Lutz Gottschalk's high school, the Grunewald Gymnasium, was "predominantly...non-Aryan, as the official tongue has it, and the question of who can stay is naturally of interest." Lutz was one of the few Jews in his class who remained to graduation, in 1935. Until Nazi textbooks could be produced, teachers had to improvise. History teachers were expected

to deliver oral explanations of the origins of the great National Revolution. And as the teachers, especially after the spring cleaning, will be uniformly *nationalgesinnt* [nationalist in feeling],...they will execute their duties with zeal.

All children, including Jews, had to sing Nazi songs such as a popular ditty with the lines "When the knife drips with Jewish blood, / Things will be twice as good as before." At the university, where students were "not certain whether they may be admitted or, if they are already in, whether they may stay," Hermann Christern began his first lecture "with a zealous but not very consistent paean on the subject of the national resurrection [revolution] of the past three months." Harry thought that Christern's praise "sounded as if it were made to order, for he depended on his notes," which were unnecessary when he spoke about his subject, the Counter-Revolution.⁹⁷ The students gave "no sign of assent or dissent." Harry did not return. Christern later proved to be a devoted Nazi.