The Role of Antisemitism in the Expulsion of non-Aryan Students, 1933-1945

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"The goal is achieved! No more Jews at German Universities," read the headline of the main Nazi student paper, *Die Bewegung*, in late 1938. The author hailed the students as the vanguard of Nazism at the institutions of higher learning. The student journalist argued that students, rather than professors and academic administrators, had pioneered antisemitism at German universities before 1933. By putting pressure on the authorities to expedite the expulsion of Jews, the journalist concluded, students made an important contribution to the creation of the Nazi university in the Third Reich.[1]

This contemporary assessment of the role of students and professors stands in sharp contrast to the conclusions of modern historians. The two most important articles written on the expulsion process concentrate almost exclusively on the operation of the Nazi bureaucratic machine and on the fights between various party and state organizations, each trying to aggrandize itself by realizing its own agenda. They do not discuss, however, what happened to Jewish students at the local level during the months after the Nazi takeover in January 1933. Neither do they examine the roles and motives of Gentile students and professors in the expulsion process.[2]

Beside these articles, there are also a number of local studies that deal in passing with the fate of Jewish students. However, they tend to limit themselves to the description of events, to the listing of administrative measures, and to providing statistical data on the decline of the Jewish student population.[3] As far as motivation is concerned, the books on the

[1] *Die Bewegung*, 47 (1938), Bundesarchiv (BA) Koblenz, ZSg 129/152.

[2] See Albrecht Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten an den deutschen Hochschulen: Zur nationalsozialistischen Rassenpolitik 1933-1945," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 14 (April 1966), pp. 175-206; Arye Carmon, "The Impact of the Nazi Racial Decrees on the University of Heidelberg," in *Yad Vashem Studies*, 11 (1976), pp.131-163.

[3] Among the important local studies are Geoffrey J. Giles, *Students and National Socialism in Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Gerda Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd: Universität Frankfurt 1933-1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg-Verlag, 1984); Uwe Adam, *Hochschule und Nationalsozialismus: Die Universität Tübingen im Dritten Reich* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1977); Norbert Giovannini, *Zwischen Republik und Faschismus:*

history of the medical and law professions are more useful. These studies show that professional interests, in the presence of deeply engrained ethnic prejudices, worked toward the removal of non-Aryan teachers and students.[4]

The lack of empirical studies explains in part why historians have remained reluctant to draw conclusions about the role of antisemitism in the expulsion of Jewish and non-Aryan students. Michael Grüttner, the author of the first comprehensive work on the history of students in Nazi Germany, is perhaps the most important exception in this regard. In his well-researched and elegantly argued book, Grüttner acknowledges that, at a few places, Nazi students did verbally insult and even physically injure their Jewish colleagues. However, he contends, on the whole, most German Jews were treated, if not warmly, at least fairly on the campuses after 1933, and that their expulsion was basically the work of the Nazi authorities, with little input by outsiders.[5]

Are his conclusions valid? How much responsibility did Gentile students and academic administrators have for the expulsion of Jewish students? Why did most students and professors resent Jews? What forms did their prejudices take before and after 1933? Why did part-Jewish students remain at institutions of higher learning in 1944, when most full-Jews had been expelled within two years after the Nazi takeover of power? What does the more lenient attitude of Gentile students, professors, and administrators in the various ministries toward half- and quarter-Jews tell us about the depth of anti-Jewish sentiments among professors and students in Nazi Germany? Should the protection of part-Jewish students from harassment be perceived as a sign of resistance to the Nazi regime?

Historians generally agree that, at least since the 1880s, university students embraced stronger forms of Judeophobia than their teachers and other sections of the elite. They have shown that student radicalism and antisemitism in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic had numerous

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Heiderberger Studentinnen und Studenten 1918-1945 (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1990); and Peter Lauf, *Jüdische Studierende an der Universität zu Köln* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991).

[4] See Michael H. Kater, *Doctors under Hitler* (Chapell Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); and Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers and Engineers, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[5] See Michael Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich* (Paderborn: Schoeningh, 1995), pp. 219-227.

and mutually reinforcing causes: the influence of antisemitic parents and teachers, the corrosion of humanist values at the universities, insecurity about the academic job market, declining living standards after 1918, the identification of Jews with left-wing radicals and foreigners, the survival of the antiquated culture of student fraternities, and, after its establishment in 1926, the agitation of the National-Socialist Student League (Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund or NSDStB).[6]

While student antisemitism remained diverse[7] (it ran the gamut from the relatively mild and often religiously inspired Judeophobia to the more radical plebian and racist varieties), the mass demonstrations against the employment of liberal and pacifist Jewish teachers in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and the continuing demand for the removal of Jews from the German Student Federation (Deutsche Studentenschaft or DSt) suggest that the majority of students supported at least a drastic reduction in the number of Jewish teachers at institutions of higher learning.[8]

Widespread support for the reduction in the number of Jewish students and teachers had not only made Nazis popular on the campuses before 1933, but it also helped convince the new Nazi government that they could "cleanse" the universities of Jews without alienating the German elite. Thus, on April 7, 1933, in the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, the Nazi state ordered the retirement and dismissal of Jewish civil servants - at first

[6] On student antisemitism in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic, see Konrad H. Jarausch, *Students, Society and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 401-405; Michael H. Kater, *Studentenschaft und Rechtsradikalismus in Deutschland 1918-1933* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1975), p. 63; Hartmut Titze, "Die zyklische Überproduktion von Akademikern im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 10 (1984), p. 92; Jack Wertheimer, " The 'Ausländerfrage' at Institutions of Higher Learning: A Controversy over Russian-Jewish Students in Imperial Germany," in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 27 (1982), pp. 187-218; Norbert Kampe, *Studenten und 'Judenfrage' im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1988).

[7] On the diversity of student antisemitism, see Wolfgang Kreutzberger, *Studenten und Politik 1918-1933: Der Fall Freiburg im Breisgau* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972), pp. 91-92; and Kampe, *Studenten und 'Judenfrage,'* pp. 98-102. On antisemitism among Austrian fraternity students, see Michael Gehler, *Studenten und Politik: Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft an der Universität Innsbruck* (Innsbruck: Haymon Verlag, 1990), pp. 96, 116.

[8] On the antisemitic agitation of Nazi students, see Jürgen Schwarz, *Studenten in der Weimarer Republik: Die deutsche Studentenschaft in der Zeit von 1918 bis 1923 und ihre Stellung zur Politik* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1971), pp. 362-366; Michael Steinberg, *Sabers and Brown Shirts: The German Students' Path to National Socialism 1918-1935* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 51-71; Anselm Faust, *Der Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund: Studenten und Nationalsozialismus in der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 51-87.

only those who had not fought in World War I. This legislation forced about 1,200 Jewish academics to leave their university positions by the end of 1933.[9]

As a sign of student radicalism, however, many students remained dissatisfied with the law; they continued to boycott the lectures of Jewish professors even if they enjoyed exemption under the Aryan paragraph in the Civil Service Law. Their ruthless campaign, which lasted almost two years, finally achieved its goal: almost every Jewish professor who was legally still allowed to teach had resigned from his position by 1935.[10]

The Nazi revolution did not stop at the gates of the universities; nor was student radicalism confined to demonstrations against Jewish teachers. Encouraged by semi-official toleration of these excesses, Nazi students at many universities turned against their Jewish colleagues. In February 1933, members of the German Student Federation attacked American Jews in Königsberg, claiming that these foreigners abused German hospitality.[11] Members of the NSDStB stormed a Jewish fraternity house in Heidelberg.[12] At the same university, Nazis even manhandled an Afghan student because of what they perceived to be Jewish features.[13] On April 1, 1933, eighty students in SA uniforms occupied the university buildings in Frankfurt am Main. They denied Jewish students entry into the buildings, chased those found inside off campus, and even slapped around an Aryan who failed to produce his identification card.[14]

Gentile students pestered the Ministry of Education in the state of Baden with complaints about Jews, who, according to their letters, still dared to occupy the best places in the lecture rooms and laboratories. The refusal of these

[9] Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution 1933-1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 50.
[10] On the expulsion of Jewish professors, see Hans Ebert, "Die Technische Hochschule Berlin und der Nationalsozialismus: Politische 'Gleichschaltung' und rassistische Säuberungen," in Reinhard Rürup ed., *Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Technischen Universität Berlin 1879-1979*, vol.1, (Berlin: Springer, 1979), pp. 455-468; Klaus-Peter Hoepke, "Auswirkungen der nationalsozialistischen Rassenpolitik an der Technischen Hochschule Fridericiana Karlsruhe 1933-1945," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 137 (1989), pp. 383-413; Helmut Heiber, *Universität unterm Hakenkreuz, part 1: Der Professor im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Saur, 1991), pp. 54-134.
[11] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 25, 1933, BA Koblenz, ZSg, 129/151.
[12] Giovannini, *Zwischen Republik und Faschismus,* p. 172.
[13] Carmon, "The Impact of the Nazi Racial Decrees," p. 156.
[14] Kater, *Doctors under Hitler*, pp. 169-170.

students to vacate their seats prompted incensed Nazis to request that only Gentiles could sit in the first rows.[15]

Antisemites advertised their prejudices even in the washrooms, where they listed the names of allegedly Jewish teachers and students on toilet walls. Under pressure by university teachers, in June 1933, the German Student Federation finally ordered these fanatics to stop using the toilets for propaganda purposes.[16]

The anti-Communist hunt, legitimized by a presidential decree of February 28, which gave Hitler emergency powers, played directly into the hands of antisemitic students. In Heidelberg, the student leader Gustav Adolf Scheel immediately demanded the removal of twenty-six communist, and presumably Jewish, students.[17] At the University of Berlin, 110 of the 125 students expelled for political activities were also listed as non-Aryans.[18] Although the majority of Marxists were most likely not Jewish, the Nazis also used anti-communism to remove Jews who played no active role in politics. Such was the case in Heidelberg, for example, in spring-summer 1933, when many of the students accused of communist connections were Jews.[19] In the heat of the hour, one local student leader requested the expulsion of Helga Abrahamson from the University of Leipzig on the basis that her name sounded Jewish. As it later turned out, she was neither Jewish nor had she any affiliation with Marxist parties.[20]

Although their administrative power was limited, the NSDStB and the German Student Federation also tried to go beyond physical abuses and channel discrimination into more regulated and bureaucratic forms. Their first success came in April 1933, when, fulfilling an old demand of racist students, the Prussian Ministry of Education finally ordered that only non-Jewish Germans

[15] Geoffrey Giles, "Die Fahne hoch, die Reihen dicht geschlossen: Die Studenten als Verfechter der völkischen Universität?" in Eckart Krause et al., *Hochschulalltag im Dritten Reich. Die Hamburger Universität 1933-1945*, vol. 3 (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1991), p. 47.
[16] *Jüdische Rundschau*, Berlin, July 13, 1933, BA Koblenz, ZSg 129/151.
[17] Carmon, "The Impact of the Nazi Racial Degrees," pp. 158-159.
[18] This number was arrived at by comparing the list of non-Aryans with the names of students expelled for political activities; see Universitätsarchiv Berlin (UAB), Akten des Universitätsrats, no. 3016 and No. 3018.
[19] Carmon, "The Impact of the Nazi Racial Degrees," pp. 158-160.
[20] Letter by A. Blochberger, the lawyer of Helga Abrahamson, to Sächsisches Kultusministerium, October 20, 1933, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (SHSA), Akten des Kultusministeriums, vol. 2, no. 10055/2.

could become members of the German Student Federation.[21] In extreme cases, such as the one in Baden, state administrators made membership in the same organization dependent on Aryan descent back to three generations.[22] Simultaneously, most fraternities expelled their Jewish members.[23]

Pressure from the NSDStB also moved the Prussian Ministry of Education to withdraw social assistance from Jewish students on April 22, 1933.[24] Since less than 10 percent of students had received financial assistance during the Weimar Republic and because local student-aid foundations, such as the one in Munich, had already refused financial aid to Jews before the Nazi takeover of power, this legislation contributed little to the decline in the number of Jewish students.[25] More important was the attempt by Nazi student organizations to become involved in the registration and classification of students. At a few places, such as the Technical University of Berlin, the local branch of the German Student Federation created its own card system in order to better document the number of full- and part-Jews.[26] At most universities, however, they only wanted to gain control over the existing system and to change the color of the cards. Thus, at Frankfurt am Main, members of the NSDStB occupied the entrances to the university and forced Jews to hand over their identification cards soon after the Nazi victory.[27]

Their meddling in the registration of students became a source of embarrassment for the Nazi government, as it had to face a minor diplomatic incident caused by the parents of two sisters of Japanese-German ethnic backgrounds, who were given yellow identification cards at the University of Leipzig.[28] To prevent the repetition of such an incident, the Prussian Ministry of Education ordered the standardization of cards at the end of 1933. Brown

[21] See Joseph Walk, ed., *Das Sonderrecht für die Juden im NS-Staat: Eine Sammlung der gesetzlichen Massnahmen und Richtlinien — Inhalt und Bedeutung* (Heidelberg: C.F.Müller Juristischer Verlag, 1981), p. 14.
[22] Ibid., p. 24.
[23] Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, pp. 296-298.
[24] Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten," p. 184; Walk, *Sonderrecht*, p. 16; Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 216.
[25] See Béla Bodo, "The Function of Selection in Nazi Policy towards University Students 1933-1945" (Ph. D. dissertation Toronto: York University, 1998), esp. pp. 51-54.
[26] Ebert, "Die Technische Hochschule Berlin und der Nationalsozialismus," p. 462.
[27] Stuchlik, *Goethe im Braunhemd*, p. 86.
[28] Studentenschaft Leipzig to Rektor der Universität Leipzig, November 17, 1933, SHSA, Akten des Kultusministeriums, vol. 2, no. 10077/3, p. 227.

cards were given to non-Jewish German students; foreigners received blue cards; while Jewish and half-Jewish students had to carry yellow cards.[29]

The quick removal of full Jews from the federation and the fraternities and the bureaucratization of prejudices at German universities would have certainly been impossible without the support and acquiescence of Gentile students. However, student radicalism alone could not guarantee the disappearance of Jewish students from the campuses. Since the power to admit and remove students remained in the hands of academic administrators and bureaucrats in the state ministries, the attitude of university teachers and academic administrators toward Jews remained extremely important. Historians have shown that, already in the late nineteenth century, the majority of German professors embraced a "cultivated" form of antisemitism, which ascribed all negative features of modernity, such as materialism, decadence, and Marxism to the so-called Jewish spirit. While few university teachers were racist, their constant ranting from the lectern about "Jewish spirit" and "Jewish influence" created a favorable climate for the spread of more radical varieties of antisemitism among students in both Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic.[30] Similarly, while the majority of professors remained ambivalent toward Nazism, they shared too many of the nationalist goals and much of the anti-Jewish sentiments of Nazi students to protect non-Aryans against harassment after 1933.[31]

The same convergence in values, coupled with professional interests, provided the basis for cooperation between conservative professors and the Nazis after 1933. They help us to explain why so many academics, particularly younger ones, welcomed the dismissal of their Jewish colleagues after Hitler's victory.[32]

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[29] RdErl. des Preussischen Ministers für Wiss., Kunst und Volksbildung, September 9, 1933, SHSA, Akten des Kultusministeriums, vol. 2, no. 10077/3, p. 189-190.

[30] Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community 1890-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 135-139; 239-240.

[31] See Christian Jansen, *Professoren und Politik: Politisches Denken und Handeln der Heidelberger Hochschullehrer 1914-1935* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), pp. 176-180, 289-296; Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), pp. 65-68.

[32] See Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, pp. 49-56; and Alan D. Beyerchen, *Scientists under Hitler: Politics and the Physics Community in the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 15-22.

Academic attacks on Jews were not limited to the teaching establishment, however. Perhaps the majority of universities began preparing lists of students, as a first step toward their eventual expulsion, soon after the Nazi victory.[33] These lists display a surprising unanimity in the use of racist terms.[34] The acceptance of the Nazi racial-biological point of view, which perceived the world in terms of a permanent struggle between races, is manifested in the registration of foreign students, such as Finns, Turks, Japanese, and Chinese, as non-Aryan.[35]

As a result of such measures, the stage was set for the implementation of anti-Jewish laws on the provincial level. Even before the central government became involved, the Bavarian Ministry of Education had stopped the admission of Jews to the medical faculty on April 7, 1933; a few weeks later, Baden barred Jewish freshmen from all faculties.[36]

Important as these measures were, however, there was no nationwide policy on Jewish students until the Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools and Universities, promulgated on April 25, 1933. Modeled on the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of April 7, 1933,[37] this legislation called for a restriction on the admission of Jewish students to schools, including universities, until their numbers were reduced to the percentage of non-Aryans in the country's population. Jewish students whose fathers had participated in World War I, or who had a Gentile parent or two non-Jewish grandparents were not affected.[38] This law was complemented by the orders of the Prussian Ministry of Education stipulating that the share of non-Aryans could not exceed 5 percent of the already enrolled students in any

[33] At the University of Cologne, for example, the rector asked the faculties to prepare a list of Jewish students in May 1933. See Rektor der Universität Köln to Dekan der Philisophischen Fakultät, Professor Dr. Nipperdey, May 12, 1933, UAK, 28/No. 80.
[34] For the analysis of these lists at individual universities, see Lauf, *Jüdische Studierende*, p. 71; Giovannini, *Zwischen Republik und Faschismus*, p.183; Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten," p. 189; Adam, *Hochschule und Nationalsozialismus*, p. 115.
[35] Rektorat der Universität Köln, May 18, 1933; in the summer semester of 1933, 114 non-Aryans attended the university; the list also includes three Turks, three Finns, one Japanese, and one Chinese. See undated list of non-Aryans from SS 1933 and WS 1933/34, UAK, 28/No. 80.
[36] See Walk, *Sonderrecht* , pp. 13-14.
[37] For the importance of this legislation for the persecution of Jews, see Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), pp. 66-67.
[38] See Walk, *Sonderrecht ,* pp. 17-18.

faculty. The enrollment of first-year students was possible only when the proportion of non-Aryans in the chosen faculty was under 1.5 percent.[39]

The direct impact of this law on the number of non-Aryan students was limited. A significant portion of non-Aryans, and, at certain universities, the majority, could claim exemption either on the basis of partial Aryan lineage or that their fathers were war veterans.[40] As a result, the number of students expelled on the basis of this law alone was relatively low.[41] Since at most universities the share of Jewish students was well under 1.5 percent, this legislation alone could not significantly reduce the number of non-Aryans in the student population.

This law, however, did not stand alone; it was followed by other measures that encouraged academic administrators to compete in the reduction of the number of non-Aryan students at their institutions. In June 1933, the Prussian Ministry of Education ordered the deans to keep statistics and regularly inform the rectors on the number of non-Aryans in their respective faculties. The same ministry soon gave universities the right to lower the Jewish students quota below 1.5 percent at will.[42] The arbitrary character of this process was made even more obvious by an order of the Ministry of Education in Baden in November 1934, which made the enrollment of full-Jews dependent on the applicants' "character" and "ties to the German people."[43]

Such arbitrary laws were extended to the high-school level as well. In 1934, an order by the Reich Ministry of the Interior required high-school teachers to provide information on the religious background of prospective university

[39] See Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 213.
[40] In Hamburg, eighty-four out of 143 non-Aryans could claim exemptions on the basis of the law; see Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 214. In Tübingen, twenty-five out of thirty-five non-Aryans fell under the same category; see Adam, *Hochschule und Nationalsozialismus*, p. 114. At the University of Freiburg and the Technical University of Berlin, the numbers were somewhat lower; see Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten," p. 181; and also Ebert, "Technische Hochschule Berlin und der Nationalsozialismus," p. 459.
[41] Forty-nine students were expelled from the University of Frankfurt am Main, the University of Königsberg, the Technical University of Berlin, and the University of Leipzig. This number does not include, however, the number of Jewish students expelled on the basis of political activities; see Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 214.
[42] Ibid., p. 215.
[43] See Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten," p. 182.

students.[44] From the winter semester of 1933/34 on, incoming students had to declare under oath that neither their parents nor their grandparents had belonged to the Jewish religious community. After the winter semester of 1935/36, an oral declaration of ethnic and religious background was no longer sufficient; instead, students had to provide university authorities with certificates of Aryan descent.[45]

The success of these laws depended to a large extent on the cooperation of university administrators. Besides material interests, academics who were not necessarily radical antisemites found themselves in the same camp with the Nazis because they shared with them an aversion toward the political left. This convergence of values remained an important factor in the expulsion and the possible re-admission of students expelled on the grounds of their former political ties.

As a part of Nazi policy to eradicate their political opponents, Communists and Social Democrats were forced to leave the universities in early 1933. However, the majority of Gentile students were readmitted after one or two years. As the case of Adolf Rubinstein suggests, academic administrators treated Jewish students very differently. This talented student of German language and history, who planned to earn a doctorate in literature, had been expelled from the University of Berlin in 1933, for Marxist political activity. Humiliated but not discouraged, he planned to continue his studies at the University of Cologne in 1934. Since the law of April 25, 1933 gave individual universities the right to decide about re-admission, Rubinstein could reasonably hope that his application would be accepted. However, he was rejected. The rector argued that the university "had no interest in the admission of a non-Aryan, who had been excluded for Marxist activity and had never studied in Cologne."[46]

As a result of centrally sponsored antisemitism and the willingness of academic administrators to comply with the orders of Nazi students, the number of non-Aryan students declined precipitously after the Nazi takeover

[44] As a result, out of 846 high-school graduates in 1934, only sixty received a matriculation certificate and thus the right to attend university; see Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 215.
[45] Ibid., p. 213.
[46] Rektor der Universität Köln to Adolf Rubinstein, April 11, 1934, UAK, 28/No. 80.

of power. According to the *Niederelbisches Tageblatt*, in 1932 there were about 4,000 non-Aryans at German universities. By the summer of 1933, their number had declined to 1,900. By the next semester, many universities and faculties had no Jewish students at all. By the winter semester of 1934/35, there remained only 590 male and 223 female Jews nationwide in a student body of 92,000 (87,000 male and 15,000 German female students attended university in the same semester).[47] The *Hannover Kurier* gave a slightly different number for the summer semester of 1934. At that time, the paper reported that 656 students belonged to Jewish religious organizations. Apart from these students, there were 1,316 non-Aryans who could not join the German Student Federation because of their race. The newspapers also informed the readers about the almost complete halt in the admission of Jewish students. In the summer semester of 1934, there were only twenty-four Jewish freshmen at German universities, who made up only 0.4 percent of the 6,189 first-year university students.[48]

The rapid decline in the number of Jewish students was in part the result of an orchestrated campaign by doctors, lawyers, and other professionals seeking to get rid of their competitors. The desire to expel Jewish doctors and limit the number of non-Aryan medical students laid the ground for cooperation between doctors, including academics, and Nazi leaders since the late 1920s. This alliance continued after 1933, as a significant number of teachers and perhaps the majority of medical students sought to restrict the number of Jews at universities. They found ready support in the person of the *Reichsärztführer* (Reich Physicians' Leader) Gerhard Wagner, who demanded the radical curtailment of the number of non-Aryan candidates immediately after the Nazis came to power.[49] Under pressure by Wagner, the NSDStB and the Office of the Deputy Führer, the Reich Ministry of Education (Reichserziehungsministerium-REM) prohibited non-Aryans from working as insurance-panel doctors except if they were recognized as war veterans as of

[47] *Niederelbisches Tageblatt*, April 24, 1935, BA Koblenz, ZSg 129/151.
[48] *Hannover Kurier*, September 10, 1935, BA Koblenz, ZSg 129/151. In the winter semester of 1934/35, Nazi officials put the number of students who belonged to the Jewish religious community at 538. There were also an additional 594 non-Aryans who did not belong to the Jewish religious community; see Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 215.
[49] Kater, *Doctors under Hitler*, pp. 169-170.

April 1933.[50] This later concession, which also allowed children of war veterans or fallen soldiers to study medicine, was revoked in May 1934.[51]

Heightened discrimination at local levels also ensured that, after 1933, even those non-Aryans who were close to graduation could not automatically expect admission to the state examination or obtain a license to practice medicine. To salvage something from their studies, many non-Aryan students requested admission to the state examination as foreigners. Most states, like Bavaria, acceded to this request only if the students promised to emigrate after graduation.[52] On October 20, 1933, the Prussian Ministry of Education ordered that graduating Jewish students could not get their licenses as doctors and dentists; they could receive their diploma only if they had renounced their German citizenship.[53]

To create a more unified system for the admission, graduation, and licensing of non-Aryan students, party and state representatives met in the Ministry of the Interior in December 1933, and agreed that they all wished to stop completely the licensing of non-Aryans in Germany. However, they were forced to admit that this was not yet feasible. In violation of the April 7, 1933 law, they set the limit of Jewish and half-Jewish candidates admitted to licensing exams at 1 percent. The participants also supported the proposal that non-Aryans who had expressed their intention to emigrate could gain promotion before approbation.

Disagreement surfaced, however, on the question of whether to allow Jewish students to complete their practical training in German hospitals. Paranoid about possible abuses of medical power by Jewish doctors and candidates, the Nazi purist, Gerhard Wagner, proposed that the training of non-Aryans should proceed only in separate, Jewish, hospitals. Leonardo Conti, the founder of the Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Arztebund (National Socialist Doctors League) and, after 1939, Wagner's successor as *Reichsärztführer*,

[50] Uwe Adam, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1972), p. 67; Walk, *Sonderrecht*, p. 16.
[51] Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 217.
[52] Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus to Preussisches Kultusministerium, September 20, 1933, BA Potsdam, Akten des Reichsministeriums des Innern, Abt. III, p. 392.
[53] RdErl. des REM, October 20, 1933, BA Potsdam, Akten des Reichsministeriums des Innern, Abt. III, pp. 398-399; Walk, *Sonderrecht*, p. 57; Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 217.

however, rejected Wagner's proposal. He argued that it was impossible to fulfill Wagner's demand since, at the end of 1933, only 40 percent of doctors in Berlin were Aryan. Nevertheless, he agreed with Wagner that the training of non-Aryans in German hospitals constituted a serious problem, the solution of which should be considered as a long-term goal.[54]

Further restrictions came with the new examination regulation (*Prüfungsordnung*) for doctors, dentists, and pharmacists in April 1934, which forbade the admission to state examinations and granting licenses in cases where there was serious doubt about the candidate's national feeling or moral reliability. This again conformed to the racist view (shared by many academics) that Jews could not possess these qualities. After February 1935, Jewish and half-Jewish medical candidates could obtain a license only if they had begun their studies before the summer semester of 1933.

Preferential treatment was granted to candidates who had fought in the war and exhibited "Nordic" physical and moral features.[55] Since there were very few war veterans among students ten years after the end of World War I, the order gave only quarter-Jewish candidates the chance to finish their studies. Students who began their medical studies in 1933 or later had to leave the universities. The few who had enrolled before 1933 could complete their studies without, however, being given permission to practice medicine in Germany.

Simultaneously, practical training became extremely difficult, as one after another, the departmental student groups (Fachschaften) excluded Jewish trainees from German hospitals. As the result of these measures, the number of Jewish students declined rapidly and, by the end of 1938, there were no Jewish medical students in German universities. The Nazi student paper, *Die Bewegung*, celebrated the victory with the headline: "The End of Medical Doctor Cohn."[56]

The removal of Jewish medical students paralleled events in other faculties. In April 1933, Prussian Minister of Justice Hanns Kerrl prohibited the

[54] "Niederschrift über die kommissarische Beratung vom 13 Dezember 1933, betreffend die Prüfungsordnung für Ärzte und die Erteilung der Approbation für Ärzte," BA Potsdam, Akten des Reichsministeriums des Innern, Abt. III, pp. 451-457.
[55] Grüttner, Studenten im Dritten Reich, p. 218.
[56] Die Bewegung, 39 (1938), BA Koblenz, ZSg 129/152.

appointment of non-Aryan law candidates as barristers. Other states soon followed suit. After April 1933, the completion of regular university study was possible only through the form of a promotion, which promised little chance for employment. At the same time, non-Aryan barristers were also dismissed on the basis of the Civil Service Law if they were not the children of fallen soldiers or war veterans.[57] In July 1934, the Reich Minister of Justice ordered students applying for the state examination to prove their own and their spouses' Aryan descent. The order made no mention of exemptions on the grounds of war service.[58]

While material interest played an important role in the expulsion of Jews from medical and law faculties, the priority of ideological principles is clearly recognizable in the exclusion of non-Aryans from the faculty of agriculture, which had traditionally attracted few Jews. At the same time, Jews were barred from academic studies for other professional positions, such as pharmacist, notary public, teacher, and even tax advisor.[59] After a long debate between the Office of the Deputy Führer and the education and interior ministries, the REM prohibited German Jews from obtaining a doctorate in April 1937.[60]

Foreign Jews posed a special problem for the regime. Initially, foreign-policy considerations prevented the Nazi government from moving freely against Jews of foreign citizenship. The Ministry of the Interior decreed, in May 1933, that the restrictions in the Civil Service Law did not apply to them.[61] By the end of 1933, there was even a setback, as the Prussian Ministry of Education ordered universities to cease requiring proof of Aryan background from foreign students.[62]

To avoid open conflicts with foreign governments, the central government gave the rectors, assisted by a five-member council, the right to determine

[57] Grüttner, Studenten im Dritten Reich, p. 217.
[58] See Walk, Sonderrecht, p. 86.
[59] See Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten," pp. 188-192; Adam, *Judenpolitik*, pp. 73-76.
[60] See Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 220.
[61] See Walk, *Sonderrecht*, p. 19.
[62] Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten," p. 182.

admission criteria.[63] The central government correctly assessed the true sentiments of academic administrators toward Jewish students: authorities at the state and local levels did not need central regulations to remove foreign Jews gradually. In Saxony, for example, bureaucrats in the education ministry and academic administrators did their best to prevent the admission of eighty American Jews who came to Germany to circumvent the restrictive quotas imposed mainly on Jews at American medical colleges. German authorities rejected their applications with the flimsy argument that the Medical License Examination Board in New York would not recognize German university degrees.[64] The rectors were equally reluctant to admit East European Jews after 1933. They were especially hard on German-speaking Jews, who had often suffered discrimination as the members of German minorities in Eastern Europe after 1918. Instead of recognizing their loyalty to German culture, the rectors at most universities punished these people by subjecting them to the same discriminatory treatment as German Jews.[65]

As a result of the continuing dependence of the Nazi state on international public opinion, however, no nationwide law followed these local measures after 1933. In February 1937, the party and state offices finally decided not to admit foreign Jews to German universities. Wary of reactions from abroad, however, the Ministry of Education still did not issue a formal decree but simply instructed the rectors that they should not allow the registration of foreign Jews. [66] The same policy continued during the next two years. Only under the impact of the war did the Nazi government force foreign students to declare under oath that neither they nor their spouses were Jewish.[67]

Nazi policy toward non-Aryan students reflected the rapid deterioration in the position of the German-Jewish population after 1933. The stages in this process were neither planned nor easy to predict.[68] Nevertheless, the struggle

[63] RdErl. des Reichsministers des Innern, October 14, 1933, SHSA, Akten des Kultusministeriums, No. 1028.
[64] Der sächsische Minister für Wiss., Kunst und Volksbildung to REM, October 4, 1933, SHSA, Akten des Kultusministeriums, vol. 2, No. 10281.
[65] Der sächsische Minister für Wiss., Kunst und Volksbildung to Rektor der Universität Leipzig, May 14, 1933, SHSA, Akten des Kultusministeriums, vol. 2, No. 10281/23.
[66] Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 220.
[67] RdErl.des REM, January 5, 1940, BA Koblenz, R 21/10850.
[68] See, among others, Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970).

between state and party offices and the inherent contradictions between the goals of Nazi ideology and the limits imposed upon Nazi economic, social, and foreign policy moved leaders and events in the direction of radicalization.[69]

A new stage in this radicalization was introduced after the pogrom of November 1938. After that date the Nazi regime could no longer be satisfied by measures aimed simply at the reversal of the achievements of Jewish emancipation; now the goal was the total expropriation and emigration of the Jewish minority.[70] The pogrom also put an end to the centuries-old tradition of Jewish learning at German universities.

In various universities Nazi students now blocked the entry of Jewish students to the university buildings. On November 11, 1938, Minister of Education Bernhard Rust instructed the rectors by phone to remove Jewish students from their institutions. By this time, however, there remained very few Jews at German universities.[71]

As a sign of the increasing radicalism of the Nazi regime, the antisemitic campaign at the universities did not end with the expulsion of full-Jews, but continued in the discrimination against students who had at least one Jewish parent or grandparent. The problem of part-Jews touched one of the most serious flaws in the theory of biological racism: until its very end, the regime failed to define the Jews in scientific terms. The concept non-Aryan, which formed the basis of categorization, anti-Jewish legislation and action, remained ambiguous as well. Although this phrase was sometimes used to imply a hierarchy of races on a global scale, its main thrust was directed against full- and part-Jews.

After 1935, an intense fight developed between the Reich ministries, on the one hand, which worried that that the removal of rich, highly educated, and influential part-Jews would destroy German families and damage the economy, and the Nazi party, on the other hand, which, for ideological

[69] See Hans Mommsen, "National Socialism: Continuity and Change," in Walter Laqueur ed., *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1979), pp. 151-192.
[70] See Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 89-96.
[71] Adam, Hochschule und Nationalsozialismus, p. 115; Giles, Students and National Socialism, p. 107; Grüttner, Studenten im Dritten Reich, p. 221.

reasons, wanted to equate *Mischlinge* of the first degree with Jews. The details of this struggle, which was both ideological and political, are beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say here that, while bureaucratic fights between party and state organizations, concerns about administrative rationality and economic efficiency helped to destroy Jews in Eastern Europe, the same factors, paradoxically, proved vital for the survival of *Mischlinge* in the Third Reich.[72] Although the genocide of most part-Jews was avoided, the *Mischlinge* experienced increasing discrimination throughout the Third Reich. In the case of students, the oppression of part-Jews after 1938, followed the pattern established after 1933: the gradual radicalization of the regime manifested itself in a series of decrees that progressively circumscribed the rights of part-Jews to start an academic career or complete their studies.[73]

The continuing discrimination against *Mischling* students seems to support the argument that, in the Third Reich, ideological considerations, especially on the issue of race, took precedence over short-term advantages in other areas. As the following case studies will show, however, Nazi policy toward students of mixed blood had an additional function: it served to undermine the power of the traditional elite by destroying respect for its professed values. The humiliation of aristocrats, such as Jürgen Graf von Schwerin, demonstrated a rejection of noble birth as a criterion for elite status in contemporary German society. [74]

Jürgen von Schwerin was the grandson of Albertus Graf von Zieten Schwerin and the son of a legation councilor (*Legationsrat*), Albert Constantin von Schwerin. His maternal grandfather was a famous banker, Ernst von Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Despite his Jewish origin, Ernst von Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was a personal friend of Bismarck, who had praised his patriotism and devotion to the royal family in a personal letter. Nevertheless, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's background spelled trouble for his grandson. Although Jürgen von Schwerin was also a patriotic German, as the

[72] Jeremy Noakes, "Nazi Policy towards German-Jewish Mischlinge 1933-1945," Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, 34 (1989), pp. 291-356.
[73] Grüttner, Studenten im Dritten Reich, p. 223.
[74] For the Nazi regime's policy toward nobles, see Jeremy Noakes, "Nazism and High Society," in Michael Burleigh ed., *Confronting the Nazi Past: New Debates on Modern German History* (New York: Palgrave, 1996), pp. 51-66.

recommendation of his military commander suggests, he had to endure a long and humiliating bureaucratic battle for university admission. Finally, this second-degree *Mischling* was allowed to register at the Technical University of Berlin in 1942.[75]

Unfortunately, there are no statistics on the number of students who were both noble and had at least one Jewish grandparent. While their number was probably negligible, the impact of their persecution must have been significant. For the first time in German history, aristocrats had to fear the whims of administrators who often came from humble families. They had to pay the psychological price for finding their way through the bureaucracy. Their loss in status, however, represented a psychological gain for the Nazis (especially at the district levels and in the party chancellery), who obviously enjoyed humiliating nobles. By barring noble applicants from universities, Nazi zealots exercised a perverted form of class justice, which rewarded them both with the pleasure of revenge and with the feeling of superiority. However, the purpose of their actions, especially during the last two years of the war, went beyond reaping cheap satisfaction from the degradation of the members of the old elite. It was part and parcel of the larger attempt of the Nazi leadership to destroy traditional high society and assume its position and status in German society.[76]

Noble birth meant little to Nazis if the applicant had one Jewish parent or, later in the war, even one grandparent. Other traditional elite virtues, such as high regard for “old money” and family fortune, became sins if Jews represented them. The case of Dieter Thomas shows the extent to which Nazi ideology corroded the social function of money and family fortune in the Third Reich. His Jewish grandfather, the distinguished philanthropist Oscar Hirsch, was the owner of an old and profitable trading firm in Mannheim. Oscar Hirsch raised Thomas’s mother as a Lutheran. She served in World War I and even received a decoration for her work in the German Red Cross. Despite his half-Jewish background, Dieter Thomas joined the Hitlerjugend in the second half of the 1930s, and even served briefly in the army in 1940. After completion of

[75] See correspondence between Jürgen von Schwerin and REM, 1940-1942, BA Koblenz, R 21/10873, pp. 11-16, 342.
[76] For a similar conclusion about Nazi policy, see Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 299-307.

his labor service, he sought admission to the University of Heidelberg in 1941. However, his plan to become a chemist in Nazi Germany was frustrated by the rejection of his application.[77]

If a noble title and "old money" mattered less in Nazi Germany than it had in the Weimar Republic, so did the third criterion of the traditional elitist value system: high achievement in public service. Perhaps the cases of Dietgard Meyer and Dieter Weiss best demonstrate how closed admission served the dual purpose of racial selection and intimidation of civil servants. Dietgard Meyer's father, a major in World War I, worked in a senior administrative position in the Ministry of Defense until his - possibly forced - retirement in 1933. On this occasion he still received a letter from Reich President Paul von Hindenburg thanking him for his service to Germany. In spite of his service, however, his daughter, ostensibly on the basis of her mother's Jewish background, could not gain admission to university.[78]

Dieter Weiss's application met a similar fate. Weiss's father, a moderately successful diplomat, came from a prominent German family in Cologne. As a young graduate, he married the daughter of Eduard Sonnenburg, an internationally renowned surgeon and professor at the University of Berlin, who was also Jewish. Later he served as a member of the German diplomatic corps in China, Latin America, and the Middle East. Despite his father's merits, Dieter Weiss, branded as a first-degree *Mischling* on the basis of Nazi laws, was denied admission to the University of Berlin in 1941.[79]

Nazis, especially in the party chancellery, used the admission procedure to undermine the importance of learning and refinement (*Bildung*) as the fourth pillar in the value system of the elite. Thus, the offspring of such famous scientists as Emil von Behring, the inventor of the anti-diphtheria and anti-tetanus serums, and Otto von Giercke, the famous jurist and writer, evoked in

[77] Dieter Thomas to Rektor der Universität Heidelberg, March 14, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10873, pp. 120-123; Rektor der Universität Heidelberg to REM, June 16, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10873, p. 124.
[78] Rektor der Universität Berlin to REM, November 9, 1941, UAB, Akten des Rektors und Senats, No. 1167.
[79] Correspondence between Rektor der Universität Berlin and Dieter Weiss, 1941, UAB, Akten des Rektors und Senats, No. 1121. pp. 117-130.

vain the achievements of their fathers or relatives.[80] The same humiliation awaited Adelheid Klein, who listed Charlotte Heiden von Siebold, one of the first female doctors in Germany, the poet Eduard Stucken, and the expert on Japanese culture, Philippe Franz von Siebold, among her ancestors. The intellectual contributions of her family, notwithstanding, the debate over her admission lasted so long that Klein lost patience and withdrew her application from the University of Berlin in 1944.[81]

The completely apolitical case of Ludwig Mayer demonstrates that racism prevented the Nazis from showing respect for achievement in the field of sports. He was the brother of the famous Helene Mayer, who had won the gold medal in fencing at the 1928 Olympics. In the 1920s, the Hugenberg press regularly depicted her as the "typical Aryan girl."[82] This first-degree *Mischling* had come from California. She was allowed to compete and won the silver medal at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Her brother, Ludwig Mayer, volunteered in the army and was promoted to lance corporal during the Polish campaign in 1939. Although his file is incomplete, party authorities initially rejected his application to the Technical University of Berlin, and the final decision still awaited the outcome of bureaucratic battles in 1941.[83]

Antisemitism was taken so seriously that only the political services of the applicants, rather than those of their parents, counted as a reason for possible exemption from racial laws. On this basis, part-Jews could still upgrade their status from first- to second-degree *Mischlinge* or even to German. This procedure, known as "liberation" (*Befreiung*), was an integral part of racial selection in the Third Reich. Similar to the attempt to assimilate young people in the occupied countries during the war, the Nazis saw this as a way to gain useful human material for the building of their racial empire. "Liberation" was also a privilege and, as Victor Klemperer pointed out, privileges, such as the exemption from wearing the yellow star, served to create lasting resentment

[80] Memorendum Lösener, "Betrifft: die Anwendung der Arierbestimmungen auf Abkömmlinge aus Mischehen,"IZG, F71/1; on the life of Otto von Giercke, see Gerd Kelinheyer and Jan Schröder, *Deutsche Juristen aus fünf Jahrhunderten* (Heidelberg: Müller, 1989), pp. 96-101.
[81] Adelheid Klein to Rektor der Universität Berlin,, UAB, Akten des Rektors und Senats, No. 1172. pp. 105-108.
[82] Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 179.
[83] Ludwig Mayer to Rektor der Technischen Hochschule München, March 16, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10874, pp. 156-157.

among, and thus divide, the victims.[84] Petitions for liberation were transmitted through the Ministry of the Interior and the Reich Chancellery to Hitler, if the applicant was a civilian, and through the Army High Command and the party chancellery if the petitioner was a soldier.[85]

As the case of Karl Noack demonstrates, there were a few students whose services were such that, even the most rigid Nazis in the party chancellery did not block their admission. Born in Budapest in 1912, Noack moved to Berlin with his family in the 1920s, where he finished high school. Already in the late 1920s, he became an enthusiastic supporter of Nazism, entering first the Hitlerjugend and later the Nazi party. To his shock, he learned, in 1935, that he was half-Jewish. As a true believer in Nazi dogma, he left the party in the same year but remained a member of auxiliary Nazi organizations. He volunteered for the army in 1941, and was decorated for bravery. Noack's credentials were so good that his partly Jewish background was forgiven, and he was allowed to study at German universities.[86]

However, active participation in the Nazi movement did not always guarantee admission or re-admission to university, especially in the last two years of the war. Gerhard Engelmann, a first-degree *Mischling*, was a law student at the University of Graz until his dismissal in the early 1940s. Despite all the regulations designed to guard the racial purity of Nazi organizations, Engelmann entered the Hitlerjugend and even joined the SA in 1942. He served two years in the army and was decorated for bravery. His records prompted the local SA leader to support his re-admission in March 1944. At first the party chancellery had rejected his application; only after a protracted struggle did the rector, supported by the local SA and the REM, allow him to continue his studies.[87]

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[84] Victor Klemperer, *LTI Die unbewältigte Sprache: Aus dem Notizbuch eines Philologen.* (Darmstadt: Melzer, 1966), pp. 185-188; in English: *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua, Tertii, Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook*, translated by Martin Brady (London: Althone Press, 2000).

[85] Hilberg, *Destruction*, pp. 78-79.

[86] Karl Franz Günther Noack to NSDAP Partei-Kanzlei, May 29, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10873, pp. 113-115; NSDAP Partei-Kanzlei to Rektor der Universität Berlin, July 14, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10873, p. 402.

[87] REM to NSDAP Partei-Kanzlei, March 16, 1944, BA Koblenz, R 21/10876, p. 197; NSDAP Partei-Kanzlei to REM, July 20, 1944, BA Koblenz, R 21/10876, p. 389; Dekan der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Graz to REM, September 20, 1944, BA Koblenz, R 21/10876, p. 426.

As this last example suggests, the fate of applications depended upon the outcome of bureaucratic battles between two sides: students, university administrators, and bureaucrats in the REM, on the one hand, and Nazi diehards in the regional party offices and the party chancellery, on the other. In this struggle, half-Jews had an ominous start. Already in early 1933, a few schools, such as the University of Frankfurt, refused to register people with two Jewish grandparents.[88] At least on paper, after October 1937, half-Jews could receive a degree only if they pledged to leave Germany after graduation.[89]

The November pogrom of 1938, and the outbreak of the war in September 1939, brought further restrictions. In early 1939, the REM re-examined the right of part-Jews to attend university studies. Its new plan confirmed old regulations but included no additional restrictions. On the contrary, it stated that, in the future, foreign students would not have to provide written proof but simply declare under oath that they and their parents were not Jewish.[90] Despite its apparent leniency, the proposal encountered strong opposition from the bureaucrats in the other ministries. They argued that the re-opening of the whole question would adversely affect the position of part-Jews, whose contribution they deemed important for the future war effort.[91]

Events would soon confirm their prediction. In January 1940, the REM released a new order that significantly lowered the chances of part-Jews gaining admission to universities. The order stipulated that students of mixed parentage had to obtain the permission of the REM for registration and continuation of their studies. Part-Jews had to provide certificates of Aryan ancestry, a curriculum vitae, biographies of their close relatives, including their grandparents, and information about the occupation, public and war service of the Jewish members of the family. Certificates of work and army service and two photographs, one of them showing the petitioner's face from profile, had

[88] Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 222.
[89] Walk, *Sonderrecht*, pp. 187-188.
[90] Der Generalbevollmächtigte für die Reichsverwaltung to Ministerrat für die Reichsverteidigung z.Hd. des Herrn Reichsministers und Chef der Reichskanzei, February 16, 1940, BA Potsdam, R 43/941, pp. 105-107.
[91] Ministerpräsident Generalfeldmarschall Göring, Beauftragter für den Vierjahresplan, to Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei, April 7, 1940, in BA Potsdam, R 43/941, pp. 113-115.

to be attached to the application. Finally, they needed the rector's recommendation: he had to render a professional opinion on the question of whether the applicants "exhibited any of the characteristics of the Jewish race and to what extent."[92]

The above law significantly increased the power of the rectors, who, as "racial experts," now had to make far-ranging decisions on the race of the applicants. The rectors' decisions in turn reflected the attitude of their colleges toward non-Aryans. While very few professors had defended full-Jews before 1938, [93] academics often expressed concern about the expulsion of the *Mischlinge*. [94] The motives of these professors varied greatly: some resented the involvement of Nazi officials in the admission process, while others sought to protect the children of their colleagues from harassment.[95]

As the example of Siegfried Moll shows, besides professional solidarity, ties of friendship could also move some teachers to defend their students. This half-Jew worked as an assistant to Gottfried Feder, a prominent, early Nazi and co-author of the party program, at the Technical University of Berlin. Under Feder's protection, Moll registered for years without even asking the permission of the party chancellery and the REM. However, Feder's illness, in 1940, left Siegfried Moll in a vulnerable position. But even on his deathbed, Feder was determined to defend his student. Despite sharp protests from the party chancellery, Feder ensured that his assistant would be allowed to continue his studies and eventually graduate from the Technical University of Berlin.[96]

Since the protection of non-Aryans rarely derived from a principled rejection of racism, favors awarded to individuals could not stop the process of

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[92] RdErl. des REM, January 5, 1940, BA Koblenz, R 21/448, p 1.

[93] At the Technical University of Dresden, Professor Walter König sheltered at least one Jewish student between 1935 and 1938; see Matthias Lienert, "Die Studenten der Technischen Hochschule Dresden unter dem Nationalsozialismus," *Dresdner Hefte: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte*, 35 (1993), pp. 5-25.

[94] Horst Tietz, a *Mischling* of the first degree, was allowed to finish his studies at the University of Hamburg thanks to his teachers; see Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, p. 226.

[95] See, for example, the case of Maria-Eugenie Ehrenberg, who showed "much fewer signs of Jewish blood than the picture might suggest"; Rektor der Universität Göttingen to REM, April 18, 1942, BA Koblenz, R 21/10878, p. 223.

[96] Siegfried Moll to Stellvertreter des Führers, April 21, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10873, pp.148-149; Rektor der Technischen Hochschule Berlin to REM, January 12, 1942, BA Koblenz, R 21/10875, p. 351.

radicalization. On the contrary, deep-seated prejudices made many rectors the ideal agents to carry out the racial selection of students. Sources show that many rectors took their new jobs as racial experts seriously. The rector at the University of Berlin, for example, described the appearance of Hans Rosenthal, a *Mischling* of the second degree, as typically Jewish. Although Hans Rosenthal had excellent recommendations from other agencies, which praised him as punctual, talented, and ambitious, his name and physical appearance distracted the rector's attention and prompted him to reject his application.[97] Trapped in his prejudices, the head of the University of Giessen went so far as to invent ethnic features in order to judge the applicant more harshly. He described Günther Selig's appearance as "not particularly Jewish, although the eyes show some Jewish features. In regards to his racial soul, he did not make the impression of a Jew, although I [the rector] had only a short time to observe."[98]

In a few cases, the rectors were so sure of their expertise that they did not even need visible signs to identify the Jew in the applicant. In one case, the head of the Technical University of Berlin argued, "the characteristics of the Jewish race were clearly recognizable, if not in the appearance, in the attitude, of the applicant."[99]

Similarly, the dean of the Philosophy Faculty at the University of Breslau stated that the applicant, Walter Boehlich, "made an unmistakably Jewish impression. He had strong interests in arts and drama, as was usual in intellectually oriented Jewish circles."[100]

Unlike their purges of full-Jews, Gentile students played a relatively minor role in the expulsion of part-Jews after 1938. The present research confirms Michael Grüttner's conclusion: *Mischling* students rarely experienced open discrimination from their non-Jewish comrades.[101] This difference can be explained in part by socio-economic factors. As prospects of employment in

[97] Rektor der Universität Berlin to REM, [1940], UAB, Akten des Rektors und Senats, No. 1124.
[98] Rektor der Universität Giessen to REM, March 4, 1940, BA Koblenz, R 21/10873, p. 207.
[99] Rektor der Technischen Hochschule Berlin to REM, August 6, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10873, p. 554.
[100] Dekan der Philosophischen Fakultät to Rektor der Universität Breslau, February 5, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10874, p. 142.
[101] Grüttner, *Studenten im Dritten Reich*, pp. 224-225.

most professions improved after 1935, rationalization of anti-Jewish sentiments in terms of social conflict gradually lost its attraction among students. In any case, part-Jews were less visible and numerically too insignificant to represent a perceived danger to Gentile students.

While most students probably sympathized with part-Jews, the national student leadership, with its close connection to the party chancellery, however, continued to hold radical opinions on the issue of non-Aryans. It consistently tried to frustrate the desire of these students to begin or complete their studies. Only in rare cases did they allow personal considerations to override party discipline and fanatically-held political ideas. [102] Sources suggest that Nazi student leaders maintained their hard-line policy toward part-Jews even during the last years of the war. In February 1944, for example, at the prompting of the local student leader in Baden, the Reich Student Leadership demanded the expulsion of a "Jew," probably a *Mischling* of the first degree, from the University of Heidelberg.[103]

After 1939, the REM tried to balance the party's increasing radicalism with the conservatism of other ministries in order to preserve its monopoly over the admission process. The REM, supported by the Army High Command and the Reich Propaganda Ministry, continued to argue that deterioration in the status of part-Jews was economically damaging and morally harmful for a country at war. They challenged the legality of further restrictions by claiming that Hitler himself did not wish to see any change in the legal status of part-Jews during the war.[104]

As the war continued, however, the REM slowly began losing the battle with the party chancellery. After October 1940, it allowed the continuation of study by *Mischlinge* of the first degree only when they were close to graduation. Their admission was permitted only in exceptional cases and in faculties where there was no hindrance to their future employment. To avoid further

[102] In one such case, they conceded to the request of the local leader of the NSDStB at the Technical University of Vienna, who recommended that his friend, Franz Partisch, should be allowed to continue his studies. Partisch was a *Mischling* of the first degree. Incidentally, he was also a party member and in the leadership of the local NSDStB; see Dworzak, Studentenführer der Technischen Hochschule Wien, to Rektor der Technischen Hochschule Wien, January 17, 1942, BA Koblenz, R 21/10877, p. 42.

[103] Reichsstudentenführer to REM, September 2, 1944, BA Koblenz, R 21/10876, p. 194.

[104] Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei to Generalbevollmächtigte für die Reichsverwaltung, April 25, 1940, BA Potsdam, R 43/941, pp. 115-117.

bureaucratic discrimination at local levels, however, the REM asked the rectors not to transfer candidates who had obtained its permission to other universities.[105]

The Office of the Deputy Führer was not satisfied with this new order. At the end of 1940, it again demanded that its permission should be mandatory for the admission of part-Jews. The Office of the Deputy Führer also challenged the REM on the question of the education of war veterans. While the Reich ministries and the Army High Command argued that *Mischlinge* of the first degree who had participated in the war should be admitted or allowed to finish their studies, the Office of the Deputy Führer wanted to apply a more rigorous selection and permit only the enrollment of distinguished war veterans.[106] However, the REM found the demand to exclude wounded soldiers and war veterans with no decorations as too harsh. On the defensive, it sought to obtain the support of those other ministries whose conservative stand it had fought against just a few months earlier.[107] Finally, in January 1941, the two parties reached a compromise. The party chancellery permitted the temporary admission of wounded *Mischlinge* of the first degree. At the same time, the REM agreed to share power with the party chancellery over their admission.[108]

The relatively high number of *Mischlinge* of the first degree who distinguished themselves in battle was a constant embarrassment to Nazi zealots. Obviously, they believed that the virtue of bravery could not be reconciled with even a drop of Jewish blood. By May 1941, there were around 150 petitioners of the same background who had applied to universities on the basis of their outstanding war records.[109]

The obvious injustice these war veterans suffered at the hands of Nazi radicals and conformist university administrators prompted even Göring to become involved in the case of a seriously wounded soldier, Hans-Paul

[105] RdErl. des REM, October 25, 1940, BA Koblenz, R 21/448, p. 13.
[106] Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten," p. 195.
[107] REM to Stellvertreter des Führers, January 8, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/448, p. 21.
[108] REM to Stellvertreter des Führers, January 8, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/448, pp. 30-32.
[109] REM to Staatssekretär auf dem Dienstwege, May 7, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/10875, p. 103.

Walbaum, and grant him permission to start his university studies.[110] In July 1941, Hitler himself declared that he would not want to show ingratitude to decorated half-Jews. Pressured by the army leadership on the eve of the Russian campaign, he promised that the status of half-Jewish war veterans and all but politically unreliable *Mischlinge* of the second degree would be upgraded to the level of Germans after the war.[111]

Renewed interest in part-Jews was connected to the Nazi preoccupation with finding a "final solution to the Jewish problem" after the outbreak of war. Although the exact date is unknown, most historians agree that Hitler and his close associates decided upon the systematic killing of Jews between the spring and winter of 1941. Since the implementation of this decision required a more precise definition of "Aryans" and Jews, at the Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942, Nazi leaders tried to hammer out a compromise. While some participants demanded the extermination of the *Mischlinge*, others counseled caution. They had little sympathy for the Jews, but they realized that the death of a "half-Jew" would also mean the end of a "half-Aryan."[112] The failure to reach a consensus on the status of the *Mischlinge* provided a vital respite in the radicalization process and saved the majority of part-Jews from annihilation.

Still, the onset of the genocide had an adverse effect on the position of part-Jews. In the case of students, concessions given to war veterans and other selected individuals involved bureaucratic procedures that often dragged on for a year and had an uncertain outcome. Meanwhile, the party chancellery advanced its position at the expense of the REM. In September 1941, the REM officially gave up its monopoly over the admission of part-Jews. The new agreement with the party chancellery stipulated that university administrators and the bureaucrats in the REM had to consider the evaluation of the political reliability of the applicant by the district party leaders (*Gauleiter)* as well.[113] By January 1942, the party chancellery further sharpened the admission

[110] REM to Staatssekretär auf dem Dienstwege, May 7, 1941, BA Koblenz, R 21/ 10875, p. 104.
[111] Götz von Olenhusen, "Die nichtarischen Studenten," p. 196.
[112] Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 83.
[113] Götz von Olenhusen, "Die 'nichtarischen' Studenten," p. 196.

requirement. *Mischlinge* of the first degree, except for distinguished war veterans and wounded soldiers, could be admitted only when they - those who had not served in the war - had completed their secondary school studies in 1940, or were near graduation.[114]

The next step in radicalization came with the secret order of the REM in June 1942. It stipulated that *Mischlinge* of the first degree could be admitted to university only in cases where they had already been declared German, received or would have received decoration and promotion for bravery had they not been half-Jewish, or Hitler himself had allowed them to stay in the army. The secret order recognized the equal status of the party chancellery with the REM on the admission of half-Jews. Rectors still preserved the right to admit quarter-Jews without asking permission from higher authorities. However, they had to request the political expertise of the regional party leadership when there was doubt about the candidates' political reliability. But even they remained barred from studying agriculture and from admission to the state examination in the field of public administration.[115]

The deterioration in the position of part-Jewish students was connected to the growing influence of Martin Bormann over party affairs after 1942.[116] Bormann sought to destroy the separate category of *Mischling*, seeking to draw all half-Jews into the genocide program. He also wanted the remaining *Mischlinge* of higher degrees to undergo a strict selection process and to prevent - if necessary, by sterilization - the procreation of individuals who failed this procedure.[117] Under Bormann's influence, Hitler stated, in July 1942, that the question of part-Jews had been hitherto handled too softly. In the future, he argued, applications for equal status with Germans should be accepted only in exceptional cases; for example, when the applicant had demonstrated exceptional loyalty and service to the party prior to 1933, without having any knowledge about the Jewish ethnicity of his ancestors.[118]

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[114] NSDAP Partei-Kanzlei to Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei, January 31, 1942, BA Potsdam, R 43 II/941, pp. 124-126.
[115] RdErl. des REM, June 22, 1942, BA Koblenz, R 21/448, p. 36.
[116] On Bormann's career, see Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich: Portraits of the Nazi Leadership* (New York: Pantheon, 1970), pp. 125-136.
[117] Noakes, "Nazi Policy towards German-Jewish Mischlinge," pp. 337-352.
[118] Der Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei to Oberste Reichsbehörden, July 20, 1942, BA Koblenz, R 21/448, p. 41.

Hitler's new announcement appears both cynical and ignorant. As the bureaucrats in the REM pointed out, candidates at the end of 1942 had been on the average between ten and fourteen years old in 1933, and thus hardly in a position to perform exceptional services in the early Nazi movement.[119]

Giving in to pressure from the party chancellery, the REM ordered, in December 1942, that, in the future, quarter-Jews had to obtain the recommendation of the regional party leadership before their enrollment. Their admission to faculties of pharmacy became dependent upon the permission of the party chancellery and the Reich Ministry of the Interior as well. In addition, quarter-Jews were prohibited from studying and practicing veterinary medicine. While the employment of *Mischlinge* as doctors was still possible, conflicting orders produced an absurd scenario: in Nazi Germany, part-Jewish doctors could still examine people, while animals had to be attended only by non-Jews.[120]

Although the bureaucratic battle over the admission of *Mischlinge* seemed to have been decided in favor of the party chancellery and regional party offices, formal concession to the REM was still possible. In April 1943, the party chancellery warned the district leaders not to hinder the admission of quarter-Jews if no political reason existed.[121] At local levels rectors often habitually registered quarter-Jews without asking the permission of party chiefs. These rectors found ready support in the professional bureaucrats in the REM, who continued to admit distinguished war veterans with half-Jewish backgrounds, despite the open rejection of the same applications by the party chancellery.[122]

These concessions notwithstanding, Nazi policy tended toward constant radicalization. In April 1944, Hitler ordered a further restriction on the public lives of part-Jews.[123] As a response to this general directive, the REM began, in early May 1944, to register part-Jewish students and university teachers.

[119] Hilberg, *Destruction*, p. 79; reference to the order in a letter by REM to Partei-Kanzlei, March 14, 1944, BA R 21/10876, p. 189.
[120] Götz von Olenhusen, "Die nichtarischen Studenten," p. 201.
[121] Ibid., p. 202.
[122] See REM to Rektor der Universität München, January 8, 1944, BA Koblenz, R 21/10876, p. 97; Memorandum Kock, REM, March 14, 1944, BA Koblenz, R 21/10876, p. 193.
[123] Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei to Oberste Reichsbehörden, April 8, 1944, BA Koblenz, R 21/448, p. 46.

The list served as the first step toward their expulsion.[124] Less than two weeks later, the REM finally reacted to Hitler's order of July 1942, and made services to the early Nazi movement a prerequisite for the admission of *Mischlinge* of the first degree to German universities.[125] This was the last major initiative by the central authority to limit the number of part-Jews at German universities. Since the majority of universities had closed their doors by late 1944, this order had obviously little impact on part-Jewish students.

The increasing radicalization of the Nazi regime had a devastating impact on the number of part-Jewish students. Lists of part-Jewish students and teachers, drawn up at Hitler's order, contained only ninety-three half-Jewish students in May 1944. There were also 346 *Mischlinge* of the second degree and nine part-Jews of foreign citizenship.

Certain universities, such as the University of Berlin, University of Heidelberg, the University of Vienna, and the Technical University of Vienna, which had attracted a large number of Jewish and part-Jewish students before the Nazi rise to power in 1933, still registered the majority of *Mischlinge* in 1944. Apart from tradition, it is possible that part-Jewish students were attracted to large universities because the anonymity of big cities and universities offered them a better chance to evade Nazi control. Their enrollment was disrupted at the University of Hamburg and the University of Frankfurt am Main, however, where there remained only a few part-Jews by the end of war. On the other hand, many universities, such as Erlangen, Bonn, Rostock, Würzburg, Kiel, Posen, and the Medical Academy of Düsseldorf had no part-Jewish students at all. [126] These data clearly show that the radicalization of the Nazi regime had moved in the direction of the complete elimination of part-Jews from German institutions of higher learning. Had the war lasted for one more year, there would have been no part-Jews at German universities.

Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from the ultimate success of the Nazi policy toward full and part-Jews? What role did antisemitism among students,

[124] RdErl. des REM, May 4, 1944, BA Koblenz, R 21/729.
[125] RdErl. des REM, May 13, 1944, UAB, Akten des Universitätskurators, No. 765.
[126] "Verzeichnis der zum Studium zugelassenen Mischlinge," BA Koblenz, R 21/729.

professors, and academics play in the cleansing of the German universities from non-Aryan students?

The facts demonstrated in this article have shown that students acted as a vanguard of Nazism at institutions of higher learning after 1933. Their continuing demonstrations against non-Aryan professors and the tacit support that they gave to radical Nazis to attack or otherwise harass their Jewish colleagues helped legitimize the Nazi revolution. Radical Nazis, backed by perhaps the majority of students, also pressured the authorities to move against the Jewish students. Their unruly behavior especially terrified conservative academic administrators, many of whom began registering non-Aryans soon after the Nazi takeover.

Academic administrators acquiesced in and helped carry out the expulsion of Jewish students for a number of reasons: some were convinced Nazis and radical antisemites who believed that the “cleansing” of schools was a prerequisite for the building of a new Germany; others supported the removal of non-Aryans for professional reasons; still others saw permanent exclusion as the only way of restoring peace on the campuses. As a telling sign of the professors’ attitude toward Hitler’s regime, the rectors not only adhered to, but also tried to go beyond the first antisemitic laws in order to accelerate the expulsion process. While the Nazi government was certainly determined to implement its antisemitic program, without the active support of Gentile students and academics, it could not have reduced the number of Jewish students to a trickle by 1936, and expel the remaining few in the aftermath of the November 1938 pogrom.

While Gentile professors and students played a major role in the expulsion of full-Jews, they were much less eager to participate in the removal of part-Jews. Their more lenient attitude toward the *Mischlinge* can be explained in part by economic changes. As prospects of employment in most professions improved after 1935, students and professors no longer felt the need to rationalize their anti-Jewish sentiments in terms of a social conflict. In any case, part-Jews were more assimilated, less visible, and numerically too insignificant to represent a perceived danger to Gentile professors and students.

In this article we have seen that many rectors enjoyed their new job as “racial experts,” and Nazi students continued to press for the expulsion of part-Jews after 1938. However, we have also shown that these fanatics ceased to represent the opinion of the majority of academics and students. In fact, as the case studies have demonstrated, Gentile professors often sheltered their part-Jewish students from harassment by radical Nazis for a number of reasons. Academic administrators defended their *Mischling* students mainly as a way of expressing their disapproval of the constant meddling of Nazi organizations in university affairs. Moreover, many professors had become friends with their part-Jewish students; while others sought to protect the children of their relatives, colleagues, or friends. Like Nazis in the various Reich ministries, many academic administrators sympathized with part-Jewish students, especially if the candidates had proven their patriotism and loyalty to the Nazi regime during the war.

In all these cases, however, their protection of part-Jews had nothing to do with the rejection of the ideology of the Nazi regime. In their fight against Nazi radicals, the bureaucrats in the various ministries and academic administrators at the individual universities simply sought to protect students whom they considered mainly Aryan. In any case, their desire to shelter non-Aryan students foundered on the intransigence of the party chancellery and local party organizations. As a sign of the increasing radicalization of the regime, by the end of 1944, the party chancellery had soundly defeated the REM in the struggle over the fate of *Mischling* students, destroying the remnants of the centuries-old Jewish learning at German universities in the process.

Source: *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXX, Jerusalem 2002, pp. 189-228.