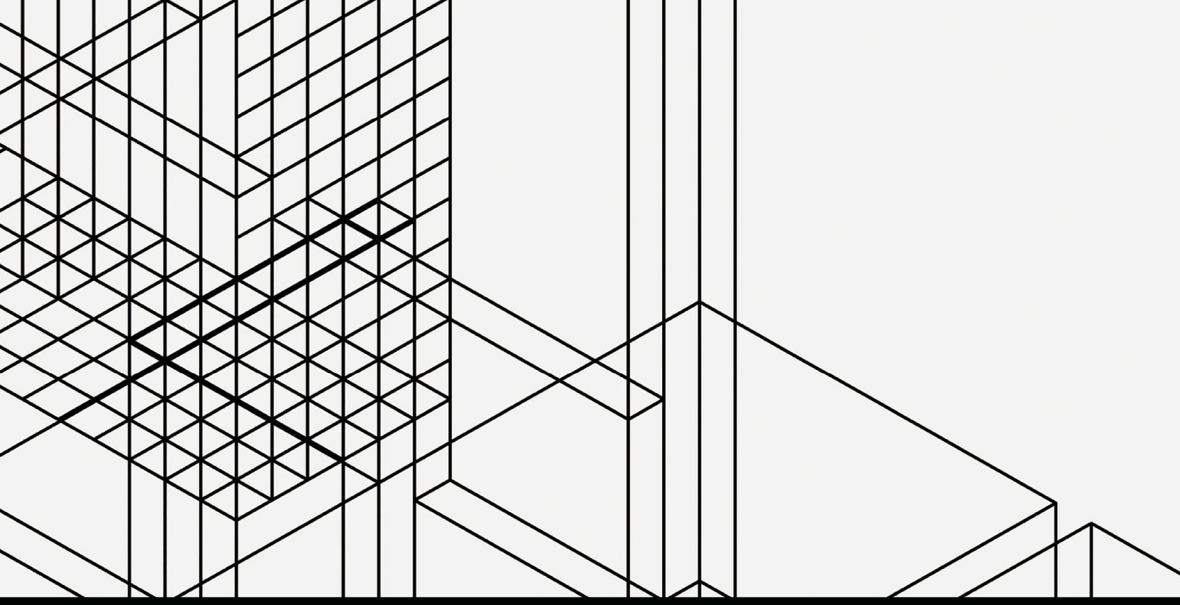


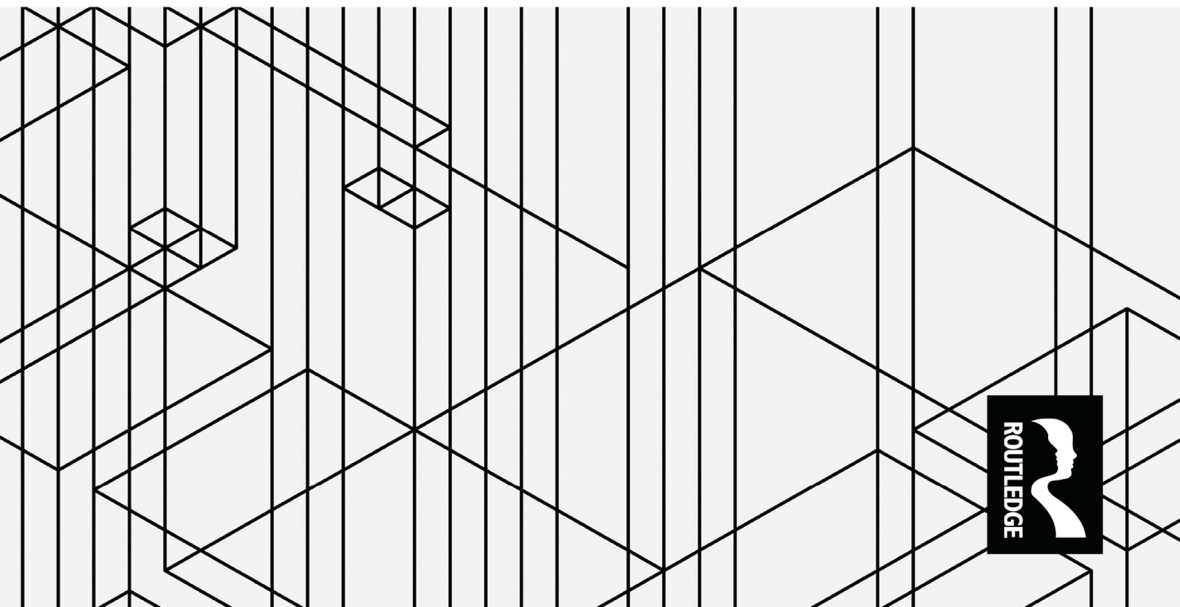
Routledge Studies in Second World War History

STAGING THE THIRD REICH

ESSAYS IN CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Anson Rabinbach

Edited by Stefanos Geroulanos and Dagmar Herzog



Staging the Third Reich

A widely celebrated intellectual historian of twentieth-century Europe, Anson Rabinbach is one of the most important scholars of National Socialism working over the last forty years. This volume collects, for the first time, his pathbreaking work on Nazi culture, antifascism, and the after-effects of Nazism on postwar German and European culture. Historically detailed and theoretically sophisticated, his essays span the aesthetics of production, messianic and popular claims, the ethos that Nazism demanded of its adherents, the brilliant and sometimes successful efforts of antifascist intellectuals to counter Hitler's rise, the most significant concepts to emerge out of the 1930s and 1940s for understanding European authoritarianism, the major controversies around Nazism that took place after the regime's demise, the philosophical claims of postwar philosophers, sociologists, and psychoanalysts—from Theodor Adorno to Hannah Arendt and from Alexander Kluge to Klaus Theweleit—and the role of Auschwitz in European history.

Anson Rabinbach is Philip and Beulah Robbins Professor of History Emeritus at Princeton University. He is the author of *The Human Motor* (1990), *In the Shadow of Catastrophe* (1997), and *The Eclipse of the Utopias of Labor* (2018), and co-editor of *The Third Reich Sourcebook* (2013). He is a founding editor of *New German Critique*.

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Staging the Third Reich

Essays in Cultural and Intellectual History

Anson Rabinbach

Edited by Stefanos Geroulanos and Dagmar Herzog

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Contents

"The attraction of fascism itself"

Anson Rabinbach's writings on Nazism and its opponents

Stefanos Geroulanos and Dagmar Herzog

Anson Rabinbach, Philip and Beulah Rollins Professor of History Emeritus and former Director of the European Cultural Studies program at Princeton University, is the author of five books, the editor of several others, and a founding editor of the journal *New German Critique* ever since 1973. Respected as a major historian of twentieth-century European thought, and known as one of the most important scholars of Nazi culture working in the last thirty years, he has bridged intellectual history with labor history, critical theory, and the history of technology. Until now, however, Rabinbach's work on Nazi culture, antifascism, and the after-effects of Nazism on postwar European culture has remained dispersed across a large number of publications, many of them unknown, and in a four-decade-long career of teaching and conference and editorial participation. These texts were so scattered that before we embarked on this project, neither of us had even heard of a significant number of those that we include here, despite having known Rabinbach well as both mentor and friend for twenty-plus years. Out of the close to forty main publications in these fields, we have gathered the twenty-two most significant of Rabinbach's essays on Nazism, antifascism, and the theories and debates on fascism after 1945. These present both his contribution to Nazi and European intellectual and cultural history and his manner of engaging with the ways in which the Third Reich's main actors and its opponents staged their culture and their conflict with one another.

Part I brings together Rabinbach's principal essays on National Socialism. Some of the essays in this section, for example "Nazi Culture" and "The Humanities in Nazi Germany," treat broad swaths of culture and politics in Germany, and explore the complicity of intellectuals and other elites—both by conviction and by careerism—in the Nazi enterprise. Others, notably the essays on Albert Speer's work and the architecture of the "Beauty of Labor" program, on reading, on the women of *Kraft durch Freude*, as well as the introduction to Klaus Theweleit's book *Male Fantasies* address more specific aspects, enriching our grasp of the aesthetics, psychological appeal, and radicalization of the Nazi movement and regime.

Part II gathers Rabinbach's essays on antifascism, parts of a long-standing project that did not materialize into a book. It brings forth the history of

antifascism as a political movement—one that quickly came under the umbrella and power of the Comintern—but also, along with that, a series of innovative theories of fascism by its intellectual opponents (notably Ernst Bloch and Wilhelm Reich). Key pieces concern Willi Münzenberg and Otto Katz's tireless efforts to establish an international antifascist front extending from Moscow to Hollywood, and explore both the activists' successes, such as *The Brown Book*, and their failures, for example the attempt to rescue the imprisoned German Communist Party leader Ernst Thälmann. Antifascism has come to be of wide interest once more in recent years, and is elaborately debated, not least on social media; Rabinbach's essays provide a crucial alternate genealogy.

Part III contextualizes historically major controversies around Nazism that took place after the regime's demise. These include a critical appreciation of the searching analysis of postwar mystifications of Nazism by philosopher Wolfgang Fritz Haug and of the 1970s theories of Nazism advanced by the Marxist political scientist Reinhard Kühnl; and a detailed study of the Frankfurt School's attempts, both in US exile and in Europe, to theorize the place of antisemitism within fascism and within European thought more generally. Other essays offer novel insights into the Eichmann/Arendt controversy in New York, the *Historikerstreit* in 1980s Germany, and the debates on totalitarianism from the 1920s through to the Gulf Wars. This part deepens our insight into the intellectual history of the Cold War era and has utterly novel takes on the periodization and interpretation of stages in the politics of memory of the Shoah both in Jewish intellectual circles in the US and in West and then united Germany.

Throughout, Rabinbach's profound respect for and engagement with theoretical approaches (from post-Marxist to psychoanalytic to Foucauldian and biopolitical, and especially his marked, longstanding, detailed attention to the Frankfurt School) is unmistakable. (In fact, in Rabinbach's putting-to-use of psychoanalysis, he shows familiarity with a very broad range of theoretical lines, including explorations of preoedipal development such as those of Klein, Mahler, or Deleuze and Guattari, in addition to the more standard, often oedipal-complex-focused, Frankfurt-School-promoted preoccupations with the puzzle of submission to authority.) It is this openness to theory of the most diverse kinds that has recurrently facilitated his extraordinarily astute and fresh explanations of a plethora of social and cultural phenomena. But contrary to any number of other thinkers, Rabinbach has also never folded his cards as a historian or given in to explanations led by theory alone.[1] Criticizing post-psychoanalytic approaches to the Holocaust, for example, he proposes that "A historical approach to 'traumatic' events demands a more rigorous and specific approach, attentive to the profoundly distinct ways in which the apocalyptic event is deployed and configured."[2] Emphasis should be placed on "more rigorous and specific," for at issue is "a more sophisticated understanding," a more complex historicity, and not some "return to the conventional narrative approach to political or social history."[3] In this pursuit, Rabinbach is very unusual: as strongly theoretical (and useful for historians, philosophers, and

comparativists working with theory) as he remains skeptical of theory and committed to complicating theory through historical research and writing. Moreover, almost alone in his generation of male historians, Rabinbach from the start incorporated attention to women's history and above all took seriously the acute relevance of sexual politics for making sense of Nazism and anti-Nazism alike.

* * * *

Rabinbach's early study under George Mosse—in the 1960s one of three historians researching Nazism as an ideology and a culture, and by the 1980s the most significant—structures part of Rabinbach's approach. Rabinbach credits Mosse, along with Peter Gay and Fritz Stern, with being the first to "illuminat[e] the manifold ways in which the Nazi revolution of 1933 did not emerge *sui generis* from Hitler and his paladins," when it "could be traced back to distinctive mentalities that were formed in the Kaiserreich and coalesced into a politically virulent agenda among a wide variety of intellectuals, students, and professors in the years following Germany's defeat in the First World War." Or, as he also observed, again invoking Mosse, Gay, and Stern, "cultural history was an American undertaking"—necessary not least as "so many German scholars refused to acknowledge the popularity, indeed the consensus character, of Hitler's rule."[4] From the start, then, Rabinbach committed himself to taking the histories of ideas and of culture (broadly conceived) seriously as drivers of historical change in their own right. Culture, far from being some sort of trivial topic in comparison with economics, high politics, or war, was in fact essential for grasping the breadth of popular support for Hitler's policies as well as participation in the Third Reich's many crimes.

In keeping with the insight that the emotional-ideological roots of German fascism, as indeed also of its critics and opponents, needed to be sought in longer-term cultural shifts, Rabinbach first immersed himself in the study of *pre*-Nazi culture. After considering (and then, on Mosse's advice, jettisoning) a project on 1930s Zionism, Rabinbach chose to write his dissertation (and first book) on the underappreciated phenomenon of Austromarxism, tracing its itinerary from the birth of the new Austria and social-democratic government in 1918 through the Red Vienna years on to the collapse of the regime and takeover by the authoritarian-conservative Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss in 1932–1934.

In what would become a hallmark of his later work, already here it was noteworthy that, instead of focusing on traditional sites of Marxist thought—or on specifically *German* fascism—Rabinbach effectively bypassed the conventional story. Placing Austromarxism, with its notable differences from Stalinism but also from other Western variants of socialist thought, at the heart of any study of interwar Europe, he broke with the usual organization of intellectual history into East versus West, with the rise-of-Germany narrative, and with the reduction of socialism to the Soviet Union. In recovering the richness and variety of the Austrian experiment, he also clarified the severity of the loss caused

by the crushing of the Austrian Left and the First Austrian Republic, while simultaneously offering a new vantage on the Central European specificity of Germanic fascism in its earliest incarnation, giving room as well for a more comprehensive understanding of the political and ideological clashes of the interwar period. (Today, as scholars are turning again to study the Habsburg Empire, its collapse, and its place in both the development of national and international politics and economic theories, this focus seems all the more prescient.[5]) *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism*, moreover, was no less notable for its demonstration of Rabinbach's early involvement in debates on Freud, as well as showcasing underacknowledged and creative uses of Marx both in the interwar period and in 1970s historiography and politics alike. Simultaneously, his other studies dating to that period, such as "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich" (1976) and critiques of theories of social organization, like "Poulantzas and the Problem of Fascism" (also 1976), opened further lines toward questions of both aesthetics and labor, both of which would become central to Rabinbach's second and best-known book, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (1991).[6]

The other part of Mosse and Co.'s above-cited core apercu—that the Nazi revolution was by no means only a top-down enterprise but held enormous appeal both for intellectuals and the wider populace—may now, two decades into the twenty-first century, seem like incontrovertible expert consensus. But this view was in fact utterly challenging to conventional wisdom even long after the decades when West Germany–based postwar historians collaborated with jurists to minimize and veil the extent of both elite and ordinary Germans' participation in the crimes of Nazism—a subject Rabinbach pursues to devastating effect in "The Humanities in Nazi Germany."[7] Or as Rabinbach and Jessica Benjamin summarily comment (in Chapter 3) with regard to the climate of the pre-1970s Federal Republic: there reigned a "suffocating atmosphere of good behavior and bad faith, uneasy and pervasive shame coupled with a monumental evasion of responsibility," as the years of reconstruction were marked by an "almost incomprehensible amnesia."[8] Cultural history, meanwhile, was not the only kind of history considered dispensable or insignificant. Asked in 2008 as to why there was also no field comparable to *intellectual* history in the West Germany of the first postwar decades, even though historians there were just as interested in understanding the legacy of the *Kaiserreich* and the reasons for the failure of the Weimar Republic, and why postwar German scholars downplayed cultural-intellectual factors more generally, including antisemitism, in favor of structures and institutions, Rabinbach replied:

> The German historical profession was blocked from the very beginning with regard to the ability to write the history of National Socialism honestly and authentically, because it was afraid of two things: of the words of the National Socialists and of the names of the National Socialists. The books that they [the postwar generation] wrote, as good as they also were, could not engage with the names and the words, because the bearers of those

> names were still living and the words that had been written down during the NS-period could not simply be erased.[9]

Rabinbach has explored the consequences of this inhibition time and again, and not only in direct examinations of German historiography. In his study of the founder of Zurich Dada and anti-war activist Hugo Ball, Rabinbach revealed Ball's post-1945 expurgation of antisemitic passages from his 1919 *Critique of the German Intelligentsia*.[10] Along a different line, he shows how Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's *The Inability to Mourn* (1967) both succeeded in establishing a psychoanalytic and intellectual ground for thinking about authoritarianism and memorialization, and also became itself a problem, an object of critique, as psychoanalysts, journalists, and historians sought to capture different ways of thinking about the past.[11] Having been entirely normal in the decades before World War II, antisemitism became taboo after the war. But Rabinbach returns recurrently also to the ways the incapacity in confronting entanglements with the Nazi past constricted otherwise creative and important scholars. He does so always with subtlety and sensitivity. Along these lines, for instance, his recent study of Reinhart Koselleck drives home the point that Koselleck's proximity to the Nazi jurist and theorist Carl Schmitt in his early years is troubling not so much as such but rather in its indirect but no less significant consequences: in this case the extent to which it facilitated the development of a metahistory by Koselleck that prioritized the period 1750–1850 and demoted as derivative the key political concepts new to—indeed so decisive for—the twentieth century, for example fascism, totalitarianism, genocide.[12]

In fact, one could argue that it is precisely his grappling with this persistent German reticence—the multi-decade unwillingness in the postwar to talk about the antisemitism, the criminality, and the popularity of Nazism, about the appeal of irrationality, or indeed about what might be called the sublime dimension in Nazism—which has provoked and enabled numerous of Rabinbach's innovations. Uninterested in quarreling directly, Rabinbach has repeatedly performed a kind of end-run around the standardly extant historiographical priorities in order to engage, from quite different vantages and with a broad variety of source bases, the cultural and intellectual, but also the corporeal, psychological-emotional, and aesthetic impulses facilitating National Socialism's triumph. Repeatedly, he has been drawn to theorists who have given thought to what could be called (in Rabinbach and Benjamin's shorthand) "the fascist unconscious"[13]—from Theweleit to Eric Michaud—and has been willing to explore, again and again, also desires, anxieties, longings, and fantasies as consequential factors in history.

* * * *

Rabinbach's interpretation of fascism and National Socialism begins with several concomitant operations. First, the history of fascism and antifascism is not a history of dead or dated ideas, but fundamentally a recursive operation entangled in a continuing set of debates that resonate broadly and persistently,

and that manifest as far more than simply the framework out of which Rabinbach's own initial scholarship grew. Key concepts (like totalitarianism), temporalities (each of them specific to different aspects of fascist culture and its consumption), and practices (including violent ones) can only be understood now through that lens. At the same time, second, we do in this volume also reach the study of the character of National Socialist culture "itself," and Rabinbach's vital insights on it. Yet third—and no less significantly—Nazism too was and is staged by its confrontation with antifascism—and the difference between their histories requires us to recognize some fundamental asymmetries in addition to the intricate ways in which these two movements were held together.

In Rabinbach's writing, fascism's history is intertwined with its memory and with its historicization: it is simply not possible to engage "it" as though it were not inflected by decades of scholarship and public debate. An engagement with postwar Germany is an engagement with a fascism that is still a semi-living thing, not simply in the sense of a political debate current then and now but just as much as a way of being and doing that had extended past 1945, where events both scholarly and quotidian continued to engage it and be warped by it.[14] Vice versa, fascism, once rethought, rejected, and re-historicized, time and again continued to define its own past, its meaning for the present. The essays brought together in this book stage this concern over and over, in Part I as historiography establishes the space for interpretation, in Part II as Rabinbach shows how the antifascist struggle in many respects set the terms of discussions of fascism, in Part III thanks to the interventions that Rabinbach pursued, for example vis-à-vis Marxist interpretations of National Socialism in the 1970s, and later just as much in the *Historikerstreit*. Thus the history of interpretations of fascism is entwined with the history of fascism, and Rabinbach's interventions in ongoing controversies serve in turn as primary documents in historiography since 1970, as documents of intellectual activism and political engagement that are simultaneously demonstrations of intellectual rigor.

One of the points to which Rabinbach repeatedly returned was that Nazism succeeded above all as cultural fusion: in a kaleidoscopic multiplicity of ways, it blended traditionalisms with modernities and irrationalism with rationalism, and —not least—"balanced technology and innovation with Germanic spirituality and racist imperialism."[15] It offered, in short, something for everyone—except for its enemies and victims. Critically, indeed, it offered a great deal not just to those already privileged, but also to vast segments of the populace who had for quite some time not felt particularly empowered. Moreover, it did so not by designing, effecting, or imposing a single, simple, overarching ideology or myth. Rather, for Rabinbach it is essential that this fusion was "a fundamentally unstable admixture" replete with contradictions, that "stuck" only because of them.[16] This allowed the NSDAP and the Nazi elite both to generate enthusiasm and to rein it in, to expect certain kinds of behavior but also to benefit from alternative endorsements. Internal differentiation and philosophical divergences provided Germans in the 1930s (and perhaps as late as 1942) with different ways for this cultural fusion to mean something to them. National

Socialism seemed to offer at once the dynamic myth of living in a new world, the ethnoracial basis for belonging, and the little everyday elements of experience (with all the bumps and changes that this involved) that allowed for a fluid kind of consensus.

Already early on, Rabinbach was intrigued by scholars who strove to explain the mechanisms by which National Socialism had achieved that—in Hannah Arendt's memorable (and today again worryingly, globally pertinent) shorthand formulation—"temporary alliance between the elite and the mob."[17] Hence, for example, Rabinbach's appreciation, already in 1974, for Reinhard Kühnl's elaboration to the effect that "fascism delivers to capitalism the mass basis that the latter could not hold through bourgeois democratic means." And further:

> In return the upper classes put the state, economic, and military apparatus at the disposal of the fascists, with whose help the party dictatorship could be established internally and external expansion could be carried on. These goals correspond to both the conceptions of the fascist movement and the interests of the upper classes.[18]

But Rabinbach was just as interested in wanting to understand two additional matters: one, the means by which that broad "mass basis" was attracted and sustained and, no less significant, how ardent support for the regime or its programs was—the empirical evidence showed—apparently not even necessary, as even disinterest or tuning-out could function to maintain the system's viability.[19]

Here, precisely, was where the very concept of *culture* needed to be extended, enriched, and deepened. Thus, also drawing from cultural anthropology, Rabinbach increasingly distinguished for heuristic purposes between three domains of Nazi culture: the "sacred," the "aesthetic," and the "popular."[20] The "aesthetic" dimension has been key to his research since the early 1976 study of the "Beauty of Labor" program and the ways it generated an image of Nazi modernization.[21] The popular, similarly, dates to early efforts to understand quotidian mass participation.[22] Yet he went far further than this trifurcation. He attended also to the ways in which propaganda sometimes missed its aims.[23] And above all he brought into his analyses more difficult-to-articulate but absolutely critical dimensions, including ways of *moving* people—physically and emotionally and visually—into small- and into large-group settings, into rallies but also into vacations, into private pleasures and into public successes. In one of his most evocatively compressed summary statements, Rabinbach observes:

> Anti-Semitism, even when it gained a measure of public support in the Weimar Republic, does not explain why the National Socialists succeeded at the polls or why their adherents flocked to them. Propaganda, for example, did not directly mobilize women voters, but organizations, especially local clubs and associations, some of which provided soup kitchens, lessons in hygiene, along with education in party ideology and in "buying

> German" did …. It is useful therefore to distinguish between the universe of choreographed representations, the sacred or the aesthetic sublime, from the non-aesthetic vulgarity of street brawls, sausages, beer, air shows, May Day rallies, holiday celebrations, and the apparent "normality" of referenda, plebiscites, KdF tours of Mallorca, and academic conferences, all of which certainly played as great if not a greater role in securing the cultural synthesis that took hold after the regime was in place. There is no doubt that Germany was inundated with Nazi propaganda after 1930. But just as important were the constant meetings and mobilization—some 34,000 in 1930 alone—that outstripped all other parties.

Just as he advocates for a dynamic quality specific to the experience and even physicality of lived popular engagement—a kind of embodiment in the crowd—so too he prioritizes the value of everyday entertainment, "unpoliticized" private life, and private assumption of Nazism.

> The "sublime" culture of Nuremberg rallies, the Bayreuth Festival, commemorations of Schlageter and Horst Wessel, approved art, music, theater, and "Nordic" ideas played a role in the efforts of the regime to create an official "Nazi culture" but its impact should not be exaggerated.

Instead: "The 'vulgar' entertainments, film, radio, sports, fashion, seem to have been far more effective, especially when politics was 'folded' into the more palatable fare." So too did another kind of distance develop, namely from official and aestheticized ideology and culture: "So did the withdrawal into the private realm of sex, reading, crosswords, card-playing, and drink, all of which permitted the dictatorship to appear less threatening and more hospitable."[24] This is not to say that the messianic claims and aesthetic valorization on which Rabinbach often focuses are to him simply ornamental. Instead, he emphasizes, they contributed to a particular morality that allowed for genocidal violence. Yet without his repurposing of insights going beyond reductive accounts of a history of ideas and his persistent emphasis on the at once high-and-low culture effect of Nazism, debates over the past thirty years become incomprehensible.

Two further indispensable insights clarify the role of "ideas" in the narrower sense. One was that adherence to or affirmative confirmation of a set of ideological principles was by no means demanded of the wider populace or even of pivotal actors in the regime's crimes. To this end, Rabinbach came to emphasize that "intellectual fealty to National Socialism required not so much ideological consistency as an ethos or *Gesinnung*, a willingness to adhere to the precepts of the worldview which was vague and indistinct enough to embrace a variety of related perspectives."[25] Rabinbach first elaborated this point on an ethos in a discussion of Jewish messianism, and later recalled it with reference to the philosopher Hans Sluga: "what mattered was the *appeal* to the worldview rather than the worldview itself."[26] Rabinbach's

point is now echoed widely among younger scholars of Nazism, who describe what Nazism asked of its followers less as an ideology and instead above all as a *Haltung*, a "stance," "disposition," or "posture."[27] A second matter was no less significant. Again, one did not, in the Third Reich, need to agree with the ideas put forward by the propagandists. Instead, fatefully, these ideas accrued reality, and turned into (all too often deadly) consequences, simply by *being debated*. Or as Rabinbach put it in an illustrative example,

> Whether "race" was to be defined biologically, culturally, anthropologically, or philosophically remained, at least in principle and for a time, a relatively open and controversial question. What was crucial, however, was not that compulsory concepts were *decided upon*, but that such questions were *discussed* in the schools, the judiciary, and in the university faculties.[28]

It is these insights, in turn, that finally lead back to the question of the participation of so many university-educated (and university-employed) intellectuals in the "normalization" of the Nazi worldview, as internally flexible and capacious as it was, and hence, coming full circle, also to the question of why so many postwar intellectuals, too, had such difficulty coming to terms with it. As Rabinbach, writing with Sander Gilman in the Preface to their monumental (900+-page) document anthology, *The Third Reich Sourcebook* (2013), notes with weary sorrow and not a small amount of disgust toward "the majority of the so-called intelligentsia of the Third Reich":

> Reading the philosophers, philologists, physicians, and historians of the day reveals their intellectual blindness, which was clothed in language that can be described only as execrable …. Reading ever more broadly in the primary texts of the period … we found … only ever-increasing circles of the banal, the trivial, the destructive, the hateful, and the inane.[29]

The ideas need not have been "believed," either by their authors or their readers, but as Rabinbach and Gilman conclude, that did not make them ineffectual: "This deadly mix deformed the experiences of those living in Europe from 1933 to 1945 and caused the suffering and deaths of millions."[30]

* * * *

As Rabinbach's approaches to ideas, culture, and concepts have been intimately connected to his interpretations of German history, a more explicit exposition of his methodological priorities can be useful, for the readers of this volume as of his oeuvre as a whole. For Rabinbach has established his priorities—often without calling much attention to them—partly to avoid classic intellectual-historical traps:

> one was to avoid pure textualism, [which would mean] to write about these thinkers as if they were writing for the *Journal of Modern Philosophy*

> and completely separated from the world that they lived in. And the other trap was to over-contextualize, to write as if the ideas were simply reflections of the events themselves.[31]

The critique implicit here takes wide aim: at a trust in "context" (conventionally identified with social history of ideas and the "Cambridge School") as much as with the persistence of approaches that return to texts themselves.[32] But finding a way through and around these problems has led to the development of a complex repertoire for handling various key difficulties in intellectual history, context being perhaps the least complex of them.

The first element of Rabinbach's approach is an attention to multiple, coinciding dynamics. Briefly, in each of these dynamics, the meaning of particular texts and concepts (or else, the rationale of particular intellectual choices, or the synthesis of a particular culture) does not emerge out of texts, contexts, or their interrelations, but rather out of frictions within each dynamic and conflicts between them. Thus, in each essay Rabinbach looks in parallel at biographical, textual, conceptual-historical, social-historical, political, aesthetic, historiographical, and longue-durée philosophical spaces and problems, treating them as different, non-concentric scales that interact. We might describe these as coexisting, superimposed force fields, each of which with its own historicity. Rabinbach's essays begin with particular figures (whether individuals, encounters, concepts, events, texts, or problems) but these figures and texts are never like centers surrounded by one or more milieus, each of these spreading further out; instead each such milieu thrives on tensions; texts and ideas coalesce thanks to the fact that tensions both construct and derail these figures and their claims.

Thus a decisive quality of *The Human Motor*, for example, resides in the way that Rabinbach retains the tensions between energy and fatigue—and the understanding of energy and fatigue—across a history that engages laboratory scientists, laboratories, public intellectuals, academic departments and journals, then institutions committed to diagnosing social ills relating to productivity and exhaustion, socialist (and other) advocates for workers' welfare, policymakers with their own motivations. But Rabinbach does not stop there: he also jumps levels, so to speak, to consider particular concepts or practices at textual levels or at the broad level of thinking about modernity. Technological concepts cannot be imagined apart from the history of labor; labor cannot be separated from the energetic and mechanical framework in which it takes place, and in which human bodies gain and lose strength. In *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, he looks at individual texts as themselves events in the shadow of World Wars, and then at their authors' intellectual frames, at their interactions with others in their "fields," at the transformation of very specific tropes, and then also at grander levels—the fate of humanism, the status of German guilt, and also "the paradoxical character of modernism for giving expression to and ultimately sanctioning violence and excess while simultaneously canonizing that transgression in an 'aesthetic of the sublime'."[33] Essays on humanism, spirit, and guilt in the postwar period resolutely refuse to leave the concepts unhistoricized, yet

retain a clear sense of these concepts' capacity to "jump" from one scale to another—at times needing to be located at a very specific point, at others at much broader ones—and to only exist because of tensions with one another.[34] In *The Eclipse of the Utopias of Labor*, too, he looks at very broad terms (the mechanical/mimetic, the energetic, the digital) as definitive of long periods—entire centuries—only to then refract them across very local debates with their own temporalities, from social hygiene to accident prevention.

In each such case, Rabinbach looks at stakes big and small, some formative, others seemingly only reactive. None of these fields gain the upper hand for long in his exposition, argument, and explanation. In this volume too, meaning is dynamically generated in the meeting points between (a) conflicting interpretations of historical events, (b) political and ideological pressures, (c) intellectual and conceptual developments, (d) ambiguous attempts at cultural syntheses. None of these suffice on their own, and none take a historical course that is not defined by tensions. Thus, for instance, in an early text Rabinbach insists on confronting Nazism's "epochal" with its "historically specific" or "historically limited" character.[35] He looks at Ernst Bloch's attempts to construct an alternative antifascism as attempts hamstrung from the beginning by his positionality vis-à-vis ideological, alternate philosophical, and social problems.[36] He also tries this on the bigger subjects. To return to a point made above, but revisiting it now with an idea to Rabinbach's method: when considering something as broad and even vague as "Nazi culture," and while also parsing out three domains—aesthetic, sacred, and popular—in which to study it, Rabinbach further distinguishes four levels:

> between the by no means compatible ideologemes of the core elite of the Nazi leadership, the worldview broadly disseminated to the German public (the bulk of which was largely about ethnic membership in the *Volksgemeinschaft* and devoid of overt antisemitism), the *Gesinnung* or beliefs actually required of the German citizen in everyday life, and finally, the reception of the culture produced in (not necessarily only by) the Third Reich.[37]

Put another way, even to begin studying Nazi culture, Rabinbach has first identified three domains, the last of which (the popular) directly undercuts the other two; and then he looks at four levels where Nazi culture operates. Each of these too, moreover, is quite different in form—fanaticism, whether sincere or performed, for internal consumption within conversations and memos; ideology produced as pedagogy or public service; techniques of the body and interpersonal interactions in everyday life; explicit participation (or indifference) of the people.

What ideas offer to Rabinbach is not, in other words, access into a specific field, nor a way of practicing "cultural history" as this is conventionally understood. Instead, in a manner that recalls the Frankfurt School (and especially insights from Adorno and Benjamin), ideas exist actively and precariously only as they are being constantly pulled in different directions by all these different

actors and within these many interlocked fields. Rabinbach additionally attends to other ineffable features that can give heft to ideas, or torque their impact, from "celebrity" to "timing."

Second, several of the essays in this book attend to intellectual *events*: texts, films, debates, or intellectual operations that constitute events in their own right and that reconstitute the terrain of intellectual activity and the constellation through which the past is perceived and understood. Indeed, Rabinbach consistently looks at the way in which intellectual events, controversies, and particular political moments stage a collision between broader cultural tendencies and movements and underlying conflicts. Intellectual "events," he writes in "Eichmann in New York," "capture the public imagination at a moment when something larger is at stake in how public culture goes about redefining the prohibitions—or indeed incitements—attached to certain emblematic experiences and ideas."[38] The idea that an intellectual (or political) event crystallizes a whole mess of other dynamics demands a keen eye for identifying the stakes—what is involved but not immediately visible—and is also essential to showing the kind of agency that can be attributed to texts. This renders simplistic the usual intellectual-historical attention to the specificity of moments, and to the shifts of the public, institutional, ideological, and intellectual grounds on which events take place, and as such it constitutes a methodological intervention, a framework that allows us to study concepts, texts, and movements, and by the same gesture to carry out that eminently difficult historical task: to evaluate their significance. In *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, he proposes

> to treat the "external" historical event not as "background" or a social fact but rather as the organizing moment in how a specific text is constructed and how it operates. In this sense a text is more than a document, but it is also not entirely open to "dialogic" exchange. The event structures the response, even if the response "supplements" it by redeploying or repositioning the event in a new constellation.[39]

This leads to

> a more sophisticated understanding of the impact of events on the ways that traditional narratives are composed and, perhaps more important, also rendered incoherent … the ways that the same event is understood as a marker in a tradition that simultaneously made that tradition implausible.[40]

This approach to the event—a subject of major concern in recent French thought, from Levinas and Derrida to Badiou[41]—is evident throughout this volume, whether when Rabinbach writes of Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* or the revelatory (exculpatory or exposé) biographies concerning Albert Speer, when he writes about the *Brown Book* ("Staging Antifascism") or about Bloch's *Heritage of Our Times*, about Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's *The Inability to Mourn* which continued to generate debate in the 1990s, some

25–30 years after its publication; or about the vituperative New York debate on Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, or about the *Historikerstreit*.

Third, Rabinbach's understanding of intellectual history has all along reached far beyond the domain conventionally covered by the term "ideas." Where all too often intellectual history remains history of ideas by another name, Rabinbach has pursued the stakes of intellectual debate for broader cultural-historical trends and particularly for the history of the human body and psyche—a history that in turn informs aspects of his interpretations of events. It is not only a matter of showing how intellectuals and even ideas are "embodied" (though it is certainly that too). Rather it is all the more a spreading out once more of the tension hubs where meaning is generated and intellectuals become actors. This is most evident in *The Human Motor*, where scientists' theorizations and calculations of the body were joined by the pressures imposed by fatigue in labor and social policy. Explicitly negotiating in that book with Michel Foucault's own approach and influence, Rabinbach enables fatigue to become a net for catching in its orbit at once bodies and thought.[42] He has pursued some of these problems further in *The Eclipse of the Utopias of Labor*. There, Rabinbach suggests that metaphors of the body/machine relationship have had a formative role in policy, philosophy, and everyday life.[43] These were fundamentally mimetic in the eighteenth century, but were gradually replaced by productivist motor metaphors in the period roughly covered between 1800 and 1970 and were and are in turn being increasingly supplanted by digital metaphors ever since 1970 or so. Such an approach informs his history of National Socialism and of its aftermath as well, including in the chapters on Wilhelm Reich and Alexander Mitscherlich. As we have noted, some of Rabinbach's key contributions to the study of fascism are tied to his attention to its affective, unconscious, sacred, and aesthetic dimensions. He speaks of its "sensuous" character, in short, not metaphorically but with a specific sense that this too belongs to the sphere of ideas. Similarly, when he proposes that we understand Nazism as an "ethos or *Gesinnung*," Rabinbach is acutely aware of the meaning of this "attitude" as one that spanned from everyday gestures (like the Hitler salute) that carried meaning and ordered human bodies all the way to abstract philosophical texts, like Heidegger's, that sought to negotiate it. And he means it as well in the sense that Theweleit criticized as lacking in the Frankfurt School theorists' analyses: their inattention to "the attraction of fascism itself'—an attraction which Theweleit (and with him Rabinbach) "understood as the 'passionate celebration of violence'."[44]

Finally, in more recent writings, and beginning perhaps with "Moments of Totalitarianism," Rabinbach has paid attention to the ambivalent function of *concepts*—how they condense huge and complex historical developments while at the same time becoming "battle words" within retrospective interpretations. Citing Georg Bollenbeck and Clemens Knobloch,[45] Rabinbach develops the notion of the concept as "semantic stockpile," which he elaborates on in an ongoing study, *Concepts that Came in From the Cold*.

> Concepts are not merely indispensable, they constitute what may be described as a "semantic stockpile," without which no political action or social behavior is possible. As semantic stockpiles they combine the content-oriented logic of multiple meanings with variegated temporal layers or sediments, to use Koselleck's term. Semantic stockpiles are by nature unstable, repurposing past and present temporalities for new historical circumstances. It is this quality of concepts as being semantic stockpiles, inventions or novelties, that interests me.[46]

Despite this reference to Reinhart Koselleck, Rabinbach remains at considerable distance from the project of Koselleck's early work.[47] "Semantic stockpiles" also allow him to begin from a different vantage than those of more proximate and also celebrated approaches, such as Raymond Williams's in *Keywords* and Barbara Cassin's in *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (2005/2014). Williams looked at "fields of meanings" and proposed it "possible to contribute certain kinds of awareness and certain more limited kinds of clarification by taking certain words at the level at which they are generally used"; Cassin's approach started out from "the meaning of a word in one language" to explore "the networks to which the word belongs" and she "seeks to understand how a network functions in one language by relating it to the networks of other languages."[48] Per the above passage, Rabinbach zooms in instead on the generative qualities of conceptual instability and ambiguity. While noting the inapplicability and overgeneralized character of "totalitarianism," for example, he adds that conceiving it in terms of a semantic stockpile offers a fresh vantage, as "totalitarianism is by definition a comparative category and historical comparisons are always fraught with danger and ambiguity."[49] The same might retrospectively be said of "humanism," "catastrophe," "apocalypse," and "guilt,"[50] all of which he studies in *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, but also of concepts brought in, often *en passant* or without definition, in the present collection, "antifascism" most clearly. A "semantic stockpile" is finally especially apropos for Rabinbach's understanding of Nazism—and perhaps constitutes its very definition in the present book.

With the "semantic stockpile," the four elements of Rabinbach's broader approach that we have accentuated here align. "Stockpile" too carries a certain tactility as well as evokes food and weaponry, indicates a certain pre-subjective or unconscious agency in the buildup and mass that precedes thinking and writing, and operates at several different levels at once. It helps with the sense that at stake in each essay and work lies a history of tense syntheses attempted by different actors that are always linked to one another, that in turn recalibrate through their intellectual contributions and events the very meaning and place of the past and the present.

We might, finally, say of this approach what Roland Barthes noted of his own: it offers "no opinion" on a methodology but expresses Rabinbach's "work habits."[51] This largely accords with his avoidance of method debates. What is most striking about it, nonetheless, is how it bridges capaciousness

with scrupulousness, how it identifies areas for intellectual engagement for others, and how it melds history, philosophy, and embodied life in truly interdisciplinary scholarship.

We close by referencing a skill or quality that is "more" than method, one which we note here both by way of our appreciation and also as a prescription: Rabinbach's ability to identify with his subjects. Rabinbach has committed time and again to an approach that refuses to prosecute without refusing to judge. He does not lose sight of violence, nor blunt his critical knives, and he echoes Agnes Heller in refusing to mourn or offer requiems for ideas[52] but he shows a deep empathy toward individuals—those trapped without exit but standing up, figures like Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno, and Karl Jaspers. Perhaps exemplary of this approach is his interpretation of Otto Katz: Rabinbach does not spare Katz, a brilliant mythmaker and a dangerous con-man, a grand antifascist but also a grandiose and pathetic figure who "from one day to the next … could embrace Social Democrats and excoriate them as traitors."[53] Nonetheless, Rabinbach, having liberated himself from biographism, structures his essay so as to reach Katz at his most exposed, briefly before his execution, choosing "extreme self-abnegation" in confessing fake, invented, ridiculous crimes in order to display, Rabinbach argues, both political loyalty but, more importantly, a defense of those dear to him. He may stand quite naked before us, yet also quite whole. He becomes a "Man on Ice" in Rabinbach's expression, just as the cracks beneath had begun their banging sounds. Paying attention to such human brittleness does lead to understanding concepts and institutions better, Rabinbach shows us, but it also is a political and ethical act.

Note on the texts

For the most part, the texts included in this volume have been previously published; the versions included here involve at times slight, at times somewhat more elaborate revisions. In these revisions, we (together with Rabinbach) have sought primarily to eliminate repetitions, and at times to update the references.

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Notes

1 See in this context Rabinbach's critique of Nicos Poulantzas, where this point is made most explicitly: "Without a doubt, *Fascism and Dictatorship* is more oriented toward history than Poulantzas' earlier work. Yet, it is also a bad compromise: more often than not, Poulantzas' structuralist method gets in the way of his history, and his history in the way of his method. From the start the two never really hit it off, and the mismatch is already evident in the structure of the book." Anson Rabinbach, "Poulantzas and the Problem of Fascism," in *New German Critique*, vol. 8 (Spring 1976), pp. 157–170, p. 157.
2 See, for example, Rabinbach's introduction to his *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 5.
3 Ibid., p. 21.
4 "Nazi Culture," infra. Among Mosse's contributions was the baseline point that Nazis "did have an ideology," a position that sounds self-evident today but that ran against the priorities of much postwar historiography both in the United States (where there was an investment, also among German émigrés, in treating Nazis more as ridiculous fools) and in West Germany (where acknowledging Nazis as idea-promoters would have required acknowledging also the persistence into the postwar of many of those ideas, and—not least—the complicity of intellectuals in the Nazi project). Cited in "'Wir können anfangen, darüber nachzudenken': Ein Gespräch über die Begriffs- und Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts" (interview with Christina Morina and Boris Spernol), in Anson Rabinbach, *Begriffe aus dem kalten Krieg* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2009), p. 88. Rabinbach discusses Mosse in "George Mosse and the Culture of Antifascism," in *German Politics and Society*, vol. 18, no. 4 (Winter 2000), pp. 30–46 and "George L. Mosse 1918–1999: An Appreciation," in *Central European History*, vol. 32, no. 3 (1999), pp. 331–336.
5 See notably the work of Natasha Wheatley, Quinn Slobodian, and Jamie Martin.
6 Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).
7 See Chapter 6, infra, "The Humanities in Nazi Germany." This theme is brilliantly analyzed also in Annette Weinke, "Bonn—Ludwigsburg—Jerusalem," *Law, History, and Justice: Debating German State Crimes in the Long Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2018).
8 "The Emotional Core of Fascism in Its Most Virulent Psychic Manifestations," infra.
9 Rabinbach, "'Wir können anfangen,'" pp. 91–92. Rabinbach expands on the non-condemnation (though not with reference to historians) in "Restoring the German Spirit: Humanism and Guilt in Post-War Germany," *German Ideologies since 1945*, ed., Jan-Werner Müller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): pp. 23–39, esp. 29.
10 Rabinbach, "Introduction," *Critique of the German Intelligentsia*, trans., Brian L. Harris, ed., Hugo Ball (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
11 See "The Myth and Legacy of Alexander Mitscherlich," infra.
12 Rabinbach, "Rise and Fall of the *Sattelzeit*: The *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* and the Temporality of Totalitarianism and Genocide," *Power and Time: Temporal Conflicts and the Making of History*, eds., Dan Edelstein, Stefanos Geroulanos, and Natasha Wheatley (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2020), pp. 103–121.
13 See "The Emotional Core," infra.
14 See especially "Restoring the German Spirit" for the late 1940s; about the 1980s–1990s "From Explosion to Erosion: Holocaust Memorialization in America since Bitburg," in *History and Memory*, vol. 9, no. 1–2 (Fall 1997), pp. 226–255; "The Jewish Question in the German Question," infra, on the Historikerstreit (and also "German Historians Debate the Nazi Past," in *Dissent* (Spring 1988), pp. 192–200).

15 See "Temporary Alliance," infra. On technology specifically, see "Nationalsozialismus und Moderne: Zur Technik-Interpretation im Dritten Reich," *Der Technikdiskurs in der Hitler-Stalin-Ära*, eds., Wolfgang Emmerich and Carl Wege (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1995), pp. 94–113.
16 See "Temporary Alliance," infra.
17 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1973), p. 333.
18 See "Toward a Marxist Theory," infra.
19 This counterintuitive but essential evidence was analyzed in "The Reader" and "Women of KdF."
20 Already evident in "The Reader," infra, but explicity in "Nazi Culture."
21 See "The Beauty of Labor: The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich," Chapter 1, infra.
22 See, for example, "The Reader, the Popular Novel, and the Imperative to Participate," Chapter 4, infra.
23 See "Women of KdF" and "Staging Antifascism," infra.
24 See "Temporary Alliance," infra.
25 Here Rabinbach cited the venerable West German historian Hans Mommsen as he went on to observe that "the image of a one hundred percent Nazi was itself a phantasm that exonerated the equally fictional majority of 'sympathizers' who, it follows, distanced themselves internally from this or that aspect of the regime." "Nazi Culture."
26 See "Nazi Culture," infra, and *In the Shadow Catastrophe*, pp. 30–31: "If we see Jewish messianism as an ethos in the Greek sense of a characteristic spirit or attitude (*Haltung*) …"
27 Consider work by Jürgen Matthäus, Birthe Kundrus, and Sven Reichardt. The term more often used is *Haltung*. See Jürgen Matthäus, "Antisemitism as an Offer," *Lessons and Legacies*, *vol.7: The Holocaust in International Perspective*, ed., Dagmar Herzog (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006), pp. 118, 120; also Matthäus, "'The Axis around which National Socialist Ideology Turns': State Bureaucracy, the Reich Ministry of the Interior, and Racial Policy in the First Years of the Third Reich," *Beyond the Racial State: Rethinking Nazi Germany*, eds., Devin O. Pendas, Mark Roseman, and Richard F. Wetzell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 243. See as well Birthe Kundrus, "Kontinuitäten, Parallelen, Rezeptionen: Überlegungen zur 'Kolonialisierung' des Nationalsozialismus," *Werkstatt Geschichte* 43 (2006) pp. 45–62; Sven Reichardt, "Fascism's Stages: Imperial Violence, Entanglement, and the Processualization of Ideas," forthcoming in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*.
28 See "Nazi Culture," infra.
29 Anson Rabinbach and Sander Gilman, "Preface," *The Third Reich Sourcebook*, eds., idem (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), p. xxv.
30 Rabinbach and Gilman, "Preface," pp. xxv–xxvi.
31 George Prochnik and Anson Rabinbach, "In the Shadow of Catastrophe: An Interview with Anson Rabinbach: Apocalyptic Thought in the Aftermath of the World Wars," in *Cabinet*, vol. 57 (Spring 2015), www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/57/prochnik_rabinbach.php retrieved November 8, 2019.
32 It is worth noting that Rabinbach is not offering a direct critique of Quentin Skinner's understanding of context, and may be aiming rather at the easy assumption of contextualism by intellectual historians. Nonetheless, his distance from Skinner too is clear. See Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," in *History and Theory*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1969), pp. 3–53; revised in Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1, *Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For a recent appeal to a Lovejoyan history of ideas, see Darrin McMahon, "The Return of the History of Ideas?" *Rethinking Modern*

European Intellectual History, eds., McMahon and Samuel Moyn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). There too, targeting "textualism" is a way for Rabinbach to present his approach in contradistinction from those of Hayden White, Dominick Lacapra, and others. (Just to be clear, none of this should be taken to indicate neglect or disdain toward these historians, simply difference of approach.)

33 Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, p. 13.

34 Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, chapters 3 and 4; consider the discussion of Derrida and the elusiveness of "spirit" in "Restoring the German Spirit" and in "From the Redemptive to the Non-Redemptive Apocalypse," in *Rivista di Filosofia*, no. 4 (2008), pp. 199–208.

35 See "Marxist theory of fascism" infra.

36 See "Unclaimed Heritage," infra.

37 See "Nazi Culture," infra.

38 See "Eichmann in New York," infra.

39 Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, pp. 18–19. In a related interview, he notes: "these ideas *were* events, the texts were themselves events—they had efficacy, permanence, and you might say they cast their own shadow. So I had these two notions of events: the event as part of the text, as a component of the text, and the text itself as event, and I tried to draw on both these alternatives." Prochnik and Rabinbach, "In the Shadow of Catastrophe: An Interview with Anson Rabinbach."

40 Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, p. 21.

41 Among many possible points of reference in their work, see Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Alain Badiou, *Being and Event* (London: Continuum, 2006).

42 Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), pp. 17–20.

43 He notes in *The Eclipse of the Utopias of Labor* that that book "weaves the history of representations of the body to intellectual history, the history of labor, and the history of the welfare state." Rabinbach, *The Eclipse of the Utopias of Labor* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. x.

44 See "Emotional Core of Fascism …," infra. For Theweleit's "Nachbemerkung," see volume 2 of the first German edition, 1977, p. 534. This section is not included in the American translation of *Male Fantasies*.

45 See "Moments of Totalitarianism," infra.

46 Rabinbach, "Rise and Fall of the *Sattelzeit*." This essay is part of the *Concepts That Came in from the Cold*.

47 Rabinbach's criticism of Koselleck in "Rise and Fall of the *Sattelzeit*" echoes closely the criticism of postwar German historiography that we highlighted earlier.

48 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 2nd, revised edition (1976; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. xxxv, xxxvi; Barbara Cassin, ed., *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, edited in English by Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. xvii. Originally published as *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

49 See "Moments of Totalitarianism," infra.

50 Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*.

51 Roland Barthes, "An Almost Obsessive Relation to Writing Instruments," in *Le Monde* (27 September 1973), in English in Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews, 1962–1980*, trans., Linda Coverdale (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), p. 177.

52 Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, p. 1.

53 See "Man on Ice: The Persecution and Assassination of Otto Katz," infra.

Part I

Nazism

1 The Beauty of Labor

The aesthetics of production in the Third Reich (1976)[1]

During the Third Reich the utopia of labor took the form of a systematic attempt to legitimize political rule through aesthetic symbolization. Aesthetics and politics were integrated not only in mass festivals and public architecture, but in the sphere of production as well.[2] The attempt to legitimize political rule through aesthetic symbolization is perhaps the most unexplored characteristic distinguishing twentieth-century fascist regimes from other forms of authoritarian domination.

Under the slogan—"the German everyday shall be beautiful"—the Bureau of Beauty of Labor (*Amt Schönheit der Arbeit*) attempted to radically transform both the interior and exterior landscape of the German industrial plant. After 1934, intensive efforts to persuade management to remodel and renovate the workplace became a central focus of the German Labor Front. According to Robert Ley, head of the Labor Front, prior to National Socialism workers had been systematically convinced that their activities served no higher purpose, that their labor was only a commodity, that they were proletarians.[3] Beauty of Labor would return to the worker "the feeling for the worth and importance of his labor."[4] Albert Speer, the bureau's initiator and director, envisioned the emergence of "a new face of the German workplace" and a "new epoch that no longer considered factory architecture "inferior."[5] Once degraded to a "joyless compulsion," labor itself would now give way to "a new spirit," manifested in the "new formation of the environment."[6]

Beauty of Labor combined social policy with cultural policy in a single administrative unity. Its function, the creation of social harmony, was to be achieved through aestheticization of labor relations. Aesthetic illusion was integrated into concrete social forms, motivated by political goals. As such, Beauty of Labor is a paradigm of the aestheticized politics characteristic of National Socialism. Moreover, factories were not simply beautified by improvements in their external appearance; the subordination of human subjectivity to industrial processes was itself expressed in an aesthetic form. If Nazism had brought about the political subordination of labor, it returned to it a cultural image that "would liberate physical labor from the curse of damnation and feelings of inferiority which had imprisoned it for hundreds of years."[7]

Beauty of Labor's ideological function was underscored by the limitations which the National Law of Labor, adopted in January 1934, placed on the Labor Front by establishing the absolute hegemony of management within the industrial enterprise.[8] The resulting dual structure of authority separated possession of the means of production from the instruments of political control and legitimation.[9] Through Beauty of Labor the control of management over labor could be furthered, while still maintaining the appearance of Labor Front activity in the interests of labor. The aesthetic transformation of the workers' environment was to result in a political transformation of the German worker.

Beyond its specific ideological function within the Labor Front, the development of Beauty of Labor also reflected the profound change in Nazi culture and ideology that emerged after the seizure of power. Increasingly, Nazism was forced to reconcile its earlier programme and ideology to the demands of an industrial society in crisis.[10] Especially after 1936, when the Four-Year Plan and "war economy in peacetime" became the *ultima ratio* of Nazi industrial policy, and when full productive capacity and the labor shortages brought about a greater effort to raise industrial output and efficiency through rationalization and the intensification of labor, Beauty of Labor embodied a reversal in the traditional ideological substance of Nazi cultural policy. By combining industrial psychology with a technocratic aesthetic that glorified machinery and the efficiency of the modern plant, Beauty of Labor signified the emergence of a new dimension in Nazi ideology. In its modernist emphasis on technology and design, its architectural principles, and above all in its growing functionalism in all areas, Beauty of Labor is a striking example of the Nazi modernism and cult of productivity and efficiency that coexisted uneasily with the völkisch traditionalism of earlier Nazi ideology. Reactionary modernism was not confined to the Labor Front. As Jeffrey Herf has shown, Fritz Todt, leader of the Labor Front's "*Amt der Technik*," exhorted engineers to favor both "revolution and tradition."[11]

The bureau was founded on November 27, 1933, as a branch of the Nazi leisure organization, "Strength through Joy."[12] According to Speer, the idea originated with Ley himself who, during a trip in the province of Limburg, was impressed with the neatness, cleanliness and well-tended gardens of the Dutch mines.[13] From the outset, extensive plans were developed to encourage German plant managers to beautify and remodel their factories and work rooms. By the end of 1935, over 100 million Reichsmark had been spent on the remodeling work.[14] The external appearance of more than 12,000 plants was improved; rubble and unkempt areas were cleared away, lawns and parks turned into rest and recreation areas, walls were painted, floors washed, work clothing repaired, and new washing and sanitation facilities installed and improved.[15]

These initial efforts only anticipated the broader effort to redesign Germany's industrial landscape after 1936. This first "cleanup" phase was superseded by a greater emphasis on technical "campaigns" to improve plant facilities.[16] In May 1935, a campaign against excessive plant noise was carried out, followed by the often repeated "Good Light—Good Work" programme for improving plant lighting. Information centers were set up in all major cities to provide

technical and scientific information on proper lighting, and to advise employers in making the necessary changes.[17] In February 1937 the campaign for "Clean People in Clean Plants" was inaugurated, resulting in large-scale renovations of washing and wardrobe facilities. In May of that year the bureau launched its campaign to improve air and ventilation in work rooms, followed by the campaign for "Hot Food in the Plant" in September 1938.[18] This greater emphasis on technical changes was also reflected in an important change in the leadership of the bureau. Speer himself had always been too occupied with other duties to concern himself with the day to day activities of the bureau, and entrusted the task to his deputy director.[19] In August 1936 Karl Kretschmer, a Labor Front ideologue who had been the first to occupy this post, was replaced by Herbert Steinwarz, a specialist in plant engineering with an orientation toward functional aspects of plant design.[20]

These efforts coincided with intensive work on aesthetic aspects, especially the development of model designs for the interiors of offices, canteens, and work rooms. Designs for furniture, light fixtures, tableware, and other interior furnishings were completed.[21] Moreover, a 1936 agreement between the bureau and the *Reichskammer der bildenden Künste* (Reich Chamber of Visual Arts) facilitated the extensive employment of artists by "plant leaders" for purposes of painting mosaics in "community houses" built for leisure time activities, designing furniture and occasionally decorating the workrooms of handicraft enterprises. Particularly in rural plants, these decorations depicted *völkisch* scenes or reflected traditional workmanship and simple materials. The most extensive application of pre-industrial forms to the plant environment, however, was the widespread use of wall sayings, either from historical figures, or from Hitler and other Nazi leaders. A strong emphasis on the re-design of the entrance and gate of the plant, often done in detailed wrought iron with medieval figures, also carried a strong *völkisch* symbolism.[22]

Steinwarz's appointment signaled the shift to greater concern with the technical design of work spaces and architectonic questions. In each national district specially designated "trusted architects" were appointed to carry out architectural and design projects undertaken by employers in accordance with the bureau's specifications. Administratively, the bureau expanded from a staff of four, housed in a Berlin apartment house in 1933, to five fully staffed subdivisions by the end of 1939: I. Administration; II. Artistic Plant Design; III. Technical Plant Design; IV. Research and Enlightenment; V. Beautiful Village. The second division was concerned with development of models for both industrial interiors and for the small number of "model plants" designed and constructed by the bureau annually. The division of technical plant design was charged with the practical evaluation and application of scientific and engineering research on light, noise, ventilation, and dust in the work environment. The enlightenment section promoted the various projects of the bureau, and more important, created initiative among "plant leaders" to adopt the proposed measures, while making available the technical and cultural information gathered in the other divisions. Special departments for seagoing vessels

and plant transportation were included in the second division, and the fifth division, concerned with beautifying the German village, was established as a separate organization during the "Beautiful Village" campaign of 1936.[23]

By 1938 the annual expenditure by German employers on Beauty of Labor inspired projects reached 200 million Reichsmark. The bureau's expanding functions included constructing sports facilities, designing kitchens, canteens, community houses, dormitories, and resort homes. By the end of 1938, 67,000 plants had been visited and inspected by the bureau, 24,000 new wardrobes and washrooms were installed, 17,000 park areas were provided and 3,000 new sports facilities built, at a total cost of over 900 million Reichsmark.[24]

These accomplishments are all the more impressive in light of the bureau's lack of any legal authority to impose changes on the "leader" of a particular enterprise. The bureau could only advise management on remodelling work undertaken at their initiative and expense. Restricted by the National Law of Labor, Beauty of Labor was limited to a variety of methods developed to persuade German industrialists that their interests would be served by adopting its recommendations. Even unsolicited visits to plants were blocked by statute. As a result, throughout 1934 the bureau appealed to the factory inspectors (*Gewerbeaufsichtsbeamte*) to extend their support for its activities by informing plant leaders of the purposes and goals of the bureau, cautioning, however, that the undertaking remained a "voluntary beautification of the workplace," and in no way infringed on the jurisdiction of the factory inspectors.[25] In July 1935, the Ministry of Labor issued a six-point declaration promising the cooperation of the inspectors by bringing employers into contact with the bureau, advertising its efforts, and informing the bureau of those employers already engaged in remodelling and construction activities. At the same time, however, the bureau was required to inform the factory inspectors of any deficiencies in the facilities of the plant.[26]

These methods were gradually supplemented by the "enlightenment campaigns," which promoted the bureau's projects through exhibitions, films and especially through the journal *Schönheit der Arbeit*, founded in 1936 to depict successful plant alterations and to "win over plant leaders to the dignity with which labor is viewed in the Germany of Adolf Hitler."[27] A series of special technical books produced along with the major campaigns, included fifteen titles by 1936.[28] A number of films were also made to publicize the work of the bureau, including a 1934 dramatization of the physical and psychological transformation of a plant as a result of the efforts of both workers and the employer to introduce Beauty of Labor.

In addition to these campaigns, less subtle methods of coercing management were also employed. Beauty of Labor consistently emphasized the economic return which improvements in lighting, noise level, dust, ventilation, and hygiene could bring. From the outset, the promise of an increase in the performance of the individual worker was a major incentive for the introduction of these changes, and the bureau's literature emphasized the increased productivity and efficiency which could be gained from the same or even less energy

expenditure.[29] There were also tax incentives which often provided reimbursement for expenses in the same year, and extended credit opportunities were provided for firms renovating according to the bureau's specifications.[30] Moreover, private industry was often promised "the recuperation of the sums invested to a certain degree" as a result of the publicity which accompanied particularly successful projects.[31]

Probably more effective, however, were the directives which compelled state and party enterprises to adopt Beauty of Labor specifications, and which ordered the sixteen Federal Plant Communities (*Betriebsgemeinschaft*) to include Beauty of Labor speakers in the mandatory morning plant assemblies.[32] Party organizations, particularly the SA, decreed that "it should not be discovered that an employer who is an SA member heaps his followers into unworthy workplaces and housing in his enterprise."[33] Industrial and military construction also provided opportunities for incorporation of bureau designs, as did the temporary workers' housing built by the Labor Front.[34] Furthermore, the position of "trusted architect" gave industrial architects complying with the bureau's specifications the advantage of commissions and employment in the Labor Front's extensive building programmes, as well as in private industrial construction.[35]

Above all, benefits for management were formulated in terms of Ley's statement that "the best social policy is also the best economic policy," and could be measured, not only in calculations of profit and loss, but by the "comradeship and joyful work spirit of the employees."[36] Full-color cartoon films made these points with Disneyesque figures: the "renewal" of the "plant leader" (an elephant) was paralleled by the joy of the employees (giraffes, cats, and hippos) resulting from the enlightened introduction of Beauty of Labor.[37] The official handbook of the bureau justified its activity as carrying out paragraph 7 of the National Law of Labor which asserted that "the German Labor Front secures labor peace insofar as it creates an understanding in the plant leader for the just claims of his following, and in the following an understanding for the situation and possibilities of the plant."[38] According to Kretschmer

> politics, economics and art went together in the effects of the bureau of Beauty of Labor. From the political viewpoint we want the community of men; the economy wants the best performance; and art wants to beautifully form the life of the community.[39]

The direct advantages for labor were less easy to demonstrate. The destruction of the legal trade unions, the suppression of working class organizations, and the freezing of wages at depression levels throughout the Nazi period only underscored the compensatory function that motivated these measures. Despite Beauty of Labor's assertion that "the basis for joy in work and genuine satisfaction can only be created when work can successfully be removed from the sphere of purely material considerations, and given a higher, ethical meaning," reports of the factory inspectors often indicated the reluctance of workers to make use of new facilities.[40] Workers' resistance did not diminish

when it became evident that the efforts of enlightened management meant that labor had to be provided as "voluntary overtime." Beauty of Labor's modifications often met with the remark that "money spent on the water closet should have been distributed among the workers."[41] Nevertheless, Labor Front officials (*Vertrauensmänner*) and plant stewards could not only exert pressure on a recalcitrant "plant leader," but on the reticent "following" which might exhibit reluctance when faced with the prospect of being compelled to endure uncompensated overtime to install new shower facilities or even to build a factory swimming pool.[42] Plant task force members (*Werkscharmänner*), SA, SS, and other party members were expected to demonstrate an exemplary attitude towards the other workers in creating "the spirit of comradeship and solidarity that would serve to defeat the anti-spirit of the class struggle."[43]

The success of Beauty of Labor's efforts to legitimate Nazi policy toward the industrial worker should not, however, be underestimated. The scepticism which often accompanied the bureau's initial efforts to enlist the support of both employers and workers was, according to official Labor Front publications, largely overcome, and its ideological benefits were, according to Otto Marrenbach, head of the Labor Front's personnel office, reaped.

> At the beginning of the activity of the bureau, Beauty of Labor was an unknown slogan for the working man, which many thousands did not believe could be realized, a propaganda slogan which even many plant leaders thought impossible. And today? A knowledge that gives every working German the certainty that everything is being done in order to keep his working life and workplace, as well as his free time, beautiful, worthy and healthy.[44]

Community activities provided by management and integrated into the plant with the aid of Beauty of Labor paralleled, and often improved upon, the facilities provided by Social Democratic, Christian, and trade-union organizations. Community houses were built, canteens and dining halls added or remodelled, small factory roof gardens and lawn areas provided for rest periods, and plant flower gardens "were cared for with careful hands."[45] For workers unable to make use of "Strength through Joy" travel opportunities, Beauty of Labor encouraged plants to provide holiday homes. For women workers entering the labor force in increasing numbers after 1936, Beauty of Labor proposed that day care facilities be established or shared among a few enterprises.[46] Providing for these needs did not, however, always lessen the burden imposed by them: "The comrades of the kitchen department are voluntarily assisted by the women and girls of the factory in the rapid distribution of the well prepared food."[47]

Above all, sports and entertainment was a major consideration. Plant leaders were advised on the design and construction of sports areas, accommodating a growing demand for sports activities during work time. Sports could, it was hoped, combine the discipline and comradeship necessary for developing

an esprit de corps within an enterprise while restoring stiff muscles. Storage rooms were turned into a "little paradise of indoor sports."[48] Group exercises and gymnastics were regularly scheduled for afternoon pauses and boxing, football and ping-pong were popular diversions. Between August and September 1938, a national "sport appeal" (*Sportappell*) was held to encourage athletics in all German plants. By 1938 some 10,000 plants had established sport clubs and intra-plant sports were greatly expanded.[49]

Combined with the community activities provided by the Labor Front's cultural bureau (*Kulturamt*) and bureau of *Feierabend* for after-work activities, and linked to the travel network of "Strength through Joy," Beauty of Labor's community ideology reflected a strong utopian image of non-alienated and non-proletarianized labor. Even popular Social Democratic symbols, such as Karl Kautsky's 1904 vision of the "worker [who] will one day drive his own car, cross the oceans with his own ships, climb the alpine regions, and find bliss in the beauty of the south and the tropics," became recurrent motifs in the Labor Front.[50] Bourgeois imagery notwithstanding, the real powerlessness of labor in economic and political life was counteracted by the authoritarian administration of an objectified appearance of socialism, combining the promises of emancipation with an extensive depoliticization of industrial relations.

Beauty of Labor promised to provide an environment in which all consciousness of "proletarity" would disappear.[51] In contrast to Marxism which was accused of exploiting the ugly and grey everyday life of the worker in the era of liberal capitalism for its own ends, Hitler referred to Beauty of Labor as the "socialism of the deed." The historical experience of the proletariat was to be dissolved in the plant and national community. According to Wilhelm Lotz, the editor of *Schönbeit der Arbeit*:

> And when another saying of the Führer goes: 'in the future there will be only one more nobility, the nobility of labor', this shows that the proletarian colouring of the concept 'laborer' and the fighting attitude toward another rank has been extinguished. Accordingly, all literary attempts to construct a proletarian culture have become pointless and forgotten. There is only one culture and one life form, that of the German people. It is clear that from all the efforts to transform the plant into a cell of community life, a life style of the German worker must emerge.[52]

The embellishment of the factory in Beauty of Labor was to be a demonstration of the "palpability of the socialist idea."[53] The objectification of the image of community in the external forms of the German industrial landscape was intended to reconstitute the soul of the German worker.

* * * *

The creation of Beauty of Labor as an element of state social policy was unique to National Socialism. Its attempt to produce a "more joyful transformation of the everyday environment" was anticipated, however, by the

nineteenth-century tradition which identified the beautification of the workplace with the "deproletarianization" of labor.[54] More than a century earlier, Fourier envisioned "attractive labor," in which "the workshops and husbandry offer the laborer the allurements of elegance and cleanliness."[55] James Silk Buckingham's imagined model town and the Garden Cities movement of the early 1900s were also predicated on the view that "air, light and sunshine could heal the damages of industrial labor."[56] By dissociating industrial processes from the image of human degradation in an inhuman and squalid environment, enlightened paternalistic entrepreneurs wanted to restore the social balance.[57] Similarly motivated was the *Cité Ouvrière Napoléon* in the 1850s, the model English villages Bournville and Port Sunlight built by George Cadbury and W. H. Lever in the 1880s, and Alfred Krupp's industrial settlements in the 1870s. Open spaces, low density, and aesthetic designs were merged with political considerations. At the root of these projects was the trepidation candidly expressed by Krupp when he began the extensive construction of industrial settlements comprised of "small houses with little gardens," in the hope that "when a general revolt goes through the land, an uprising of all classes against their employers, we may be the only ones spared, if we can get everything into motion while there is still time."[58]

After 1900 the integration of specifically aesthetic motifs took on increasing importance. In Germany, Heinrich Tessenow, Speer's teacher, designed the gymnasium and dormitory buildings for Wolf Dohrn's experimental Garden City, Hellerau, built between 1911 and 1912 to institute a German educational reform.[59] Tessenow's theoretical writings, even more than his designs, reveal his concern with the relationship between aesthetics and the industrial process. For Tessenow architecture had to affirm the principle that "the prosperity of industrial labor demands a health or strength that is composed of simple bourgeois character."[60] These bourgeois virtues of simple diligence, seriousness, persistence, love of order, and cleanliness were to be embodied in architecture and symbolized in respect for the economy of technical form, order, symmetry, and external cleanliness. In England, the values objectified in the design of the model cities were extended to the plants themselves. At Bournville, the Cadbury chocolate factory distributed a brochure to its visitors entitled "the factory in the garden," describing its lawns, trees, wooded areas, and canaries and flowers in the work rooms. In 1931 the English Industrial Welfare Society promoted the slogan, "beauty and success in work go hand in hand," and the Glasgow machine factory of Wallace Scott & Co. painted its machines blue, its girders grey, its railings green, and other parts of the plant red and gold so that the colors would reflect light and "make the plant lively."[61]

These efforts gained remarkable currency in Germany as a result of the variety of schools of industrial psychology that grew out of Hugo Münsterberg's work on the subjective dimension of the labor process in the decade before the First World War. Münsterberg was the first to recognize the advantages for industry of "psychotechnics," the scientific measurement of the effects of "fatigue, temperature, dampness, body positions—including seating and the

position of work materials—the influence of overeating, flower aromas, coloured lights, dance music and other external factors on emotional life."[62] Despite the proliferation of approaches, from Münsterberg's "psychotechnics" to more metaphysical schools which called for "the renewal of the soul of production," all shared the goal of reintegrating the individual into an industrial work process which, as a result of Taylorization, had been reduced to the carrying out of predesigned detailed tasks. Through the manipulation of the objective milieu, means could be found to reduce the overt and remediable "subjective" dissatisfaction of the worker toward what was regarded as an irreversible "petrification" of the work process.[63]

In the decade before the Nazi seizure of power these attempts to placate the worker were increasingly politicized in a conservative direction by class conflict, and by resistance to the intensive rationalization movement that swept German industry between 1924 and 1928, introducing Taylorism, technification, and the standardization of parts and goods on a large scale.[64] Of particular importance was the influential school of industrial sociology developed by Catholic philosopher Götz Briefs and his co-workers, L. H. Adolph Geck and Rudolf Schwenger. Briefs combined the insights of earlier theorists with a political strategy aimed at the practical transformation of industrial relations through direct managerial intervention. In Briefs' view the industrial plant was a completely isolated "social sphere," distinct from both the economic and technical aspects of production, which could be organized and directed by a conscious policy in line with demands for discipline, adaptation, and hierarchy.[65]

Despite Briefs' emigration in 1934, his work was carried on by his students, particularly Geck, who provided Beauty of Labor with its theoretical basis in his textbook *Soziale Betriebsführung* (1938), and in a series of articles on the development of Beauty of Labor in other countries.[66] Modern industry, Geck argued, could not rely for its stability on the moral bond between subservient workers and paternalist management which he so highly praised in the nineteenth-century enterprise. On the contrary, by adapting the aesthetic dimensions pioneered by the English model cities and American attempts to domesticate labor through Taylorism and Fordism, Geck integrated Beauty of Labor into "scientific" industrial policy. As a member of the Briefs' school, he believed that "the maximum of work efficiency and the comforts of human relations in the workplace" could be guaranteed. Geck distinguished between two aspects of "plant leadership": personnel and functional. While the former was concerned with questions of administration, wages, labor time, training, and education, the latter was the domain of Beauty of Labor. For Geck, the bureau's work encompassed three essential areas—the exterior of the plant, the interior, and the individual workplace.[67]

He pointed to the importance of a sleek and unpretentious factory architecture, and called for the extensive introduction of glass in industrial construction, as well as for the aesthetic importance of lawns and gardens in the factory surroundings. Color and cleanliness, good lighting and ventilation, and the remodeling of washrooms and canteens were all singled out for their

"practical importance as well as for the co-existence between the work comrades and the employer" which they promoted.[68] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s modern lunch rooms, health facilities, rest areas, gymnasiums, athletic fields, parks, and special housing were established in many European and American factories to improve plant relations.[69] Geck's handbook clearly established Beauty of Labor's role as an extension of the science of industrial relations developed in that period. Yet Geck believed Beauty of Labor had gone further. In Germany it had realized the project of domesticated labor rooted in the Garden Cities idea. The industrial plant was "privatized and turned into a comfortable living room."[70]

This new conception of social policy demanded a strong state which granted management the right to intervene in industrial relations to secure the new "occupational ethos" which would also "win over the worker to the state and for the preservation of traditional national culture."[71] At the same time, however, fertile terrain for the potential success of this approach was provided by the general disregard of pre-1933 trade unions for the work environment, and their frequent willingness to abandon fundamental questions about the nature of work for wage settlements in periods of high productivity. Social Democratic theorists like Otto Bauer denounced "lamentations over the spiritlessness of labor" as "nonsense," while embracing the idea that "labor is our fate."[72] Communist theorists too, following Lenin's endorsement of Taylorism, fully assimilated the cult of technocracy.[73] Only rarely was the problem of "joy in work" approached from the socialist standpoint, as in Hendrik de Man's critique of those "Marxist doctrinaires ignorant of psychology and out of touch with the actualities of life, [who] fail to see that the workers' prevailing discontent is due quite as much to the loss of pleasure in work as to the (problematical) loss of concrete acquisitions."[74]

The myth of an organic and non-alienated form of industrial production, proclaimed by politicized industrial sociology, was concretized in the National Socialist concept of a deproletarianized and economically peaceful plant. Nevertheless, its appeal to labor was always overshadowed by its promise to management. The allure of "scientific" plant policy for both employers and the National Socialists was clearly enhanced by the Briefs School's militant opposition to trade unions, and its extreme anti-socialism. Even the redefinition of management as the "plant leader" in the National Law of Labor not only ensured the hegemony of the entrepreneur, but also redefined management along the general lines which industrial relations had almost universally established in most advanced capitalist countries. The struggle for survival and the pursuit of self-interest had been superseded by an image of cooperative teamwork.[75] Beauty of Labor shared with industrial psychology this faith in the potential transformation of industrial relations in the epoch of mechanical production, Taylorized work-processes, and the depersonalized modern factory. With the elimination of the trade unions, labor relations were merged with ideology in the interests of social control.

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Of course, the concept of Beauty of Labor contained a number of fundamental ambiguities, endemic to reactionary modernism. It pointed to a return to the "community of enterprise" characterized by the unity of workman and employer, re-establishing "the organic unity which existed in the Middle Ages."[76] At the same time, however, it integrated aesthetics into contemporary industrial production, deriving its impulse from the latest stage of industrial psychology. Its nineteenth-century paternalism was clouded by real utopian tendencies aimed at the abolition of genuine discontents. These antinomies were eventually superseded however by a cult of technology and production which gradually took precedence in both the propaganda and practice of Beauty of Labor after 1936. The machine, which in the early propaganda of the bureau was assaulted as "God and Lord over the working man," lost the negativity attributed to it.[77] What had in fact been a virtual "demonization" of technology, in which machinery alone was held responsible for the failure of liberal capitalism and the social ills of the pre-Nazi era, turned into its opposite—the glorification of technical rationality through aesthetics.

At the center of this change was the emergence of an aesthetics of technology and rationalization, derived from the *Neue Sachlichkeit* of the 1920s, in which Beauty of Labor signified the aesthetic reflection of technical rationality and industrial production. Aesthetics not only intervened in the sphere of industrial labor, but industry was itself elevated to the principle by which aesthetic values were to be formed. The new technical aesthetic represented the culmination of a historical development which interpreted the industrial sphere as the source of aesthetic norms. In a direct assault on the Kantian premise that defined beauty as "purposefulness without purpose," occluding the "great majority (who) provide the necessities of life, as it were, mechanically," a new aesthetic emerged which heralded mechanical processes and made utility into a religion.[78] To be sure, nineteenth-century romantic artists, particularly in England, found beauty in the industrial landscape, even in the darkest and most exploitative workrooms.[79] But the real world of work and machine-production was not yet the paradigm of aesthetics itself. The mythologized image of industrialization stopped at the door of the "satanic mills" where "man returns to a cave dwelling, which is now however contaminated with the pestilential breath of civilization."[80] Even the Great Exhibition of 1851, which placed industrial machinery on exhibition as an object of aesthetic contemplation, did not yet fully anticipate the transvaluation of aesthetic value granted to the instruments of production in the twentieth century.

After 1907, the *Deutscher Werkbund*, formed to display the best of German art and design, indicated that technics would thereafter not only be considered aesthetic, but—especially after 1914—that industrial forms and machines would themselves shape the concept of beauty which informed contemporary design. At the annual meeting of the *Werkbund* in 1914, Hermann Muthesius, the leader of the movement for *Sachlichkeit*, defined the principle of the new aesthetic: "architecture and the entire sphere of activity of the *Werkbund* tend towards standardization. It is only by standardization that they can recover that

universal importance which they possessed in ages of harmonious civilization."[81] This new technological aesthetic became firmly rooted in Germany through the efforts of the *Werkbund*, and in architecture through the Bauhaus; it determined the fundamental principle of the "modernist movement." Beauty was identified with a "second nature," with mechanical adequacy and technical form. Especially in the artistic and literary *Neue Sachlichkeit*, which gained extraordinary popularity in pre-depression Germany, the new aesthetic celebrated "the concrete," the thing alone, autonomous of all social relations. The mystique of technical rationality, productivity, efficiency and "romantic faith in the speed and roar of machines all belonged to the cult of the *sachlich*."[82] Paralleling the intensive rationalization of German industry, during the upswing of German capitalism between 1924 and 1928, everything from frying pans to industrial gears was exhibited for its pious adherence to the principles of economy of form, efficiency of design, and mathematical precision. With the extension of modern design to all aspects of everyday life, social relations became mediated by an image of the world derived from technical rationality.

The new aesthetic absorbed the technocratic assumption that the expansion of technical rationality would automatically lead to a more rational social order. Like the technocratic theorists of "Fordism" and rationalization that had influenced them, the advocates of Nazi rationalization reflected a deep dissatisfaction with the instability of society and the perseverance of pre-industrial social structures and values.[83] The utopian dimension embedded in the new aesthetic was a vision of society in which "a badly functioning social machine had been exchanged for a more perfect one."[84] This belief in the beneficent telos of rationalization was exemplified by writers like Franz Kollman, whose book, *Schönheit der Technik* (1927), saw in machine parts, industrial buildings, structures made of steel, railroads, and submarines "the root of the power of future beauty and culture."[85] The new cult of technics contained, however, yet another, perhaps more significant aspect. It reduced real progress to the progress of technics, and the rational constitution of society to the rationality of machine production. By excluding the relations of production, its forces were ontologized. All reminders of the irrationality of what was judged to be the pretechnological epoch were exorcised, as if the old order would simply disintegrate when confronted with the power of the technical form. The rationality of technics, embodied in modern architecture and design, promoted the value of industrial forms without regard for the nature of industrial society. The attempt to repress even the most unobtrusive historical residues, expressed in the attack on ornament, revealed the extent to which this deep hostility to history was translated into a myth—"a rationalization without ratio."[86]

Continuity between the aesthetics of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and Beauty of Labor is apparent in the bureau's personnel as well as its principles. It was an open secret that Beauty of Labor was a kind of sanctuary for former Bauhaus architects and designers. Wilhelm Lotz, the editor of *Schönheit der Arbeit*, was previously editor of *Die Form*, the most influential organ of the Werkbund and Bauhaus in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[87] Despite his 1928 stand against

the Bauhaus's narrow reliance on "ideas attuned to industrial production," Lotz perpetuated its fundamental themes. Although most Bauhaus architects and designers were forced into exile in the early days of the regime, the work of modern architects, like Ernst Otto Schweizer, was approvingly displayed in *Schönheit der Arbeit*.[88] Earlier propaganda that, under Kretschmer's directorship, had criticized the "functionalist boxes of the Republic," gave way to praise for the principles of modernism in industrial architecture. The machine aesthetic was assimilated in its entirety: "it can be ascertained that machines, technics, are capable of producing aesthetic satisfaction: they must, however, only submit to the laws of their own style."[89] In an article describing the reorganization of a motor factory according to the latest plant designs, one writer exhilarated: "As opposed [to the old] the new: there is line, there is style, there is Beauty of Labor."[90] Kollman's theories were cited as evidence "that aesthetic forms no longer stand in contrast to the functional technical form."[91] Even if it was questionable that workers shared this taste in relation to the beauty of their own environment, they could be educated to acquire an appreciation of the new style.[92] The models of tableware and office furniture, designed to conform to standard industrial forms, also reflected—though somewhat subdued and unoriginal—aspects of the 1930s style. This affirmation of the new aesthetic did not go unnoticed. By 1937 the bureau found it necessary to defend itself against critics who saw their life-work in inventing slogans like *Neue Sachlichkeit* and "constructivism," increasingly used to characterize the bureau's projects.[93]

From the outset, Beauty of Labor's emphasis on the hygienic and rational design of the workplace, on lighting, ventilation and other environmental factors, derived its impetus from the rationalization movement of the 1920s. Moreover, even the most technical aspects of Beauty of Labor—the intensive campaigns to improve lighting, air and hygiene—were not simply means of increasing output and social management. The concept of light took on ideological significance, for example, through its opposition to the image of darkness associated with the industrial workplace of liberal capitalism. For Marx that "dwelling in the *light* which Prometheus in Aeschylus designated as one of the greatest boons by means of which he made the savage into a human being" ceased to exist for the worker.[94] In Beauty of Labor the lighting campaigns attempted to signify the reversal of this situation. The film "*Light*," produced by the bureau in 1936, began with a "cultural-historical" introduction describing light as the "creative power of all earthly life, reproducing the wish of mankind to illuminate the darkness of night."[95] The darkness and blight of the liberal industrial landscape, "the plants of the thoughtless sacks of gold" where "the work is sullen, done behind window panes blinded by dust, in cold unfriendly rooms, because it must be done," was contrasted to the selfless anti-capitalism of Beauty of Labor.[96] Nevertheless, the symbolism of illumination as the antithesis of capitalist industry occasionally contradicted the dark image of work romanticized by Labor Front artists. Otto Hamel's dimly lit painting *Eisenwerk*, shown at the Munich exhibition of 1937, appeared in *Schönheit der Arbeit* with the following caption: "Unfortunately the romanticism

of the old workplaces attracts the eye of the painter more than what we understand as Beauty of Labor."[97]

Cleanliness and order also externalized the model for an internalized work discipline and routine demanded by the rationalized labor process. "Cleanliness and order in all externalities, as well as in the inner attitude of all members of the plant, are the living cells whose gradual growth reaches its high point in the realization of the National Socialist model plants."[98] The inordinate amount of attention paid to the most modern conveniences in washing apparatus, cleaning of the workplace, personal hygiene, modern toilets, faucets, locker and changing rooms, cannot solely be explained by German fastidiousness in these matters. Long rows of clean and modern washing facilities were displayed as if modern sanitary equipment extinguished the effects of the working day. The bureau's slogan, "Clean People—Clean Factories," had moral associations as well. The elimination of that dirtiness, which for Freud was "incompatible with civilization," took on ritualistic character in Beauty of Labor. The "low instincts" and immorality which were said to have been bred in the industrial plants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could be erased by removing the unhygienic sources of disease and depravity.[99] Tied to the goal of "securing increase in happiness by elevation of the moral tone," hygiene had always been important in the Garden Cities movement.[100] Tessenow believed that "everyday work and our industrial worker should not only be clean materially, but clean in whole character and form as well."[101]

These attitudes were also reflected in the "cult of the body" which took the form of the plant sports and gymnastics which Beauty of Labor helped introduce into 3,000 German factories.[102] Drawing on the nineteenth-century tradition of gymnastics as political training, and adopting methods derived from François Delsare's "aesthetic gymnastics," introduced to Germany at Emil Jacques-Dalcroze's school for physical culture in Tessenow's gymnasium at Hellerau, body movement was transplanted to the factory in the interests of discipline and greater productivity.[103] What had begun as a revolt against mechanization became, by 1936, an adornment of industrial production itself.

Above all, however, it was in architecture that Beauty of Labor most decisively established what might be termed Nazi *Sachlichkeit*. Before 1936, while the economy remained below full employment and productivity, architecture had been largely limited to public building in the monumental, neo-classical style, or to the *Kleinsiedlung*, the garden plot houses for workers reminiscent of rural cottages and early Krupp settlements. The Four-Year Plan, launched in October 1936, meant not only the extension of state control over labor and industry, but intense concentration on preparation for military mobilization.[104] Less practical *völkisch* residues such as the *Kleinsiedlung* were abandoned in favor of new apartment blocks in urban areas or temporary housing.[105] Demand for new industrial plants, as well as housing for those workers "uprooted" and transplanted by state intervention in the labor market, brought about new tasks for Beauty of Labor. The bureau was entrusted with the design of "simple and purposeful" houses for workers, particularly in rural areas.[106] Usually these new

construction efforts were undertaken by the Labor Front for large industry or by agreement with the military. By 1939 a great deal of the new construction in Germany was either for private industrial purposes or in the hands of the Labor Front's enterprises and housing programmes. Industrial architecture eclipsed the monumental designs of the pre-1936 phase, incorporating principles derived largely from modernism that underscored the primacy of rationality and efficiency in the sphere of production. By 1938 a special Bureau of Architecture emerged from Beauty of Labor.[107] A conscious distinction was carefully maintained between "representational" architecture in official party buildings and industrial architecture. Moreover, buildings were required to fit into their surroundings. Hitler himself recognized this distinction between the monumental public style and the factory, and according to Speer, could even become enthusiastic over an industrial building in glass and steel.[108]

The distinction between the increasing modernism of Nazi architecture and design and the traditionalism that characterized its earlier ideology was accentuated by the public rooms and buildings designed by the bureau for specifically political functions. In larger factories these distinctly political spaces were located in the "Comradeship Houses" built in the style of a small rural church, cloister, or feudal manor house.[109] The flags and Nazi insignias conspicuously absent in other areas of the plant were present here. Yet this facet of the bureau's work, which also included the "dignified decoration" of plant assembly places, only served to emphasize the conscious separation of "purely political" spaces from the politicized functionalism of Beauty of Labor.[110]

Avowedly modern architects were employed by private industry and their designs approvingly displayed in the bureau's publications. Peter Behrens, the teacher of Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, was commissioned to design the AEG electrical company administration building on the Berlin Grand Boulevard for Speer's famous redesign of Berlin—Germania—outraging Alfred Rosenberg, who protested against the assignment to a precursor of architectural radicalism.[111] Moreover, not only was Behrens praised for his pre-war industrial designs, but occasionally even exiled architects like Gropius were openly credited with influencing the bureau's architectural tastes: "Even more decisively than Behrens, Walter Gropius was drawn to the construction of contemporary industrial facilities … Gropius had at that time recognized the economic importance of the beautiful industrial plant buildings."[112] Unlike the Bauhaus architecture of the early 1930s, however, there was little attention to classical proportions or to the radical use of new materials in most designs. Facades and entrance halls were eclectic and often reflected monumental and neo-classical elements, in sharp contrast to the buildings in the *sachlich* style. Moreover, in contrast to the Bauhaus, which endowed the rejection of ornament and its classical proportions and cubic forms with a utopian vision of total social rationality, Nazi industrial architecture retained only the utilitarian form, subordinating imagination to the demands of production and efficiency. Nevertheless, the motifs of Nazi industrial architecture are decisively modern in inspiration and were in fact largely indistinguishable from non-Bauhaus modernism of the interwar period.[113]

In early 1937 *Schönheit der Arbeit* began to publish a series of contributions by "plant leaders" and architects explicitly advocating the new style in industrial construction.[114] Pre-1933 Nazi propaganda that attacked modernism as architectural "bolshevism" had to be neutralized. Industrial architecture was proclaimed as "the most important monument of our time."[115] The old architecture which reflected the "sins of the past" was condemned—it reflected insufficient cooperation between engineers and architects. Beauty of Labor architects were required to assure the integration of technical achievement and artistic elements. Above all, historical allusion and ornament were to be eliminated: industrial buildings were not to be "palatial constructs." Monumental factory architecture which did not "form an organic whole with the entire plant" was to be replaced by architecture conforming to reality and corresponding "to the seriousness and importance of the work performed behind its doors."[116]

Among the most significant examples of National Socialist industrial functionalism were the glass, brick, and exposed structure buildings constructed for the *Deutsche Versuchsanstalt für Luftfahrt*, completed in 1936–1937 by the architects Hermann Brenner and Werner Deutschmann in Berlin-Adlershof.[117] The modernism of these buildings is evident in the use of glass, brick, exposed structures, modern lighting, and neatly laid out lawns and streets. The wind tunnels and explicitly geometric patterns of the buildings were praised as the greatest examples of Beauty of Labor in architecture and as illustrations of the principle that "a high degree of purposefulness and true beauty are not opposites which exclude each other."[118]

The crowning achievement of Beauty of Labor was the *Wunderauto* plant near Fallersleben, built to house the Volkswagen project, the showpiece of "Strength through Joy." "The Volkswagen works was to become the most powerful and beautiful automobile factory in the world."[119] In addition to the auto works, a new city was also envisioned, planned for 30,000 auto workers and their families in the first stage alone.[120] In May 1938 the foundation stone was laid, and by December of that year the skeletons of the buildings, particularly the production centers, were visible. *Schönheit der Arbeit* devoted a special issue to the new plant. The four great halls, including the energy plant and machine works, were displayed as monuments to the aesthetic superiority of industrial architecture and progress under National Socialism: In fact the celebration was premature—like most social promises of the regime, the car was never delivered. Unfinished by the beginning of the war, the works were converted to the production of arms and military vehicles. No Volkswagens were delivered for private use.[121] The new attitude toward technology was reflected in Nazi institutions as well. In 1936, the National Socialist Association for German Technology was founded under the direction of Oskar Stabel in order to bring about a harmony between Volk and technology by increasing scientific and technical labor power for the *Wehrpflicht*. In March of that year Beauty of Labor concluded an agreement to cooperate with the association in all technical aspects of the alteration of plant environments.[122] Above all, discontent with technology and industrialization, often stressed in pre-1933

völkisch theory, had to give way to a concept that emphasized the "good intentions of rationalization" and the "virtues of mechanization."[123] Even artisan production, still significant in Germany as late as 1939, when one third of all industrial workers were employed in shops of less than ten persons, was forced to increase efficiency and carry out technology improvements. Those artisan shops which survived the state-directed "combing out" of inefficient and one-person enterprises remained under government restriction and were to a large extent turned into subsidiary repair shops for large industry.[124] These measures against small industry were echoed in the bureau's campaign for the rationalization of artisan production throughout 1938 and 1939.[125] After 1938, the productivism of the bureau was the consistent theme of its publications. The romantic image of the handicraft shop, venerated in the early days of the Nazi movement, was scrutinized and purged of pre-industrial characteristics: old tables, rotten from wood worms, had to be replaced so that handwork could "understand the needs and demands" of the "epoch of the machine."[126] Technology was also aestheticized as the extension of handicraft production. A series of photographs displaying the aesthetic qualities of hand motions in both mechanized and unmechanized production illustrated the point that "handicraft work is not eliminated but transformed."[127] For Beauty of Labor the enormous gears of modern industry became the objects of aesthetic contemplation, and rows of shiny oil cans became a symbol for "the hand tools of the machine masters."[128] The mistrust among German artisans provoked by the technocratic revival was condemned as *Maschinenstürmerei*.

Although in Beauty of Labor the ideology of architectural modernism divested itself of the utopianism of the Bauhaus, it preserved the Saint Simonian myth of a rationally functioning capitalism. In the National Socialist "New Order," the cult of technical rationality embodied in Beauty of Labor represented a significant effort to legitimize state regulation and the intensive rationalization of industry. Production and efficiency were idealized as qualities divorced from commercial considerations, the market, and imperial-military aims. The myth of an abolished market society was most apparent in Beauty of Labor's successful campaign to remove all traces of commercial advertising from the plant environment.[129] Implicit was the notion expressed in Beauty of Labor's ideology of "non-economic" production: "We do not consider the factory as an association for economic purposes."[130] At the same time the purely inward focus on the productive apparatus coincided with Germany's actual withdrawal from the world market and its attempt at industrial self-sufficiency through an autarchic arms economy. In architectural modernism and the cult of technics the industrial sphere could be celebrated apart from any political and social aims which it might serve. Social realities could be eliminated by a symbolic reductionism. Modern materials became identical with the epoch itself: "reinforced concrete and steel construction are closely related to the spirit of our time."[131] Yet practical purposes were not lost—the green areas for workers' rest periods could also serve as camouflage in air raids.[132]

The industrial considerations that took priority in Beauty of Labor after 1938 dominated not only its ideology, but its practical work as well. The intensive "struggle for productivity," announced by Ley in late 1937, directed the bureau's technical agencies to concentrate, from that point on, on the development of programmes to reduce wasted energy and increase productivity. The standardization and functional design of work processes and environments became a crucial component of the new situation. Not only were the workplaces themselves to be redesigned for maximum output, but the worker too had to carry out his work in a "correct and functional manner."[133] New developments in ergonomic research were applied to furniture design to produce modern innovations like the "norm chair," with an elastic vertical and horizontal adjustable back to benefit the assembly line worker by "preventing premature fatigue" while increasing output.[134] "Flowing work" was the goal of the efficiency expert who applied the lessons of electro-technical mass production to the development of "a psychologically grounded formation of the workplace."[135]

Although Beauty of Labor emphasized the principle that "the higher the output the greater the joy in work," it was the former that received greater attention in the information directed at management. Speaking at the National Conference of Beauty of Labor in April 1938, Ley gave assurances that plant leaders had provided him with statistical evidence that Beauty of Labor "was not a luxury or a gift, but in the last analysis had been transformed into an increase in production and surplus value."[136] For business, this meant higher profits, but for the worker reductions in consumption, wage controls and longer hours were combined with the intensification of work in the plant.[137] At the same time, however, the almost exclusive focus on productivity pointed to the failure of Beauty of Labor's earlier efforts to achieve a lasting integration of the German working-class. The 1938–1939 struggle for productivity reflected an actual decline in the productivity of labor and growing discontent over the low wages and shortages that accompanied state direction in the labor scarce market.[138] Already in 1937, the voluntary overtime that was often the source of labor for the bureau's projects was publicly condemned and officially ordered terminated because it represented, in light of the already lengthened work day, an "almost unbearable burden."[139] Nazi productivism was an indication of the growing authoritarianism of state control over labor which, having ultimately failed to "win over" the working-class, was now subjecting it to the increasing domination of productivity and output.

The bureau's attempts to increase output and efficiency were designated as "steered rationalization," distinguished from the oriented rationalization of the 1920s by its "subordination to political leadership and social policy."[140] In fact, "steered rationalization" differed from the older variety, not in its system, but in its spirit. The changes which Beauty of Labor initiated were "completely within the meaning of rationalization, the scientific penetration of productive factory labor."[141] All aspects of Taylorism—the degradation of work, the dissociation of skill and mental labor from the worker—were accepted by Beauty of Labor as axiomatic. It was not concerned with

rationalization per se, but with its disadvantageous consequences. The new design of the workplace was in fact a compensatory or remedial form of rationalization, designed to adapt labor to already technified production processes: "Machines and operations must be so functionally built and arranged that the work can be accomplished within the smallest spaces with the least possible movement and expenditure of energy."[142] Even the physiology of the worker had to be rationalized. This was the motivation for Beauty of Labor's campaign for "Hot Meals in the Plant." Plant managers were instructed that

> plant leadership in nourishment means a further important step towards the rationalization of labor power; the sums invested are—if the comparison is admissible—equally as productive as the expenses for technical improvements in the plant, for construction and machine maintenance, protection from corrosion and so forth.
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Beauty of Labor's unabashed modernism and *Sachlichkeit*, and its focus on the transformation of labor through environmental changes, were contested by a competing Labor Front agency, Karl Arnhold's *Amt für Berufserziehung und Betriebsführung*, in October 1936. The controversy underscored the decline of traditional ideology in the Labor Front under the Four-Year Plan. Arnhold, whose *Deutsches Institut für technische Arbeitsschulung* (DINTA) represented the extreme right wing of industrial and plant "engineering" in the 1920s, had criticized the criteria chosen for granting the "model plant" award, announced in August 1936 to spark initiative among industrialists.[144] Instead of the "social, technical and economic" categories that were proposed, Arnhold demanded that criteria be established which followed his own programme for increasing efficiency and "mobilizing the performance reserves of industry" through a heavily ideological program of quasi-military training and indoctrination for managers and trainees. Above all, Arnhold challenged Beauty of Labor's emphasis on the "material obstacles" to increased productivity at the expense of "spiritual obstacles." Neither "Strength through Joy" nor Beauty of Labor, not even higher wages, could decrease the "resistance and exhaustion of a worker who worked with psychological blinders."[145] Although he did not entirely disapprove of the bureau's efforts, he decisively rejected its functionalism and proposed that the "tempo of the machine be brought into harmony with the rhythm of the blood" through "the organic formation of the plant" and the militarization of the leadership.[146] The results of the controversy indicated even more clearly the primacy of Beauty of Labor over Arnhold's more traditional ideological schemes. Technical rationality, and above all the utilitarian standpoint that not indoctrination, but rather the idea that "each kind of work determines where and how it is to be formed," coincided with the emphasis of the regime and guaranteed that the criteria for the "model plants" would correspond to the principles of the bureau.[147]

After 1939 the bureau was severely limited by reductions in its operating budget brought on by the war. Its activities of the previous half decade were largely abandoned in the interest of contributing to the war effort, mostly by providing technical information on the construction of shelters, troop entertainment centers, methods of improving blackout techniques, and energy saving measures.[148] But in its six years of activity almost 80,000 factories were transformed by the bureau's projects.[149] Lighting, ventilation, and noise levels were improved, wardrobes, washrooms and gymnasiums provided or remodeled, lawns and parks built surrounding the plant. Flowers, decorations, and new coats of paint appeared. Factory canteens were provided with newly designed tableware, and "community rooms" and "comradeship houses" were constructed in numerous plants. Architectural modernism and contemporary design were furthered in industrial construction. The German factory had indeed received a new face.

In Beauty of Labor the utopian promise of an industrial society where work was beautiful and the class struggle abolished was given political and administrative form. Its goal was the domestication of labor, to be achieved by treating the plant as a "sphere of life," detached from the social relations that enclose the world of work and removed from the spectres of working class culture and autonomous organization. Beauty of Labor was to integrate the German worker, deprived of political and economic representation, into the "facade" socialism of the Labor Front. As objectified ideology it signified a critique of liberalism, in which concern for hygiene and aesthetics in the environment restored the value and meaning of work. But if Beauty of Labor presented itself as a radical break with the aesthetic deficiencies of industrialization in the liberal epoch, it solidified and strengthened its political-economic basis: management was supreme, the bureau had no power to enforce its policies—its ultimate goal was the depoliticization of industrial relations. As industrial psychology, Beauty of Labor extended the domination of material nature to the nature of the worker, whose consciousness was reduced to an environmental "factor," to be transformed in the interest of productivity and habituation. As social policy Beauty of Labor subjected labor to the intervention of techniques derived from the politicized science of industrial relations of the 1920s and 1930s on an unprecedented scale.

Perhaps most important, Beauty of Labor not only integrated aesthetics into the world of production, but derived from production a technocratic aesthetic which combined with the *völkisch* and pre-industrial imagery of pre-1933 Nazism into a new legitimation based on the autonomy of technical rationality. If Nazism did not display the veneration of machinery that characterized Italian fascism in the early 1920s, or the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, this was true only before 1936, when Germany's condition could be attributed to the ills of modernity, and the support of the *Mittelstand* could be secured by the image of its dissolution.

As early as 1935, the philosopher Ernst Bloch contrasted the widespread rejection of contemporary society by a German middle strata which "sought transcendence in the past," with an exaggerated faith in the power of "neutral cleanliness, new architecture and its comforts, manufactured goods, technical functionalism and the standardization of products," as a dialectic of "non-contemporaneity and contemporaneity," specific to Germany's historical development.[150] The shift from one extreme of this dialectic to the other took place once Nazism could no longer rely on the simple legitimacy of *völkisch* ideology and an agrarian utopia. Policies directed at the *Mittelstand* were abandoned. The expansion of technical rationality to all aspects of the production process in the Four-Year Plan was extended to ideology as well. The goal of full employment, an end to the economic crisis, and industrial supremacy and military expansion, led Nazism to abandon its "utopian anti-modernism" to the institutional and ideological requirements of war production.[151] If Nazism's mass support was rooted in its promise of a Germany free from the discontents of capitalism, rationalization, and the eclipse of traditional values, its historical function was to exorcize the traditional patterns of culture which conflicted with modern modes of production. In Beauty of Labor this shift in cultural values was objectified ideologically and administratively. Its emphasis on production and the glorification of technology as ends in themselves was affirmed by persons and principles derived from the *Neue Sachlichkeit* that swept Germany in the mid-1920s. The aestheticization of machine technology, taylorized work-processes and efficiency provided the new requirements of the regime with a cultural *raison d'être*.

It is the image of the worker, however, that most clearly illuminates the unity that binds the extensive range of Beauty of Labor's efforts between 1934 and 1939. The worker, like all the subjects of National Socialism, becomes an ornament of technically preconceived and constructed environments. As objects of management and production they are subordinated to the tempo of machines: "At machine four stands a punch operator, she activates the mechanism, moves to and fro, places plate after plate in the devouring jaws of the monster."[152] The small geometric roof gardens organize workers into prescribed patterns during rest pauses; sports areas organize their physical activity; newly cleaned machines organize them for greater productivity; neat rows of washing facilities order their cleanliness. The image culminates in the neat rows of happily producing workers which adorn the factory itself. Devoid of intentionality, the workers themselves are abstractions. Unable to reflect on their own condition they are never permitted to speak in the pages of *Schönheit der Arbeit*. Nevertheless,

> the fact that hygienic factory rooms and all that goes with them, Volkswagen and sport palace, ruthlessly liquidate metaphysics would be of no consequence, except that in the social totality they too become metaphysics, an ideological veil, behind which the real calamity gathers itself.[153]