The Holocaust — Anomic Hobbesian “State of Nature”

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Massenvernichtung — Hobbesscher „Naturzustand“ in Perversion

Inhalt: Angeleitet von HANNAH ARENDT, die in der Massenvernichtung von Juden im NS-Regime die „Banalität des Bösen“ erkannte, belebt die Arbeit erneut, daß die Beteiligten an diesem Mord „normale“, gewöhnliche Menschen waren, und interpretiert diesen Befund ergänzend im Sinne der These einer „Identifikation mit dem Opfer“. Als Hauptursache, die zur Massenvernichtung führte, wird moralische Indifferenz indiziert; sie bestimmte die Haltung insbesondere der deutschen Eliten und ging zurück auf Wertedissens, eine Herrschaftsordnung, die auf bloßen Interessenkonstellationen beruhte, die Entschichtung der Eliten überhaupt, schließlich aber den Verlust der sozialen und, verbunden damit, die Entgesellschaftlichung der personalen Identität.

Abstract: Guided by HANNAH ARENDT's characterization of the Holocaust as “the banality of evil”, this paper summarizes the pertinent evidence attesting to the involvement of normal human beings in mass murder, and supplements it with an interpretation in terms of “identification with the victim”. Identifying moral indifference among German elites as the key factor, the origins of the Holocaust are traced to value dissensus, domination by virtue of interest constellation, elite-desratification, loss of societal identity, and de-socialization of personal identity.

Introduction

Nothing illustrates better the complexity and scope required of a theoretical interpretation of the Holocaust than two papers delivered at the genocide session of the 1976 ASA convention. One portrayed genocide as a function of an ideology of integral nationalism (FEIN, 1976). Another dealt with the functionaries of the German Railroads and, hence, with the most nonideological actors conceivable (HILBERG, 1976). If other recent writings can serve as an index, such variety in approaches is not exceptional. Though discounting for cognitive as well as moral reasons the central theme of his own material, DES PRES (1976:171f.) in effect proceeds in the Weberian cultural tradition and interprets German genocide in terms of the realization in concreto of centuries-old images of hell which, so activist a culture as the Occidental, sooner or later had to put into practice. In stark contrast, TILLION (1975: 48-49, 164, 172) despite noting the contradiction between the policies of exploitation and extermination, concludes in a more utilitarian key: they did it because they profited by reconciling the contradiction through a policy of “extermination by labor.”

Despite many facts that can be marshalled to demonstrate the play of varied and numerous “material” and “ideational” interests, it may be suggested that theoretical approaches to the Holocaust which rely importantly on either or both of these factors tend to conceal rather than reveal one distinctive and radically modern trait. Clearly identified by RUBENSTEIN (1975), this refers to the fact that the Holocaust was a bureaucratically administered extermination of a surplus population in the service of an abstract goal, creating Lebensraum for Germany in the New Order of Europe. And, I would add, it was possible only because the very impersonality of the bureaucratic spirit had been developed to a point where the pursuit of so abstract a goal, that characterizing criterion of genuine bureaucracy, no longer needed any morally compelling and therefore emotionally experienced legitimation at the level of the concrete human beings who participated in its accomplishment. Killing as such belongs to the human condition. But throughout human history, where man destroyed another, he never lacked ample, often impressively ingenious justifications for his action. These could range from the modest disguising of rather plain material interests as in the familiar institution of slavery (for example the Southern United States, CASH, 1941) to the intricate theological construction of demonology that came to characterize the European witch craze (TREVOR-ROPER, 1969). But in the Holocaust we encounter the total bureaucratic machine, disposable towards any end, because we Germans generated no effective demand for
the legitimation of the "final solution of the Jewish question". In HOBBES' (1881:91-96) original sociological conception of hell we still find a very human portrait. For his "war of all against all" was not only plausibly motivated, it was indeed the puzzling theoretical result that should have obtained from no less a source than man's ability for reason, the rational pursuit of self-interest. But, as will be shown, serving neither the passion of belief nor the rational exploitation of the human factor of production, there is one aspect of the Holocaust which is constituted of ultimate hell: the creation of meaninglessness suffering and the imposition of senseless death. That, so far, remains Germany's contribution to world history, at least regarding the ethical nature of man and, one can only hope, will remain so for generations to come. Interpreting that contribution is my aim.

However, I have to preface this attempt with three qualifiers. One relates to the aspect selected for study, which, however real, remains partial; another pertains to certain inadequacies of extant theoretical work; and a third to the moral precariousness of addressing this problem in a sociological key.

To be sure, the Holocaust Kingdom (DONAT, 1963) was also a slavery system (RUBENSTEIN, 1975:48-67; ADLER, 1955:420, 631; LANGBEIN, 1972:506-515). But anything with a convincing character of rational exploitation remains far better observable on the micro-level involving specific groups and personnel, off and on-site in hell (ADLER, 1955:423; CHARY, 1972:63-65; LANGBEIN, 1972:158-168, 223ff, SERENY, 1974:212ff, 232), than on the macro-level, say in terms of the camps' contribution to GNP. And it is the evidence of the former which apparently necessitates, even in 1976, to publicly assert that the Holocaust was not economically rational for the German nation (comment at 1976 ASA genocide session). But we have clear-cut evidence that recurrent and deep intra-SS conflict between the advocates of exploitation and the champions of extermination consistently yielded victory to the latter (HÖHNE, 1967:298-403). Significantly, that evidence does not attest to any widespread prevalence of "ideational interests" dictating the destruction of Jewry but reflects inter-agency resource competition instead.

Secondly, theories that rely importantly on legitimation needs of new political leadership, the requisites of national-identity formation, ideology of racial or other myths, in short on the "true believer" (HOFFER, 1951) syndrome, also retain insuperable difficulties. Of course they have the advantage of calling forth more psychological than sociological interpretations. That strategy remains relevant particularly for societies "so organized that the will of one man, or a small group, is the most powerful of the political forces" (CONQUEST, 1968:63). But the Holocaust was set in motion long after the National Socialist regime had found a secure legitimacy anchor in Germany through putting an end to economic chaos. Furthermore, as demonstrated recently in Eastern European Socialist society (LENDVAI, 1971:243ff, 326ff), political anti-Semitism is possible without social anti-Semitism, without "true believer anti-Semites" at the political center, and hardly any Jews left to serve as scapegoats (e.g., Prague); while resurgent nationalism, that illiberal force to the liberal mind, protected the surviving Jews in Rumania, a country with quite a history of social anti-Semitism.

And, however neat the analytical structure of the totalitarian model as developed by ARENDT (1951) and more specified by FRIEDRICH (1954), at least four features make it less than compelling. First, like theories of fascism in general which either excel in descriptive or explanatory analysis but hardly ever in both (NOLTE, 1970:15-75), totalitarianism not only describes too much relative to its explanatory intention, it covers far more than mass murder and, worse, does not give sufficient separate attention to the latter. Clearly recognized by DAHRENDORF (1965:375-376), an explanation of the National Socialist polity is one thing, that of the death camps another. We must simply acknowledge that the considerable social revolution that was the Third Reich (SCOHENBAUM, 1967) with its phenomenal career opportunities for the little man, the greatly accelerated modernizing change in terms of industrialization and urbanization under the umbrella of an anti-modern ideology, and all that that entailed, including total mobilization for war, was possible in exactly the way it happened without taking the ultimate step to bureaucratized mass murder. Staying within the human condition with a form of slavery through a sys-
tem of forced labor would have deprived no conceivable SS-functionary or other politico of the career chances available. Neither political, nor social, neither military nor economic “system requirements” called for the gas chamber. Secondly, while the model demands systematic terror as a necessary and inevitable accompaniment of the remaining FRIEDRICH characteristics (An all-encompassing Weltanschauung, monopoly control over the means of communication and those of enforcement), empirically Italian Fascism had all of the latter but never systematized its terror to anything even approaching the conditions under HITLER (GERMINO, 1959; also SETON-WATSON, 1967:702ff).

Thirdly, the model certainly implies the impossibility of endogenous reform which would significantly reduce terror. In Russia KRUSHCHEV falsified it on that point. Finally, the model implies the complete breakdown of the Rechtsstaat. That is denied by reality. The famed Nürnberg racial laws as well as the many administratively legal decrees that followed not only attest to the legal exclusion of Jews from society, a process repeated by many governments allied with Germany, these laws also clearly indicate a modern state’s capacity for selective exclusion of some of its members. This is not an unimportant fact. “Packing people off to camps” and doing so legally, however illegitimately, was a facilitative mechanism of central import in the accomplishment of the Holocaust. Furthermore, let us not forget the internment of American citizens of Japanese origin in wartime America, that otherwise stable democracy. It should make us less certain about the “systemic character” of any political regime, democratic, authoritarian, or totalitarian.

These cursory remarks should suffice to establish that much remains to be done for any adequate comprehension of the Holocaust. Beyond the few points made, nothing here intends to cast doubt on existing work and, certainly, nothing here pretends to its evaluation. With an estimated seven thousand six hundred three books and articles published between 1945 and 1968 on German Jewry alone (Der Spiegel, June 15, 1970:131), such a task may well elude us forever.

Nothing in my selective descriptive account of the Holocaust pretends to be original. Nothing should be read to imply that some groups and some individuals did not enrich themselves; nothing, likewise, is to suggest that extermination did not satisfy any one’s need for closure and consistency in ideological convictions. But if one denotes these two faces — killing for gain and murdering for the sake of belief — the traditional ones, then everything to be described should reveal that a third and modern face, mass murder in the form of a mindless bureaucratic machine, devoid of a need for legitimation and therefore constituting the ultimate of a sociological conception of hell elucidates an aspect as real and as valid as any we already have. Towards this end I shall endeavor to demonstrate that: (1) the Holocaust occurred despite the absence of “true believers” in any number adequate to the enormity of its scale; (2) its single most important cause was also the most simple imaginable: a massive moral indifference among Germans in elite positions concerning the fate of the Jews; (3) it was anything but inevitable and in fact could have been stopped with surprising ease; but because of these features which denote an anomic state, (4) the camps also had a character of quasi-compulsiveness about them which calls for resurrecting an apparently forgotten interpretation — “identification with the victim” — if their stable operation is to be understood at all.

This brings me to the third prefatory consideration: How does one deal with our ability to realize ultimate hell? Perhaps DES PRES (1976: v) answered that query best by admitting: “one doesn’t.” LANGBEIN (1972:17-25), himself a survivor, presents a lengthy justification for writing at all. There are, then, good reasons why research on the Holocaust demands a special language of taboo which, while shedding cognitive light, would still record the primacy of respect we owe these events. For, as will be demonstrated, the Holocaust was utterly unique in the annals of human historical experience in that among the upper reaches of German society, where responsibility for it lies, it served neither material nor ideal interests; it was just permitted to happen. Throughout history man has killed man and never lacked in reasons explicated to himself his deeds. In the absence, then, of a felt need for justification lies, indeed, the significance of the Holocaust as the crime against humanity. Given that, any effort to-
wards better understanding, necessarily cognitive, should retain a religious tone. But lacking such a special language of respect, perhaps a reversal of our usual priorities can serve as a substitute. Thus I offer an interpretive account of this experience beyond the human condition not to serve the advancement of social science but as a cognitive mode of mourning, designed to supplement and strengthen other ways of remembrance and witness. Thus also, I shall deliberately sacrifice the scientific desideratum of efficient writing. If we are to understand, we must select. All selection is abstraction. But here it must come as a second step. Our first obligation is to recollect perhaps, above all, those members of the Judenräte who knew of their complicity and experienced a terror of helplessness hitherto unknown to man, and those who perished, those who survived and their children. And only having stood there at the gates of hell, in our imagination, as best we can, exposed once again to the reality of that ultimate terror of which we are capable, may we permit ourselves the comforts of abstraction and, however feeble, the hope of learning. If that procedure elucidates more of the reality of meaningless suffering than I could ever expect to capture in interpretation, so be it.

When it comes to answering the question why Germans in elite positions did not care, my analysis seeks connections between three societal and one social-psychological variable. The former refer to value cleavages, destratification among Germany's national elites, and incapacity to organize social conflict; the latter to desocialization of subjective identity in the form of the disappearance of social honor. All of these, it seems to me, are potentials in any modern highly differentiated society, a matter which lifts the experience of the Holocaust out of the realm of a historical burden making it significant beyond the confines of the relations between Germans and Jews.

I. Aspects of Hell

1. Mass Murder “Sine Ira et Studio”

The Holocaust took many forms: mass executions by extermination squads (Einsatzgruppen); starvation, "epidemization," and forced labor in conjunction with ghettos and camps; individual and sometimes random murder, torture, and incarceration; gassing in vans; and, only finally, the death factory as an industrialized, bureaucratized, technologically and organizationally integrated system for the production of corpses, the retrieval, collection, disbursement, and re-utilization of valuables, and the disposal of waste (e.g., HILBERG, 1961; REITLINGER, 1961). It is really the last form which renders distinctiveness to the Holocaust. At the peak of production, during the Hungarian Ak- tion in the summer of 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau gassed and cremated over 9,000 persons per day, and more efficient technology was planned for "after the war" (HOESS, 1959:215, LANGBEIN, 1972:38). The technique of gassing in a factory setting was to serve "the humanization of murder" for the sake of the SS. Its bureaucratization was designed to relieve most participants from facing individual responsibility for their action. For "murder itself resulted form innumerable part-decisions, made by innumerable persons, who maintained neither emotional, to say nothing of cognitive-reflective orientations to the object of murder" (LANGBEIN, 1972:37).

This was mass murder conceptualized as routine work (LANGBEIN, 1972:39). And, after initial flufflings which exacted too high a psychic and organizational cost among the killers (SERENY, 1974:157-161, 221-228; DICKS, 1972), and some learning, it was so realized. What makes the Holocaust unique relative to other mass murders in human history lies in its "banality of evil" (ARENDT, 1963), in that "decent family men simply engaged in murder as an occupation, enjoying in the evening, as it were, that wholesome feeling of self-satisfaction that comes with being a law-abiding, respectable citizen . . ." (HÖHNE, 1967:351), and in the fact that it was, finally, realized in that spirit of bureaucracy which Max Weber characterized with sine ira et studio (LANGBEIN, 1972:40).

This characterization of the phenomenon does not, I feel, diminish but reinforce its "diabolical" nature as emphasized by DES PRES (1976). For it adds to his portrayal of the camps at once a wider focus of men far from the scenes of hell, yet indispensable in its accomplishment, and a more sociological conception of hell: behavior without legitimation.
2. Genocide Out of Indifference Rather than Significant Political and Social Anti-Semitism

If one designates as “true believers” those committed to the racial myth of National Socialism to the point of believing in a historical mission to liberate the German people and the world at large from the curse of the Jewish virus, admittedly a tough standard, then one finds a tiny group of homo-neurotic social anti-Semites, even in the party a minute minority, and only before such talk became reality (HÖHNE, 1967:303). Grouped around SCHLEICHER, GOEBBELS and HITLER, that is where the idea of the final solution originated, apparently. If one relaxes the standard to social anti-Semitism in the usual prejudicial key, it evokes not only the quasi-comic figure of ROSENBERG, mighty author of the Nazi myth, who receded into utter political insignificance soon after the Machtergreifung, but one also enters not only the use of anti-Semitism as an electoral campaign aid before 1933, the lines of distinction between social anti-Semitism, i.e. genuine hostile prejudice, and political anti-Semitism, using the figure of the Jew as a tool in political mobilization, seen as such by mobilizer and mobilizee alike where the promised reward is always material gain, soon fade. That has a long history in Europe. Critical in that history is a finding from comparative analysis showing that anti-Semitism, in whatever mixtures, was far higher in Eastern Europe as well as in Austria than in Germany (e.g., PULZER, 1964). Insofar as popular reaction to “the night of crystal” can serve as a barometer of the people’s sentiments, it does not point to rabid anti-Semitism (HÖHNE, 1967:313ff). Finally on this general point, a moment’s reflection about the institutional interests of so vast an Apparat as the SS-Economic and Administrative Chief Office (SS-WVH) makes it obvious that extermination counteracted political anti-Semitism which, in the forms of safe jobs away from the front lines and career advancement chances could only be served by exploitation in as rational a key as possible. In fact, employees at death factories voiced apprehension that efficient work would rob them of no less than a reason to exist (e.g., SERENY, 1974).

Evidence on the non-ideological character of pure functionaries engaging with mindless routinized discipline in the administration of death and the leadership circles maintaining that atmosphere appears in conflated form by demonstrating a) that the critical administrators of death themselves were not social anti-Semites and b) that they never called a spade by its name.

The SS, executor of the final solution, started out as the only National Socialist voice in open opposition to such “crude, primitive, emotional anti-Semitism” as evident in calls for extermination before the war. Later, the SS was to work diligently for voluntary emigration, followed by forced emigration in collaboration with the Haganah, the “Mossad le Aliyah Bet,” and the American Joint Distribution Committee. The SS also entertained genuine resettlement options before implementing the final solution (HÖHNE, 1967:298-324). Neither the principal commandants of the death factories, nor transport chief EICHMANN were ever social anti-Semites with any degree of fervor (SERENY, 1974; HOESS, 1959:146; HÖHNE, 1967:307; ARENDT, 1963). Since it was a group of SS-intellectuals who opposed “such impractical nonsense” the most, it is also very likely that the commanders of the mobile execution squads (Einsatzgruppen) were not radical anti-Semites; for that group was likely the most highly educated of all the leadership circles in the Third Reich. Of the eight commanders, four had university doctorates, one even two (HÖHNE, 1967:329). That they were not “true believers” is also evident in the very fact that they needed a veneer of traditional “justifications” for mass murder even in secret internal communications. These covered all kinds of things, preventing epidemics, combatting partisans, or preventing collaboration with the enemy. What one does not find is any indication of the kind of pride expected of “true believers” reporting success in their historic mission. And while that may not satisfy the psychoanalytically inclined observer, always in search for repressions, the next finding may diminish his resistance: “when a planned extermination Aktion could not be so ‘justified’, it did not take place” (HÖHNE, 1967:337).

In fact an impressive and truly diabolical silence about its “world-historical mission” reigned in the Holocaust Kingdom enveloping victim, obedient executor, and even opponent alike. Aided, no doubt but hardly adequately accounted for, by the language conventions typical of totalitarianism, the literature reveals a level of silence so
pervasive as to indicate indifference and thus a real deficit in moral concern with these events.

Efforts to keep the final solution secret were extensive but effective, I suggest, only because very few cared to know reality. Personnel training in the mobile execution commandos proceeded without revelation of the assignment; the famous Wannsee Conference Notes, their restricted circulation notwithstanding, remained devoid of any concrete references; HOESS was not only ordered to keep reality to himself but recalled having told only his wife; and concealment of the truth pervaded ghettos, “model camp” Theresienstadt, and camps alike (HÖHNE, 1967: 328-329; HILBERG, 1971:89-106; HÖESS, 1959:205; LANGBEIN, 1972:353; GOLDSTEIN, 1949:108-110; ADLER, 1955:118; SERENY, 1974:213). Among killers and killed only few faced reality.

Thank: to quasi-surveys of population-morale by the Domestic Branch of the security apparatus (Inland-SD; SCELLENBERG, 1959), we have indications of awareness of the reality of the final solution among Germany’s lower classes. But while they called a spade by its name, circumlocutions and, above all, sheer silence reigned in higher circles.

To start with the top, in the mountain of documentary material about HITLER and his immediate environment very little if any concrete reference to the fact of human destruction can be found. That otherwise so voluble man hardly ever talked about it; we do not even know whether he ever read the pertinent reports (FEST, 1973:931). HIMMLER started out with a flat rejection of physical destruction, designating it as a Bolshevik method and intrinsically “un-Germanic” (HÖHNE, 1967:299). When he later assumed responsibility for the execution of the final solution, what he said about it hardly attests to conversion. It was the rare occasion when he talked concretely about human destruction, clothing murder into that heroic rhetoric expected of a “true believer” (HIMMLER, 1943:169; HÖHNE, 1967:335; FEST, 1973:929). Far more often one finds him engaging in attempts at minimization, and de-criminalization, even vis à vis closest associates (HÖHNE, 1967:335). The real intimacy which he shared with his private physician and mas-

seur (KERSTEN, 1952) makes abundantly clear: Himmler tried hard to deny reality to himself. He too experienced himself as a cog in a machine.

HÖHNE (1967:474, 537) discovered a total of seven SS-officers who opposed the final solution on moral grounds, and that figure must be considered in relation to the estimated 50,000 of one million combat-SS directly involved. In the party, he found one (HÖHNE, 1967:340-342). BLASKOWITZ seems the only one among German generals who opposed the final solution openly, and like the few in the SS who simply refused such orders, the consequence was simply transfer (HÖHNE, 1967:281ff; HOFFMANN, 1970:189, 309; BUCHHEIM et al., 1965). Even the most extensive history of the German resistance to HITLER identifies exactly one person for whom the final solution was the “decisive existential experience” (HOFFMANN, 1970:381).²

However fragmentary, the available evidence points to an enormous moral deficit among the higher strata in German society. Most, it seems, acted like DÖNITZ (personal communication), sticking to their sphere of competence, and registering, even afterwards, either unwillingness or incapacity for responsibility and, therefore,

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1 Even that remains a conservative figure because it excludes personnel directly involved with the final solution before conversion to combat-SS status.

2 That does not prove the absence of a widespread moral concern about the final solution among resistance groups. But it makes it likely, nevertheless. Like one survivor of the resistance circle (ANNEMARIE FINCKH, personal communication) HOFFMANN may have been inclined to take moral revulsion against the final solution simply for granted “in that circle”. But the extensive treatment he gives to the many moral scruples which eventuated in the defeat of the repeated attempts at HITLER’s life, make one thing clear: Whatever the level of moral revulsion, it remained insufficient to overcome these other far more traditional concerns such as fear of civil war, doing unspecified damage to the country because no definite promise could be exacted from the enemy as to post-war conditions, and even breaking the oath of loyalty to the Führer. In one sense the facts here do speak for themselves: the moral basis of solidarity among the carriers of the highest prestige in German society, the Generals, was so fragile that they could not mobilize themselves for a coup.
guilt³. For those to whom the Holocaust meant "work", on the other hand, whether off or on-site in hell, the evidence suggests that denial helped the killers in their task, one in which they did not believe; and denial aided the victim in his striving for survival, for a day, a week, and later in the war escape from hell as such. Racial myth, then, figured marginally in the Holocaust and no more than in the role of a precipitating factor. What is more, there was nothing inevitable about this mass murder. One can trace origins deep into the bowels of German history and culture (SHIRER, 1960). One can read Treblinka into Mein Kampf. One can be impressed with the step-by-step nature of the process it took, from the imposition of occupational restrictions to gas chamber, and see design at work. But whether one starts early or late in this history, the postulate of some inexorable logic leading of necessity to the realization of the final solution remains a post factum construction at variance with critical fact.

3. Mass Murder Which Could Be Stopped But Was Not

Let us recall, first, that the very few who simply and openly refused to go along succeeded. One bishop, hurling the threat of excommunication against collaborators, stopped the euthanasia program of the mentally incurably ill. That program is now widely seen as a necessary precursor of the final solution, a view of some plausibility because of the continuity in personnel (SERENY, 1974). One German governor of occupied Denmark, after its loss of internal autonomy, and a high SS-officer to boot, finding

3 As in the apparently still "hotly debated issue of Jewish history", Jewish complicity in their own destruction (LENDVAL, 1971:191), such terms as "incapacity for guilt", or "inability to mourn" (MITSCHERLICH & MITSCHERLICH, 1970) merely illustrate the awesome difficulty to arrive at moral evaluations. For we do not have moral criteria "adequate" to a near-Hobbesian state of social reality, and we may be even hesitant to develop them. A term like guilt has meaning in its relation to another, atonement. But for the holocaust, there is no way to atone. The event itself goes beyond mankind's repertoire of experience and, therefore, transcends the powers of familiar language discourse itself.

himself in a social milieu of real moral concern, actively participated in the successful sabotage of the final solution (YAHIL, 1969). As evident in the cases of Bulgaria, Rumania, and Italy, governments allied with HITLER could save their own Jews if they wished, and even before Stalingrad (CHARY, 1972). And though dealing with anti-Christian school policy rather than "the Jewish question", even peasant women, when mad enough to simply take action, could effectively stop HITLER's policies (PETERSON, 1969:404-427). One may venture this conjecture: as we learn more about the limits of HITLER's power, the question why the Holocaust was not stopped will became more pressing. Some of the already known and notable opportunities to stop it concern the law, the fact that the Euthanasia Program (of the mentally ill) required external legitimation, and the way in which a portion of Jewry escaped the net of EICHMANN.

Starting with prohibiting the employment of non-Aryans in the teaching professions and ending with denying to Jews the protection of the courts, the legal exclusion of German Jewry from participation in society took eleven years, without even then resolving all doubt as to who was a Jew (The Jewish Black Book Committee, 1946:106-107; HILBERG, 1971:97). There were many opportunities to abort the mission. More telling remains the procurement of written expert testimony about the moral justifiability of killing the incurably mentally ill. It was only this testimony from a Catholic professor of theology which led HITLER to conclude that "a unanimous and unequivocal opposition from the two churches was not to be expected", to withdraw his objection accordingly and, of course, then order the program (SERENY, 1974: 64-68). And as the protest of bishop v. GALLEN demonstrated, it took far less than unanimous opposition to stop it again. Just a slightly different constellation of pure power interests during the "night of crystal" could have relegated the forces of political anti-Semitism to a permanent position of negligible influence as happened with the SA before (HÖHNE, 1967: 313-317). Solidarity of just a few generals with BLASKOWITZ, rather than relative indifference to the murder of Poland's leading circles would have eliminated that important learning experience for the final solution.
Inside Germany hatred of Jews was hardly a prominent factor in their destruction. Outside Germany, as evident in the fate of Jews in the newly acquired territories of Bulgaria, even social anti-Semitism was a dispensable factor in accomplishing the Holocaust. And so, similarly, it was with the opposite: saving the Jews from annihilation did not uniformly, nor even commonly, require real moral concern, widespread in the population. The five prominent cases, where the final solution encountered difficulties, partially or almost completely saving Jewry, cover Denmark, Rumania, Bulgaria, Finland, and Italy (HÖHNE, 1967:360). They display only one common denominator: the territories were not conquered by German arms in the style of Poland and parts of Russia. Other seemingly relevant factors were quite variable. Morality — operative, albeit, in modified form through identifying the fate of Jewish fellow citizens with a genuine commitment to preserve one's national identity — was a decisive factor only in Denmark (YAHIL, 1969). As to political status vis-à-vis the Reich, Denmark was a special case of occupation in that, foreign relations and trade apart, fully autonomous democratic self-government was retained until late into the war; the other countries were all Axis allies during the critical period. That that status in itself did not mean much is attested to by the case of Hungary, where most Jews perished. Rumania, quite a participant in the final solution outside its old territories, was a country with pervasive social anti-Semitism; Bulgaria, also saving the Jews of its old territory and otherwise an active participant in the holocaust, was a country completely devoid of social anti-Semitism. But it was in Bulgaria where parliament once debated the question of collaboration with such unequivocally clear language as "sending women and children to their death" and generated a vote in favor of it. What saved the Bulgarian Jews proper was bureaucratic error in a cabinet order designating the respective collection areas and late timing of the action far more so than moral opposition, though the latter was not absent (CHARY, 1972:184ff; for a different view cf. LENDVAI, 1971:64-65). Finland's Jews escaped by personal intervention (HÖHNE, 1967:364ff; KERSTEN, 1952). Adoption of anti-Jewish legislation notwithstanding, Italy widely sabotaged the holocaust, including temporary invasion of Croatia to save Jews (HÖHNE, 1967:363). Here, then, courageous individuals in the diplomatic corps or the armed forces sufficed.

Like a cognitive flashlight the case of Bulgaria shows two things. Anti-Semitism was important in inventing the holocaust, but quite dispensable, i.e. not even a necessary factor, in accomplishing it; and a common revulsion among the people against this crime was not relevant for saving the Jews. These facts remain: one could stop the Holocaust engine and get away with it; but too few even tried.

If the Holocaust engine was a bureaucratic enterprise administered by functionaries so uncaring about the rhyme and reason of their actions as never to generate effective demand for the legitimation of so extraordinary a task as the administration of death in mass production style, then, postulating still normal human beings, anomie should have been the experience of everyday life. To be sure, this applies more to the destruction camps themselves than to places of disengaging Jews from society, of embarkation to the journey of death, and travel towards it in cattle cars. Nevertheless, anomie denotes instability. But the camps operated with the reliable routine that is the hallmark of bureaucracy. Therefore, BETTELHEIM's (1943) famous thesis of "identification with the aggressor" needs a complement. This can be done by extending STEIN's (1936) earlier interpretation of "identification with the victim" from the original site of its application, HITLER's electoral campaigns, to the camps.

4. Identification With The Victim

When RAUSCHNING (1939) first suggested that National Socialist ideology was in fact a "doctrine of doctrinalness", that idea was a startling one. How could there be nothing at the core of the voluminous outpourings of "idealism", "commitments"., "Volksgemeinschaft", is "history and destiny", and the like in manifold quasi-Hegelian trappings? But RAUSCHNING's assertion stood the test of time and research. For Nazism, like European fascism, was more a mentality than an ideology (LINZ, 1964). It was a mentality with a commitment to "heroic activism" at its center, only more activist and
virulent than the non-German versions. That central notion decrees that the true test of modern man was the capacity to exist, and asserts that existence against all forces, without the crutch of belief (NOLTE, 1969).

But to generate and maintain a psychological state of mobilization, of constant commitment to action-exertion “to the last drop” of energy, without any substantive cause to serve remains very difficult. That difficulty should be apparent from SMELSER’S (1962) analysis of “collective behavior” as phenomena that short-circuit across various levels of the organization of meaningful action, destructive of complexity and, hence, reductive of uncertainty. In that analytical perspective value movements short-circuit across all levels of organization of action, from ultimate ideals over normative specifications, modes of social organization, to instrumental facilities, eventuating into shared action that is one implementive shout of shared meaning. But in the hitherto known forms of value movements it was precisely commitment to substantive ideals which ripped out the building blocks of meaningful action from their traditional allocations, thus making them disposable for new, revolutionary combinations. The Nazis attempted the same, but with commitment to the purely formal notion of activism for its own sake. That was not and cannot be reductive of uncertainty; it was the opposite, more productive of it instead. The formal ideal of “heroic activism” may be a stance bearable with some credibility for contemplative roles or men in the expressive arts. It remains too difficult for men of action, particularly in roles with recurrent scheduled accountability. Those men are likely to fill the void. But with any serious dedication to the formal ideal of active existence without the crutch of belief, they are likely to fill the void with projections of whatever targets of action and forces to overcome happen across their path.

Identification with the opponent, in the present context with the victim, is therefore a plausible outcome. STEIN (1936) left us a convincing account of how the Nazis used “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion” (ROSENBERG, 1923), that forgery of a Czarist police official (BERNSTEIN, 1971), as an instruction manual in their struggle for power. But that pattern of so filling the void did not stop with the attainment of power; and it became a mark of the Holocaust Kingdom in particular.

On-site in hell many examples of identification with the victim could be listed. Some SS-men feared they would be executed themselves in the end; even an inmate could force an SS-physician to select another victim for gassing because no reasonable excuse not to kill occurred to the doctor (LANGBEIN, 1972:332, 258). We know of STANGL and HOESS, commandants of Treblinka and Auschwitz respectively, that it never occurred to them to disobey orders for murder, though they were quite capable of disobeying orders not to personally profit thereby in any way. With respect to killing then, they had become incarnations of the despicable goyim in the “Protocols” whom their Jew-masters had deprived of the very capacity to form their own opinion (BERNSTEIN, 1971:311, 334), themselves doomed to perish in the end, but meanwhile, on another plane, being like the Zion-master, dominating and doing the killing. Examples of such double role-reversal could be easily multiplied. But it may be more useful to show how central organizational features of the camps reflected the anti-imag of the mythical Jew.

Four features of camp existence clearly show how the agents of the masterace identified with the image of the “Protocol” Jew as an unfeeling being, wantonly dedicated to domination for its own sake. These are: i. de-personalization of inmates and guards to robot status; ii. destruction of kinship solidarity; iii. replication of that stratification system which marked medieval society during the plagues, and through that; iv. the realization of an anomic, yet stable subject-society.

De-personalization already started during the transports, conducted in so shocking a fashion of anti-order that it produced widespread amnesia among victims, even to the point of not knowing their own name (ADLER, 1955:108). A similar “presence-shock” met the inmate at arrivals in transit and destination camps. Here we have an index that guards and inmate-capos alike became de-personalized. As evident in the purely instrumental use of brutalization as a crowd control technique, the administrators of death had turned themselves into robots, de-

The significance of the destruction of the kinship tie becomes apparent in view of SCHNEIDER's (1968) analysis. Kinship solidarity, especially in modern society is man's sole experience with the normative demand to render inter-personal loyalty independent of reciprocity and performance. One might, therefore, designate it as the core resource on which the trust of all other social bonds comes, ultimately, to rest. And, sensitive like cultural anthropologists, the holo-caust masters proceeded to destroy the tie of kin. So prevalent as to enter the camp language, Familiezerreissung became the universal inmate experience. It also found symbolic expression when inmates led their own family members to the gas chamber, removed their corpses to oven or pit thereafter, or inmate ghetto police selected their older parents for shipment to death (ADLER, 1955:543-556; LANGBEIN, 1972:225, 240; GOLDSTEIN, 1949:107, 129). Diminished somewhat to the destruction of the friend tie, this could also happen to the SS, as apparent in the case of HOESS who had to execute a personal friend and fellow SS-officer (HOESS, 1959: 168-169).

In ghetto, transit camp, and camp alike there arose a three-class stratification system — the prominent, the workers, and the beggar-like near corpses — with inequality of living resources so drastic that "men lived on different planets" (GOLDSTEIN, 1949:91; ADLER, 1955:37, 154, 246-248, 305; LANGBEIN, 1972:91; HOESS, 1959:128-129). Wealth, health, and comfort among the prominent or inmate elite existed in closest proximity to poverty, disease, and direct unsheltered exposure to the vagaries of nature among the bottom mass. In between were the "useful pro tempore", the workers. The top of the inmate administration had literally everything, personal servants, a limited staff "protected against selections" and hence the power over life and death, cultural entertainment, and sports; members of the bottom class, "the already useless", had nothing. Partially replicated among the various SS ranks on the other side, there was an enormous distance separating the lordly commandant with his own house, present family, staff of personal servants, delectable table, and horse stable from the lowly guard, family-less in barrack quarters, low in pay, with fixed hours of duty and rationed food. Generally, inside-personnel was significantly better off than external guards. Stratification was a symbiotic mechanism that bound together victim with administrator of destruction. To the victim went differential survival chances, to the SS indispensable assistance in their work. Corruption, on both sides, was a tolerable cost factor accepted by upper echelon SS (HÖHNE, 1967: 352-355). Further, it was not only the obvious, public ownership of the means of destruction (and production, in SS enterprises), which made the camps a selective realization of "Jewish Communism". The system of inequalities was also a product of administrative decision, with the attendant consequence of absolute personal insecurity about anyone's stratum position and, therefore, life itself, even for the guard who might be posted to the front.

Who enjoyed advantages and for how long varied from camp to camp and over the history of each; the inmate-elite could be "criminals" or "politics", Poles or Jews. But, however structureless, the symbiotic "stratification" of the Kingdom was indispensable for stabilizing the otherwise prevalent near-anomie. For life in camp rested on two planes simultaneously: the reality of destruction, mostly screened off from consciousness, and a make-believe veneer of normality, made up of bureaucratic administration, work, and recreation. Much of the latter, as for example a monetized economy in Auschwitz (LANGBEIN, 1972:42; also Theresienstadt, ADLER, 1955:121) with a currency for which one could not really buy anything, was a mockery of normality. However unreal and weird, such features were important reality-denying mechanisms to sustain a world truly the reverse of the normal. The most telling index of that reversal and "identification with the victim" was the capsizing of being and doing in the behavior-sanction sequence. Normal society designates a deviant act as a clue of characterological quality and then attaches a sanction. But just as the mythical "Protocol" 4

4 Usually stressed only by German authors, the critical divide was between the internal staff (Schutzhaftlager-personnel) and the external staff guarding the camp on its perimeters (cf. for example, KOLB, 1962:78).
Jew oriented to despicable goyim entirely on quality rather than the principle of performance, so did the SS. The survival chances of a Jew who had actually done something were definitely better than those of a fellow-ethnic who just was a Jew. The latter came to camp with a collective RSHA-transport, facing selection immediately upon arrival. But the former came with a special transport, and he came with a file. That demanded a decision for death of a concrete individual and an entry into the file. Requiring more information, it meant more survival (LANGBEIN, 1972:80).

In sum, the Holocaust did not rest on firm internalization of a “racial myth” at the top; it was not inevitable and, indeed, stopped here and there when someone cared enough. On-site in hell it required neither political fanatics nor pathological personalities to produce death, but rather a normal eagerness to fill a meaningless void, even if with a combination of “identification with aggressor” and “identification with the victim”. That, apparently, was smoothly accomplished. When “Eiche’s boys”, those SS-men with the allegedly proper training for total domination (ARENDT, 1951), left for frontline duty, their places in Auschwitz were taken by persons without any prior direct contact and experience in guarding anyone, and without significant change in the fate of inmates (LANGBEIN, 1972:318). Offsite from hell it required many persons in many roles, just doing their job. From legislators passing anti-Jewish laws to policemen who collected victims, from industrial managers who employed them to Sonderkommandos (special squads) who destroyed them, from lawyers drafting Aryanization-papers of property to bank clerks monetizing golden tooth fillings, from physicians and professors who experimented on them to lower riffraff who gladly moved into liberated housing, from peasants in the country who watched the smoke rise to the sky to cultivated ladies in first-class coach compartments who noted the cattle cars with human freight pass by, the Holocaust Kingdom touched the lives of millions, directly involving many thousands from many walks of life, normal average men for the largest part; and, on the outside, men and women who “knew”, but could do what they did by not caring to know about the fate of fellow human beings which they administered in innumerable ways. Why we did not care deserves interpreting.

II. On the Sociological Bases of a Bureaucratized Hobbesian State of Nature

The following analysis rests on two facts, one pertaining to the Nazi polity, the other to German society since its emergence into modern nation-state status in 1871. Both have to be treated as givens. First, the National Socialist regime was the opposite of a “garrison state”, if by that one means a militarystyle dictatorship with unambiguous, undisputed lines of authority and, for whatever reason, largely effective obedience and little visible internal conflict. In contrast, Nazi rule meant “not authority and order, but absolute antihierarchy, and structurelessness constituted the dynamic principle of this Führer dictatorship”. It was no less than “a system of anarchical systemlessness” (HÖHNE, 1967:376-377). While based on the SS, other studies indicate that the generalization is reasonably correct (e.g., ORLOW, 1968; PETERSON, 1969; HOMZE, 1967). The theoretical implication is that one cannot speak of genuine functional differentiation among the elites. Empirically, Nazi Germany had the appearance of functional elites but the reality of bureaucratic hierarchies in relentless resource competition with each other and a considerable level of de-differentiation or breakdown in the division of labor. The fact that the SS, self-proclaimed aristocracy of the New Order in Europe, diligently captured and held a monopoly over soft drinks production and marketing, amongst its many other economic enterprises (HÖHNE, 1967:472ff), is only one telling instance.

In its disorder the Third Reich provides impressive empirical verification of PARSONS’ (1949) critique of HOBBES, particularly as regards the role of some commonly shared values as a resource for the institutionalization of conflict in society. And this brings in the second fact. German society was characterized by value cleavages along regional, social class, and urban-rural lines (BAUM, 1968; and MS). Based on content analysis of popular literature, quantitative data show that Germans perceived each other as ethical strangers, committed to different and profoundly conflicting imperatives concerning such Durkheimian pre-contractual ground-rules as bases of assigning generalized prestige, legitimacy conceptions of authority, bases on which one advocates change or defends the status-quo in social arrangements, and the like. Only one com-
mon element stood out: a high stress on achievement. It is a truism that no society, regardless of its complexity, is just integrated by values. Just as trite is the observation that empirical value systems are never as tightly internally integrated as even the most modest mathematical paradigm. The significance of value consensus or dissensus emerges only from comparative data. Critical then for present purposes is merely this fact: relative to American middle-class main stream presuppositions about man and society, which because abstract, hence not detail-prescriptive of concrete conduct, constitute a resource for the structuring and re-structuring of norms in concrete institutional settings, Germany’s upper classes, in particular, displayed profound regional heterogeneity in such commitments. No main stream there.

Accepting this as fact permits two useful specifications. When RAUSCHNING (1938) asserted that Nazi Germany was characterized by “a dissolution of all values” and a celebration of “a doctrine of doctrinelessness”, he meant the public sphere of political rhetoric. Relative to Communism with its written ideological texts, the Nazis’ mentality made it possible for any political actor to define the meaning of the New Order with great latitude, so long, as he stopped short of appearing disloyal to the Führer himself (NYOMARKAY, 1967). And when DAHREN-DORF (1965:327-341) asserted it is German to regard “private virtues” as the only genuine value-commitments and show a corresponding disdain for merely “public virtues”, then none of these facts indicate the emanation of some national character traits. Instead perception of value dissensus in the social sphere leads men, and quite reasonably so from the personality point of view, to assign real ethical significance to non-role stereotyped aspects of their lives, whether other-wordly or not, and to take a correspondingly more instrumental approach to all social obligations. That however, and less reasonably so, facilitates the transformation of all publicly floated value appeals into blatant propaganda. Cynicism and opportunism become part of political culture more so than in societies with relatively greater value consensus. In Germany this was by no means a particular trait of Nazi political culture; one can find it in Weimar and Imperial Germany as well, though it was more extreme under the Nazis than before. None of this is new, all will become more plausible as an interpretation of our profound indifference to the fate of the Jews when one considers the relations between: i. value dissensus and political domination; ii. value dissensus, stratification, and conflict organization; and iii. stratification and capacity for moral citizenship responsibility.

1. Value Dissensus and Political Domination

One implication of WEBER's (1922:212-301, 941ff.) famous work on domination is that the political regime of any complex society rests somewhere on one continuum where legitimacy beliefs — some admixture of tradition, personalized charisma of the chief executive, and rational legality — can be conceived of as lying at one end and “domination by virtue of a constellation of interests” at the other. Ceteris paribus, the single most important variable determining just where on this continuum a given concrete regime rests — how close to the legitimacy or the interest constellation pole — should be the degree of value consensus in society. The higher that degree is, the more the regime enjoys legitimacy, the lower the consensus on values, the more is man ruled by a constellation of interests. The main reason for this rather obvious proposition is that value consensus facilitates ensocialization to political legitimacy beliefs with similar contents, while dissensus impedes that. A further implication is that the more a regime rests on legitimacy, the greater are the chances for the generation of autonomous leadership or genuine political entrepreneurship. Conversely, the higher is domination by virtue of a constellation of interests, the more blurring the lines between public and private interests, and the more leaderless the ship of state.

Now, he who accepts that the Nazi polity was an "anarchical system of systemlessness" may well conclude that — Führer here, Führer there — National Socialism was “domination by virtue of constellation of interests”. From that one may safely exclude going to war itself and the ensuing mass murder, but not the form it took. More critical then is the question whether domination through interest constellation was a radically new or rather a more familiar experience in modern Germany. Though I must let it stand as a hypothesis here, I suggest it was the latter, being only
more extreme under National Socialism than before. Psychologically, that means people could adjust to it because they encountered basically familiar conditions. In ECKSTEIN's (1960) account of the breakdown of Weimar democracy we find the prevailing legitimacy deficit as the crucial variable. He argued the case in terms of inconsistency in authority patterns between the political center and the contiguos institutions such as parties, pressure groups, the economy, and so on. The work of LEPSIUS (1966, 1968) on the relations between modernizing change, structural conflicts, and extreme nationalism as well as the breakdown of the intermediary power structure of Weimar Germany into a carussel of pressure groups also attests, however indirectly, to the pre-dominance of domination by interest constellations during that era. Anglo-Saxon democracies, similarly ravaged by the Great Depression, survived because of relative legitimacy surfeit which facilitated the political entrepreneurship of ROOSEVELT, for example. As to Wilhelminian Germany we might draw on MAX WEBER. His advocacy of parliamentarization of the Imperial polity and indeed his often scathing critique of it had nothing whatever to do with eudaemonistic considerations deriving from the notion that some types of regime might be inherently more just or ethically preferable than others but concentrated entirely on the chances for the generation of effective national leadership. In his eyes Imperial Germany was a miserable failure on this score. Ruled by the appearance of monarchical unity but the reality of nothing but shifting interests between the partners of "iron" and "rye" themselves, on the one hand, and their hangers-on in the circles of "mittelständige Sammlungspolitik", on the other, his was a plea for democracy primarily in order to overcome "domination by constellation of interests" (MOMMSEN, 1974; WEBER, 1918).

For Germans in elite positions this would mean continuity with the experience of rule by interest groups. For those born in the late 1880s or 1890s who made it to elite positions in the civil service, the army, the economy, or the academic sphere it means the experience of taking care of some corporate interest under changing symbols of political life but relative constancy in the main strategy of all survival under domination by interest constellations: making and breaking alliances as the shifting situational exigencies dictate and otherwise paying lip service to whatever the changing fashions in political culture dictate. Under these conditions it would be unreasonable to expect any serious development of a sense of citizenship responsibility that extends beyond the sphere of one's own interests and competencies. In sum, the continuity in the pattern of domination by interest constellation under rapid regime turn-over furthered that bureaucratic mentality — a deep concern with and sophisticated management of all affairs having a direct bearing on one's position-interests and, practically, no interest in anything else in public life — that intellectuals tend to bemoan as a lack of civic concern. But why was this self-regardingness so strong as to eventuate in that massive moral indifference that made the Holocaust possible? The nature of these elites should provide one clue.

2. Value Dissensus, Stratification, and Conflict Organization

Using a slightly revised version of WEBER's (1947) famed trilogy of class, status, and power, I shall endeavor to show that Germany had mostly "one-dimensional" elites rather than elite-*strata*. The revision is this: a) let class stand for property rights in monetizable wealth as before; b) let power denote state authority or access to it in two ways: i) office incumbency and ii) political control or weight, regardless of its base; c) let "social honor" be restricted to that kind of occupational prestige which is a differential imputation of trust to contribute to conflict resolution "in the good and true interest" of the parties concerned (PARSONS, 1963b); and d) let "cultural honor" denote the imputation into positions of a differential capacity to know the nature of man's more ultimate moral commitments. Two points about this revision deserve note. First, so defined the four dimensions of vertical ranking cover any conceivable socially recognized inequality in society. Second, and important with respect to elites, the question is whether top or near-top position incumbency on any of these four dimensions of ranking also carries with it some commensurate control over the other resources, though by no means exactly identical amounts, extant only in the ideal typical ruling class. "Commensurate" here only means the absence of two conditions regarding elite positions: a) random relations
between control over different types of scarce, unequally distributed resources, as for example when some of the richest in the land are also the bearers of top prestige while some of their wealthy peers are in fact disprivileged regarding prestige and b), partly a logical consequence of a) in a case with four variables and partly a further specification, also the absence of systematically patterned and strongly negative relations between any two dimensions of rank for elite positions. Thus “commensurate” control over scarce resources describes a condition of relative elite-stratification. It is an important prerequisite for both other and self-legitimation and for mutual respect in inter-elite relations. Respect is one resource for exercising restraint in inter-elite resource competitions. Legitimacy is certainly one factor in the sense of security with which one regards one’s privilege. Both are related to the capacity to assume differential responsibility for society, the other side of the coin of privilege. All of this has relevance respecting the question: Was Germany perhaps saddled with an “Angstkartell” of elites long before DAHRENDORF (1965:297) discovered it for post-war West Germany? If so, and we shall examine the question below, the continuous pattern of “domination by virtue of interest constellations” was very likely accompanied by a deficit in the capacity to institutionalize conflicts.

Elite-stratification has just been treated as a variable, its range extending from the ruling-stratum extreme on one side to “one dimensionality and random” endowment with control over resources among top positions on the other. Making the assumptions of striving for status enhancement and equilibration, which seem plausible for industrialized society, it follows that the more a national elite system approaches the less stratified end, the greater the dynamics of inter-elite competition where all seek control over resources they lack. In the case of elites where one needs a lot, this means encroachment upon the alleged functionally special turf of serving society claimed by another. Status inconsistency among elites is, ceteris paribus, a force making for breakdown in their division of labor. Theoretically, the most central cause of this breakdown is unregulated conflict. This derives from the following.

In the multi-variate case where it is not obvious, GALTUNG (1966) proved that stratification (degree of status consistency) and crisscross (the cross pressured who share one status with two or more others who in turn share no status) vary inversely and in zero-sum fashion: the more one has of one, the less one has of the other. But for the institutionalization of conflict one requires both: status-consistent actors and the cross pressured. The status-consistent are society’s resource for order and predictability in conflict alignments, telling men who is going to fight whom and about what. As MARX (1852) discovered, the status-consistent are also society’s resource for effective conflict organization, hence stability in conflict alignments. A Lumpenproletariat is difficult to organize, because its members are drop-outs from different kinds of status sets, and too diverse in social identities for effective organization. Before the fight gets under way, they fall apart under the weight of their inner heterogeneity of origin. However, as evident in the samurai spearhead of the Meiji Restoration, a Lumpenaristocracy can be effectively organized (MOORE, 1966:228-313). On the other hand, the cross pressured are society’s resource for the mitigation and regulation of conflict. With their conflicting group loyalties and social identities that place them in between the opposing parties, they have a “position-determined” interest in institutionalizing conflict (DAHRENDORF, 1959; LIPSET, 1960). Given GALTUNG’s law of the zero-sum negative relation between stratification and the supply of the cross pressured in a social system, this reveals what might be called the Job-effect of stratification in its impact on conflict regulation. For as it is said of the Lord in the Old Testament (Job, 1:21), what stratification giveth of one, order in conflict, it taketh of the other, cross-pressured actors. It also follows that “partial stratification” which yields some requisite amount of both is the indispensable precondition for a society’s capacity to institutionalize social conflict.

The case of Japan is interesting for present purposes. First, relative to Germany it is a society with impressive value consensus as evident in the paucity of politically significant ascriptive cleavages such as region, religion, ethnicity (excepting the few Burakumin), and language. Second, when
confronting modernization, Japan did so out of a preceding historical experience with impressive de-stratification among its elites. Two hundred years of Tokugawa peace, that anomaly in a feudal society, had produced a highly prosperous merchant group, absolutely negatively privileged on prestige where they ranked below the peasant according to the apparently uncontested traditional stratification codes on the one hand, and, through unemployment in their “real” calling, an impressively impoverished warrior aristocracy, the samurai still enjoying enormous prestige, on the other. Relations of corruption and collusion between the two were not unimportant factors of stability (NISHIO, 1965). Nothing like that amount of elite-destratification can be found in preindustrial Germany. But modernization in Japan brought re-stratification among its national elites. It was the staffing of the newly created national banks with lower samurai as new finance managers which helped greatly in the re-alignment between prestige and wealth (NISHIO, 1965). There might be a lesson here.

Everywhere modernization entails the inflow of formerly passive groups as a participants in new institutions such as a national economy, a state, and a nation-state. Everywhere too, modernization brings new skills and new experts in these skills, or new elites, such as the industrial entrepreneur or manager, the mobilizer of mass political support, the new professional. To begin with, these new leader-ship groups do not form “circles”. Initially, they possess but differential control over one of society’s socially recognized scarce and unequally distributed resources, the one which calls for new ways of management and at which these newcomers excel. As to the fate of elite-destratification in society, the question is whether the striving for status crystallization among these new elites will succeed or not. Other things equal, such striving will be more successful in a society with common values than one characterized by value dissensus. In the former case, the claims for more diffuse rewards advanced by new elites will fall on fertile soil because those who make them can appeal to a consensual image of the good society to be built and one to which they make differential and commonly valued contributions. But in Germany this was less likely because of value dissensus. Coming out of a history with more stratified elites than Japan, but also with more value dissensus, modernization probably made for de-stratification in that case.

If so, one should not leave the relation between values and elite-stratification in modernizing periods in so uni-directional a fashion as just indicated. After the rise of the first new elite and the realization of dependence on it, when coupled with a denial of more diffuse rewards for its services, the relation may well turn into mutual acerbation. Then value dissensus fuels the need to deny entitlement beyond the narrow service sphere provided and striving for status crystallization leads the new entrant to try “to earn” respect by encroachment on the sphere of other elites, traditional still or also modern. Value dissensus enhances elite conflicts, and the latter, in turn, increase the heat of ideological debates. And in 19th century Germany the spectre of industrialism was debated with extraordinary passion, on fearful symbolic heights, evincing deep hostilities (BARKIN, 1970).

With this as background, what are the facts? Can the massive indifference to the fate of the Jews among Germany’s elites be traced to the nature of these elites? Was there perhaps a history of an “Angstkartell”, elitist on only one dimension, brittle in legitimation and self-respect, radically determined to seek security by getting more, and cynically inclined to treat all rhetoric about public interest, national goals, etc. as mere instruments for status defense and status enhancement, particularly since “domination by virtue of interest constellation” made that the most reasonable thing a prudent man could do?


Considerable historical evidence (cited in summary fashion below) suggests that modernization led to a de-structuring of Germany’s national elites, eventuating in the emergence of “one-dimensional elites.” These are groupings with a near-monopoly control over one of society’s scarce resources, but no commensurate control over any other. Well-formed on the eve of the first world war, they were: i. the “merely-prestigious” Junker-military complex; ii. the “merely-wealthy” bourgeois-capitalist complex; iii. the “merely-virtuous Mandarin complex” (the professoriate); and iv.
the "merely-powerful" political executive complex.

The mechanisms underlying this development started with "accommodation deals" between the Prussian monarchy on the one hand and three social groups of crucial significance in the modernization of all European societies. The monarchs of the House of Hohenzollern succeeded three times in excluding potential contenders for power from regularized differential access to it.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the issue was the centralization of power, i.e. state building. Here the monarchs "purchased" the acquiescence of the landed nobility by the legal grant of private property over formerly common lands, the legal guarantee of patrimonial rights, and a near-monopoly over the military officer corps. In the 19th century the issue was the inclusion of the rising middle-strata into politics, i.e. suffrage extension and full parliamentarization of the regime. Here the monarchy "purchased" allegiance to the monarchical principle from the established intellectuals who symbolized virtue rather than prestige and remained relatively poor. The deal involved the guaranteed financing of higher education by taxation, protection against direct state interference in academic affairs, and bureaucratic employment for graduates in exchange for the supply of legitimacy for the monarchical principle. Refraining from a unified determined effort to articulate demands for parliamentarization of the regime, the "educated" in academia and state bureaucratic employment formed a non-economic upper-middle class, a "stratum of cultivation" with relative indifference to practical everyday political issues. Also in the 19th century, the monarchy succeeded in retaining as political neutrals the new industrial elite, who commanded the most of wealth, but lacked prestige and "cultivation". This involved a double-deal. In order to avoid financial dependency on a parliament pressing for full parliamentarization of the regime, the executive financed expanding state expenditures through loans and direct economic activities on the private capital markets rather than taxation. Thus, the political neutrality of the bourgeoisie-capitalist "minority of awesome wealth" could be won through the provisioning of very lucrative business opportunities. Secondly, it took considerable private unearned income to afford a juridical career. As a result, the sons of new wealth practically held a monopoly over the juridical system, presumably assuring that the law would be administered to favor economic development (KEHR, 1965:37-54, 244-253; RINGER, 1967, 1969; ROSENBERG, 1966; KOSELLECK, 1966; ZUNKEL, 1962). This complex set of social changes, only touched in outline here, left German society with a group of the "merely-powerful", viz., central bureaucrats in uneasy relation to the political executive and a conception of state that combined the rhetoric of lofty Hegelianism with the practice of "praetorianism" (RÖHL, 1967; SAUER, 1962; BÖHME, 1966). Finally, a quantitative study of elite-dissociation in German society covering the Weimar and Nazi periods permits the same conclusion of increasing dissociation (ZAPF, 1965).

At some crucial points the merely-prestigious, wealthy, and virtuous exhibited extraordinary political efficacy; at other equally crucial points they were characterized by an amazing degree of abject political impotence. The army constituted the political executive during the closing years of W.W. I, receded into the background during early Weimar, re-emerged again in 1932 as crucial actors in the regime change to National Socialism, only to become the object of total civilian domination under HITLER. The same can be said of the relation between wealth and power. At least twice wealth exerted enormous political clout with society-wide effects. The alliance of wealth and rural conservatism facilitated the anti-Socialist legislation of the Empire, the alliance of wealth and organized labor the transition to the republic. The political impotence of wealth was glaring however, in their failure to pull their weight in the war aims debate of W.W. I, and their later subservience to HITLER's war controls on the economy. The professoriate, recognized authority on secularized morality, supplied important legitimation for the Imperial regime, failed utterly in impressing its vision of W.W. I as a cultural mission on other groups, participated in Weimar constitution making, only to recede to political impotence under HITLER. Thus over the long haul, differential command over one social resource did not guarantee differential access to
political decision making with national consequences. Instead, the conversion capacity of the other three resources into power was intermittent, and, hence, the long-term relation between power and the other three approached randomness.

If this evidence be tentatively granted, three relations between inequalities remain: i. prestige and wealth; ii. prestige and virtue; and iii. wealth and virtue. Though impossible to justify here, the best indicator of moral excellence in pre-Nazi Germany would be formal education, i.e., belonging to the "cultivated". Now, as both the military leaders and the top industrialists before W.W. II were definitely under-educated relative to the "non-economic" middle-class, and the military-Junker complex certainly was a poor cousin economically relative to the industrial elite while outranking both the educated and the rich in prestige (RITTER, 1965), these three relations were negative.

Thus at the eve of the Nazi social revolution, the German stratification system was already considerably weak, at least at the level of national elites. At the local and regional level there was probably better coherence. But, everywhere, the remaining "bits" of stratification were smashed by the Nazis. The way the Nazis did this was to de-structure inequalities, including the three negative relations mentioned above, by making all conversion attempts unreliable in principle. SCHOENBAUM (1967) rendered an impressive portrait of this process. Whether one considers the virtuosi of a "new cultural honor", resplendent in their brown uniform, but lacking private property, prestige which was still allocated to the military, as well as political efficacy; or whether one thinks of HIMMLER, next to HITLER the mightiest man in the Third Reich but an economic pauper neither able to pay his medical bills nor buy himself a home (KERSTEN, 1952), as SCHOENBAUM (1967:281) put it, in this wonderland that was the Third Reich, men literally did not know "what was up, what down".

A lack of status crystallization among elites is compatible with order when there are rules, agreed upon by most, justifying the inconsistent distribution of rewards and facilities. But in the absence of such norms, a function of value dis-sensus, one-dimensionality of elite status should lead to truly chaotic conflict relations of which HÖHNE'S (1967:376-377) characterization of Nazi rule as "a system of anarchical systemlessness" constitutes the critical empirical evidence. But the unmanageable conflicts between elites additionally imply three conditions without which the irrationality of modern genocide cannot be understood. One is that no one in an elite position can afford to publicly appeal to another "functional" elite on common sense moral grounds in the service of a goal supravening both. Such appeals get across as nothing but propaganda serving some particular bureaucratic institutional interest. Secondly, a "system" of one-dimensional elites is also an impressively helpless one when it comes to changing system goals. Those who command superior trust in moral discernment lack all other relevant means to do anything, be they economic, political, or influential; while those who command any of the latter lack the former. Thirdly, when elites struggle for status enhancement primarily, a consequence of a one-dimensional position, then there really is no public interest; there are only private interests pursued with public means. Normally, functional elites have a position-determined interest in preserving their autonomy, this being one source, and one of the most important, of the integration of complex social systems (LUHMANN, 1970:137-177). Normally too, this works through respecting each other's valued contribution to society. But in Germany with its value disensus, its long history of domination by constellation of interests, and its gradual but ever more comprehensive de-stratification of inequalities, that factor of integration also disappeared. Instead, a pervasive free for all came to govern the relations between most politically relevant institutions in society.

Finally, social disorder does not automatically spill over into personal disorder. But neither is a Hobbesian state of nature without effect on people. However complex the relations here, an initial step of their analysis shall be the last one of the present effort to interpret our moral indifference. A society without stratification

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5 For example, the Los Angeles Times recently sacrificed a very lucrative account pertaining to pornographic entertainment in anticipation of possible local ordinances, possibly encroaching on freedom of the press.
is not only one where people do not know what is up, what down, what right, and what left; it is also so structureless a social reality as to deprive its members of any secure intersubjectively valid and reinforced sense of social identity. Incapacity to predict where a given actor will take his stand on any issue in public life seems to be one central consequence, a disinclination to assume any responsibility for events not directly and very concretely within the purview of one’s job responsibilities the other.

4. Stratification and Citizen Responsibility: On the Bases of Moral Indifference at the Personal Level

Hardly anywhere in recent history can one find so complete and so unexpected a realization of BELLAH’s (1964:371) vision of modernity, “life as an infinite possibility thing”, as in the Third Reich. And hardly anywhere did it take so devastating a form as under National Socialism which truly had struck the term impossible from the vocabulary of political reality (ARENDT, 1951). That rationalization of social arrangements through extensive bureaucratization can be a permanent source of anomie was, apparently, an idea that occurred to PARSONS (1942a, 1942b) in considering the case of Germany and the Fascist movements more generally. That a mentality, however much inspired by revolt against such excess of modernity, remains a weak force to actually counteract it, we now know; one may suspect that an ideology alone, even a sophisticated one, may not fare much better. But Nazi Germany seen as a case of excess in modernization remains an instructive case even for the considerably advanced state of the theory of integration of social systems (PARSONS, 1963a, 1963b, 1968). The case, it seems to me, carries a powerful empirical message about the functionalist worry that “differentiation may go too far” (BELLAH, 1970:244). Succinctly put, that message is: even partial de-differentiation of role systems and their integration to that level of sufficiency in the interchange of goods and services which satisfies short-run bureaucratic interests may, rather than fix the situation, contribute to further disintegration of meaningful and responsible action. Or, to restate the message, one can militarize the economy, economize military action, politicize expressive solidarities as in the performing arts, and apply a religious veneer to political solidarities, remove de facto one formerly developed role, responsible citizenship if by that one means a role of caring concern for society that crosscuts all other roles, re-integrate the rest and still fail miserably in the reduction of actual anomie. Apparently, integrative failure of a modern system cannot be fixed at the social system level alone. The failure goes deeper than organizing roles. Personality too is involved, and so is culture. Therefore too, the theory of integration was generalized beyond HOBSES’ problem of social order to a problem of order in meaningful action and experience (PARSONS, 1969).

Functional system theory defines the modern condition as one marked at least by the differentiation of culture, society, and personality (BELLAH, 1964). Therefore, the resulting “modern individualism” does involve the partial “obsolescence of the concept honor” (BERGER, 1970). No self-conscious multiple role player has anything like the capacity to feel insulted as had traditional man, so deeply identified with a largely ascribed set of social roles as to amount to “a walking piece of social structure”, That much of BERGER’s highly suggestive formulation is helpful. But if one postulates a reduction of honor to zero, as he does, one is speaking about the excess of modernity, the empirical case of Germany to be shown below, not about the analytical model of differentiation. The latter requires a capacity for insult in response to alleged failure of responsibility for conduct in any particular role. For if modern individualism were to eventuate into som kind of “rampant situational ethics” destructive of all intersubjectively binding personal accountability and predicatability, all the advantages of role differentiation would be lost. One cannot even imagine any police apparatus that could substitute for personal responsibility and genuine accountability in a complex social system. Differentiation is one thing, simple dissociation another.

However separate the symbolic realms, there must be mechanisms to articulate their mutual contingency and ward off anomie. Some societies, as the American, have secular institutions,
as the Supreme Court, functionally specialized for the management of contingency between culture, society, and personality and, in this instance, "with the force of law". Such mechanisms provide no guarantee against the dissociation of legality and legitimacy (WINKELMANN, 1952). The interment of American citizens of Japanese ancestry during the second world war is a case in point. But over the long haul such mechanisms certainly reduce the probability that perfectly legal rules become wholly immoral, lacking all anchorage in more ultimate ideals, religious or secular, as evident in the racial laws of Nazi Germany which were a necessary requirement for the Holocaust. This permits us to conclude that differentiation "has gone too far" when it flips over into simple dissociation: when mutual contingency between the norms of culture, social and personal life has been effectively abandoned and, above all, when no socially effective demand for the need of such contingency is forthcoming anymore.

Just how much this had come to pass in Germany can be illustrated with one quote revealing the essential reason for the failure of the resistance to HITLER among the German generals. When approached for help in March, 1943 (hence long after the mobile extermination squads (Einsatzgruppen) had become a well known reality to the army), HAMMERSTEIN opined: "Yes, had he only a division, he would be willing to fetch this devil (Hitler) from the bowels of hell itself; but that was the problem: those who could act, did not want to, and those who wanted, couldn't" (HOFFMANN, 1970: 344). To appreciate the full extent of such utter incapacity for effective moral mobilization against a regime seen as clearly immoral in that circle, one has to recall that even in Nazi Germany a general symbolized the highest occupational prestige. For these generals who did not want to depose HITLER, "the execution of 'legal orders', even if involving the death of millions, remained subsumable under understandable norms, . . . but a conspirator who dared a coup for the sake of saving lifes could be stamped a traitor" (HOFFMANN, 1970:213). Nothing speaks better for the complete collapse of the very capacity to feel and act in what one normally understands by the term moral responsibility than this ability of the decisive among the German generals to subsume simple mass murder under the label warfare. They exemplify the total obsolescence of the concept honor.

The sources of such behavior can be traced in a two-step historical development: the loss of societal identity, followed by the loss of effective social identity on the personal plane.

The theoretically most sophisticated definition of the concept societal identity is to be found in EISENSTADT's (1971) near-operationa formulation of "stratification codes". Minimally, these cover norms specifying: i. the amount of inequality; ii. extent and nature of crystallization between dimensions of rank; iii. exchange between resources and agencies controlling such exchange; and iv. above all, for all of these, legitimating reasons why. In Germany the confluence of variant regional traditions into the modern nation-state and the leadership of Prussia during the nation-building phase probably were the most important factors in the failure to develop some level of consensus on these matters. Prussia's was a political culture of "mobilized subjectship" combined with a commitment to cultural pluralism, a formula which proved expedient, if ultimately fatal for the development of modern citizenship. It proved so expedient, and therefore attractive to a late-comer to modern nationhood, precisely because it permitted nation-building in a formal rather than a more substantive sense, thus at the time saving the need for political re-socialization of variant traditions into one.

This, of course, would be a cultural explanation, moving as it does from the failure of normative development of consensual stratification codes to factual de-stratification in the relations between inequalities as outlined above. But this is not critical for the issue, the loss of societal identity. One might contend that where there are near-random relations between socially relevant inequalities, as I have empirically ar-

6 The reserve officer's patent was as unquestioned a status badge for the normal middle class boy in German society as a college education is in American society. And however much the Nazis tried to shift prestige to the politically conscious bearers of their New Order, when given a choice, SS-officers always identified more with the army than their own Order of the Deathhead (e.g., HÖHNE, 1967:445-447).
gued here, social reality is so much at variance with any conceivable set of rules denoting an order that identity would remain a chimerical vision of no consequence for getting along in real life. For where there is no stratification in fact, the respective codes, which are the basis of one of PARSONS' (1963a, 1963b, 1968) societal media, influence, are meaningless. Consequently, influence as a medium ceases to operate. That failure, in turn, was due to value-dissensus so pervasive among Germany's elites as to inflate the medium value-commitments to meaningless propaganda, lacking any intersubjective bindingness. This outcome was clearly evident even in the tiny subculture of the futile resistance-generals. They could not agree what it meant to be a German general, or what their duty to the fatherland might entail. That fatherland had lost all defining contours and, therefore, the indispensable resource for any responsible patriotism. Loss of societal identity had transformed these once proud and self-confident representatives of the "state-bearing strata" in Prussia to simple bureaucratic functionaries, committed to career success, regardless of the consequences, and as freely disposable and manipulable a resource as any conceivable mere "service class" (DAHRENDORF, 1959).

Moving to the personality plane, be it recognized that even a modern condition characterized by differentiation of, but still contingency between, the realms of culture, society, and personality permits a differential reliance on culture or society in that universal task of modern individualism which we designate as the need to find a sense of "personal self", more stable and beyond the requirements of "mere" social obligations. The French, for example, rely more on culture in this respect than the Americans who depend more on their social networks. Treated elsewhere (BAUM, 1977a, 1977b), such differences make for profoundly variant experiences with the constraints of political authority and, hence, the moral implications of modern citizenship. But such variance still rests on some degree of stratification and, therefore, discernable images of national order.

Yet the incumbent of a position of "on-dimensional eminence" who encounters random outcomes in conversion attempts for other critical resources finds himself in that Hobbesian hell characterized by INKELES (1954) as "institutionalized anxiety". No matter how hard he tries, everything remains possible, astounding success as well as utter failure. Further, he knows only one thing: nothing has endurance either. Such a person cannot rely on feedback from others concerning any sense of social validation as to who he is. Nothing can be quite as socially alienating as the combination of a performance ethic with institutionalized uncertainty. Then who one is, can afford to be, and indeed the very ability for evading enrollment in the camps and thus for survival itself, devolves entirely onto the cognitive plane as symbolized in the proverbial political flexibility of the ideal-typical party apparatchik. Under such conditions the search for a sense of personal self in any form of serious and binding commitment shifts entirely onto the cultural plane, whether it takes religious, secular-meta-physical, or artistic form. De-socialized, the answer to the question who I really am becomes radically subjectivized, ceasing to be a resource for that double-contingency of normal social life on which symbolic interactionism insists. It does not take much imagination to see that once a process of so subjectivizing the self gets under way, it becomes fast a self-fulfilling prophecy in social life, accelerating the descent into institutionalized anxiety and starting a vicious circle, where every additional step to escape from Hobbesian uncertainty necessarily deepens it. And, finally, where man has shifted his sense of personal self onto the cultural plane without contingency to the realm of social obligation, there too he becomes incapable of responding on the social plane to any offerings of more ultimate commitments with an inner-worldly relevance. For then, what matters ultimately has no relationship to what matters here and now, to one's fellow human beings, in the finitude of life. Moral solidarity shrinks to the dimensions of friendship and kinship, society becomes a scene of moral irrelevance.

Summary

Without any aspirations to comprehensiveness I have selected one aspect of the Holocaust. That dealt with the attested fact it rested for its accomplishment, among captors and captives alike, on normal human beings. But it was a normality un-
like any we were familiar with. Man has always killed man, but never yet lacked in reasons justifying why. But mass murder as a consequence of enmeshment with complete bureaucracy, without much rhyme and reason for most participants constitutes one of the possibilities of the modern condition. Seeking possibilities inherent in the human condition without any claim to even their causal probabilities is something scientifically respectable, a topic common enough in methodology courses. But it seems to remain more lip service than practice. In the latter we still act according to the maxim of seeking causes for events, however treated as probabilities, coupled with the silent but powerful conviction: the more extraordinary the event, the more unusual must be its determinants, including its motivation. And so the search for “the killer instinct” in EICHMANN and other Nazi leaders, usually far from the camps, persists (MIALE and SELZER, 1975; SELZER, 1977), as if that mattered greatly. If we stick to the idea that the distinctive in human behavior is its reflexivity, that man is self-justifying, and I think we should, the Holocaust teaches us that we can leave the human condition and so truly ultimately abandon our humanity. As a possibility, which ex definitone is not inevitable, the death of six million Jews and others which just happened because we did not care has been traced here to value dissensus, domination by constellation of interests, modernizing change which eventuated in de-stratification of elites with its attendant chaos in social conflicts and, lastly, de-socialization of one’s subjective, personal sense of self. Three reasons suggested the mode of interpretation rather than really reaching for explanation. First, where the interest focuses on a possibility rather than a probability, to say nothing of a necessity, one engages in a search for plausible conditions of indeterminacy permitting the event, and all kinds of functional equivalents, which I have to leave to the reader’s imagination. Secondly, that aspect of the Holocaust of interest here had an undeniable element of uniqueness. Treblinka had no antecedents. Thirdly, on a topic such as this stark encounter with our capacity for ultimate evil, the production of senseless suffering and death, we need a special language of respect or taboo that prevents us from that very same escape into abstraction which was so centrally a feature of the realization of hell. Interpretation is certainly a lower form of abstracting. It might serve as a substitute until we develop an appropriate language that can yield better knowledge without making the knower part of the syndrome because scientific work produces itself, contributes to, and yields its product only in the spirit of impersonality.

According to the MITSCHERLICHs (1970) silence about the Holocaust persists in post-war Germany because we suffer from melancholia. One need not concur with all the psychoanalytic details that thesis requires in order to agree with its substance. Silence there reigns. In German sociology it seems absolute. That silence may well rest on a diminished sense of self; in any case there are good reasons why it should and more compelling ones than any “lost object thesis” could suggest. If this effort reduces our lack of comprehension by one inch and enhances our ability to mourn correspondingly, it will have done its service. If, in addition, it induces sociologists not to neglect forever the most shattering experience of our time and more comprehension comes forth, it is even conceivable that a right for hope may eventually return.

7 There is a dilemma here for which I have no solution. Obviously, a purely disinterested, cool mode of knowing about the Holocaust unmindful of the special moral status of that event is a way of adding insult to injury. On the other hand, anyone trying to understand in a scientific key for the sake of ethics here, obviously ascribes ethical relevance to science. Then part of respecting, if indeed not the most central part, is to produce the very best cognitive truth one is capable of. But that, in turn, happens to demand conduct in a spirit of impersonality. And this much we learned from the MIL-GRAM experiments, that it is not just a practical question of deceiving concrete persons or exposing them to actual harm but also, and more importantly, a matter of committing a sin, some sort of “spiritual offense” that results from the unlimited pursuit of cognitive ideas and becomes manifest in a disrespect for other ideas of no less a status than ultimate ethical commitments.
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