

collection and publication of soldiers' letters by professors of the local university, and their contribution to the literary imaginary of the German war effort. The relative neglect of the social forces of mobilization for total war is the result of Chickerling's deliberate decision to focus on the "self-realization of war, the fulfillment of its totality" as the central narrative of the story (p. 7). In this perspective, total war turns to a certain extent into an automatic subject. But the slightly teleological aspect of this approach does not diminish the substantial insights this total history of wartime German society from a local perspective yields. Chickerling's book is thus not only a very detailed and rich account of the German home front from 1914 until 1918, but also a major contribution to the discussion about the forms and extent of total war in the twentieth century.

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EUGENE R. SHEPPARD. *Leo Strauss and the Politics of Exile: The Making of a Political Philosopher*. (The Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry.) Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press. 2006. Pp. xi, 191. \$24.95.

Eugene R. Sheppard's study examines Leo Strauss, the Jew, the German, the Zionist, the critic of liberalism, and above all the philosopher. The Strauss that emerges from this meticulous study is a fervent conservative and an eclectic voice. Simultaneously shaped by the multiplicity of biographical, historical, and philosophical contexts, Strauss bridged some of the most extreme Weimar philosophical traditions in his own work.

Born into rural Hesse in the small town of Kirchhain, raised in a middle-class Jewish family, Strauss grew up within a Jewish community of religious observance and patriotism, a conservative region in which political antisemitism found receptive listeners. Recalling his childhood in a Zionist article, Strauss believed that the rural Hesse communities had "remained virtually untouched by the liberal Reform movement" (p. 10) in the nineteenth century. For him, his place of origin informed his philosophical and political views. Kirchhain also placed him in geographical proximity to the neo-Kantian and Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen, whose philosophical work continued to emanate from Marburg even after his retirement in 1912. Strauss shared with many other German Jewish intellectuals of the period a great admiration for the Jewish neo-Kantian "because he was a passionate philosopher and a Jew devoted to Judaism" (p. 14).

Sheppard aptly traces the formative years of Strauss in Hesse and as a student, who enrolled at the University of Marburg in 1917 to take philosophy under the neo-Kantians Nicolai Hartmann and Paul Natrop. During the years of the Weimar Republic, Strauss pursued his intellectual curiosity further in theology, philosophy, and history at various universities and published in several Jewish and Zionist journals. After he completed

his doctorate in 1921 under the supervision of Ernst Cassirer in Hamburg, he came under the intellectual influence of Martin Heidegger, who initially taught in Freiburg but took Cohen's philosophy chair in Marburg in 1925. Heidegger's magnetism further fermented a fascination that had already emerged in Strauss's dissertation on Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, a critic of the Enlightenment. In 1924–1925, Strauss also joined the ranks of intellectuals who lectured at Franz Rosenzweig's Free Jewish House of Study. Located at the crossroads of conflicting philosophical orientations, he was critical of liberalism and the enlightened faith in progress and reason and utilized Zionism mainly during this period to dissect German Jews' instability and misguided sense of security (p. 19).

The impact of Rosenzweig, Heidegger, and eventually Carl Schmidt gave Strauss's philosophy its unique voice. The bridging of divergent influences led some like Gershom Scholem falsely to identify Strauss as an atheist, which Scholem saw as a scholarly shortcoming that dampened Strauss's chances for a desirable position at the Hebrew University after 1933 (p. 73). Yet it was Strauss, as this study convincingly argues, who rejected the radical separation of reason and revelation. Philosophy, Strauss believed, remained inescapably linked to theology; neither the modern liberal state nor philosophy could negate the importance of theology and religious law and had to conceal their indebtedness and dependence. In his scholarly work, he unearthed the commingling of philosophy and law in the tenth-century Arabic philosopher and Neoplatonist Abu Nasr al-Farabi and traced this same confluence in the work of Moses Maimonides and Baruch Spinoza (pp. 75–76).

Strauss critiqued not only the secular posturing of modern philosophy and politics but also liberalism's failure to deal with National Socialism. It was in his 1932 review of Schmidt's *Concept of the Political* (1927) that Strauss denounced the complacency that permeated modern liberal civilization. As Strauss put it shortly after Adolf Hitler's ascension to power in 1933: "Just because the right-wing-oriented Germany does not tolerate us [the Jews], it simply does not follow that the principles of the right are therefore to be rejected" (p. 61). He indeed believed that "only on the basis of the principles of the right—fascist, authoritarian, *imperial*"—was it possible to marshal protest against Nazi Germany (p. 61).

Sheppard's perceptive study illuminates the extent to which Strauss's life, the Weimar context, and the philosophical traditions influenced him and conjoined in his attempt to understand the predicament of reason and revelation by scrupulously studying pre-modern thinkers in an effort to find some grounding for his own intellectual and biographical experience of exile. In Strauss's thinking exile (*galut*) had become the defining and permanent facet of Jewish life that could not be overcome without losing Judaism's foundation in divine law and messianic redemption (pp. 47, 126). Here Strauss in many ways approximated Schmidt's criticism of liberalism and understanding of politics. In the end,

Sheppard is at his best in arguing and delineating the creative tension between Strauss and the non-Jewish philosophers like Heidegger and Schmidt, while Rosenzweig in the end remained much less important than Sheppard tries to suggest (p. 28). Notwithstanding this minor criticism, Sheppard's book provides a fresh venue to continue to investigate Strauss's trajectory from Weimar to Chicago.

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WOLF GRUNER. *Jewish Forced Labor under the Nazis: Economic Needs and Racial Aims, 1938–1944*. Translated by KATHLEEN M. DELL'ORTO. New York: Cambridge University Press, in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. 2006. Pp. xxiv, 322. \$75.00.

This volume makes available in English an augmented version of a study on the same subject published in German by the author in 1997. It demonstrates conclusively that forced labor by Jews during the Third Reich did not begin, as is often assumed, with the notorious wartime camp system of the SS but was instead initiated by civilian labor authorities in line with the persecutory measures adopted in the wake of the pogrom of November 1938. Jews who became eligible for governmental unemployment insurance benefits as a consequence of the boycotts and occupational prohibitions imposed by the Nazi regime were, beginning in newly annexed Austria and then throughout the Reich, required to take work assigned them by government offices in charge of labor affairs. Nominally they were employees covered by individual contracts, but in reality they had no choice of jobs, were segregated from non-Jews, and had to accept substandard wages. Increasing numbers were compelled by the labor offices to toil in labor camps remote from their homes, where their freedom of movement was tightly restricted.

As Wolf Gruner demonstrates on the basis of prodigious archival research, Jewish forced labor was extensively exploited to augment a German workforce diminished by preparations for, and execution of, Adolf Hitler's war. Gruner estimates that even before the war began, some 20,000 Jews were involuntarily toiling within the Reich, under supervision of the labor authorities, for private companies, municipalities, and government agencies. By the spring of 1941 the number had grown to 50,000. At least 400 Jewish labor camps, some of brief duration, were established in the Germany expanded by the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland. In the wake of Hitler's military conquests, the author estimates that more than a million Jews were eventually subjected to servitude by the labor authorities, some 700,000 in occupied Poland alone, where more than 900 camps were created for the extraction of Jewish labor.

By 1942 this system was being eroded by other Nazi policies. The eastward deportations preparatory to

genocidal slaughter reduced the supply of Jewish workers in Germany, who were increasingly replaced by laborers drawn from conquered countries, especially from Poland. In the eastern occupied areas, the SS established its own extensive system of forced-labor camps for Jews. Nevertheless, the author finds that the labor authorities proved resourceful in retaining a role in the exploitation of Jewish labor. Whenever possible, they resisted the deportation of their charges on the grounds that they were performing tasks essential to the war economy. Where the SS asserted its much harsher control over Jews, the labor authorities became willing accomplices.

Gruner maintains that the often-invoked charge that the forced labor of Jews in the Third Reich amounted to "destruction through work" does not apply to the system administered by the labor authorities. Although it operated within parameters set by Nazi racist doctrine, he insists that its rationale was economic maximization, not physical annihilation. Despite that system's repressive and exploitative nature, Gruner argues that the labor authorities' self-serving efforts to retain control over their victims eventually made it possible for tens of thousands of Jews to survive the Holocaust.

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PETER REICHEL. *Erfundene Erinnerung: Weltkrieg und Judenmord in Film und Theater*. (Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus.) Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch. 2007. Pp. 374. €12.95.

The theme of World War II and the Holocaust has occasioned a wealth of historiography, but few titles dealing with political and cultural developments have been as enlightening as Peter Reichel's new book. Seldom has a writer so successfully placed his work within the context of a complex moral framework while never losing sight of his role as a guide to the interface of aesthetics and politics. Reichel deconstructs the cinematic and theatrical interpretations of what he terms the "life myths" that comforted so many Germans and Austrians after the war. In carrying out this mission, he never loses sight of the fact that media productions often play a central role in public perceptions of historical events.

Reichel organizes his analysis around two major thematic areas, embracing both World War II and the Holocaust, concluding that each motif developed its own interpretive history. He focuses on the revolutionary activities of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris and the military conspiracy that led to the abortive assassination plot against Adolf Hitler in July 1944; on whether Stalingrad should be interpreted as the criminal deployment of the Sixth Army or as a model of redemptive sacrifice; and on interpreting several outstanding East German DEFA films as both anti-fascist and anti-war productions. Turning to Auschwitz, he chronicles not only the postwar German amnesia about the crimes against humanity but each subsequent stage in the development of painful memory thereafter. He never loses sight of