Gallin, A. (1986). *Midwives to Nazism: University professors in Weimar Germany, 1925-1933.* Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986, 134 pp., $16.95 (hardcover).

In this book, Alice Gallin confronts the important question of the "relationship of academia and politics in the pre-Hitler period" or more specifically the contribution of university professors to the rise of the Third Reich. The study is welcome, since there has been little attention in English, and in universities, to match the resurgence of German literature on the origin and character of the Nazi phenomenon, including the War and aftermath.

The strengths of the work are its brevity, clarity and readability; its case studies of recognized names (intellectual lights of the 20th century) who distinguished themselves positively or negatively in the political conflicts of the time, and its framework of general German history and cultural discussion. Particularly, the chapter on "The Power of Rhetoric" provides a necessary background on the interweaving of spiritual threads into the German intellectual tradition, although one misses reference to the overriding classical humanism which has pervaded higher education, school and university in Germany and which sets the historical and philosophical mold for the language - culture - state - education connection.

The gripping, sometimes pathetic, case studies constitute the main body of evidence for Gallin's work. The anecdotes do not, however, allow for generalization, except that professors are idiosyncratic and can thus be studied idiosyncratically. In exploring reasons, causes for the lack of university resistance to the barbarism of the Nazis, even within the university itself (the puzzle Americans cannot seem to solve), Gallin begins and ends with much the same conviction expressed by Dean William Russell, Columbia, in 1950: The "ideas of German superiority, of special destiny, of blind obedience to a glorified leader . . . antedated Hitler by at least 100 years" (*Education Digest*, September 1946). The grounds for such an assumption, taking account of the complexity, both in terms of cause and value, of revolutionary periods, have, to my knowledge, never been established. Gallin's assertions of cause for the acquiescence of universities in the Nazi rise to power boil down to: an ideational source which coincided with Hitler's romantic and nationalistic emphasis; the fault of the strong father for the irresponsible child, i.e., Bismarck; and the failure of education, almost totally one must assume, since the most basic concepts of German education are seen, in this argument, to be related to rather than distorted by Nazism.

The book's real contribution may be as a mirror for the professoriate. Gallin shows that German professors in this period were attracted by the combination of social romanticism and state socialism, and by a völkisch community ideology (after Bracher). They presumed their own invulnerability to politics through a moral order which restrained the exercise of power. They frequently acted with personal malice against a colleague who had fallen out of favor politically, and rarely came to the aid of colleagues under fire from radical students, from

political authorities, or who, out of dignity or oppression, sought "inner migration." (Spranger's resignation was "accomplished in solitude.") Gallin finds, following Ringer, that they were incapable of clear decision in the midst of fundamental questions of culture, knowledge and education in the 20th century. They appear to have been more interested in their own disciplines than in their institutions, and more interested in maintaining the privileged governance of the professorial elite within those institutions than in the operative social morality which would necessarily cause them disruption.

Either these professors agreed with the tenets and actions of National Socialism (which is highly unlikely in general) or they were unwilling to disturb their own complacent self-interest and put away political fantasy to act cohesively in the public interest.

Since the academic values they held are fundamental in the research community, why should we expect any different behavior then and there, or here and now? If the author is surprised at the lack of tolerance in the German university before Hitler, or by the lack of courage among professors, she has apparently not observed the universities of her own land and others in times of crisis far less threatening than Germany between 1925 and 1933. We can be thankful for those whose names Gallin has enshrined as the intellectual resistance, but it is perhaps more tenable to think of them as rising above, rather than characterizing the norms and behaviors of the professoriate generally.

The bulk of the work was obviously done by the early 1970s. While this does not detract from the study, it might have given time for a more extensive conclusion on a matter of such importance for scholars of German history and higher education, and for the clean-up of technical errors by the publisher. The use of the term "midwives" seems to me questionable, but perhaps appropriate to the author's hypothesis. The concluding paragraph is reminiscent of Gordon Graig's judgment in *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, but not as convincing. Probably the army could have stemmed the tide; probably the professoriate could not have.

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