**Introduction**

**Lisa Pine**

The Nazi era has been the subject of a vast amount of historical research and debate. An examination of the impact of National Socialism upon German society sheds light on both the nature and impact of the Nazi dictatorship as a whole and the social setting in which its policies were executed. Yehuda Bauer has noted that ‘National Socialist Germany was ruled by a criminal, murderous regime, and the day-to-day life of its citizens was coloured by this’.[[1]](#endnote-1) Daily life - even the most trivial parts of it - took place within this context. The historiography of the Third Reich is vast, with studies of many different aspects of the politics of National Socialism, eugenics and racial hygiene, the war and the Holocaust, as well as the various Nazi organisations, to name but a few. Indeed, the social history of the Third Reich, the ‘history of everyday life’ has a large secondary literature. At first, some concerns were raised about this type of history and claims made that it was in danger of ‘trivialising’ the subject, but this is not the intention of historians working in this area – on the contrary, social history applies the use of different perspectives and themes in order to more fully understand the complex nature of life under National Socialism. The first major work on Nazi social history in English was Richard Grunberger’s *A Social History of the Third Reich*, which covers a wide range of subjects including music and literature, Nazi speech and humour.[[2]](#endnote-2) The historiography has grown extensively since then to include more detailed analyses of specific issues, such as class and gender.[[3]](#endnote-3) There are also newer works on everyday life in the Third Reich.[[4]](#endnote-4) In addition, the historiography of the Nazi era has burgeoned with the publication of many important monographs that deal with specific aspects of social and cultural life in Nazi Germany. The secondary literature on this subject continues to grow, as readers’ interest and fascination in it remain undiminished.

This book adds significantly to this literature in a specific and particular way. It seeks to explore the variety and complexity of life in Nazi Germany through a compilation of thematic chapters that examine the extent to which a regime with totalitarian aims and ambitions succeeded in permeating different areas of social and cultural life in Germany. The individual chapters each deal with a different aspect of life in Germany in the Nazi era, assessing the extent of intervention of the Party and regime into them. They establish cases and areas of life in which the regime interposed itself heavily, as well as those in which National Socialism did not intrude and permeate as much. The authors illuminate aspects of life under Nazi rule that are less well known and examine the contradictions and paradoxes that characterised daily life in Nazi Germany. An analysis of how people lived their everyday lives extends our knowledge of the Nazi era and enhances our understanding of it.

Even at the outset, the response of the German population to the new National Socialist government in 1933 was mixed. Peter Fritzsche has commented on ‘the sheer number of civilian wellwishers’ who gathered to greet the newly appointed Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, on 30 January 1933, noting that ‘nearly one million Berliners took part in this extraordinary demonstration of allegiance’ to the NSDAP.[[5]](#endnote-5) On 1 May 1933, the new government put on a May Day celebration in the German capital, complete with beer, sausages, an air show and fireworks - ‘all the trappings of a fun-filled spring holiday’ - although the day was designed to show a sense of national purpose and to tie German workers to the new state, as well as to provide family entertainment.[[6]](#endnote-6) As the NSDAP took over the buildings of the German trade union organisations the next day and quickly suppressed what had been the largest trade union movement in Europe, the more coercive nature of the new state came to the fore, and as Fritzsche has noted, May Day and its aftermath clearly signalled ‘both the genuine support and the sheer terror that composed public life in the Third Reich’.[[7]](#endnote-7) The symbolic gestures of the National Socialist regime towards the German population were significant in creating and establishing the popular response towards it. However, it is a difficult picture to definitively recreate, because the popular response was so nuanced. Whilst Fritzsche notes that ‘there was considerable enthusiasm for the Nazi cause long after the seizure of power in January 1933’, he also states that ‘indifference to public events and withdrawal into private arenas characterised much of everyday life in Germany after 1933’, suggesting that many Germans either were or became sceptical about the nature and intentions of the National Socialist state.[[8]](#endnote-8) This ambivalence came to characterise the whole Nazi period, both during peacetime and throughout the wartime years. During the war, enlistment into military and labour services strengthened the role of Nazi institutions in daily life, yet at the same time, people became more critical of the Nazi Party and its policies, and even of Hitler himself, as the *Führer* (leader) myth began to falter, particularly after the Battle of Stalingrad.[[9]](#endnote-9) Indeed, a variety of reasons accounted for dissent from Nazi norms, including as Jill Stephenson has noted, ‘undiluted self-interest’.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Much recent research on the social history of Nazi Germany has focused on the *Volksgemeinschaft* (‘national community’). This was a concept that both featured in Nazi propaganda and influenced many aspects of everyday life. It was central to the Nazis’ view of German society. Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto note that: ‘*Volksgemeinschaft* was the Nazis’ central social concept: it was within it, and via it, that visions of community in Nazi Germany were expressed, negotiated and put into practice.’[[11]](#endnote-11) It was a promise, a utopia, a propaganda construction and an order - hence, it was a term that encompassed many things. It included the giving of donations to state-sponsored charity, in particular the *Winterhilfswerk* (Winter Relief Agency). It entailed communal activities, such as gathering to listen to Party radio broadcasts or involvement in a variety of Party activities. The ideal *Volksgemeinschaft* was a society in which class, religious and local loyalties disappeared in favour of the concept of the nation as a whole. Its members or *Volksgenossen* (‘national comrades’) had to behave in a particular way in order to belong. But again, the reality was not clearcut. As Steber and Gotto note: ‘there was immense pressure on citizens to conform, even if the loyalty created by such pressure had its limits.’[[12]](#endnote-12)

Furthermore, the *Volksgemeinschaft* was used as a tool of repudiation, as much as it was one of integration. Certain sectors of German society were excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft* on racial grounds (the Jews and the ‘Gypsies’); others were precluded on account of their deviant sexual behaviour (homosexuals and prostitutes); others still because they were considered to be either politically unreliable or ‘asocial’. Those who failed to conform did not belong to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. And so, the *Volksgemeinschaft* was not only a propaganda construct, but also a project of social engineering. As such, it permeated the private lives of ordinary Germans throughout the duration of the Nazi era. Whilst success, happiness and, in many cases, social advancement, was promised to those who belonged to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, discrimination, persecution and ultimately destruction was the fate of those who did not belong to it. The *Volksgemeinschaft* was not, as Steber and Gotto note ‘a static condition’, but a dynamic one.[[13]](#endnote-13) Michael Wildt too argues that: ‘the *Volksgemeinschaft* is not to be analysed as a rigid social construct, but as the making of community, focusing on social practice instead of a societal status quo.’[[14]](#endnote-14) It was a living community in which all members had their duties and obligations. During the war, the *Volksgemeinschaft* was presented increasingly as a ‘community of struggle’ or even, as defeat loomed in 1945, as a ‘community of sacrifice’ and a ‘community of fate’.[[15]](#endnote-15)

Wildt has shown how *Volksgenossen* could be involved in the realisation of the utopia of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. In serving the Nazi ideal - for example, as doctors sterilising the ‘unfit’, as policemen dealing with ‘asocial elements’, as local welfare officers or block wardens who supervised the German population - they became integrated and had a stake in Nazi society. Thus, their individualised self-empowerment through the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* was not only about top-down power, but also about the participation of the population. Wildt argues that an immense pool of functionaries reflected this high degree of sharing in the Nazi social engineering project.[[16]](#endnote-16) In addition, previously existing boundaries, particularly in regard to class, became blurred and the promise of social advancement was appealing and attractive to many German workers. The regime’s promises to *Volksgenossen* often fell short of real achievement, yet life was better than in the years immediately before the NSDAP came to power - sufficiently so that many Germans willingly bought into the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Yet, as Ian Kershaw notes, it is difficult to assess how far this entailed ‘active commitment, as opposed to passive acceptance’.[[17]](#endnote-17)

Another dimension to the dynamics of Nazi society was the concept of ‘working towards the *Führer*’.[[18]](#endnote-18) The power structure of the Third Reich lent itself to individuals undertaking initiatives within the Party and state administration for self-advancement or self-aggrandisement by anticipating and fulfilling Hitler's wishes. Much has been written about this in regard to the radicalisation of anti-Semitic policies, in particular. Yet it also impacted other aspects of social and political life and was related to the way in which opportunities offered by the new *Volksgemeinschaft* enticed citizens to behave in a particular type of way. Wildt notes too that ‘the concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* drew its political power not from a social reality achieved, but rather from its promise, and the mobilisation it inspired’.[[19]](#endnote-19)

The relationship between consensus and terror in Nazi Germany was also important in determining people’s thoughts and actions.[[20]](#endnote-20) As Steber and Gotto note: ‘consensus was inconceivable without terror, and terror without consensus.’[[21]](#endnote-21) Participation in the *Volksgemeinschaft* brought its members pleasure and social enhancement and this factor needs to be taken into account alongside the aspects of terror and repression associated with the National Socialist government. As Wildt argues, the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* entailed a ‘diversity of behavioural strategies’ among the German populace, exemplifying both ‘joining in and turning away, willingness and reluctance’ to conform to Nazi ideology and practice.[[22]](#endnote-22) Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann argues that the *Volksgemeinschaft* was ‘produced daily in social interactions’, with ‘many motives and many different contexts’.[[23]](#endnote-23)

The perspective of everyday experience adds an important dimension to our understanding of the Third Reich. Between 1933 and 1945, life was far from ordinary, and a deeper knowledge of the complexities of the structures of people's lives enables us to gain a comprehension of their actions. In studying this era, it is necessary to consider how everyday life was politicised by the regime and to examine the extent to which a clinging on to the non-political aspects of daily existence played a part in life under Nazi rule. As Schmiechen-Ackermann asserts: ‘The social reality of life under the swastika was a complex balancing act.’[[24]](#endnote-24) In examining the social practices of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, this book asks how people lived their everyday lives under the conditions of the Nazi dictatorship and offers a significant point of entry and enquiry into the subject for students and scholars in the field. The chapters of this book are divided into three sections. The first part on food and health contains chapters on food; alcohol, tobacco and drugs; illness and health. The second section of the book, on lifestyle comprises chapters on fashion; tourism; sports and clubs; and art. The third and final part of the book on religion is made up of chapters on Protestantism; Catholicism; and Christmas. The chapter subjects have been selected to reflect on aspects of everyday life and activities that either have been little explored in the historical literature or have been the subject of specific academic monographs. Here, a comprehensive overview of each subject area is given so that a variety of topics can be considered together in a single volume that will allow readers a new lens with which to view daily life in Nazi Germany.

In a volume of this size, scope and nature, it has taken careful consideration, both in intellectual and practical terms, to select which topics to include and which to omit. This book does not by any means cover all aspects of everyday life. It does not delve into the subjects of working life and Nazi organisations, even though these both had a bearing on the experiences of the German population in the Third Reich. Moreover, it is not a book about the Nazi acquisition of empire and genocide – whilst the fate of the Jews and the experience of the Second World War find coverage within some of the chapters, they are not the primary sources of focus. Both the Holocaust and the history of the Second World War have been the subjects of numerous books. Nor too are the political and economic histories of the Third Reich central to this volume. This is a book about the everyday lives and ordinary experiences of Germans during the Third Reich. The Nazi regime had far-reaching goals - whilst it could not attain them all, it did achieve wide-ranging changes in a relatively short space of time, especially taking into consideration that half of that era was one of war.

The first part of the book opens with Nancy Reagin’s chapter on food. Reagin shows how cooking, diet and the use of housekeeping resources during the Third Reich were shaped by the National Socialist agenda of economic autarky and military preparation. The goals of the Four Year Plan, followed by the demands of the war itself, drove both the conditions under which Germans kept house, as well as the propaganda directed at German housewives. Nazi endeavours to reshape German women’s cooking and housekeeping built upon some widely shared values, but simultaneously, they contradicted other popular aspirations and housekeeping norms. Nazi leaders were especially wary of resurrecting consumers’ memories of the First World War. They therefore promoted the creation of a variety of ‘ersatz’ or substitute foods, to make up for the shortfalls. Food choices and cooking were the subject of intense propaganda as well, and the regime’s interventions tried to persuade German women to adapt and comply with the constraints imposed by the Four Year Plan, and to build support or understanding among German women and families for the shortages and extra labour required. Those foods available locally such as apples, potatoes and whole grains were presented as both healthier and more ‘German’ than luxury foods or imports. The Nazi regime launched ambitious campaigns to educate German housewives to make do with what was on offer in the market, and to go to often surprising lengths to avoid any hint of waste.

Nazi propaganda built upon the high value assigned to frugality among many sectors of the German population. But the push for ‘German’ foods and frugality sometimes contradicted popular notions of luxury and the *habitus* of the German bourgeoisie, which celebrated the value of some luxury foods like butter, and which cherished the notion of a Sunday ‘roast’ and other items that were central to German *Tischkultur* (table culture)*.* In general, the regime was asking German women to embrace a more labour-intensive style of cooking and housekeeping, especially with regards to recycling and preserving foods and other resources. Such extreme frugality had always been common in working-class and lower middle-class families, but the Nazi government promoted it as a ‘patriotic’ duty for all housekeepers. The results did reshape German cooking and diet to a certain extent, but there was also evidence of widespread resistance to these measures and evasion of these restrictions. Reagin also notes the influence of the experience of food during the Nazi period upon Germans’ postwar food choices and advertising. After 1950, West Germans increasingly embraced so-called ‘international’ dishes and ‘labour-saving’ frozen foods, products that were directly opposed to the choices and values regarding foods forced upon housewives during the Third Reich.

In Chapter Two, Jonathan Lewy examines a subject area that has been largely neglected by historians – namely, the history of alcohol, tobacco and drugs under National Socialism. The chapter demonstrates how the Nazis dealt with activities that we consider vices today. Although alcohol was popular in Germany, heavy drinking and the resulting diseases were frowned upon by the Nazi regime. In their policy towards alcohol, the Nazi authorities trod an uneasy path demarcated by an attempt to accommodate a thirsty public on one side, and enforcing a biological imperative - as they saw it - on the other. Since the early nineteenth century, the ‘drinking disease’ was considered a hereditary disease. In the twentieth century, Nazi parlance turned the disease into a biological defect that had to be eradicated. Therefore, severe alcoholics were forcibly sterilised according to a law passed in July 1933. However, drinking did not stop in the Third Reich. High-ranking Nazi officials such as Martin Bormann and Reinhardt Heydrich were known drunkards. Beer remained a recognised essential in Bavaria during the war, and soldiers were given schnapps before special or difficult missions.

The Nazi policy towards tobacco was equally paradoxical. Certainly, tobacco use was considered a dangerous carcinogen and therefore was limited to adults. However, this did not keep the Nazi Party from using cigarette boxes for propaganda purposes or receiving the financial support of the tobacco magnate Philipp Reemtsma. Indeed, Hitler recognised the importance of tobacco to the autarkic German economy. The drug policy of the Third Reich is especially interesting, since to modern readers today, drug use might appear as the most serious vice of all. However, in Nazi Germany this was not the case. The few researchers who have referred to the question of drugs have assumed that the Nazis treated drug addicts as they did other ‘asocials’ and alcoholics, employing such measures as incarceration in concentration camps or sterilisation. Lewy’s chapter shows that this view is erroneous. Far from persecuting drug addicts as they did other ‘asocials’, the Nazis tried to rehabilitate them and were even prepared to spend public money for that purpose. The National Socialist regime inherited its drug laws from the Weimar Republic. These laws had been imposed upon Germany under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and so they did not reflect a natural evolution in German legislation. This caused odd legal mechanisms: drug possession without proper documentation was illegal, yet drug use itself remained legal. Following the traditions of the *Kaiserreich* (Second Empire, 1871-1918), drug use and drug addiction were not a crime and, in many cases, drug addicts bore no criminal liability for their actions. No special measures were taken against drug addicts; they were not considered ‘asocials’ and they were not persecuted in the same manner as alcoholics, the ‘workshy’, ‘Gypsies’ or Jews.

Following Lewy’s exploration of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, in Chapter Three, Geoffrey Cocks examines the state of health in the Third Reich. He shows that whilst we know a great deal about the monstrous and murderous racism that was the *raison d’être* of the Third Reich and about the role of medicine, in particular, in effecting lethal Nazi racial policy, we know relatively little about health and illness in Nazi Germany. Experiences of illness and health under Hitler were an extension of the modern German past - the rapid development of a recently unified Germany into a modern industrial and commercial society, of the First World War, economic disaster and political catastrophe. In addition, they were the outcome of the pervasive social, cultural and psychological dynamics of the demands, pleasures and needs of the German population.

The Nazi insistence on ‘racial health’ burdened the German population with demand, expectation and exploitation for work and war. Germans responded with a mixture of discipline, fanaticism, worry, physical and mental breakdown, as well as instances and degrees of agency on behalf of the self. More and more, life and experience in collapsing and collapsed Nazi Germany became both an individual and a general war of all against all in a frenzied landscape of battle and work, discipline and diversion, suffering and survival, fear and flight, pain and panic, injury, illness and death. The Third Reich in this way sustained in Germany the modern material, medical and commercial concern with health and illness. Cocks examines both the impact of Nazi health policy and practice, and the effects of well and ill selves acting within and around social, medical, political and discursive spaces. He illustrates the intersection of the lives of German people from all walks of life with inevitable but manipulable illness.

Beginning the second section of the book, in her chapter, Irene Guenther shows how during the Third Reich, female fashioning became the subject of intensive debate as well as contradiction. Instead of an agreed-upon plan of what German or Nazi fashion meant and a singular, consistently public image of the female, incongruities in the representation of fashion abounded. The result was that there was not one prevailing female image, but several. Examining the Third Reich through its clothing - the way in which the regime fashioned itself and German society - is revelatory. Clothing served as a means to visibly convey many of the notions elaborated by the Nazis’ propaganda machine. It was employed to enhance the power and status of the regime, as well as to consolidate society and control behaviour. Additionally, clothing provided a tangible sign of inclusion into and exclusion from the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Clothing also served as a form of communication, as Germans silently inspected one another. What people wore or had to wear and how they fashioned themselves spoke volumes in Nazi Germany. The National Socialist regime defined ideals of national taste, including dress codes, to construct acceptable individual and collective identities. Inclusion into the *Volksgemeinschaft* could be attained by conformity to a contrived image that supported National Socialist ideology; similarly, ‘otherness’ was demonised and had its own appearance.

The Nazis utilised a variety of clothing directions, as they strove to consolidate and control the appearance, conduct, consumerism and attitudes of the German population. The Third Reich utilised *Trachtenkleidung* (folk costume) to illuminate Germany’s cultural past and to promote its ‘blood and soil’ ideology. As *Trachtenkleidung* could not be bought, sold or worn by Jews, the fashion was a visible signifier of who did – and who did not – belong in the Third Reich. In addition, the Nazis promoted another sartorial image and dress code - the female uniform. This was a reflection of the Party’s attraction to organisation and militarism. Similarly to *Trachtenkleidung*, the uniform also offered a visible sign of inclusion into the *Volksgemeinschaft*. It exuded power and enhanced the status of the regime; it projected symmetry; it signified order, accommodation and conformity; it reflected beliefs and value systems; and it shaped the attitudes of both the wearer and the observer. The Third Reich had a third fashion countenance, one that was intensely modern, supremely stylised and technologically advanced. It was this appearance that German fashion magazines depicted, fashion institutes promoted and German designers created for export fashion shows. Regardless of the *Trachtenkleidung* and uniform fashions that were created to support the regime and to consolidate society, magazines, newspapers and photographs of the time reveal that many urban German women wore the latest fashionable attire, much like style-conscious women in France and Britain. At various times, factions within the Nazi Party attempted to manipulate and redirect consumer culture so that it would better reflect the anti-modernist aspect of National Socialist ideology. Rarely, though, were they successful in doing so, since the modern, fashionable countenance served the Nazi state’s agenda in a variety of ways. Guenther shows how fashion and clothing in the Third Reich were invested with manifold meanings and utilised or manipulated for multiple purposes.

In her chapter, Kristin Semmens examines developments in the tourism industry under National Socialism and their impact on life in Nazi Germany. The Nazi government took tourism seriously. Hitler professionalised the industry and passed laws that ‘coordinated’ it. Tourism officials gladly traded regional and local autonomy for what they had long wanted: state involvement and more streamlined practices, whether in advertising, statistics gathering or travel agency licensing. Moreover, after 1933, domestic and international visitors came in record numbers and non-German experts praised the Nazi government’s interventions. Semmens shows that the regime transformed the world in which tourism professionals worked, in ways that coincided with their own desires. Although conflict was never entirely absent, most within the industry agreed that the Nazis were good for tourism. Their intrusions were, for the most part, welcome.

Semmens demonstrates that far-reaching changes naturally did not mean that every aspect of daily working life was instantly transformed for all tourism professionals. Although the regime stood poised to direct the most minute details (the font to be used in tourism advertising, for example), there were definite continuities between the Weimar era and the Third Reich: brochures selling towns and regions as holiday destinations were printed; the imposition of a spa tax was debated; national and international conferences were held; tourists’ inquiries were addressed and so on. Many daily tasks and routines thus appeared normal. That normality, however, was in keeping with the NSDAP’s overall goals for tourism. The Nazis transformed the tourism industry in far-reaching ways, which, for the most part, were grounded in consensus. The regime also had an impact on tourists themselves, in terms of their holiday practices, habits and experiences. The extent of its impact was dependent upon their travel destination, with places like the Black Forest remaining superficially untouched by Nazism, while Berlin was suffused with swastikas. Yet, here again, such different experiences occurred not in spite of, or in opposition to, Nazi control: they were deliberately fostered because they tallied with the regime’s overall economic and ideological goals. Visitors praised the ‘new’ (and heavily Nazified) Berlin; they simultaneously extolled the ‘timelessness’ of other German destinations. In both instances, their responses met with the regime’s approval.

Semmens’ chapter revisits the debate about terror and consensus under National Socialism through the lens of tourism. Certainly, terror and coercion were not absent from this history: politically ‘unreliable’ Germans lost their jobs as the industry was ‘coordinated’; some foreign tourists were victims of SA (*Sturmabteilungen* or stormtroopers) aggression in the violent early months of the Third Reich; Jewish Germans were increasingly excluded from all aspects of leisure travel. Yet, those measures too found favour within the industry, or could be dismissed as exceptional. Even if they were opposed to some specific actions, most tourism professionals continued to support the regime’s interventions generally. As was so often the case in the Third Reich, dissent and complicity - and often, outright support - co-existed. Life undoubtedly changed for both tourism professionals and their customers. For most, at least until the outbreak of war, it changed for the better. Semmens’ evaluation of tourism concludes that despite the inescapable presence of the Nazi regime in people’s lives, many Germans had no real desire to take a holiday from the Nazis.

In his chapter, David Imhoof examines the subject of sport in a specific local context in Göttingen, a town in Lower Saxony, in order to reflect on the impact of Nazism on sports. He discusses how sports developed in the Third Reich through evolutionary and revolutionary change and how larger structures - the state, the Nazi Party, sport organisations - shaped daily activities. Sports in the Third Reich allowed Germans to participate in the regime’s ideological aims. But they also served as a refuge from political and economic tensions. Imhoof’s chapter explains the ways in which Germans used sports to participate in the Third Reich. Indeed, sports reveal the complexity of the relationship of the Germans between leisure activities and the Nazi state. Germans used sports to empower and entertain themselves. Sometimes they used sports to hide from government officials or punish outsiders. Nazi leaders, for their part, celebrated the body, health and physical activity as an integral part of their racist, eugenic vision of the world.

The Nazi regime also created hierarchical organisations to direct all sporting activities. Imhoof’s examination of these helps us to understand how Germans worked with the Nazi state in the highly personal, yet greatly politicised daily activity of sports. Ultimately, Imhoof argues, we can best understand the Nazi *Gleichschaltung* (‘coordination’) of sports as a process by which average Germans helped to create the sport culture of the Third Reich as much as they had it imposed upon them. This chapter describes a variety of sporting activities in which Germans engaged as participants and spectators. The history of sports in Göttingen during the Third Reich sheds light on how individuals, institutions and ideas functioned in Nazi Germany as a whole.

Next, Joan Clinefelter’s chapter shows that the art produced between 1933 and 1945 served a vital function for the Nazi state. Clinefelter argues that the National Socialists used the visual arts to integrate Germans into the *Volksgemeinschaft*. By analysing Nazi policies, mass art exhibitions and the art market, her chapter demonstrates how Nazi culture excluded outsiders - Jews, Communists, Socialists and others - and embraced conservative art to win over the lower and middle classes, artists and the educated elites. The chapter begins by examining the development of cultural policy between 1933-37. The Nazis pursued a dual strategy of exclusionary and inclusionary tactics. While modernists were attacked as inherently ‘unGerman’, conservative artists were hailed as the creators of an eternally pure German style. The Reich Chamber of Culture provided approved artists with national recognition and access to commissions, exhibitions and honours – simultaneously, it relegated modernist artists to the cultural periphery. Artists demonstrated their support for Nazi policy by organising local ‘degenerate’ art shows designed to defame modernist art and artists. Most often these shows were driven by professional rivalries and longstanding perceptions that the modernists had enjoyed an unfair competitive advantage during the Weimar Republic. Economic opportunism, as well as ideological support for National Socialism, drove many artists to ally with the Nazi state.

Clinefelter explores the integrative function of art in the Third Reich, with regard to educated elites and the middle and lower classes through a focus on mass exhibitions. The Degenerate Art Exhibition and the Great German Art Exhibition, held directly across the road from each other in Munich in 1937, offer the best illustrations of the role of art in forging the *Volksgemeinschaft*. While the Degenerate Art Exhibition vilified outsiders, the Great German Art Exhibition celebrated the Third Reich's artistic insiders. Held annually from 1937-1944, the Great German Art shows were the national venue for art that represented the will of the *Volk* (people or nation). Covered extensively in the press, radio and film, the Great German Art exhibitions enabled all classes in Germany to celebrate their cultural heritage, now recast within a Nazi framework. Clinefelter examines the art economy as yet another way to illustrate the role of art in integrating Germans into the *Volksgemeinschaft*. She shows how the Great German Art Exhibitions identified accepted artists, connected them with buyers and helped them to determine the prices that they could command for their works in galleries. The art market boomed as especially middle-class Germans sought to signal their membership of the *Volksgemeinschaft* by purchasing art approved by the regime. However, in the wartime years, art sales represented not only public approval, but also popular fears. After 1942, Germans increasingly purchased art as a hedge against inflation and the economic collapse that would surely follow defeat. The chapter ends with a consideration of the effects of the war on Nazi art and the inability of the Third Reich to create the kind of innovative outpouring of racialist excellence so hoped for by Hitler.

The final part of the book focuses on the subject of religion. The vast majority of the German population in 1933 was Christian - together Protestantism and Catholicism accounted for the religious beliefs of 96 per cent of the total population. Accordingly, this section contains a chapter each on Protestantism and Catholicism, with the final chapter of the book devoted to the subject of Christmas. In his chapter, Christopher Probst examines Protestantism in Nazi Germany. Protestants comprised 63 per cent of the German population during the Third Reich. Utilising church newsletters and newspapers, conference proceedings, internal church communications and published writings, Probst seeks to answer a number of important questions about German Protestant experiences and views during the Third Reich. He examines how Protestants responded towards the Nazi regime and how the pressures and strictures of living in the Nazi state helped to fracture the Protestant Church into competing factions with distinct views on myriad issues. He explores how Protestants confronted the so-called ‘Jewish Question’. The chapter begins with a description of the general context of the German Protestant Church as a state-supported institution, including the *Kirchenkampf* (church struggle) between the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) on the one hand and the pro-Nazi *Deutschen Christen* (German Christians) on the other. The latter sought rapprochement with the Nazis, but their enthusiastic support for the regime often went unrequited. Probst analyses important themes addressed by Protestant pastors and theologians, including nationalism, anti-Semitism, the Lutheran doctrine of the ‘two kingdoms’ and the doctrine of the ‘orders of creation’, of which the *Volk* was most crucial. Many Protestant pastors and theologians wrote about the ‘Jewish Question’. Most were keen to argue against ‘racial’ forms of anti-Semitism. Yet, most held traditional Christian anti-Judaic and/or anti-Semitic opinions. Nazi philologist Theodor Pauls’ views illustrated one approach to such issues; Heidelberg pastor Hermann Maas’ actions and ideas represented a starkly different outlook.

Pauls published a three-volume work titled *Luther und die Juden* (*Luther and the Jews*) in 1939, which was part of a long series of ostensibly scholarly works about ‘positive Christianity’. Pauls offered the work as a ‘gift’ to the anti-Semitic and purportedly academic Institute for Research into and Elimination of Jewish Influence in German Church Life, which was dominated by the *Deutschen Christen*. In these volumes, Pauls wove together Martin Luther’s ‘two kingdoms’ doctrine with ardent nationalism and anti-Semitism, lifting the most incendiary passages from Luther’s anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic works and infusing them with Nazi racial conceptions. In contrast, Maas represented a philo-Semitic strand of Protestantism in Nazi Germany. He had joined the Society for Protection against anti-Semitism in 1932. In 1933 he spent several months studying in Palestine. Maas co-founded the *Büro Grüber* (Grüber Office) together with Heinrich Grüber in 1938. Through this work and his ecumenical contacts abroad, Maas assisted in the emigration of many persecuted Jews and Jewish Christians. He accomplished all of this while serving as pastor of the Holy Spirit Church in Heidelberg from 1915-1943. As a result of his daring activities, he was harassed by the Gestapo and eventually had speaking, writing and professional restrictions imposed upon him. In 1943, church authorities forced him to resign his position at Heidelberg, under pressure from the regime, and later that year he was transferred to France to endure work in a hard labour camp. Maas’ actions and theological works, which exhibited sympathy for the Jewish victims of Nazism, represented an exception to the rule. Probst shows how Pauls’ and Maas’ starkly disparate views about and actions towards the Jews served as windows to wider Protestant opinions about the German nation, the Nazi regime, Jews and Judaism during the Third Reich. They illustrate extreme poles on either side of the German Protestant divide, indicating the extent of different aspects of Protestant thought in German society under National Socialism.

In his chapter, Kevin Spicer shows how during the turbulent years of Hitler’s rule, German Catholicism did not escape the evils of National Socialism unscathed. In 1933, when Hitler came to power, 33 per cent of the German population was Catholic. Ruthless state and party officials with unlimited power compelled both ordained and lay members of the Church to find their place among the loyal ranks of fellow German compatriots. Amid the flurry of events surrounding 1933, German Catholics had to make some hard choices, both personal and political. As an institution, the position of the Catholic Church towards National Socialism changed over time. Spicer identifies four main phases: 1930-1933, when German bishops publicly opposed National Socialism; 1933-1934, when German bishops jointly reversed their stance towards National Socialism while holding on to the illusion that they could work with the state; 1934-1939, when the state directly attacked the value system of the Catholic Church and purposefully worked to remove it from the life of the *Volksgemeinschaft*; and 1939-45, when the state engaged in an annihilative war, carrying out the murder of the physically handicapped and the mentally ill, as well as the deportation and mass murder of German and European Jews, whilst simultaneously threatening the future existence of the Church.

Initially, the National Socialists’ emphasis on nationalism and promise of economic renewal drew many Catholics to the movement. Catholics also feared being left out of the political process, labelled traitors by the new government and subjected to a second *Kulturkampf* (culture struggle) as in Bismarck’s era. In March 1933, most Catholics including the German bishops, believed in Hitler’s promise that Christianity would serve as Germany’s underlying foundation. A subsequent Concordat between Nazi Germany and the Vatican in July 1933 solidified the aspirations of such Catholic support. The murder of Erich Klausener, the Berlin Director of Catholic Action during the Night of the Long Knives, in June 1934, however, enabled the initial disillusionment with National Socialism to surface again. Subsequent encroachment on the freedom to operate of Catholic organisations, newspapers and publishing houses further complicated church-state relations.

Despite such tensions, the Catholic Church and National Socialism shared some traits in common. Both condemned the cultural excesses of the Weimar Republic and supported traditional gender roles and family life. Similarly, both spoke against the evils of modernity and attributed to Jews the cause of Germany’s misfortunes. Yet, their forms of anti-Semitism – racial versus religious – differed significantly, though the Church’s failure to consistently emphasise this point and end its anti-Jewish teaching made it challenging for Catholics to differentiate between the two. Still, in the proclamation of the Christian faith, many Catholic bishops and priests made statements that government officials labelled as ‘political resistance’even though mostchurchmen rejected such characterisations. For their part, churchmen regularly insistedthat they had to actsolely to protect the interests of their Church and to secure pastoral freedom. Underlying the problem was that the Catholic Church institutionally rejected Judaism. The Catholic Church did not formally make a shift in this historical reality until 1965 when the Vatican issued *Nostra Aetate*, which called for recognition of Judaism and the rejection of all forms of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, as Spicer shows, in the Third Reich, there were unique individuals who saw the evils of National Socialism and, in highly motivated ways, followed the gospel command to ‘love thy neighbour’, even at the expense of their own survival.

In the final chapter of the book,Joe Perry examines the subject of Christmas under National Socialism. The Nazification of Germany’s favourite holiday took many forms, on numerous levels. Building on historical notions in place since the mid-nineteenth century, Nazi functionaries cast Christmas as a celebration of the German *Volk* that had deep roots in the solstice worship of pre-Christian Germanic tribes. Traditional symbols and rituals, including decorations, family observances, carol singing, annual Christmas markets and particularly the Christmas tree, were stripped of their Christian content and were reworked to insert Nazi ideology into popular festivity. Nazi propagandists and functionaries worked hard to construct a Christmas that would celebrate the *Volksgemeinschaft* and its racial boundaries; an analysis of these efforts sheds a revealing light on the way National Socialism intervened in the everyday lives of German citizens and the conflict and consensus generated by this intrusion. This chapter offers fresh insight into the contradictory relationship between private life, political culture and identity production in Nazi Germany. The *NS-Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV or National Socialist People’s Welfare) subsumed familiar forms of holiday charity-giving under the auspices of the *Winterhilfswerk* (WHW or Winter Relief Agency), one of the most popular Nazi institutions. Annual celebrations sponsored by National Socialist mass organisations, including the Hitler Youth, the National Socialist Women’s League (NSF), the German Labour Front (DAF) and the *Wehrmacht* (armed forces), brought the values of the Nazi holiday to millions of Germans. A variety of Nazi propaganda institutions and publications championed reworked domestic festivities that exalted the family's place as the ‘germ cell’ of the nation in ways that emphasised the importance of women and mothers for building the national spirit of the German home.

Perry’s chapter traces the Nazification of Christmas in chronological order across three main parts, beginning with initial attempts to shape a Nazi holiday around *völkisch* (nationalist) themes in the 1920s. It then explores the period between 1933 and 1939, when Nazi authorities eagerly used all the institutional muscle they could muster to popularise a highly ideologised *Volksweihnachten* (‘People’s Christmas’). The third section examines the attempts of the regime to celebrate *Kriegsweihnachten* (‘War Christmas’), a resurrection of themes and ritual practices previously in place during the First World War. Throughout these sections the chapter assesses the success of Nazi efforts to colonise Christmas. Though our knowledge of the people’s response to ‘People’s Christmas’ remains shrouded behind the highly controlled information politics of the dictatorial Nazi state, sources such as Security Service reports on the general mood and opinion and internal institutional records offer some insight into the popularity of the Nazi holiday. Perry shows that the Nazi orchestration of Christmas proceeded piecemeal and engendered conflict as well as conformity; attempts to de-Christianise holiday observances were particularly unpopular. Nevertheless, on balance, it seems that Nazified rituals and traditions successfully appropriated and displaced public festivities and made real inroads into private celebrations. The reinvention of Christmas as a National Socialist holiday was an effective means of remaking social solidarity and national identification, not least because participation in Nazi observances offered German citizens real material and symbolic rewards, including a privileged place in an exclusionary racial state.

Together, these contributions offer readers an opportunity to rethink their ideas about everyday life in Nazi Germany and to examine the impact of the Nazi state on German people’s lives. The Third Reich was indeed a brutal dictatorship, but within this context, people still had to continue their daily existences in a way that they were able to or chose to do. An analysis of these discrete aspects of life under National Socialism, within the broad themes of food and health, lifestyle and religion enables us to understand more about the nature of the Nazi state and illuminates the relationship of the German population to the Nazi government and its responses to Nazi ideologies and policies.

This book examines popular responses to the Nazi regime and establishes where it permeated people's lives and where it did not. For example, we know that fear and terror underpinned life in Nazi Germany, but recent research has shown that the real influence of the Gestapo (the secret state police) was perhaps much more limited than had been previously accepted.[[25]](#endnote-25) Denunciations, on which the Gestapo relied, were often based on revenge, resentment or personal jealousy, rather than on wholehearted acceptance of Nazism and Nazi ideology. Tim Kirk has also commented on the complex relationship between the Nazi government and its citizens. He shows that the German *Volksgemeinschaft* was ‘managed by a mixture of promise and exhortation, discipline and threat’.[[26]](#endnote-26) The promotion and creation of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, as Fritzsche notes ‘offered particular social rewards’ and had considerable appeal to the German population.[[27]](#endnote-27) Fritzsche shows how: ‘over the course of the twelve-year Reich, more and more Germans came to play active and generally congenial parts in the Nazi revolution and then subsequently came to accept the uncompromising terms of Nazi racism.’[[28]](#endnote-28) Whilst the Nazi regime failed to achieve its goal to rebuild, reshape and harmonise German society, it did enjoy considerable popular consensus throughout much of the period. The pervasiveness of the regime and its institutions were not clear-cut. In many cases, it appears that people went along with the components of National Socialism that they liked or that benefited them, not necessarily consenting to the regime entirely. Jill Stephenson has used the phrase ‘à la carte Nazis’ to describe this phenomenon and has noted that even Party members ‘did not necessarily swallow Nazi ideology whole’.[[29]](#endnote-29) Many Germans were willing to subscribe to certain aspects of Nazism, but were disinclined to change their behaviour and habits entirely in line with Nazi ideology.

Thus, the Nazi Party could not claim the complete allegiance of the German population. Whilst it attained a degree of consent, in particular, through its sponsorship of entertainment and leisure, it did not succeed in winning over the total control that it desired. Fritzsche notes that the regime offered ‘unprecedented opportunities for social mobility’ and that ‘the promise and possibility of a renovated social sphere’ created considerable appeal for the Nazi movement.[[30]](#endnote-30) Yet, as Stephenson contends: ‘expecting the mass of the people to accept Nazi priorities wholeheartedly and to reorientate their working, social and family lives to accord with them was to court disappointment’ for the Nazi leadership.[[31]](#endnote-31) Various forms of opposition to and dissent from the ideas and ideals of Nazism, or even in comprehension of them, all signified the failure of the regime to achieve total control of the German populace. The Nazi regime, despite its terror apparatus and vast propaganda machine, did not succeed in persuading the German people into compliance with its ideology entirely. There were people who did manage to maintain their own values or sense of morality during the Nazi era. There were significant distinctions between what people thought, said and did; and so, a complex picture emerges. In the confines of a dictatorial regime, thoughts, words and actions did not always easily converge. It is these discrepancies and the spheres of daily life that the regime did not succeed in penetrating, that this book seeks to explore.

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