

NAZIS AND NEO-STOICS: OTTO BRUNNER AND GERHARD OESTREICH BEFORE AND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR*

The early modern revival of interest in the late, or Roman, Stoa was a philosophical movement that became increasingly fashionable in the years between 1580 and 1640, appealed to aristocrats rather than to professional philosophers, and was more closely linked to vernacular than to learned culture. Its cardinal texts taught the strength of mind and detachment necessary to stand fast in adversity and to maintain an even keel in prosperity — a message especially useful for those in public life. This was the famous *sustine et abstine* of Seneca and Epictetus.

But this ‘neo’-Stoicism was a ‘lifestyle’ as well as a philosophy. Friendship, conversation, and beneficence were the ways in which early modern Europeans lived it, in their homes, academies and courts. In so far as these are identified with ‘civil society’, the spread of neo-Stoicism marks the beginnings of modernity. We can chart the propagation of these ideas — in private correspondence, but also in published editions and translations — across the Continent, emanating out from its most distressed, most creative corner: France and the Netherlands in the last decades of the sixteenth century.

I

The study of neo-Stoicism began with the twentieth century. The first part of Fortunat Strowski’s study of Pascal and his context, *De Montaigne à Pascal*, discussed it in five parts: ‘Réveil stoïcien, Montaigne, Juste Lipse, Du Vair, Diffusion du stoïcisme’. The

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Flemish philologist and antiquarian Justus Lipsius was recognized as having made the key contribution by fashioning a new system of ethics out of scattered examinations and occasional translations of ancient Stoic thinkers. The religious context was a given; and in Guillaume Du Vair, Lipsius's French counterpart, it was inextricable from the pure 'philosophy'.¹

In Germany, Wilhelm Dilthey put the Stoic revival at the heart of his essays on the intellectual history of modernity, published at the turn of the century. For him, the central problem of the sixteenth century was that the Reformation liberated the individual without supplying any theoretical structure that could make a community of such radically empowered men. The wars of religion of the late sixteenth century marked the shipwreck of European polities on this rock. Those who looked back to the Stoa believed that human reason was strong enough, both to grasp the universal laws of nature and to dominate the particular passions of individuals that threatened always to overturn common bonds in the name of particular ones. For Dilthey, the real triumph of Lipsius's neo-Stoicism lay in Hugo Grotius's reformulation of it as natural law.² But it was Lipsius, first of all, who recognized 'the Stoic moral philosophy underpinning the conception of the moral world'.³ If Dilthey's general emphasis was on neo-Stoicism as a way out of religious civil war, his interpretation of Lipsius's specific contribution focused on how he made a philosophy out of philology. At the same time, he explicitly placed this in the trajectory that led up to the liberal state, as conceived of in the years around 1848.

The next 'wave' of scholarship occurred just before the First World War. In France, Léontine Zanta dedicated an entire book to the subject. She, too, defined neo-Stoicism in terms of its demi-Christian, demi-pagan content. Half of her book is devoted to Lipsius and Du Vair, and her conclusion, like Strowski's and Dilthey's, was that 'Stoicism, with its exclusive worship of reason, opened the door to a secular ethic and to natural religion'. She viewed it very much as a Christian philosophy: like Strowski, as

¹ Fortunat Strowski, *De Montaigne à Pascal* (Paris, 1907), ch. 2.

² Larry Frohman, 'Neo-Stoicism and the Transition to Modernity in Wilhelm Dilthey's Philosophy of History', *Jl History of Ideas*, lvi (1995), 274; Wilhelm Dilthey, 'Die Funktion der Anthropologie in der Kultur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1904), 3, 23.

³ Dilthey, 'Die Funktion der Anthropologie in der Kultur', 28.

part of the history of religious revival in the sixteenth century, and, also like Strowski, as an essentially French story whose climax is the Jansenist reaction *against* neo-Stoicism in the middle of the seventeenth century.⁴

In Germany, at the very same time, a substantial treatment of Lipsius and neo-Stoicism was presented, but to explain a seventeenth-century German, not a sixteenth-century French, writer. Martin Opitz, the philosopher-poet-antiquary was the focal point of Kurt Wels's careful study. Recognizing that the poet from Silesia followed on directly from the philologists of Leiden — his teachers — made it possible to trace the close parallels between Lipsius and Opitz. Strowski is not mentioned, but, more surprisingly, neither is Dilthey, despite the fact that the case of Opitz provided strong support for Dilthey's view of the significant role of Dutch philology in remaking the terms in which the world was viewed.⁵

In the United States, just before and after the Great War, Morris Croll discussed Lipsius in terms of his literary impact.⁶ Although wholly indebted to earlier French scholarship, Croll's work differed in two respects: in emphasizing the existence of a 'Stoic style' that could be traced back to Lipsius, and in recognizing the impact of this style of writing and thinking in England. His work made clear that neo-Stoicism was a European phenomenon that could not be identified with any one nation, though it had specific resonances in the different national, intellectual traditions. Croll, too, viewed neo-Stoicism from the perspective of theology, as a post-Scholastic accommodator of pagan and Christian learning. Croll made no effort to incorporate Lipsius's political writings alongside his moral ones; indeed, he saw them as antithetical — the 'burn and cut' (*ure et seca*) of the *Politicorum* still rang out loud and clear, and all too dissonantly for a generation counting its dead.⁷

⁴ Léontine Zanta, *La Renaissance du stoïcisme au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1913), 29, 333. She acknowledges the influence of Strowski in her *avant-propos*.

⁵ Kurt Wels, *Die patriotischen Strömungen in der deutschen Literatur des Dreissigjährigen Krieges* (Greifswald, 1913), 51–2; Kurt Wels, 'Opitz und die stoische Philosophie', *Euphorion*, xxi (1914).

⁶ Morris Croll, 'Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon', in *Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm: Essays by Morris W. Croll*, ed. J. Max Patrick *et al.* (Princeton, 1966), 177.

⁷ Morris Croll, 'Juste Lipse et le mouvement anticiceronien à la fin du XVI^e et au début du XVII^e siècle', *ibid.*, 8. Croll observed — and it took a long time before others came around to this view — that the 'careful student of his mind will be convinced that his ruthlessness, like the orthodoxy of Montaigne and [Thomas] Browne, was founded in scepticism and not in bigotry': Croll, 'Attic Prose', 169.

It was Croll's student, Rudolf W. Kirk, who did more than anyone to put neo-Stoicism on the map, at least of English literature, publishing translated editions of landmarks of neo-Stoicism: Lipsius's *De constantia* in its 1595 translation (1939), Joseph Hall's *Heaven upon Earth* (1607) and *Characters of Vertues and Vices* (1608) — both published together in 1948 — and Guillaume Du Vair's *The Moral Philosophy of the Stoics* (1598; 1951). Lipsius and Du Vair sought 'to explain Stoic philosophy for Christian readers', Kirk wrote, 'and, if possible, to hold on to the best of the two traditions'.⁸

In his classic study of the very early enlightenment, *Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVII^e siècle* (finished in 1939, but published only in 1943), René Pintard also emphasized the close relationship between neo-Stoicism and religion, describing it as a kind of Christian philosophy for non-believers. Lipsius, however, does not play a major role, whether because Pintard was interested in a later period, or because his focus was on neo-Stoicism as lived rather than as theorized.⁹

In short, up through the Second World War, those who thought about neo-Stoicism saw it serving a fundamentally theological purpose, whether consoling people in times of adversity, or providing a model of wisdom which allowed for the peaceful amalgamation of the best in Christian and pagan thought.

In the second half of the twentieth century, however, we have become acquainted with a different Lipsius, and a different neo-Stoicism. Our Lipsius belongs to the world of *raison d'état* and 'the military revolution', and to scepticism and self-perfection: the rise of the state *and* the birth of the citizen.¹⁰ Lipsius's personal tie to the painter Peter-Paul Rubens, and Rubens's work for the Spanish and English crowns, suggests another avenue

⁸ See Kirk's introduction to *Two Bookes of Constancie: Written in Latine by Iustus Lipsius*, ed. Rudolf W. Kirk (Rutgers Univ. Studies in English, no. 2, New Brunswick, 1939), 14. Kirk's study of the spread of Stoic ideas in early modern Europe is focused on England but remains valuable for all students of neo-Stoicism.

⁹ René Pintard, *Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVII^e siècle*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1983), 52–5.

¹⁰ Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1651* (Cambridge, 1993); Günter Abel, *Stoizismus und Frühe Neuzeit: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte modernen Denkens im Felde von Ethik und Politik* (Berlin, 1978); Anthony Levi, *French Moralists: The Theory of the Passions, 1585 to 1649* (Oxford, 1965); Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford, 1997); Julien Aymard d'Angers, *Recherches sur le stoïcisme aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*, ed. L. Antoine (Hildesheim and New York, 1976).

through which these ideas found their way into wider circulation.¹¹ So, too, do the plays of Jonson, Corneille, Gryphius and Calderón, and the operas of Monteverdi. All feature more or less extensive engagement with themes that would have been familiar to seventeenth-century readers of Lipsius and his philosophical followers. The theorists of the short-lived English Republic, including the great John Milton, have also emerged both as readers and as translators of Lipsius.¹²

That neo-Stoicism is now seen as a key — even *the* key — ingredient in the making of a modern society that is either ‘civil’ or ‘disciplining’ can be traced back to the work of two historians, Otto Brunner (1898–1982) and Gerhard Oestreich (1910–78). While better known for his work on the late Middle Ages,

¹¹ See W. Prinz, ‘The *Four Philosophers* by Rubens and the Pseudo-Seneca in Seventeenth-Century Painting’, *Art Bulletin*, lv (1973); Mark Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius* (Princeton, 1991). Recent years have witnessed a flood of volumes on Lipsius: Karl Beuth, *Weisheit und Geistesstärke: Eine philosophiegeschichtliche Untersuchung zur ‘Constantia’ des Justus Lipsius* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, 1990); K. A. E. Enenkel and Chris L. Heesakkers (eds.), *Lipsius in Leiden: Studies in the Life and Works of a Great Humanist on the Occasion of his 450th Anniversary* (Voorthuizen, 1997); *Le Stoïcisme aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles: Actes du colloque CERPHI (4–5 juin 1993), organisé par Pierre-François Moreau, publiés sous la direction de Jacqueline Lagrée* (Cahiers de Philosophie Politique et Juridique, no. 25, Caen, 1994); Christian Mouchel (ed.), *Juste Lipse (1547–1606): Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 1994* (Paris, 1996); Marc Laureys (ed.), *The World of Justus Lipsius: A Contribution towards his Intellectual Biography* (= Bulletin de l’Institut Historique Belge de Rome, lxxviii, 1998); G. Tournoy, J. De Landtsheer and J. Papy (eds.), *Justus Lipsius Europae Lumen et Columna: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven, 17–19 September 1997* (Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia, xv, Leuven, 1999); Pierre-François Moreau (ed.), *Le Stoïcisme aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles, i, Le Retour des philosophes antiques à l’âge classique* (Paris, 1999).

¹² On England, see Gilles D. Monserrat, *Light from the Porch: Stoicism and English Renaissance Literature* (Paris, 1984); Geoffrey Miles, *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans* (Oxford, 1996); Adriana McCrea, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England, 1584–1650* (Toronto, 1997); Reid Barbour, *English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture* (Amherst, 1998); Andrew Shifflet, *Stoicism, Politics and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconsidered* (Cambridge, 1998). On France and Corneille, see Marc Fumaroli, *Héros et orateurs: rhétorique et dramaturgie cornéliennes* (Paris and Geneva, 1990); André Stegmann, *L’Héroïsme cornélien*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1969); Jacques Maurens, *La Tragédie sans tragique: le néo-stoïcisme dans l’œuvre de Pierre Corneille* (Paris, 1966). On Germany, see Xaver Stalder, *Formen des barocken Stoizismus. Der Einfluss der Stoa auf die deutsche Barockdichtung: Martin Opitz, Andreas Gryphius und Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg* (Bonn, 1976); William L. Cunningham, *Martin Opitz: Poems of Consolation in Adversities of War* (Bonn, 1974), chs. 4–5; Leonard Forster, ‘Lipsius and Renaissance Humanism’, in Anthony Stephens, H. L. Rogers and Brian Coghlan (eds.), *Festschrift for Ralph Farrell* (Bern, Frankfurt am Main and Las Vegas, 1977). On Calderón, see Peter N. Miller, ‘Calderón, Opera, and Baroque Aesthetics’, *Cambridge Opera JI*, vi (1994).

Brunner's *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist* [Noble Rural Life and the European Spirit] (1949) looked at one individual and through him evoked the neo-Stoic moral cosmos of a provincial aristocratic society of the sort found all across seventeenth-century Europe.¹³ By contrast, Gerhard Oestreich's two collections of essays on neo-Stoicism, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates* [Spirit and Form of the Early Modern State] (1969) and *Strukturprobleme der Frühen Neuzeit* [Structural Problems of the Early Modern Age] (1980), some of which were translated in *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (1982), focus on exploring the philosophical foundation of the large-scale transformation of political relations that made the modern state.

For both Brunner and Oestreich, whether looking through the singular to the social, or from the social to the singular, the seventeenth century was a watershed. Their books pointed to that moment in European history when what we might call the 'ethic' of social life — constancy, conversation, and friendship — was established, and they located it in a series of political, social, philosophical and theological contexts. How important is it, then, that their interpretations of neo-Stoicism were shaped by the intellectual agenda of National Socialism?

The last decade has witnessed an astonishing transformation in the study of the historical profession in Germany, both under the Nazis and in the decades after 1945. As recently as 1989 the consensus was that the so-called *Stunde Null*, or 'zero hour', from which a liberal democratic Germany rose from the ashes of Hitler's Reich applied also, more or less, to historians.¹⁴ This

¹³ For recent studies of aristocratic sociability, see Jonathan Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570–1715* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, 1993); David G. Halsted, *Poetry and Politics in the Silesian Baroque: Neo-Stoicism in the Work of Christophorus Colerus and his Circle* (Wiesbaden, 1996); Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Great Tew Circle', in his *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans: Seventeenth-Century Essays* (London, 1987); James Amelang, *Honored Citizens of Barcelona: Patrician Culture and Class Relations, 1490–1714* (Princeton, 1986); Jonathan Brown, *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Painting* (Princeton, 1978), ch. 1; R. J. W. Evans, 'Learned Societies in Germany in the Seventeenth Century', *European Studies Rev.*, vii (1977); Peter N. Miller, *Peiresc's Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven and London, 2000), chs. 1–2.

¹⁴ Even someone who called attention to the continuity across the middle decades of the twentieth century, such as Winfried Schulze, did not emphasize the extreme moral ambiguities raised by this continuity or inquire into the learned and/or political activities of these historians. See Winfried Schulze, 'Der Neubeginn der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945: Einsichten und Absichtserklärungen der Historiker nach der Katastrophe', in Ernst Schulin and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (eds.), *Deutsche*

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Forschungsdefizit (research deficit), as Peter Schöttler termed it, is now being redressed, and with a vengeance.¹⁵ The first generation of scholarship pointed the finger and ripped away the veil.¹⁶ This work met with resistance from obvious quarters and for obvious reasons. At the same time, others looked more closely at some of the scholarship produced under Hitler and argued that the new social history that was the glory of post-war German historiography actually had its origins in reactionary, and then National Socialist, *Volksgeschichte* (ethnic history). This was the ironic vision of 'methodological innovation' emerging from 'ideological regression'.¹⁷ The next stage in the debate looked more closely at that innovative scholarship and found that much of it was National Socialist in its very bones. This approach has been both biographical — Gadi Algazi's brilliant study of Otto Brunner comes to mind — and institutional, as in the work of Schöttler, Michael Fahlbusch and Ingo Haar on the *Volksdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften* (Ethnic German Research Councils), the teams of scholars that reported to the SS and advised them on managing the human content and natural resources of conquered territories, including their depopulation and 'resettlement'.¹⁸

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Geschichtswissenschaft nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg (1945–1965) (Munich, 1989); Winfried Schulze, *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945* (Munich, 1989), esp. ch. 16, 'Von der "politischen Volksgeschichte" zur "neuen Sozialgeschichte"'. As late as 1994 a collection of essays on Nazi-era historians had nothing to say about their academic service to the Reich: Hartmut Lehmann and James Van Horn Melton, *Paths of Continuity: Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s* (Cambridge, 1994).

¹⁵ Peter Schöttler, 'Von der rheinischen Landesgeschichte zur nazistischen Volksgeschichte oder die "unhörbare Stimme des Blutes"', in Winfried Schulze and Otto Gerhard Oexle (eds.), *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), 90.

¹⁶ Karen Schönwälder, 'The Fascination of Power: Historical Scholarship in Nazi Germany', *History Workshop* 31, xliii (1997), is a summary of her fundamental *Historiker und Politik: Geschichtswissenschaft im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, 1992).

¹⁷ I borrow the expression from Jürgen Kocka, 'Ideological Regression and Methodological Innovation: Historiography and the Social Sciences in the 1930s and 1940s', *History and Memory*, ii (1990), summarizing the advance findings of his student, Willi Oberkrome, who soon after published *Volksgeschichte: Methodische Innovation und völkische Ideologisierung in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft, 1918–1945* (Göttingen, 1993). For a critique of the recent tendency to celebrate the innovativeness of *Volksgeschichte*, see Peter Schöttler, 'Einleitung' ('Introduction'), in Peter Schöttler (ed.), *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft, 1918–1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), 17–19, esp. n. 47.

¹⁸ See Peter Schöttler, 'Die historische "Westforschung" zwischen "Abwehrkampf" und territorialer Offensive', in Schöttler (ed.), *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft*, 204–61; Michael Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialis-*

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This most recent approach has proved especially unsettling because it has revealed the extent to which the leaders of post-war, 'progressive', German social history were scholarly accessories to war crimes: Theodor Schieder, Werner Conze and Brunner.¹⁹ It also calls into question the almost universal praise for 'interdisciplinarity'. All forms of inquiry require some framework. If the alternative to the coherence provided by disciplinary rigour was one given by racial theories — indeed, if the new interdisciplinarity was developed to reflect the Nazi New Order (*Neuordnung*) of things — then *Volksgeschichte* and all that came from it rested on a lie. A further lesson can be drawn: 'old-fashioned' academic disciplines, precisely because of their imperviousness to fashion, are also bulwarks against barbarism when barbarism is fashionable.²⁰

Thus far, scholarship on Schieder, Conze, Brunner and others like them has focused on the way in which their politics affected their Nazi-era work. The next step, surely, needs to be discussion of their *post-war* work, the body of writing and thinking that had exerted such a profound effect on historical practice in the Federal Republic of Germany and which, through the activity of prominent students-now-teachers, continues to influence. More complicated still is examination of the work of scholars either at the beginning of their careers during the Nazi years or working on the periphery of the Nazi system.

The case of Gerhard Oestreich is, therefore, an important test. An exact contemporary of Conze, he too was an active scholar in

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tischen Politik? Die 'Volksdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften' von 1931–1945 (Baden-Baden, 1999); Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus: Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der 'Volkstumskampf' im Osten* (Göttingen, 2000).

¹⁹ The explosive discussions of their role were presented at a panel during the 42nd *Historikertag* in Frankfurt and have since been collected, along with other major contributions, and published in Schulze and Oexle (eds.), *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*. Some of the popular dimension to this debate can be gauged from Gustav Seibt, 'Kritisches Goldrähmchen: Hans-Ulrich Wehler's erstaunlich sanfte Worte über Theodor Schieders Karriere im Dritten Reich', *Berliner Zeitung*, 12–13 Dec. 1998; Götz Aly, 'Stakkato der Vertreibung, Pizzikato der Entlastung: Welche Sprache ersetzt die Rhetorik der Raumordnung? Eine Entgegnung auf Hans-Ulrich Wehler', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3 Feb. 1999, 46. Schöttler, Fahlbusch and Haar are among the contributors to *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*; Schöttler and Fahlbusch were also speakers at the *Historikertag*.

²⁰ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'Vom "Volkstumskampf" zur nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungspolitik in Osteuropa: Zur Rolle der deutschen Historiker unter dem Nationalsozialismus', in Schulze and Oexle (eds.), *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*, 210, 268.

the period 1935–45, and the body of work from those years has also been ignored, or dismissed as insignificant, by readers of what he produced later. Unlike Brunner, Schieder and Conze, he seems not to have been a servant of the Final Solution, though in the absence of any biographical research all conclusions must be tentative. Oestreich's post-war scholarship, like that of the others, has since won for itself an important place in the historiography of the social sciences. But was there no connection between his work before 1945 and his subsequent work? Can there ever be a *Stunde Null* in the life of an individual scholar? And how are we to trace continuities in an intellectual trajectory that an actor himself may never have noted or — alternatively — may have wished to efface?

Three questions run through the discussion that follows. What was the twentieth-century historiography of neo-Stoicism? What was the impact of National Socialism as filtered through the work of Brunner and Oestreich *after* the war? Is the interdisciplinarity that characterized their new approaches a step forward or a reference back to a past that they preferred not to mention?

II

Brunner's *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist* is a remarkable, if rather self-indulgent, reconstruction of provincial aristocratic culture in a European backwater — Lower Austria — in the middle of the seventeenth century. Its protagonist, Wolf Helmhard von Hohberg, was an unimportant, lesser landowner who left a literary corpus that commemorated his rural lifestyle in great detail and many thousands of verses of poetry. Brunner's broad claim was that he was typical not only of his time and place but also of all 'Old Europe' (*alt-Europa*) in that *longue durée* preceding the revolution wrought by commercial society.²¹

The focus on an unknown second-rank figure as a representative type, and therefore a more accurate instrument of historical revelation than the great but extraordinary, is one of the methodological innovations of Brunner's book. If this now seems like such a familiar, even obvious, approach, it is because the social history of ideas has caught up with Brunner. Another striking

²¹ It is on this level that Brunner is engaged by H. C. Erik Midelfort, 'Adeliges Landleben und die Legitimationskrise des deutschen Adels im 16. Jahrhundert', in Georg Schmidt (ed.), *Stände und Gesellschaft im alten Reich* (Stuttgart, 1989).

feature of the book is the way it brings to life the slowly flowing register of rural time; in Brunner's hands the perdurance of the noble world (*Adelswelt*) bends even intellectual history to the rhythms of the countryside. Finally, posing questions about the transformation of the European aristocracy on the threshold of modernity from the perspective of a circle of provincial intellectuals was a virtuosic but also, as it turned out, fruitful way of looking at seventeenth-century European intellectual history.

Many of Brunner's themes were inaccessible, or even invisible, from conventional vantage points. Some of his most brilliant pages were devoted to the intellectual pursuits of Hohberg and his circle. Brunner reconstructed these friendships, and the issues that cemented them, through their own works and those that they read or translated. Much of this was accomplished by examining surviving seventeenth-century library catalogues from Lower Austria, studying patterns of translation, and poring over local archives.

Brunner's composite portrait discerned several important features characteristic of late humanist culture, features which attract the attention of historians to this day. His figures were interested in typical antiquarian pursuits that emphasized collecting, the ancient constitution, epic poetry and the Ottoman East. Hohberg's generation also lived through an ideological transformation that was marked, according to Brunner, by the spread of neo-Stoicism across Europe. His account of Justus Lipsius and his European fortune remains a marvel of insight and brevity.²²

Some commentators at the time remarked on the parallel between Brunner, an Austrian of the twentieth century, writing about Hohberg, a fellow Austrian of the seventeenth, or noted that Brunner's book about an obscure corner of provincial Europe was published in a provincial town, Salzburg, and not a capital like Vienna. But none has commented on a further parallel between Hohberg, whose family lands had been confiscated and to whom the paths of power had been barred as punishment for collaboration with Protestant co-religionists after their defeat at the White Mountain in November 1620, and Brunner, who had been deprived of his position at the University of Vienna in the spring of 1945 and forcibly pensioned off to a provincial exile

²² Otto Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist* (Salzburg, 1949): friendship circle (179–93); library catalogues (158–68); intellectual interests of nobles (168–77); neo-Stoicism (129–36).

because he was a Nazi. His retirement was short, however, with a visiting appointment at Cologne in 1952 leading to a permanent one at the University of Hamburg in 1954, where he became rector in 1959. Despite the ready accessibility of his wartime writings and his prominence during the Third Reich, only since his death in 1984 have his reactionary anti-liberalism, *völkisch* sympathies, and politicized view of history come in for serious scrutiny.²³

Gadi Algazi, in particular, has explained how Brunner's historical scholarship on the Middle Ages could have lent itself to the support of National Socialism.²⁴ The central methodological claim of his best-known book, *Land und Herrschaft* [Land and Lordship], published in 1939, was that medieval political history had been systematically misunderstood by modern scholars who studied the pre-modern world with modern (by which he meant nineteenth-century bourgeois liberal) categories. He accused them of simply reading back into the Middle Ages the separation of state and society that was characteristic of the modern state but which was absent in 'Old Europe'. This idea of an estrangement at the heart of modern political society was a feature of

²³ A damning dossier on Brunner's politics was prepared by Robert Jütte, 'Zwischen Ständestaat und Austrofaschismus: Der Beitrag Otto Brunners zur Geschichtsschreibung', *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte*, xiii (1984). See also Reinhard Blänkner, 'Spät-Europa oder Frühe-Neuzeit? Anmerkungen zur Otto-Brunner-Tagung in Trent (19.–21. März 1987)', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, xiii (1987). This seems not to have been taken seriously by Howard Kaminsky and James Van Horn Melton in the introduction to their translation of Brunner's *Land und Herrschaft* (see n. 26 below): Otto Brunner, *'Land' and Lordship: Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria* (Philadelphia, 1992), pp. xiv–xvii. Their decision to work from the expurgated 1959 edition of *Land und Herrschaft* on the grounds that the stripped away 'modish jargon' (*'Land' and Lordship*, p. xlii) did not alter Brunner's argument is an ahistorical claim and inconsistent with their own practice. For, to make good the incoherence created by these cuts, the translators felt compelled on occasion to supply in their footnotes the material which Brunner had excised. Either the Nazi concepts are extrinsic to the argument and therefore do not need to be provided as a supplement to the 1959 edition, or the Nazi passages are essential because the argument cannot work without them, in which case the choice of the later edition is questionable. In fact, Van Horn Melton himself remarks elsewhere that the 1959 edition obscures 'the coherence of the argument': James Van Horn Melton, 'From Folk History to Structural History: Otto Brunner (1898–1982) and the Radical–Conservative Roots of German Social History', in Lehmann and Van Horn Melton (eds.), *Paths of Continuity*, 267–9. For the state of knowledge today, see Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der national-sozialistischen Politik?*, 255–7; Michael Fahlbusch, 'Die "Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft": Politische Beratung und NS-Volkstumspolitik', in Schulze and Oexle (eds.), *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*.

²⁴ Gadi Algazi, 'Otto Brunner — "Konkrete Ordnung" und Sprache der Zeit', in Schöttler (ed.), *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft*.

National Socialist jurisprudence that Brunner adopted. The entire book was devoted to demolishing the modern interpretation by recovering the lost conceptual language of the Middle Ages.

But this was no dispassionate work of historical reconstruction. Even after the war, Brunner remained convinced that the task of the historian was to marshal the past for the present 'but not to transmit dead antiquarian knowledge' ('nicht aber totes antiquarisches Wissen zu vermitteln').²⁵ How much more was this true for him in the 1930s and 1940s! Brunner had described his book then as a study of the 'political concepts of the Third Reich, leadership and community (*Führung und Volksgemeinschaft*)', with the full confidence that the old Europe of social harmony that had been rent asunder by the devastating competitiveness of commercial society was in the process of being restored.²⁶

In a programmatic statement also published in 1939, concerning modern constitutional theory and medieval constitutional history, Brunner tried to show that his kind of medieval history was not at all antiquarian, but eminently relevant. Like Carl Schmitt, he believed that the Enlightenment separation of politics and culture had now been reversed. 'Not the state, nor culture, are for us today the object of history', Brunner wrote, 'but rather *Volk* and *Reich*'.²⁷ Just as the rule of the lord in the Middle Ages created a unity, National Socialism had restored this unity through its recreation of the *Volk*, 'a blood- and race-stamped reality that lives in a concrete *Volksordnung* and becomes aware of this unity in the experience of *Volksgemeinschaft*'. With this step the liberal-constitutional state, with its abstract principles, was 'negated' and the *Volk*, understood through its key political manifestations of *Volksgemeinschaft* and *Führung*, became the basis of constitutional thought.²⁸ In conclusion, Brunner proposed that the 'geschicht-

²⁵ Otto Brunner, 'Abendländisches Geschichtsdenken', in his *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, 2nd edn (Göttingen, 1968), 43.

²⁶ Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft: Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte süddeutschlands im Mittelalter* (Vienna, 1939), 512.

²⁷ Otto Brunner, 'Moderner Verfassungsbegriff und mittelalterliche Verfassungsgeschichte', *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung*, xiv (1939), 516. Schmitt's importance for Brunner is discussed in Algazi, 'Otto Brunner — "Konkrete Ordnung" und Sprache der Zeit'.

²⁸ Brunner, 'Moderner Verfassungsbegriff und mittelalterliche Verfassungsgeschichte', 517. He also stated here: 'For National Socialism it is no more the State but the "Volk" that is the highest principle of political thinking; thereby the separation of state and society is negated (*aufgehoben*) and "Volk", in particular community (*Volksgemeinschaft*), and leadership (*Führung*) are the central constitutional concepts'.

lichen Grundlagen' ('historical foundations') — in which we ought to hear an echo of the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* [Fundamental Historical Concepts] that he edited with Conze and Reinhard Koselleck after the war — of the 'Law and Constitution of the Third Reich' needed to be investigated. But this could not be achieved using the anachronistic categories developed by that same *bürgerlichen Rechtsstaat* whose claim to legitimacy was, in any event, 'extinguished' (*ist erloschen*).²⁹ Contemporary readers did not miss the political message.³⁰

Brunner's method in *Land und Herrschaft*, like its politics, was also about overcoming nineteenth-century distinctions, but now in the division of the disciplines.³¹ The idea of the *Volk* provided Brunner with a subject that held together inquiries into political, social, geographical, economic and intellectual conditions. The claim to historiographical innovation and, in particular, to a new interdisciplinarity, was underpinned by Nazi ideology. In Brunner's words:

The more recent forms of scholarship devoted to *Land* and *Volk* are in the process of overcoming the fragmentation of history into the special subjects of economic, legal, constitutional history, as well as the mere juxtaposition of these autonomous spheres as *Kulturgeschichte*; instead they seek to describe the *Land* as a *Konkrete Ordnung*.³²

The 'task of the hour', he declared in 1939, was to write the history of this *Volksordnung*. He contrasted *Volksgeschichte* — in the 1943 edition he specified that it was a 'politische Volksgeschichte' — with the 'anti-political, liberal' forms of historical inquiry and their 'superficial' *Kulturgeschichte*, by which we should understand Burckhardt, Dilthey and their heirs.³³

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 528; Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, 8 vols. (Stuttgart, 1972–97).

³⁰ In his review of the book for *Historische Zeitschrift*, Heinrich Mitteis praised its 'political point of view in the fullest sense' as the first work of constitutional history that registered the changes attendant upon 'the breakthrough (*Durchbruch*) of National Socialism': H. Mitteis, 'Land und Herrschaft: Bemerkungen zu dem gleichnamigen Buch Otto Brunners', *Historische Zeitschrift*, clxiii (1941), 256. A measure of official approval for Brunner's thesis is the fact that this review sprawled over two parts (255–81, 471–89).

³¹ For this, see Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Sozialgeschichte-Begriffsgeschichte-Wissenschaftsgeschichte', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, lxxi (1984), 320.

³² Quoted in Kaminsky and Van Horn Melton, 'Introduction' to 'Land' and *Lordship*, p. xxiii.

³³ By the fourth — and first non-Nazi — edition of 1959, *politische Volksgeschichte* had been changed to *Strukturgeschichte*, which could be assimilated to the latest,

(cont. on p. 157)

Brunner's commitments came together in his *Ostforschung* [Research on the East].³⁴ During the war, Brunner directed the *Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* in Vienna and was active as an editor and author.³⁵ His essays celebrated the New Order brought about by the *Wende* (change) of the 1938 *Anschluss* and the correction of Germany's south-eastern borders to include *Volksdeutsch* communities.³⁶ At the tenth-anniversary celebration of the *Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, Brunner presented a research plan for the decade to come which included as objectives 'the immunization of the German population against the spiritual influence of alien ideas', and the furtherance of German cultural hegemony over minority populations. The festive dinner that he hosted included among its guests Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Heydrich's successor as head of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, later responsible for overseeing the destruction of Hungarian Jewry, and at the time the officer to whom Brunner reported.³⁷

The same longing for a pre-commercial old Europe of aristocratic authority, coupled with the bureaucrat's heaping up of

(n. 33 cont.)

mostly French, trends in social history. For the controversial history of this revision and Brunner's possible motives, see Schulze, 'Von der "politischen Volksgeschichte" zur "neuen Sozialgeschichte"', in Schulin and Müller-Luckner (eds.), *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945*, 289–90.

³⁴ Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of 'Ostforschung' in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1988); Christoph Klessman, 'Osteuropaforschung und Lebensraumpolitik im Dritten Reich', in Peter Lundgreen (ed.), *Wissenschaft im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985). In his contribution to a volume on *Europas Schicksalskampf im Osten*, published in *Bücherkunde* (an organ of the N.S.D.A.P. Hauptamt Schriftumspflege), Brunner provided a historical overview: Otto Brunner, 'Die Ostmark Europas', *Bücherkunde*, v (1938), 468. The wider theme of a 'Struggle for Destiny in the East' (*Schicksalskampf im Osten*) was the subject of that year's exhibition at the *Reichsparteitag* in Nuremberg.

³⁵ Under his editorial direction the series *Volkstum im Südosten* published seventeen titles in 1941–2 alone. He was also one of the editors of the celebratory volume: Hermann Aubin et al., *Deutsche Ostforschung*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1942–3), a collection of essays by leading practitioners that has been described as the 'high-water mark of *Ostforschung*' and a 'fusion of nationalistic historical writing and bibliographical ahistoricity'. Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastward*, 244.

³⁶ He duly noted that the 'Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums [Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood], Reichsführer SS und Chef des deutschen Polizei' Heinrich Himmler, and the 'Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle' [Ethnic German Liaison Office] under 'SS-Obergruppenführer' Lorenz, had 'accomplished these difficult tasks in the interests of strengthening the German East': Otto Brunner, 'Südostdeutsche Leistungen und Schicksale', *Die deutsche Schule: Zeitschrift für praktische Volksschularbeit* (Zeitschrift der Reichsfachschaft, 4 — Volksschule — der Nationalsozialistische Lehrbundes, xlv, 1942), 78.

³⁷ Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik*, 643.

information, shaped *Adeliges Landleben*. Brunner deployed the interdisciplinary approach of the *Volkshistoriker* to bring to life the sleepy world of the rural nobility in a corner of old Europe. This agrarian *Volksgemeinschaft* and its slow-moving rhythms was shattered by the rise of the absolutist state, constitutionalism and commerce. The book is one long, loving and elegaic look backwards at the persistence of a medieval ideal of social life into the eighteenth century. Its collapse into the hostile modern antitheses of state and society looms just over the book's horizon.

In short, *Adeliges Landleben* develops the picture of the old world destroyed by the modern state that Brunner first laid out at length in *Land und Herrschaft*, and an early reviewer picked this up immediately — not surprisingly, since it was written by someone who had been responsible for Baltic studies at the *Nordostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*.³⁸ *Adeliges Landleben*, like *Land und Herrschaft*, denied the existence of an 'early modern'. Instead, it carries us from the origins of aristocratic culture and authority in the twelfth century to the hostile world of Enlightenment. (Brunner's celebration of the troubadours and *Minnesänger*, and his distaste for commerce as a form of moral corruption, are from the same historical vision that was at work in Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, another work of this period driven by a longing for an older, 'purer', Europe.)

Fernand Braudel was right to be suspicious of Brunner's motives. 'For this obvious eulogy of the old social order', observed Braudel, 'must have a meaning. A *laudator temporis acti* is never without ulterior motives relating to the present'.³⁹ As Brunner made clear in *Adeliges Landleben*'s concluding paragraph, the 'Downfall of the Noble World' (also the title of the book's final chapter) that was brought about by the commercial revolution had left Europe bereft of 'enduring forms of human sociability' and 'spiritual life'. Was not this breach — the book's last sentence announces the onset of 'the spiritual crisis of the day' — precisely what he had once hoped would be repaired by the Nazi *renovatio*?⁴⁰

³⁸ Herbert Hassinger, review of Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist*, in *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, xxxviii (1951), 282–3. For Hassinger, see Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik?*, 218, 221.

³⁹ Fernand Braudel, 'On a Concept of Social History' (reviewing Brunner's *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte*), in his *On History* (Chicago, 1980), 128–9.

⁴⁰ Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist*, 339.

III

Amongst the few reviews of *Adeliges Landleben* was one that appeared in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* in 1952 written by Gerhard Oestreich, then forty-two years old and working in publishing while trying to complete studies interrupted by the war.⁴¹ He described its achievements in recovering a lost world in its own terms and in providing a new model of how to do social history. Oestreich was full of admiration for the detailed, as well as for the large-scale, structure. He singled out as especially praiseworthy Brunner's ability to move back and forth between the social and cultural history of the long term, and the short.⁴² We know from an essay written during these years that Oestreich's appreciation of Brunner extended also to *Land und Herrschaft*, which he recommended as an 'indispensable' example of *Verfassungsgeschichte*.⁴³ Brunner's description of the spread of neo-Stoicism as a sign of the rise of the state and of its content as marking a break in European history are themes that had to have registered with Oestreich, whose *Habilitationsschrift* (post-doctoral thesis), *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat bei Justus Lipsius (1547–1606): Neustoizismus als politische Bewegung* [Spirit of the Ancients and the Modern State in Justus Lipsius: Neo-Stoicism as a Political Movement], would be completed only two years later (1954).

This thesis was long delayed. Oestreich had received his doctorate on Prussian history in 1935 for work on the 'Geheime Rat',

⁴¹ Another review, the only one in an English-language journal that I have come across, by the émigré historian Hans Rosenberg, appeared in the *Journal of Economic History*, xi (1951), 289–91. He praised it as a 'brilliant and subtle', 'odd but brilliant', and 'very thoughtful and, on the whole, fascinating book'. But he also criticized Brunner for 'a questionable thesis', and for 'mustering a too one-sided and patchy body of evidence in support of his ambitious contention'. Neither these criticisms, nor those of Braudel in his discussion of Brunner, were mentioned by Van Horn Melton when citing their reviews: Van Horn Melton, 'From Folk History to Structural History', 265, 279 (n. 48).

⁴² Gerhard Oestreich, review of Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist*, in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, lxxviii (1952), 656–62: 'Social history is impossible without political history, and history cannot be written without consideration of inner structure' (660); 'The combination of really concrete detailed research and very comprehensive approach produces surprising results' (661).

⁴³ Gerhard Oestreich, 'Verfassungsgeschichte vom Ende des Mittelalters bis zum Ende des alten Reiches', in Bruno Gebhardt, *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, ed. Herbert Grundmann, 8th edn, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1955), ii, 321 (n. 5). Oestreich's knowledge of *Land und Herrschaft* would have been based on the first three, Nazi, editions. The expurgated version only appeared in 1959.

or secret council, during the Thirty Years War, which he completed under the supervision of Fritz Hartung, Professor of Constitutional History at Berlin. Over the next few years Oestreich carved out several free-standing pieces on aspects of seventeenth-century Prussian history, which were published in journals that ranged from the venerable (*Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preußischen Geschichte*) to the repulsive (*Archiv für Bevölkerungswissenschaft (Volkskunde) und Bevölkerungspolitik*).⁴⁴ At the end of the 1930s he was a member of the Wehrpolitischen Institut at the University of Berlin, but his biography trails off for the period 1942–50. He was, apparently, not drafted, but still found himself in an American prisoner-of-war camp in 1945.⁴⁵ It is thus far impossible to do more than speculate about the reasons why his career was disrupted, while those of his contemporaries Conze and Schieder proceeded as if nothing had happened.

An autobiographical account, given to a German radio station in 1966, reflects a rather unreconstructed conservative version of the history of the period. He complained about the ‘storm’ of post-war literature telling Germans that their history had taken a wrong turn. His own particular field of Prussian history, he wrote, ‘lay in this foreign critique under a kind of artillery barrage’. Historical work was difficult during these years because of the division of the country, the sacking of archives, bombing of libraries and the destruction of private collections. The historian of neo-Stoicism, however, did not view this experience as having any compensatory value (‘wiedergutzumachenden’) for the making of a scholarly persona. The destruction of Germany’s Jews and their disappearance, in droves, from the university

⁴⁴ Gerhard Oestreich, ‘Kurt Bertram v. Pfuel, 1590–1649: Leben und Ideenwelt eines brandenburgischen Staatsmannes und Wehrpolitikers’, *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preußischen Geschichte*, 1 (1938); Gerhard Oestreich, ‘Der Blutverlust des deutschen Bauerntums im Dreissigjährigen Kriege’, *Archiv für Bevölkerungswissenschaft (Volkskunde) und Bevölkerungspolitik*, iv (1936), 244. This periodical was an organ of political National Socialism. On the editorial board were the ‘Direktor des Bevölkerungsstatistischen Abteilung beim Statistischen Reichsamt’, the ‘Leiter des Rassenpolitischen Amtes der NSDAP’, the ‘Ministerialdirektor im Reichsministerium des Innern’ and the ‘Direktor der Hauptabteilung I im Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheitsdienst’. This was one of the publications of the Berlin headquarters of the *Volksdeutschemittelstelle* (‘Ethnic — or Racial — German Liaison Office’).

⁴⁵ The standard account of Oestreich’s life is found in *Neue deutsche Biographie*, 20 vols. (Berlin, 1999), xix, 463–4.

seems to have had no effect on him. And, as for his own activities during these years, there is nothing.⁴⁶

Oestreich's career, at Berlin, Hamburg and Marburg, was crowned by his interpretation of what he called *Sozialdisziplinierung* — the state-driven process whereby individuals were made into matter suitable for improvement and organization. Old Europe, the Europe of privilege and aristocratic liberty, was overthrown in this period, Oestreich wrote, by 'the common European process of state-building through a conscious disciplining of every part of public life'. The characteristic feature of the modern state was, therefore, its extension of this ideal from the army to the population as a whole. 'The disciplining of men', he continued, took in 'the military leaders along with the led, the economic leaders and the day labourers, the civilian ministers and bureaucrats, and, generally, all subjects'. It served as a prerequisite for the disciplining of the institutions of society.⁴⁷

The linchpin of his interpretation was the claim that this discipline was derived from the Stoic teachings revived and reformulated by Lipsius. In an article written late in his career, he defined neo-Stoicism as a political philosophy whose aim

was to increase the power and efficiency of the state by an acceptance of the central role of force and of the army. At the same time, neo-Stoicism also demanded self-discipline and the extension of the duties of the ruler

⁴⁶ Oestreich's use of *wiedergutmachen*, a word associated with the 'reparations' paid by the Federal Republic to the State of Israel, in a self-pitying lament in 1966 about the state of Germany after the defeat of Nazism is particularly unfortunate: Gerhard Oestreich, 'Dreißig Jahre Historiker', in his *Strukturprobleme der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Brigitta Oestreich (Berlin, 1980), 21. None of those who have written about Oestreich has delved into these matters: Peter Baumgart, 'Gerhard Oestreich zum Gedächtnis', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, v (1978); Nicolette Mout, 'Einleitung' ('Introduction'), in Gerhard Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat bei Justus Lipsius (1547–1606): Neustoizismus als politische Bewegung*, ed. Nicolette Mout (Göttingen, 1989). I have pursued some of these questions with people who knew Oestreich but have been unable to obtain any further clarification. One colleague who worked closely with him explained that in the 1950s the two of them had agreed not to inquire into each other's biographies — and then instructed me not to trouble him with any further questions.

⁴⁷ Gerhard Oestreich, 'Reichsverfassung und europäisches Staatensystem, 1648–1789' (1960), in his *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates* (Berlin, 1969), 236. Oestreich's widow, and editor of the posthumous collection of essays, notes that this article had its origin in a lecture delivered in 1958/9 (*Strukturprobleme der Frühen Neuzeit*, 7). Some of the same ideas are present even earlier, in his assessment of Scharnhorst's achievement in recognizing the French 'rearrangement of the interrelationships between people, army and state', and applying it to the German situation: Gerhard Oestreich, 'Gerhard von Scharnhorst', in Heinrich Ritter von Srbik (ed.), *Deutsche Soldaten: Bildnisse und Lebensbeschreibungen* (Berlin, 1943), 79.

and the moral education of the army, the officials, and indeed, the whole people, to a life of work, frugality, dutifulness and obedience.⁴⁸

'The question of discipline', Oestreich wrote in his first published piece on neo-Stoicism, 'stood then in political, worldly and spiritual lives as the order of the day'.⁴⁹ In 1965 Oestreich had cited Brunner's presentation of late humanism in *Adeliges Landleben* in support of his emphasis on its practical utility.⁵⁰

Oestreich most fully elaborated his idea that the disciplining of society was *the* first act of the modern state in an article which he dedicated to Otto Brunner on the occasion of the latter's seventieth birthday. Oestreich argued that 'the spiritual, moral and psychological changes which social discipline produced in the individual, whether he was engaged in politics, army life or trade' were 'profound', 'far more fundamental' and 'far more enduring' than any other political or institutional changes.⁵¹ This was Oestreich's most explicit attempt to identify his work with the *Strukturgeschichte* associated with Schieder, Conze and Brunner. His greatest tribute to their approach was, of course, the use of their key term: '*Strukturprobleme*' der Frühen Neuzeit.⁵²

⁴⁸ Gerhard Oestreich, 'Introduction', in his *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, ed. Brigitta Oestreich and H. G. Königsberger, trans. David McLintock (Cambridge, 1982), 6.

⁴⁹ Gerhard Oestreich, 'Der römische Stoizismus und die oranische Heeresreform' (1953), in his *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates*, 20.

⁵⁰ Gerhard Oestreich, 'Politischer Neustoizismus und niederländische Bewegung', *ibid.*, 112. This passage is not found in the English reworking of the article, nor in the parallel discussion in 'The Military Renaissance', in Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 77–8. Brunner is cited elsewhere for his recognition that ancient literature had practical value in early modern Europe: Gerhard Oestreich, 'Die antike Literatur als Vorbild der praktischen Wissenschaften', in his *Strukturprobleme der Frühen Neuzeit*, 363 (n. 20); this reference was incorporated into Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 3.

⁵¹ Gerhard Oestreich, 'The Structural Problem of the Absolutist State', in his *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 265. Also note: 'In the army of the absolutist state the "socio-psychological forms obedience" and bourgeois-monarchic discipline were established by training and drill. But it was not just the army that was put through its paces on the parade ground: the same rigour prevailed in administrative, economic, moral and spiritual spheres as well' (270). The editors expunged the reference to Brunner which, in the German original, followed the sentence, 'More importantly, an entirely different world is revealed within absolutism itself — the old world of the European nobility': Oestreich, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates*, 183; Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 262.

⁵² On *Strukturgeschichte* and the work of these men, see Schulze, 'Von der "politischen Volksgeschichte" zur "neuen Sozialgeschichte"'; Dieter Groh, 'Strukturgeschichte als "totale" Geschichte', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, lxxi (1984). For Oestreich and Brunner, see Oestreich, 'Dreißig Jahre Historiker', 25, and Mout, 'Einleitung', in Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat*, 28. The respectful reference to Brunner in Oestreich, 'Reichsverfassung und

(cont. on p. 163)

Social disciplining, because of its widespread adoption as an organizing concept by social and Church historians, has itself become an object of study.⁵³ At the theoretical level its relationship to the work of Max Weber, Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault explains much of its appeal.⁵⁴ Oestreich's interpretation of neo-Stoicism, and of Lipsius, has for the most part been accepted. That Oestreich, who trained as a historian of Prussia, might have wanted to turn Prussia from the great European exception (militarized and bureaucratized to the hilt) into the great European exemplar — the paradigmatic modern state — has not escaped notice.⁵⁵ But only relatively recently has his

(n. 52 cont.)

europäisches Staatsapparat', 238, is omitted from the English version of the essay ('The Constitution of the Holy Roman Empire and the European State System'): Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 243.

⁵³ The contents of a conference in 1981, on 'Forms of Social Discipline in Early Modern Europe', was published in *Annali dell'Istituto storico-italo-germanico in Trento*, viii (1982); ten years later the same journal devoted another section to several articles on social disciplining, and the same institute hosted a conference that was published as Paolo Prodi (ed.), *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna, 1994). On religion and discipline, see esp. Heinz Schilling, 'Sündenzucht und frühneuzeitliche Sozialdisziplinierung: Die calvinistische presbyteriale Kirchengleichheit in Emden vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert', in Schmidt (ed.), *Stände und Gesellschaft im alten Reich*; Heinz Schilling (ed.), *Kirchengleichheit und Sozialdisziplinierung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa* (Berlin, 1994); Heinz Schilling, 'Disziplinierung oder "Selbstregulierung der Untertanen"? Ein Plädoyer für die Doppelperspektive von Makro- und Mikrohistorie bei der Erforschung der frühmodernen Kirchengleichheit', *Historische Zeitschrift*, cclxiv (1997).

⁵⁴ The most recent surveys of this growing discursive field are Winfried Freitag, 'Mißverständnis eines "Konzeptes": Zu Gerhard Oestreichs "Fundamentalprozeß" der Sozialdisziplinierung', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, xxviii (2001) and Ulrich Behrens, '"Sozialdisziplinierung" als Konzeptionen der Frühneuzeitforschung: Genese, Weiterentwicklung und Kritik — eine Zwischenbilanz', *Historische Mitteilungen*, xii (1999). Important discussions of Oestreich, Weber, Elias and Foucault are found in Stefan Breuer, 'Sozialdisziplinierung: Probleme und Problemverlagerungen eines Konzepts bei Max Weber, Gerhard Oestreich und Michel Foucault', in Christoph Sachsse and Florian Tennstedt (eds.), *Soziale Sicherheit und soziale Disziplinierung: Beiträge zu einer historischen Theorie der Sozialpolitik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986); Robert van Krieken, 'Social Discipline and State Formation: Weber and Oestreich on the Historical Sociology of Subjectivity', *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift*, xvii (1990); Peter Burke, 'Civilisation, Disziplin, Unordnung: Fallstudien zu Geschichte und Gesellschaftstheorie', in Nada Boškovska Leimgruber (ed.), *Die Frühe Neuzeit in der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Paderborn, 1997). For Oestreich, as seen through Foucault's optic, see Pasquale Pasquino, 'Michel Foucault (1926–1984): The Will to Knowledge', *Economy and Society*, xv (1986); Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality', in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, 1991).

⁵⁵ Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Sozialdisziplinierung—Konfessionalisierung—Modernisierung: Ein historiographischer Diskurs', in Boškovska Leimgruber (ed.), *Die Frühe Neuzeit in der Geschichtswissenschaft*, 41.

identification of a 'Netherlandish Movement' with Lipsius rather than Grotius been challenged.⁵⁶

In the most detailed treatment of Oestreich and 'social disciplining', the eminent historian of post-war German historiography, Winfried Schulze, emphasized both its ability to integrate discrete facts into a larger story and its European scope.⁵⁷ Social disciplining was useful because it could mediate the integration of social history (the facts of regulation) with political history (the state apparatus that regulates), and with cultural history — since the product of this process was nothing less than a new kind of mentality. In fact, distinguishing Oestreich's work from Weber's and Elias's, Schulze noted that the central principle for the first was 'morals', the second 'reason', and the third 'custom'.⁵⁸ 'Without wishing to separate too sharply rationalization and civilization from social disciplining', Schulze wrote, 'Oestreich clearly concentrated on underlining and clarifying the "disciplinary side" of this process'.⁵⁹ He was, however, able to fill in only parts of this map; Schulze actually refers the reader to Brunner's essays on the 'new social history' for a sense of what Oestreich aimed to achieve in the sphere of economic and social life.⁶⁰

Schulze, trying to place Oestreich in some context, locates his thought in the general reaction of the 1930s against 'static' treatments of absolutism, a reaction that included Oestreich's *doktorvater*, Fritz Hartung. 'Mechanisms' and 'processes' became part of the vocabulary with which absolutism was analysed. From Hartung's teacher, Otto Hintze, he might have derived the powerful idea of 'inserting constitutional history' — the old style approach — 'in the wider sphere of historical development linking it with general political history, through cultural history, in order to reach the totality also sought after in constitutional history'.⁶¹

Indeed, later in his career Oestreich put himself in the direct line of descent from Hintze. He edited the latter's collected essays,

⁵⁶ Martin van Gelderen, 'Holland und das Preussentum: Justus Lipsius zwischen niederländischem Aufstand und brandenburg-preussischem Absolutismus', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, xxiii (1996).

⁵⁷ Winfried Schulze, 'Gerhard Oestreichs Begriff "Sozialdisziplinierung in der Frühen Neuzeit"', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, xiv (1987), 266.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁵⁹ 'Ohne Rationalisierung und Zivilisation zu scharf von Sozialdisziplinierung trennen zu wollen, kam es Oestreich offensichtlich darauf an, die "disziplinierende Seite" dieses Vorgangs stärker betonen und besser erklären zu können': *ibid.*, 296.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 275 (n. 19).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 298.

Gesammelte Abhandlungen, wrote the introduction to the second volume on the relationship between history, political science and sociology, and in several other essays explored the fall-out from the *Lamprechtsstreit* on Hintze and the historical profession in Germany.⁶² It was Hintze's openness to new ways of thinking about history, and, in particular, the comparative approaches that were associated with sociology, that distinguished him from contemporary political historians.⁶³ The great essays, 'The Origins of the Modern Ministerial System' and 'The Commissary and his Significance in General Administrative History', broached questions about the organization of states from a new perspective. Hintze's synthetic essays, 'Military Organization and State Organization' and 'Calvinism and *raison d'état* in Early Seventeenth-Century Brandenburg', offered everything Oestreich needed for his argument except the Orange-Nassau military revolution and the neo-Stoicism that he substituted for Hintze's and Weber's Calvinism.

Essential for Oestreich's later work on social disciplining were Hintze's brilliant articles on sociology that could not be published in the 1942 edition of Hintze's *Abhandlungen*, on account both of Hintze's Jewish wife (she had committed suicide during her Dutch exile in 1940) and sociology's Jewish aura.⁶⁴ For Hintze, the only valuable questions (Oestreich stressed), were those that emerged out of real historical scholarship. This marked the border

⁶² The *Lamprechtsstreit* was the debate over the priority of cultural or political history within the German historical profession associated with the figure of Karl Lamprecht. Oestreich provides the background for understanding the position of Hintze in Gerhard Oestreich, 'Die Fachhistorie und die Anfänge der sozialgeschichtlichen Forschung in Deutschland' — probably his most learned and successful article — and studies an instance of its impact outside Germany in his 'Huizinga, Lamprecht und die deutsche Geschichtsphilosophie: Huizingas Groninger Antrittsvorlesung von 1905', both reprinted in Oestreich, *Strukturprobleme der Frühen Neuzeit*. See more recently Winfried Schulze, 'Otto Hintzes Kritik und Rezeption der Soziologie', in Otto Büsch and Michael Erbe (eds.), *Otto Hintze und die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft* (Berlin, 1983).

⁶³ Oestreich notes that as early as 1896 Lamprecht was suggesting that local or regional history ('Landesgeschichte') was the proper site for his kind of new social history, and that after the First World War scholars of this persuasion moved away from the national narrative that appealed to someone like Hintze. Oberkrome and Haar have shown, very recently, that Lamprecht's 'Landesgeschichte' led to the 'Volksgeschichte' of the 1930s and 1940s whose practitioners, after 1945, mantled themselves anew, this time as social historians *à la* Lamprecht (see references above, nn. 17–18).

⁶⁴ Oestreich explains that Hartung's publication of Hintze's *Works* — Otto Hintze, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. Fritz Hartung, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1941) — 'during the bloody persecution of Jewry' ('inmitten der blutigen Verfolgung des Judentums')

(cont. on p. 166)

between history and sociology.⁶⁵ Historians and sociologists could share a comparative method, but where the sociologist compared in order to find the general, the historian looked always to grasp the particular.⁶⁶ Despite these differences, however, Hintze insisted that historians had to remain open to the work of sociologists lest history as a discipline be cut off from 'the sociological investigation of the cultural sciences' ('soziologischen Durchleuchtung der Kulturwissenschaften').⁶⁷ This same commitment to the modernization of historical scholarship through attentiveness to the perspectives opened up by sociology was reflected in Marc Bloch's contemporary and near identical definition of the different kinds of comparison relied upon by historians and sociologists.⁶⁸

In the 1960s Oestreich wrapped himself in the mantle of Hintze, and promoted him as the forerunner of a methodological revolution that had led to the triumph of a new kind of social history in Germany with Brunner, and in France with the *Annales* School. Oestreich linked his own cross-disciplinary approach to theirs, concluding his article on Hintze with Brunner's favourable appraisal of Hintze's 'synthesis of economic and social history in the narrow sense with legal and constitutional history, and

(n. 64 cont.)

was a difficult undertaking. See the editor's 'Vorwort' ('Preface'), in Otto Hintze, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. Gerhard Oestreich, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1964), ii, *Sociologie und Geschichte*, 5*. This is, to my knowledge, Oestreich's only precise reference to the war against the Jews.

⁶⁵ Oestreich, 'Otto Hintzes Stellung zur Politikwissenschaft und Soziologie', in Hintze, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. Oestreich, ii, 61*, quoting from Hintze's 'Soziologische und geschichtliche Staatsauffassung: Zu Franz Oppenheimers System der Soziologie' in the same volume.

⁶⁶ "One can compare in order to find a universal that lies behind that which is compared; and one can compare in order to understand more clearly one of the compared things in its individuality and so set it apart from the other. The sociologist does the first, the historian the second". In another place [Hintze] said: "The sociologist looks for the general, the historian the particular". Quoted in Oestreich, 'Otto Hintze's Stellung zur Politikwissenschaft und Soziologie', *ibid.*, 62*.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 64*.

⁶⁸ Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J. E. Anderson (London, 1973 [1924]), 30; Marc Bloch, 'Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes', *Revue de synthèse historique*, xlvii (1928) [translated as 'A Contribution towards a Comparative History of European Societies'], in Marc Bloch, *Land and Work in Mediaeval Europe: Selected Papers*, trans. J. E. Anderson (London, 1967); Marc Bloch, 'Comparaison', *Bulletin du Centre International de Synthèse*, ix (1930). Gilbert discusses Hintze's 'modernity', pointing out the similarities between the latter's remarks on 'comparison' and those of Bloch in these essays: Felix Gilbert, 'Otto Hintze und die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft', in Büsch and Erbe (eds.), *Otto Hintze und die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft*, 200, 203–4.

of political history with a comprehensive social history in the full sense of the word'.⁶⁹ Indeed, the essay in which these words first appeared, Brunner's 'Das Problem einer europäischen Sozialgeschichte', marked a first step towards articulating 'New ways to social history' — a kind of counter-*Annales* from the other side of the Rhine. It was this attempt that Braudel had so warily and intelligently rebuffed ('Otto Brunner owes nothing to *Annales*, and the assumptions of his reasoning or his experience, his proofs, and his conclusion are not ours').⁷⁰

But were there still, perhaps, other sources for the shaping of Oestreich's thinking — other contexts against which it unfolded in the 1930s? This undiscussed aspect of his intellectual biography needs to be considered next.⁷¹

IV

In 1940 Oestreich published an article with the now-awkward sounding title 'Vom Wesen der Wehrgeschichte' ['On the Essence of Military History']. An understanding of this article is vital in order to appreciate why his post-war scholarship took the shape that it did. *Wehrpolitik* and *Wehrgeschichte* were terms used by a group of former military officers who formed themselves into an organization, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrwissenschaften* (*D.G.f.W.u.W.*) — German Society for Military Politics and Military Sciences — which was founded by the Interior Ministry in June 1933 as an in-house organ for preaching the revival of the German military establishment and the militar-

⁶⁹ Oestreich, 'Otto Hintze's Stellung zur Politikwissenschaft und Soziologie', in Hintze, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. Oestreich, ii, 65*. There is also something of this reappropriation of the 'spirit' of *Annales* in Oestreich's comments on Lamprecht's publication in Henri Berr's *Revue de synthèse historique*, where Bloch, Febvre and others first cut their teeth: Oestreich, 'Huizinga, Lamprecht und die deutsche Geschichtsphilosophie', 124. Oestreich's English editors explicitly suggest that he hoped to write a grand history of Europe, and that he 'visualized it as an *histoire totale*, wider perhaps even than that of the modern French school': Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, p. viii.

⁷⁰ Braudel, 'On a Concept of Social History', 120.

⁷¹ Winfried Freitag, in the most recent discussion of Oestreich and social disciplining, dismisses those who have worked on this question for having failed to put the man and the work 'in context', and then proceeds to ignore everything Oestreich wrote before 1953 — reminding us that contextualization can be used to obscure as well as to clarify. Nicolette Mout at least acknowledges the importance of the 1940 article, even if she fails to consider its meaning. Mout, 'Einleitung', in Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat*, 15.

ization of German society as a whole. They believed that, if in the past warfare had transformed Germany, a new war could do so as well. In this they represented only the most disreputable fringe of what had become a widespread worship of discipline, toughness and readiness to die that had been promoted by eminent men such as Ernst Jünger and Martin Heidegger.⁷² They asserted that social relations, the organization of learning and the moral formation of citizens needed to be re-evaluated in terms of education to war-readiness (*Erziehung zum Wehrwillen*). At its two extremes, these arguments were indistinguishable from propaganda and officer training.⁷³

Contemporaries were aware of the difference between this kind of work and real scholarship. When Oestreich's teacher, Fritz Hartung, reviewed one of the society's more serious-looking publications he criticized it as utterly unscientific (inadequate bibliographical references, use of only one primary text), unhistorical (looking for the present in the past) and schematic (seeing politics as something made by rulers independent of any social or economic context). Hartung observed that the author's analysis of the nineteenth century was particularly damaged by his *parti pris* against liberalism.⁷⁴

The author — Paul Schmitthenner, professor of *Wehrpolitik* at Heidelberg from 1937, *Rektor* of the University from 1938, minister for 'culture and education' of the state of Baden, and war-time chief education officer (*Leiter der Abteilung Erziehung, Unterricht und Volksbildung*) in the civil administration of Alsace — did not tarry in replying. He mocked the academic standards by which Hartung judged him, claiming that he was not engaged in some dry-as-dust pursuit but aimed to serve the present. The historian's 'schoolmasterly' (*schulmeisterlich*)

⁷² See, for instance, Michael E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art* (Bloomington, 1990), 56, 75, 178–9; Julien Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, trans. Richard Aldington (New York, 1969), 134.

⁷³ For a brief survey of the activities of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrwissenschaften*, see Manfred Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), 165–8. To my knowledge no specialized studies of this organization exist. Nor has its institutionalization in the University of Berlin's Wehrpolitischen Institut attracted the attention of the contributors to a nearly 900-page collection of essays: Reimer Hansen and Wolfgang Ribbe (eds.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Berlin im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Persönlichkeiten und Institutionen* (Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, lxxxii, Berlin and New York, 1992).

⁷⁴ Fritz Hartung, review of Paul Schmitthenner, *Politik und Kriegführung in der neueren Geschichte*, which appeared in *Historische Zeitschrift*, clviii (1938).

approach did not impress him — note again, as with Brunner, the condemnation of learning that was not sufficiently politically motivated as ‘pedantic’ or ‘antiquarian’ — and he refused to be judged according to its canons. He denounced Hartung for attacking the National Socialist character of the book out of a ‘secret love for a liberalizing way of life’ (*heimlicher Liebe zur liberalisierenden Lebensform*).⁷⁵

The next year Oestreich struck back, perhaps in defence of his teacher, perhaps in defence of traditional, serious, standards of historical scholarship. From 1935 to 1939 he had been an *Assistent* at the *Wehrpolitischen Institut* of the University of Berlin and so we can assume that he was familiar with the arguments and the prominent members of the *D.G.f.W.u.W.* Indeed, Oestreich was included as a contributor to a 1940 volume on the *Verteidigung Mitteleuropas* [Defence of Central Europe], edited and introduced by its President, Friedrich von Cochenhausen.⁷⁶ And yet, while accepting the key premise of the *Gesellschaft* that war was the defining human activity, the article ‘Vom Wesen der Wehrgeschichte’ — advertised as a trailer for a soon-to-be-published book that was overtaken by events and never appeared — tried to shift the direction of debate.⁷⁷

Oestreich did no less than sketch out a research project that offered a whole new agenda for historians. ‘With the change in the general situation of the entire *Volk*’, he began, ‘a change in the sciences was necessary’.⁷⁸ The experience of World War remade society and ‘brought before our eyes the inner union . . . of political life as such with, and for, military existence’.⁷⁹ The ‘military sciences’ represented this same recognition come to the world of learning. ‘The military sciences alone live their being (*Dasein*) as a discipline shaped by a military calling’.⁸⁰ But above all, their most important task was ‘immediately through their

⁷⁵ Paul Schmitthenner, ‘Politik und Kriegführung als wehrpolitische Problem: Eine grundsätzliche Erwiderung’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, clxix (1939), 548.

⁷⁶ Gerhard Oestreich, ‘Die Verteidigung Mitteleuropas im Zeitalter der Reformation’, in Friedrich von Cochenhausen (ed.), *Die Verteidigung Mitteleuropas* (Jena, 1940). Oestreich also knew Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer, who defined Wehrgeschichte as ‘the Wehrpolitik of the past’ in his *Wehrpolitik: Eine Einführung und Begriffsbestimmung* (Leipzig, 1939), 161.

⁷⁷ Gerhard Oestreich, ‘Vom Wesen der Wehrgeschichte’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, clxii (1940), 235; also 231 (n. 1).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 231–2.

scientific knowledge to serve the political and military leadership of *Volk* and State'.⁸¹

The most important difference between Oestreich and the others who wrote about the *Wehrwissenschaften* was that Oestreich approached these matters as a historian, not as a propagandist. Where Schmitthenner and his colleagues had conceived of the role of history as simply recounting the *Wehrpolitik* of the past — many publications of the *Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrwissenschaften* were profiles of famous military leaders⁸² — Oestreich projected *Wehrgeschichte* as the single over-arching framework within which the other *Wehrwissenschaften* could be organized. Just as history was believed to be the guide to life (*magistra vitae*) in the old order of knowledge, so *Wehrgeschichte* was to be the teacher of the other *Wehrwissenschaften* in the new one.⁸³ The *Wehrwissenschaften* had six parts: *Wehrgeschichte*, *Wehrgeographie*, *Wehrrecht*, *Wehrwirtschaft*, *Wehrphilosophie* and *Wehrpolitik*. Oestreich saw 'a more indissoluble and stronger connection' amongst sub-disciplines shaped by their relation to the experience of war, than amongst the old, classically derived liberal arts.⁸⁴

Oestreich described *Wehrgeschichte* in two different ways, as if seen from two distinct points of view. In the first, the historian's frame of reference determined the disposition of its three parts. These included a 'summary overview' (*zusammenfassender Überblick*) which laid out the geographical, political, military and economic conditions in the form of a general sketch of the situation, and a 'particular overview' (*spezieller Überblick*) which focused on distinct features of individual states. Oestreich even suggested seven possible themes: (1) defence space (*Wehrraum*); (2) Social circumstances (*völkische Gegebenheiten*); (3) State organization (*staatlich Organisation*); (4) leading personalities (*führende Persönlichkeiten*); (5) defence goals and defence tasks (*Wehrziele und Wehraufgaben*); (6) *Wehrwesen*, which included military constitution (*Wehrverfassung*), military personnel (*Wehrmacht*) and economics and technology (*Wehrmittel*); and (7) the strategy,

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁸² For example, Friedrich von Cochenhausen, *Schöpfer und Gestalter der Wehrkraft* (Berlin, 1935); Friedrich von Cochenhausen, *Soldatische Führer und Erzieher: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Hamburg, 1942); Friedrich von Cochenhausen (ed.), *Wille und Tat: Ein Buch zur Nacheiferung* (Berlin, 1936).

⁸³ Oestreich, 'Vom Wesen der Wehrgeschichte', 235, 245.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 233–4.

tactics and art of war (*Kriegskunst, Strategie und Taktik*). These synchronic inquiries would, in the third part, be put in a chronological framework (*zeitliche Verlauf*). As far back as the seventeenth century, narrative history and the structural account of the 'interest of states' that is the prototype for Oestreich's overviews (*Überblicken*) had pulled apart. To put them back together constituted the 'core of military-historical work' (*Kernstück der wehrgeschichtlichen Arbeit*) and was to attempt something quite daring, though in reality quite futile, akin to trying to square a circle.⁸⁵

The second vantage point from which Oestreich surveyed *Wehrgeschichte* distinguished differences of content rather than method. Again, Oestreich described three components. The first, *Wehrwesen*, included *Wehrverfassungsgeschichte*, a history of the link between the military, fiscal and administrative institutions of the state, *Wehrmittel*, or the relationship between war and human beings, and *Wehrtechnik*, the connection between war on the one hand, and economic and technological development on the other. The second part contained an account of wars and battles (*Kriegesgeschichte*). The final one included *Wehrdenken*, or all the elements of thought that were in some way impinged upon and shaped by the experience of war.⁸⁶

Oestreich ambitiously described *Wehrgeschichte* as Totality (*als Ganzes*) with an eye to Hegel's description of *Weltgeschichte* as the great and many-sided tableau of human events.⁸⁷ For Hegel, the history of the political constitution was the engine of historical development. Now, Oestreich wrote, 'the military in its manifold forms and expressions is ever more the guarantee of the life of the people in their conflicts with other states and peoples'. In the life of nations war was a transforming experience, and *Wehrpolitik* reflected the complex relations between State, *Volk*, and the military-industrial complex (it is no distortion of Oestreich's thought to reach for this term).⁸⁸ Oestreich alluded to work like Brunner's as an example of historical scholarship that succeeded at operating on different registers and tying them all together. 'I need here only to recall to the general historical sciences how in the last decades the total political picture of the Middle Ages and

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

modern age has flourished through the achievements of constitutional and economic history and has been shaped in its features'.⁸⁹ The processes by which states made themselves capable of fighting were accessible to historians, and their reconstruction would yield a thoroughly integrated historical narrative that spanned political, social, economic and cultural history. Oestreich envisioned *Wehrgeschichte* as the template for future historians of early modern Europe, the age of state-building par excellence, because 'the state without defence-readiness is no state' (*der Staat, ist ohne Wehrhaftigkeit kein Staat*).⁹⁰

Schmitthenner's intemperate and abusive reply highlights the fundamental difference between the two men.⁹¹ By complaining that the young Oestreich had not taken seriously the work of his older colleagues on *Wehrpolitisches Geschichte*, Schmitthenner made clear that intellectual rigour and historical seriousness was not what the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrwissenschaften* was really about. In his response, Oestreich calmly insisted, as had Hartung, that only a solid grounding in the sources could make for a thriving intellectual venture. This was the lesson to be extracted from the achievements of Ranke, Droysen and Treitschke in political history and, more recently, that of Otto Hintze in his work on the relationship between state-building and constitutional development. In 1940 Hintze was *persona non grata*, living alone and blind in Berlin. For a young man (Oestreich was only thirty) to invoke Hintze against a barbarian like Schmitthenner, who had no scruples about menacing Hartung, an Ordinarius Professor, with the charge of disloyalty to National Socialism, might be considered a certain kind of bravery.

The importance of this article for Oestreich's later work is not immediately evident because it disappeared from view with the

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁹¹ He mocked Oestreich's civilian intellectualism. A regimental or division commander 'would be astounded' to know that their attacks were actually an example of *Wehrpolitik*. He was outraged at what he took to be a mere youth's contemptuous treatment of his elders. 'This is not done' ('So geht das nicht!'), Schmitthenner raged, 'We are living in a military age. Even the sciences cannot escape it'. He denounced the *Schulmeisterei* of a young man against his elders as niggling and carping ('Beckmesserei und Pfaffengezänk'). 'I have the chair for both *Wehrpolitik* and *Wehrgeschichte* at Heidelberg', he bellowed, and 'What idiot wants to argue with this?': Paul Schmitthenner, 'Wehrpolitik, wehrpolitische Geschichte, Wehrgeschichte: Entgegnung und Entwirrung', *Historische Zeitschrift*, clxiii (1941), 319, 322.

defeat of the Nazi regime and the discrediting of *Wehrpolitik* as a legitimate discourse. Yet, the dispute over *Wehrgeschichte* seems to have had far-reaching consequences for Oestreich. It suggested a means of crossing disciplinary lines and constructing a historical account that was linked by theme rather than by academic sub-speciality. The discourse of *Wehrwissenschaften* was fabricated by Nazis who sought to unify a society behind the idea of war; Oestreich borrowed the framework and turned it into a historical tool. And so, *Wehrgeschichte* occupies the same place in the history of Oestreich's career as *Volksgeschichte* does in that of his contemporaries Schieder and Conze as well as in that of the older Brunner.

The social historians replaced the *Volk* in their concept of history with *Struktur*, while Oestreich replaced *Wehr* with *Struktur*. The term *Wehrgeschichte* was replaced by *Sozialdisziplinierung*, as the fundamental historical process. Yet one of his most careful readers was not thrown off the trail. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault conveyed the martial origins of 'social disciplining':

Historians of ideas usually attribute the dream of a perfect society to the philosophers and jurists of the eighteenth century; but there was also a military dream of society; its fundamental reference was not to the state of nature, but to the meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine, not to the primal social contract, but to permanent coercions, not to fundamental rights, but to indefinitely progressive forms of training, not to the general will but to automatic docility.⁹²

V

Oestreich began his *Habilitationsschrift* (1954) with the explicit acknowledgement that 'Neo-Stoicism as a Political Movement' belonged to the study of *Staatsverfassung* and *Wehrverfassung* in early modern Europe — precisely the project formulated in 'Vom Wesen der Wehrgeschichte'. But only someone who remembered the 1940 article would have perceived the connection, for Oestreich explained, instead, that his original intent had been to write on *Staatsräson und Wehrverfassung der deutschen Territorien vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert*. In seeking its intellectual foundation he had been drawn to neo-Stoicism, and to Lipsius as its great

⁹² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1979), 169. For Foucault as a reader of Oestreich, see Pasquino, 'Michel Foucault'.

expositor.⁹³ He gave Lipsius credit for creating ‘a new *Wehrverfassung*’, with the elaboration of a military ethic based on Roman Stoicism.⁹⁴ Oestreich did not explain that these terms comprised the part of *Wehrgeschichte* that he had termed *Wehrverfassungsgeschichte*, nor did he refer to this earlier work at any point.⁹⁵

Oestreich’s later work develops and expands on these themes as they relate to Lipsius and neo-Stoicism, and to the impact of neo-Stoicism on early modern Holland and Germany more generally. Two articles published just before and just after the completion of *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat* present the main lines of Oestreich’s interpretation. In this narrower compass his emphasis on Lipsius as a philosopher of discipline is unmistakable. Even the ‘ultimate sense’ of *De constantia*, whose wide-ranging significance for the seventeenth century Oestreich acknowledged (commenting that no biography of Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza, Corneille or Opitz could be possible without accounting for it), is boiled down to a single line: ‘for by fighting many battles are won, but none by flight’.⁹⁶ On this reading, neo-Stoicism offered an ideal of discipline and a moral and intellectual outlook that shaped the seventeenth-century’s newly modelled armies, beginning with the Houses of Orange and Nassau, and later their governments and societies as well.⁹⁷ Oestreich’s interest in this

⁹³ Mout, ‘Einleitung’, in Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat*, 18. Oestreich cursorily surveys the pre-Second World War literature on neo-Stoicism in *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat*, 46–7, but offers a far more satisfying survey of neo-Stoicism in seventeenth-century Europe in general (pt 2, ch. 5) and political thinking in particular (pt 1, chs. 1–4). His interpretation of Lipsius is based entirely on the latter’s printed treatises; the vast riches of the correspondence seem not to have been mined at all. The most substantial assessment of his most significant predecessor, Dilthey, is found in an essay written later in 1971: Gerhard Oestreich, ‘Das politische Anliegen von Justus Lipsius, *De constantia* ... in publicis malis (1584)’, in his *Strukturprobleme der Frühen Neuzeit*, 298–9.

⁹⁴ ‘He [Lipsius] develops here the foundation of a new “Wehrverfassung”; he calls for the *miles perpetuus* who is to be created through a choice of subjects. For the new princely-state army he develops an ethic out of Stoic-Roman principles and places the concept of a four-fold discipline at the core’: Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat*, 40–1.

⁹⁵ He continued to use this terminology, referring to *Wehrwesen* and *Wehrthik*, in Oestreich, ‘Der römische Stoizismus und die oranische Heeresreform’, 23, 31, and *Wehrpolitik*, in Gerhard Oestreich, ‘Justus Lipsius als Theoretiker des neuzeitlichen Machtstaates’, in his *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates*, 46.

⁹⁶ Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 29, referring to Lipsius, *De constantia*, I. 3; Oestreich, ‘Der römische Stoizismus und die oranische Heeresreform’, 12–13; Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 38.

⁹⁷ Oestreich, ‘Der römische Stoizismus und die oranische Heeresreform’, 19.

subject can be traced back to an article published in 1940 on the 'Verteidigung Mitteleuropas'.⁹⁸

The real weight of Oestreich's analysis rested on *Politicorum* and Lipsius's discussion of military discipline. 'The goal of discipline', Oestreich wrote in a later article, 'is the serious education of soldiers in military-physical strengths and the development of their spiritual-ethical forces'. 'Only hard work', he continued, 'can lead to success' (*Nur harte Arbeit kann zum Erfolge führen*).⁹⁹ Drill and discipline were part of the soldier's education which led to self-control. Lipsius's attention to this training, as well as to regular drill, united 'soldier-specialized skills' (*soldatisch-fachlichen Können*) and 'human-ethical powers' (*menschlich-ethischem Vermögen*).¹⁰⁰ Here Oestreich evoked, rather than quoted, Lipsius: 'Man as autonomous creator of his life must, in a disciplined posture, fight against the hardships and rigours of Being, against the destiny from which he cannot flee'.¹⁰¹ Oestreich was emphatic that this was an active virtue. The 'neo-Stoic posture', he explained, 'understands *Dasein als Kampf*'.¹⁰² These military attributes were embodied by the officer: 'He must be constant, clever and self-controlled'. *Constantia* was necessary not only to maintain discipline but also to lead his soldiers to the life of wisdom. This was a picture of the officer as stoic sage.¹⁰³

Oestreich's emphasis on discipline as the key to neo-Stoicism, and neo-Stoicism as the key to understanding the army reform of Orange-Nassau is set off sharply by comparison with the more straightforwardly historical reconstruction of these reforms by an exact contemporary, Werner Hahlweg. His *Die Heeresreform der*

⁹⁸ Oestreich, 'Die Verteidigung Mitteleuropas im Zeitalter der Reformation'.

⁹⁹ Gerhard Oestreich, 'Soldatenbild, Heeresreform und Heeresgestaltung im Zeitalter des Absolutismus', in *Schicksalsfragen der Gegenwart: Handbuch politisch-historischer Bildung*, 6 vols. (Tübingen, 1957), i, 306. Oestreich is not generally included amongst the pioneers of the 'military revolution' thesis, though this argument appeared at roughly the same time as Michael Roberts's famous *The Military Revolution, 1560-1660* (Belfast, 1956). While Roberts noted the importance of training by Orange-Nassau and linked it to the reading of ancient texts, no one before Oestreich had emphasized the importance of drill for the 'inner strengthening' of the soldier, nor had anyone tracked the spread of this revolution in discipline from the Low Countries to Germany on the one hand, and Sweden on the other: Oestreich, 'Soldatenbild, Heeresreform und Heeresgestaltung', 317.

¹⁰⁰ Oestreich, 'Soldatenbild, Heeresreform und Heeresgestaltung', 313.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 309.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 310.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 315-16; Oestreich, 'Der römische Stoizismus und die oranische Heeresreform', 29-30.

Oranier und die Antike (1941) was published with a subvention from the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrwissenschaften*, and establishes its *bona fides* in its first three footnotes, referring readers to works on *Führertum*, *soldatische Erziehung* and drill, published by *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*. From then on the work keeps reasonably close to its texts.¹⁰⁴ By contrast, Oestreich's post-war emphasis on morals rather than methods — 'Lipsian' discipline as a strengthening of the spiritual forces of the soldier — echoes, much more closely, the National Socialist literature on education of the will to war.

If the Nazis described the goal of *Wehrerziehung* as the achievement of 'inner defence-readiness' (*inneren Wehrhaftigkeit*) this was, in turn, understood as demanding 'firmness, equanimity of the soul, unprecedented strength of will and the courageous will' (*Standhaftigkeit, seelischer Gleichmut, unerhörter Willenstärke und der mutige Wille*).¹⁰⁵ In the foreword to another publication of the *D.G.f.W.u.W.*, Göring proclaimed that 'the deed only arises from a strong will. Only action brings success'.¹⁰⁶ Discipline was a key component of this *Wehrhaftigkeit*; as one Nazi official was quoted as proclaiming: 'Work means discipline' and 'Discipline is the expression of our race'.¹⁰⁷ Hence, a writer on officer training concluded: 'Education to discipline is the solution to the problem of the will' (*Erziehung zur Disziplin ist die Lösung eines Willensproblems*).¹⁰⁸ And while these virtues did not have an exclusively military orientation — indeed, another contributor specified that there was a 'heroism of conviction', which was

¹⁰⁴ Werner Hahlweg, *Die Heeresreform der Oranier und die Antike: Studien zur Geschichte des Kriegswesens der Niederlande, Deutschlands, Frankreichs, Englands, Italiens, Spaniens und der Schweiz vom Jahre 1589 bis zum Dreissigjährigen Kriege* (Berlin, 1941), 7 (nn. 1–3). As would Oestreich, Hahlweg situated this story within the larger narrative of the revival of the antique at the heart of the modern age, and acknowledged the importance of Lipsius (13). He also focused on the practice of arms. For example, both discuss Jean de Billon's *Les Principes de l'art militaire* (1612), but, where Oestreich focuses on the ideal of the officer, Hahlweg looks at how he was supposed to use his weapons (168–9).

¹⁰⁵ Wilhelm Ziegler, 'Wehrerziehung durch das Schrifttum', in Jakob Szliska (ed.), *Erziehung zum Wehrwillen: Pädagogisch-methodisches Handbuch für Erzieher* (Stuttgart, n.d. [1937]), 442; Dr Weber [*sic*], 'Wehrpolitische Erziehung im Geschichtsunterricht', *ibid.*, 370.

¹⁰⁶ 'Nur aus einem starken Willen heraus erwächst die Tat. Nur die Tat bringt den Erfolg': Hermann Göring, 'Zum Geleit', in Cochenhausen (ed.), *Wille und Tat*.

¹⁰⁷ Dr Ley, 'Reichsorganisationsleiter der deutsche Arbeitsfront', quoted in Paul H. Kunke, 'Die wehrpolitische Bedeutung der DAF', in Szliska (ed.), *Erziehung zum Wehrwillen*, 481.

¹⁰⁸ Friedrich Altrichter, *Der soldatische Führer* (Berlin, n.d. [1938]), 102.

demonstrated by Luther and Galileo, as well as a ‘heroism of *Zivildcourage*’, whose great living exemplar was Adolf Hitler¹⁰⁹ — it comes as no surprise that they received their most comprehensive treatment in military training manuals. Discipline, inner strength and the solidarity of comrades in arms were all part of shaping the soldier’s ‘ethical character’, an essential task of National Socialism which was adopted from a common vocabulary shared with non-Nazi reactionary writers.¹¹⁰

Lipsius was no hero of National Socialism; indeed, none of the works I have read contains any reference to him. Nor should we conclude that Oestreich in 1953 and 1957 was parroting Nazi dogma — the 1957 article linking neo-Stoicism to the virtues of the ideal officer was, after all, his contribution to a multi-volume manual outlining politico-historical education, published by the Defence Ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany. Perhaps there are only so many ways to describe the inner fortitude of soldiers. But it is striking that Oestreich’s evocation of Lipsius’s idea of discipline seems to pick up every single nuance and echo of the National Socialist language of *Erziehung zum Wehrwillen*.

While focused on the early part of the seventeenth century, Oestreich, who during the war put together an edition of the correspondence of the Napoleonic-era reformer Gerhard von Scharnhorst, tried to sketch the survival of these ideas on into the nineteenth century. He suggested that clear traces of Lipsius’s idea of discipline could be found in Clausewitz’s discussion of ‘the genius for war’ in which the latter described the strength of mind and decision-making capacity that was essential. As Oestreich rightly noted, the emphasis on firmness, staunchness, self-mastery and strength of mind and character (*Festigkeit, Standhaftigkeit, Selbstbeherrschung, Gemüts- und Charakterstärke*) recalls Lipsius very directly. Clausewitz’s description of the strong mind as like ‘the needle of a compass in the storm-tossed ship’ that was always able to ‘maintain its serenity under the most powerful excitement, so that, in spite of the storm in the breast,

¹⁰⁹ Richard Haage, ‘Wehrerziehung im Deutschunterricht’, in Szliska (ed.), *Erziehung zum Wehrwillen*, 351.

¹¹⁰ These were themes discussed by Altrichter. See, for example, Friedrich Altrichter, *Die seelischen Kräfte des deutschen Heeres im Frieden und im Weltkriege* (Berlin, 1933), pt 1, ch. B, ‘Die Psychologie der Disziplin’; Friedrich Altrichter, *Der Reserveoffizier: Ein Handbuch für den Offizier und Offizieranwärter des Beurlaubenstandes aller Waffen*, 14th edn (Berlin, 1941), 15; Friedrich Altrichter, *Das Wesen der soldatischen Erziehung* (Berlin, 1938), 13, 58.

the perception and judgement can act with perfect freedom' sounds like it could have been written by Lipsius or any number of early seventeenth-century thinkers.¹¹¹

But, trapped by an interpretation of neo-Stoicism that focused on *Politicorum* instead of *De constantia* and discipline rather than deliberation, and which had no place for men like Montaigne or Peiresc, or legends like that of the young Hercules choosing at the crossroads, Oestreich was unable to see that the Lipsian tradition evoked by Clausewitz stressed the virtues that were necessary for choosing wisely (*Entschlossenheit*). The 'General' was constantly confronted with life or death choices and forced to decide between different alternatives under extreme conditions of danger, uncertainty, and incomplete knowledge. To make the right decisions, Clausewitz is arguing, the 'General' needed to be able to judge 'with perfect freedom', and this meant rising above his passions. Hence the importance for Clausewitz, as for Lipsius, but also for Montaigne, Pierre Charron, John Eliot, Baltasar Gracián, the third earl of Shaftesbury, Adam Smith, and a host of lesser-known early modern thinkers, of those virtues that made it possible to choose well. Oestreich's inability to see that neo-Stoicism shaped early modern conceptions of civil life made him singularly unresponsive to the centrality of the mechanics of moral choice. Freedom, and not discipline, was necessary for the achievement of excellence. Discipline was important, but as a means to that end. Oestreich, but not only Oestreich, confused the two.¹¹²

VI

Perhaps we now have enough distance from events to observe that Oestreich described as historical theory what he had lived

¹¹¹ After quoting this long passage from Clausewitz, Oestreich concludes: 'These are thoughts and images from Lipsius': Oestreich, 'Der römische Stoizismus und die oranische Heeresreform', 32; Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 88. I have quoted Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Anatol Rapoport (Harmondsworth, 1968), 150.

¹¹² Neo-Stoicism and freedom is not an important theme for Oestreich. I have found only one, passing and late, mention of this aspect of Lipsius's teaching: 'The man who curbs the blind passions and emotions that threaten reasoned thought and action will finally achieve spiritual and moral freedom and so be enabled to deal with life in a creative manner': Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 35. Oestreich's English editors wrote that he had 'decided on a complete recasting of the first four chapters' and this sentence does not appear in the previously published versions of the essays. The relevant passages appear in Oestreich, 'Der römische

(cont. on p. 179)

through as historical fact. For social disciplining was, of course, precisely what the Nazis attempted to do, largely successfully, in Germany after 1933. In fact, the kernel of Oestreich's concept can be traced back to a brief analysis he gave of Scharnhorst's reforms, which was published in 1943 in a volume celebrating *Deutsche Soldaten*. Oestreich singled out as his great achievement the creation of new forms of discipline that united army, state and *Volk*. Compulsory military service made the army's discipline into society's. Oestreich was not alone in recognizing in Scharnhorst a forerunner of the ideal of a fully mobilized society. It was this same aspiration that made him a favourite of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrwissenschaften*.¹¹³ Notions like *Erziehung zum Wehrwillen*, as we have seen, reflect this ideal of a militarized society. In Oestreich's circle the armed camp did, indeed, offer a model of 'social disciplining'.

One could argue just as persuasively that 'old Europe' was overthrown not by *Sozialdisziplinierung*, but by a different process. Asserting, as Oestreich did, that 'the art of living, which was always the first and most noble concern of the Greco-Roman Stoa, was transferred from the civil life to the military life' by Lipsius, is actually to blind oneself to the extraordinary transformative power of this philosophical lifestyle in Europe's civil life in centuries that characterized themselves in terms of 'advancement of learning', and 'enlightenment'. For in early modern Europe a whole world of friendship and generosity,

(n. 112 cont.)

Stoizismus und die oranische Heeresreform', 14; Oestreich, 'Justus Lipsius als Theoretiker des neuzeitlichen Machtstaates', 38–40, 51; Gerhard Oestreich, 'Justus Lipsius in sua re', in his *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates*, 95; see also Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat*, 103. Nor, despite the insistence of the recent editor of an Italian translation of his brief history of human rights, does Oestreich argue that the pursuit of freedom was a central element of neo-Stoicism. Gerhard Oestreich, *Storia dei diritti umani e delle libertà fondamentali*, ed. Gustavo Gozzi (Rome and Bari, 2001) is a translation of Gerhard Oestreich, *Geschichte der Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten im Umriß* (Berlin, 1978), itself a much expanded version of his pamphlet, *Die Idee der Menschenrechte in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Berlin, 1951; repr. 1961, 1963, and expanded in 1968). Compare this with Cassirer's assertion that Jefferson's famous beginning of the Declaration on Independence 'was speaking the language of Stoic philosophy. This language could be taken for granted; for since the times of Lipsius and Grotius it had a common place with all the great political thinkers'. Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven, 1946), 167.

¹¹³ Oestreich, 'Gerhard von Scharnhorst', 79–80; Friedrich von Cochenhausen, 'Scharnhorst', in his *Soldatische Führer und Erzieher*, 16; Karl Linnebach, 'Scharnhorst', in Cochenhausen (ed.), *Schöpfer und Gestalter der Wehrkraft*, 113. The latter, just to make the point, concluded by asserting that no one better incarnated Scharnhorst's spirit than Hitler.

conversation and beneficence was brought up on the ideal of *constantia*. This is the other side of Lipsius's neo-Stoicism that Oestreich ignores in his exclusive focus on discipline.

The Republic of Letters and its constituent networks of academies, salons, clubs and journals is absent from Oestreich's Europe. Over and against these miniature but proliferating civil societies that became and remain the characteristic feature of modern Western political culture, Oestreich offers us only the sodality of the armed camp.¹¹⁴ This cannot help us understand the origin and rise of civil society, which was the central phenomenon in the history of Europe during this period and the richest heritage of neo-Stoicism.¹¹⁵

Oestreich's blind-spot for civil society can be traced to his inability to recognize that social and political change can also be driven by the forces of *indiscipline*. His interpretation can, for instance, make no sense of the line of argument that stretches from Pierre Nicole through Bernard Mandeville to David Hume and Adam Smith. If 'reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions', then a rationalizing, state-directed process of social-disciplining is a fiction, or at best a myth constructed by rulers and their soothsayers after the fact. The armed camp is thus a poor metaphor for the modern age. Already in the middle of the seventeenth century a Venetian political writer, Tommaso Roccabella, offered an alternative. Society, he observed, was nothing less than a market where 'many make merchandise of themselves, some of their abilities, and others of their servitude and affections'.¹¹⁶ If discipline was Oestreich's chosen tool for explaining enlightenment, it also prevented him from ever under-

¹¹⁴ For the relationship between these miniature civil societies and the creation of a new, European society, see Klaus Garber and Heinz Wismann (eds.), *Europäische Sozietätsbewegung und demokratische Tradition: Die europäischen Akademien der Frühen Neuzeit zwischen Frührenaissance und Spätaufklärung*, 2 vols. (Tübingen, 1996). Before Oestreich, other members of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrwissenschaften* had also proposed to remodel society in the image of the soldier. See, for example, Altrichter, *Das Wesen der soldatischen Erziehung*, 13: 'The development of the sense of subordination, comradeship, corporal and martial spirit brings about the spiritual order of the individual in society'. Levi comments on this phenomenon in 'Useless Violence': Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York, 1988), 116–18.

¹¹⁵ Stern noted that, until the novels of Theodor Fontane and the Mann brothers, 'there were few, if any, great realistic novels in Germany; there were no analogues to Dickens and Trollope, to Balzac and Flaubert': Fritz Stern, *Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History* (Princeton, 1987), 139.

¹¹⁶ Tommaso Roccabella, *Il principe morale* (Venice, 1645), 86.

standing it. It is against this backdrop that Jürgen Habermas's contemporary (1962) emphasis on the civil and commercial dimension of social change emerges clearly as a repudiation of a lingering Brandenburg-centred vision of early modern European history.¹¹⁷

If Oestreich overemphasized the service ideal in neo-Stoicism (discipline) — Lipsius read through Ernst Jünger — Brunner erred in the opposite direction, making neo-Stoicism into an 'inner migration' undertaken by a ruling class revolted or excluded from a world degraded by commerce and exchange. Brunner deftly describes the new forms of civil life and their intellectual foundation but flattens out their ambivalence. That those elsewhere in Europe who shared much of Wolf Helmhard von Hohberg's world-view struggled to balance a desire for peace through withdrawal with a sense of responsibility to the public that almost always won out — this is not mentioned.

Brunner chose a particularly old-fashioned corner of Europe and then proceeded to evaluate its conditions in the most conservative fashion. Thus, for example, instead of seeing the network of Hohberg's literary friendships as part of a new Republic of Letters capable of penetrating the redoubts of some of Europe's most conservative circles, Brunner preferred to view it as the last flourishing of a venerable tradition of courtly-noble life. But even here, is it not just a little surprising that these 'backward' rural nobles could have had such wide acquaintance with the most recent and sophisticated French, Italian, Spanish and English books?

Adeliges Landleben actually documents the very opposite of Brunner's thesis, namely the cosmopolitan character even of provincial European society in the middle of the seventeenth century. It is in locales like Hohberg's *Niederösterreich*, Opitz's Breslau, Peiresc's Aix, and Flavio Querenghi's Padua that civil society and its values were being created. Brunner tries as hard as possible

¹¹⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962). Oestreich, by contrast, remained committed to the old Brunner-Schmidt view of a separation between state and society. In a brief and passing analysis of the social position of the army in *Ancien Régime* France in the 1957 article discussed above, he noted that it had become cut off from 'civil society' and 'the life of the people', destroying any 'connection with the world-view and philosophical currents of the age'. The result of this was that 'the soldier class was hated and despised by the citizen-class. It was considered shameful to be a soldier. The army, on the other hand, looked down on the civilian world with the arrogance of a closed officer-caste'. Oestreich, 'Soldatenbild, Heeresreform und Heeresgestaltung', 320.

to obscure and play down these changes, but, fortunately, he also presents us with evidence enough, however patchy and twisted, for their existence. Moreover, if Brunner would never have used the word 'enlightenment' to describe the direction of his story, except disparagingly, comparison with René Pintard's study of another aristocratic circle of learned inner émigrés, the *libertins érudits* of Paris, shows that out of this world of Stoicism and scepticism did come freedom of thought and, eventually, the idea of toleration.

The single most striking feature of Oestreich's interpretation of neo-Stoicism, upon which rests his concept of 'social disciplining', is the relative unimportance of religion. While his predecessors all emphasized that what distinguished the 'neo' from the ancient Stoics was the attempt to reconcile and accommodate pagan wisdom with Christianity, Oestreich puts the stress entirely on its political utility. Indeed, he argues that Lipsius's aim was to articulate a fully secular ethic.¹¹⁸ Lipsius believed in religion from a political point of view, rejected toleration of dissent, and was prepared, famously, to use force to assure uniformity ('burn and cut' were his precise words).¹¹⁹ Freedom of religion, as such, does not enter Oestreich's field of vision. Despite references to the United Provinces as a model of spiritual, as well as economic and military power in the first decades of the seventeenth century, Oestreich does not acknowledge that this 'spiritual superpower' (*geistige Grossmacht*) derived in large part from the practice of wide religious toleration.¹²⁰

The figure of Grotius, and his marginalization in Oestreich's account, is telling. Grotius was the key figure in Dilthey's early twentieth-century synthesis, transforming the Stoic emphasis on reason into a natural law that could overcome the divisions that had riven the Christian world: *The Laws of War and Peace* (1625)

¹¹⁸ 'This state morality of Lipsius is now the most important attempt to erect the structure of a political ethic independent of any kind of ecclesiastical belief system': Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat*, 172. He also refers to neo-Stoicism as putting ethics 'on a new secular-ethical basis' (171).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 176–7; Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 63. Lipsius debated these points with Dirck Coornhert. See the relevant discussion in van Gelderen, 'Holland und das Preussentum', 50–1, esp. n. 83, and, more broadly, Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 1992), 243–56.

¹²⁰ See, for example, 'Fundamente preußischer Geistesgeschichte: Religion und Weltanschauung in Brandenburg im 17. Jahrhundert', in Oestreich, *Strukturprobleme der Frühen Neuzeit*, 283.

complemented the eirenic, non-dogmatic Christianity presented in *On the Truth of the Christian Religion* (1622). Ernst Cassirer followed this line of argument, and its focus on Grotius, in his *Myth of the State*, and it has recently been revived by Richard Tuck.¹²¹ In his *Habilitationsschrift*, Oestreich observed that Grotius cited the Stoics as well as the Spanish scholastics and corresponded with Lipsius for a time. But he never seemed to recognize the conceptual link between neo-Stoicism and the modern theory of natural law.¹²² The suggestion has even been made that Grotius, and not Lipsius, was the more authentic face of European neo-Stoicism, with his interest in reconciliation rather than military preparedness.¹²³

VII

Cassirer's was not the only interpretation recognizing the importance of Stoicism and neo-Stoicism to the history of freedom proposed in the 1940s. But others were lost to its upheavals — amongst them Arnaldo Momigliano's reading of Lipsius. Because of Momigliano's enormous contributions to the history of the ancient world, and to the history of the study of the ancient world, it is easy to forget the political charge in some of these topics. Yet, one of the lessons of his work is precisely that for a very, very long time the history of scholarship was the history of political thought.

When Momigliano delivered his course of lectures on 'Liberty and Peace in the Ancient World' in Cambridge in the spring of 1940 he was a Crocean. History was the history of liberty and the history of historiography was the history of how people thought about that liberty. Stoicism was the language in which the ancient world discussed the problem of personal and political

¹²¹ Cassirer, *Myth of the State*, 169, 172. He also supports Dilthey's suggested link between the New Science and neo-Stoicism (Galileo and Grotius), 165. See now Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, ch. 5.

¹²² Oestreich mentions the relationship between Galileo and Grotius but does not suggest that Grotius's natural law is actually a development of neo-Stoicism: Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat*, 100; Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 36, 58. Brunner rejected Dilthey's link between neo-Stoicism and the modern theory of natural law altogether: Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist*, 129.

¹²³ Arthur Eyffinger, 'Amoena gravitate morum spectabilis: Justus Lipsius and Hugo Grotius', in Laureys (ed.), *World of Justus Lipsius*, 326.

liberty. Christianity displaced Stoicism as the form of this debate with the elimination of liberty under the Empire.¹²⁴

It was as a historian of the loss of freedom that Momigliano came to Tacitus. In 1942, while discussing 'The Crisis of the Roman State and the Roman Historians', Momigliano described the novelty of Tacitus as residing in his commitment to a new kind of *Libertas* called into being by the circumstances of life: 'it is the free mind and free speech of those who do not refrain from facing the peril of their life'. Momigliano describes the *Annals* 'as a study in the consequence of the destruction of freedom of speech and thought'.¹²⁵

Many of these ideas were drawn together in *Aspects of Roman Political Thought from Seneca to Tacitus*, a series of lectures given in London just after the end of the war and repeated in Oxford. As the modern editor of both Seneca and Tacitus, and as a famous early modern antiquarian, it was natural for Momigliano to reflect on Lipsius's combination of interests. Lipsius had recognized that Tacitus, to be really helpful in life, had to be associated with Seneca; he 'meant to conciliate Stoicism with Christianity', and his *De constantia* was a book about how to tend one's garden. 'But', Momigliano added, 'he had to live in a world where people killed each other for religion, and Spanish soldiery might lay waste your garden, if you had it in Louvain, as Lipsius did'. Hence the necessity of being interested in politics. Stoicism, according to Momigliano, 'went both ways with him. It taught him to contemplate events with resignation and persuaded him that politics had to be accepted on its own terms. This combination of political realism and sad resignation took contemporaries by storm'.

Even as Oestreich was beginning his forced march from *Wehrgeschichte* to *Sozialdisziplinierung*, Momigliano was suggesting that no interpretation of Lipsius and neo-Stoicism that

¹²⁴ Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Liberty and Peace in the Ancient World', in his *Nono contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, ed. Riccardo Di Donato (Rome, 1992), 493, 501. The full course of lectures is available, albeit in Italian translation, in Arnaldo Momigliano, *Pace e libertà nel mondo antico. Lezioni a Cambridge: gennaio-marzo 1940*, ed. Riccardo Di Donato (Florence, 1996).

¹²⁵ Arnaldo Momigliano, 'The Crisis of the Roman State and the Roman Historians', in his *Nono contributo alla storia*, ed. Di Donato, 517–18.

emphasized only one of its two faces could be adequate. 'His synthesis of Tacitus and Seneca was a personal, but not an arbitrary, experience'. Momigliano concluded:

Lipsius realised what every historian must realise: that Seneca and Tacitus faced the same situation — imperial absolutism — from two different angles. He endeavoured to make the teaching of both a living experience. The way in which he understood Seneca's escapism and Tacitus' realism is still indeed one of the best ways to come to grips with both Seneca and Tacitus.¹²⁶

Momigliano never published these words. When he uttered them he already knew of his parents' murder in a concentration camp. The text reminds us that there was then — and there remains — an alternative to an instrumentalized view of neo-Stoicism that sees in Europe's modernity the crushing, rather than the liberating, force of reason. Moreover, as a historian of scholarship he recognized, in the post-war shift to structural history (Momigliano referred to 'sociology') of men like Brunner and Oestreich, a more or less conscious attempt to efface the ideological position-taking of their Nazi years.¹²⁷

In the end, it is Momigliano's commitment to the truth in historiography that offers the best reason for continuing to read Brunner and Oestreich today, when we know both where they are wrong and why they are wrong. As Momigliano explained in a similar context, we want to know 'how intellectuals of no little ability became adherents of a religion that had its principal shrines at Dachau and Auschwitz'. Historiography, he noted, was often treated by historians as a holiday from careful reading. 'Generally, nothing too harmful comes from not reading, but this time — my dear and eminent colleagues

¹²⁶ *Aspects of Roman Political Thought: From Seneca to Tacitus*, a course of lectures delivered at University College, London, in March 1946, and in Oxford in the winter of 1947. I am grateful to Riccardo Di Donato for making available to me Momigliano's discussion of Lipsius from these lectures. They will be published in the *Decimo contributo*. Much more lapidary is Momigliano's review of José Ruyschaert, *Juste Lipse et les Annales de Tacite* (1949), in Arnaldo Momigliano, *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1955), 54–9. Momigliano mentions Oestreich only once, noting the 'excellent series of papers' that the latter collected in Oestreich, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates*, and thanking him for drawing his attention to the work of Werner Hahlweg: Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Polybius' Reappearance in Western Europe', in his *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1980), i, 120 (n. 36).

¹²⁷ Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Dopo Max Weber', in his *Sesto contributo alla storia*, 309.

will pardon me the frankness — ignorance has serious implications. Some millions of ghosts, innocent victims of racism, still wander Europe's roads'.¹²⁸

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¹²⁸ Arnaldo Momigliano, review of H. Berve, *Storia Greca* (1959), in his *Terzo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1966), ii, 708.