

The survival of the mandarin tradition in German universities

Anindya Shrivastava (2004)

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**THE SURVIVAL OF THE MANDARIN TRADITION
IN GERMAN UNIVERSITIES**

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Ph. D.

2004

Abstract

This thesis studies the professoriate and the overall academic tradition at German universities in context of successive phases of change since 1933. It extends the analysis of the mandarin tradition developed by Fritz K. Ringer in his seminal work entitled *The Decline of the German Mandarins*. In this book Ringer argued that the German professors or mandarins wielded extraordinary socio-political and cultural influence for most of the nineteenth century. This “mandarin tradition” began to decline somewhere around 1890, following changes in Germany’s society and polity that accompanied its rapid industrialisation and, in Ringer’s view, finally ended with the advent of the National Socialists in 1933.

However, this thesis argues that core elements of the mandarin tradition, identified by Ringer, survived the Nazi regime and some of their manifestations are, indeed, evident even in the present times. In part, this is because the tradition had deep social, cultural and institutional roots which influenced thinking about intellectual culture and university reform, including the latter’s content and pace. But it is also because the context in which change in higher education spheres occurred – the political exigencies, the efficacy of implementation and the capacity to sustain reform – frequently created a set of circumstances which allowed for persistence of mentalities and codes of practice traditionally associated with the mandarin tradition.

Chapter One is the introductory chapter which sets the stage for extension of Ringer’s analysis by identifying key elements of the mandarin tradition and its contemporary manifestations. Chapter Two examines Ringer’s thesis and its assessment by prominent scholars and academics. It focuses on the origins of the German mandarin class, Ringer’s claim of uniqueness of the mandarin tradition, and his conclusion about the end of the tradition in 1933. The chapter also complements Ringer’s thesis by developing the overlooked but important political role of university professors in the 1830s and 1840s.

Chapters Three to Five focus on investigating the existence of the mandarin tradition in German universities after 1933, and its relationship to the developments within the sphere of higher education and the culture of academic reform. Chapter Three considers the changes in professorial status and influence in the German universities during the fascist regime. It focuses on the National Socialist attempts at higher education reform and the passive, apolitical attitude of the mandarins to the excesses of the regime. The chapter discusses how, despite Nazi attempts at comprehensive control of the universities, mandarin attitudes and systems of thought survived the regime and experienced a rapid resurgence after the Second World War.

Chapter Four assesses the impact the Soviet-led “socialisation” of the universities on the mandarin culture in the eastern part of Germany. Deliberate and systematic changes to the objective of learning and the purpose of university education were accompanied by large-scale institutional and structural reform of higher educational institutions. The impact of these comprehensive and sustained changes went beyond university form and function, gradually transforming the entire academic milieu. Elements of mandarin tradition such as the overwhelming authority of the professors in university affairs and their elitist educational philosophy could not survive this

change. Interestingly, though, ritual invocation of the Humboldtian idea of a university, with which the mandarin tradition was closely inter-twined, continued. Overall, the analysis of this chapter deepens understanding of the outcomes and limitations of university reform in other settings by providing a template, as it were, of the scope, depth and intensity of change required to alter deep-seated intellectual cultures such as the mandarin tradition.

Chapter Five traces the evolution of the mandarin tradition in the erstwhile West and now re-united Germany. For a combination of intellectual and practical reasons, mandarin authority was restored immediately after the War. Subsequent changes in the higher education sphere exhibited a complex pattern. Successive reform efforts, which included curbs on mandarin authority and influence, have been followed by *de facto* revival of mandarin power and prestige, albeit in altered guises or under different rationale. Overall, the analysis of the post-War experience shows that the mandarin tradition not only continued to exist but also played a significant role by influencing people's attitudes and approaches over key issues of the academic reform debate.

Chapter Six inquires into the roots of the mandarin tradition and the reasons for its survival. The abiding appeal of the Humboldtian model of university and scholarship, the modern-day relevance of aspects of its institutional culture (such as academic freedom and university self-governance), and the overwhelming past successes of the classical German university built around this model, have conditioned perceptions of and responses to challenges and crises in higher education. This, in turn, has served to create a set of circumstances in which attitudes and approaches associated with the mandarin tradition continue to survive.

Chapter Seven concludes by bringing together various strands of the argument in the thesis. It focuses on the two formative influences - intellectual and social - of the tradition. It provides an integrated discussion of the two themes that recur in the thesis and are crucial to a deeper understanding of the mandarin tradition: mandarin apoliticism, and the role and responsibilities of mandarins as critical intellectuals. Finally, it recounts key aspects of the evidence and case presented in the thesis regarding continuity of the mandarin tradition which justify a revision of Ringer's claim about its demise around 1933.

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I am deeply indebted to Hans Hahn, my supervisor, for his unstinting support at every step in the preparation of this thesis. He sparked my interest in the subject through his work and discussions and provided expert guidance for negotiating the complexities of research in this area. His counsel, wit and infectious enthusiasm have over the years proved invaluable in sustaining endeavour and making the experience of research a memorable one.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Mandarin Tradition

This thesis is based on Fritz K. Ringer's seminal work *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (hereafter *The Decline*).¹

It seeks to extend Ringer's analysis of the German university professors or mandarins up to the contemporary period. Its point of departure is Ringer's contention that the mandarin tradition came to an end in 1933. This thesis examines the existence of the mandarin tradition in three distinct periods of Germany's history, namely the Third Reich, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic (now re-united Germany). For each period it explores the manifestations of the mandarin tradition and the reasons for its survival or transformation, including its relationship to the existing political and academic culture.

Ringer identifies the mandarin tradition as a socio-cultural system in which the professorial class enjoys unique intellectual, cultural and social pre-eminence. This tradition is anchored in the whole complex of institutional and social patterns within the universities as well as the corpus of academic opinion on higher education and learning. The tradition can be traced to the neo-humanist educational reforms of the early nineteenth century instituted by the eminent educationist Wilhelm von Humboldt.² The Humboldtian principles of university organisation and learning formed the basis of the classical traditions of the German university, of which the

¹ Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1990 reprint of 1969 edition).

² Humboldt was the Director of the Section for Culture and Education in Prussia in 1806. Hans-J. Hahn, *Education and Society in Germany*, (Oxford: Berg, 1998), p. 1.

mandarin tradition was an intrinsic part. This chapter prepares the ground for extension of Ringer's analysis by abstracting the principal elements of the mandarin tradition and its manifestations in the day-to-day functioning of the university as well as in the status and influence of the full professor within the university and the society at large.

1. Manifestations of the Mandarin Tradition

The key manifestations of the mandarin tradition fall into two categories: mandarin attitude towards culture, politics and higher education; and mandarin status and influence within the university. Mandarin attitude includes the educational philosophy of the professorial group, its view of the university as an elite institution and its characteristically apolitical approach. Mandarin status and influence includes the position of a (full) professor in the academic hierarchy, his status as a civil servant, and his exclusive membership of the university's decision-making bodies. As Ringer has shown, these core elements of the mandarin tradition were manifest in the German universities of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is noteworthy that various aspects of the mandarin status and influence remain virtually intact even in present day German universities.

1.1. Mandarin Educational Philosophy

The mandarin class was associated with the mandarin culture which emerged as a distinct entity within Germany's intellectual history with the Humboldtian educational reforms of the early nineteenth century. This culture embodied the mandarin's educational philosophy which acquired institutional form with the establishment of

the University of Berlin in 1809/1810 along the guiding principles laid down by Humboldt and other prominent neo-humanists such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. In general, the Humboldtian idea of university and learning was the antithesis of practical, utilitarian studies and conformed to the ideals of *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung*. *Wissenschaft* or scholarship was interpreted as all formal knowledge and the collective activity of scholars in obtaining and interpreting it. *Wissenschaft* had elusive, almost mythical connotations - Humboldt famously chose to consider *Wissenschaft* as

[etwas] noch nicht ganz Gefundenes und nie ganz Aufzufindendes ... und unablässig ... als solche zu suchen.³

The concept of *Bildung* or learning too implied far more than collection and transmission of information. It encompassed the notions of individual personality development, self-study and the moral impact of learning. The concept of *Bildung durch Wissenschaft* thus formed the basis for the classical German university of the early nineteenth century.⁴ The universities were institutions in which utilitarian

³ Dorothee Wilms, 'Lebendigkeit des Geistes, Einheit von Forschung und Lehre' in *Humboldt und die Universität heute: Symposium des Bundesministers für Bildung und Wissenschaft am 17. April, 1985 im Wissenschaftszentrum Bonn*, (Bonn: Der Bundesminister für Bildung und Wissenschaft, June 1985), p. 11.

⁴ Ringer provides further details of the mandarin idea of university and of learning - its neo-humanistic roots and the influences of the Kantian critique, the theories of idealism and the German historical tradition on it. He also conducts a methodical analysis of certain key terms and distinctions which, apart from *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung*, had permeated mandarin vocabulary- *Kultur*, *Zivilisation*, the subjective *Geist* among others. The common link between all these concepts was a concern for holism, synthesis and totality. The concern for the whole and the pure in turn developed partly in an attempt to redress intellectual tendencies engendered by the West European Enlightenment. The mandarins were clearly disturbed by the emphasis of the Enlightenment on practicality and utilitarianism which they perceived as being shallow and superficial. Instead, they were in favour of an intellectually and spiritually ennobling form of education which would ultimately contribute to the "richness of mind and person" as well as to the "inner growth" of the student.

considerations were presumed not to enter, research and scholarship went hand in hand, inner freedom and solitude were essential, and all disciplines were represented with the faculty of philosophy functioning as the core. Thus the notions of *Einheit von Forschung und Lehre*, *Einheit von Wissenschaften und akademischer Freiheit* (which included *Lehr- und Lernfreiheit* and the *Selbstverwaltung* of universities) formed an integral part of the classical Humboldtian university. Finally, the entire system was overseen by a “benevolent” oligarchy of senior (full) professors whose authority was anchored in their exclusive membership of the senate and faculties of the universities.

1.2. Elitist Views of Mandarins

The principles of the classical German university (synonymous with the mandarin philosophy of higher education) were based on an idealisation of pure and non-utilitarian learning. Not surprisingly, that practice resulted in universities becoming elitist in character. Mandarin philosophy rejected the idea that a student’s potential ability could be tested, favouring instead normal sociological processes in order to select aspiring university students. Ringer notes how the mandarin philosophy

tended to leave the selection of candidates for higher learning to chance - and to the social prejudices of the cultured elite itself.⁵

An associated phenomenon was the inability of the classical German university to cope with mass higher education. Despite the gradually increasing demand for mass education, the elitist mandarin notions of higher education continued to deeply influence university policy and reform throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth

⁵ Ringer, 1990, p. 109.

centuries. The mandarins consistently opposed reform proposals aimed at fundamental change in the nature and structure of the traditional German universities, the establishment of new universities or the transformation of other “lower” institutions of higher education such as the *Fachhochschulen* into full-fledged universities. This elitist attitude was evident as recently as in the reform debates of the 1960s in West Germany.

1.3. Mandarin Apoliticism

Ringer points out that an unusual aspect of the mandarin attitude was its strong aversion to involvement with everyday politics and political realities of the time. He observes that academic discussions tended to be idealistic and followed an “apolitical” approach towards political theorizing. The ultimate purpose of government was considered to be the key issue; analysis of political realities and questions of political technique were largely ignored. The mandarins believed that conventional political activity was “ethically and intellectually beneath the notice of the cultivated man”.⁶ Thus, barring their politically active role in the liberal movements of the 1830s and 1840s, the mandarins followed this pattern of behaviour through various political phases in the history of Germany. Indeed, their attitude during the Third Reich can best be described as passive apoliticism in the face of the dominance and terror of the Nazi onslaught.

1.4. Academic Rank, Civil Servant Status and Social Prestige

In academic rank, the German mandarin was a full professor or *ordentlicher* Professor and was also known as *Ordinarius*. As chair-holders the mandarins were known as the

⁶ Ringer, 1990, p. 121.

Lehrstuhlinhaber and those *Ordinarien* who headed individual institutes within universities were designated as the *Institutsdirektoren*. There were three main academic ranks: the *Ordinarius*, the associate professor (*ausserordentlicher Professor* or *Extraordinarius*) and the instructor (*Privatdozent*). The *Ordinarien* and *Extraordinarien* were salaried government officials. The *Privatdozenten* were not government officials and had no source of regular income although they had the right to give lectures for which they could charge fees from students.

Over time other academic positions were created such as the *außerplanmäßiger Professor*, the *wissenschaftliche Räte* and the *Assistenzprofessor* and some related posts.⁷ However, all these figured below the rank of *Ordinarius*, which remained practically unchanged. The difference between *Ordinarius* and the others was institutionalised in the frequent dichotomy of academic ranks between *Ordinarien* and “*Nichtordinarien*” (all other positions irrespective of job description or salary):

[N]ur die Ordinarien waren im Vollbesitz akademischer Rechte, alle anderen waren “Nichtordinarien”. Das Wörtlein “Nicht” hielt sie als Gruppe zusammen. ... [D]as Landesrecht und die Satzungen der Universitäten unterschieden sehr deutlich zwischen den Ordinarien und den Nichtordinarien. ... Diese Unterscheidung wurde mehr und mehr problematisch, je mehr sich das Wissenschaftssystem ausfächerte und immer mehr Spezialitäten in

⁷ Teaching at universities required the completion of two degrees: the doctorate and the *venia legendi*. A candidate with the latter degree was considered to be qualified or *habilitiert* to begin lecturing at a university. All ranks of teaching staff had to possess both these qualifications.

Forschung und Lehre entstanden, aber die Zahl der Ordinarien nicht dieser Entwicklung entsprechend vermehrt wurde.⁸

This was the situation towards the second half of the nineteenth century by which time the increase in the size of the universities and number of students had resulted in a considerable rise in the numbers of *Nichtordinarien* but no corresponding rise in the number of *Ordinarien*. Thus, the academic pyramid became extraordinarily steep with the *Ordinarien* at the very top. Apart from the superior position in the academic hierarchy, the *Ordinarien* held civil servant positions for life with all the privileges and benefits that came with it.

Outside the university, a full professor was considered to be close to the ministerial level in bureaucratic rank. Given the cultural and social pre-eminence of his position, this bestowed substantial personal authority upon him. Ringer traces the source of this authority and esteem, accorded to full professors, to the historically close connection that existed between the universities and the bureaucracy, the universities' control over state examinations and privileges, and the accepted position of mandarins as guardians of culture. Aspects of this phenomenon have now persisted for two centuries, far longer than recognised by Ringer. Indeed Jürgen Habermas, in his review of Ringer's book, observes in 1971, that this "academic self-image", which gained wide acceptance in nineteenth century Germany

⁸ Werner Thieme, 'Laufen in das Ungewisse', *Forschung und Lehre*, September 2001, <http://www.forschung-und-lehre.de/archiv/09-01/thieme.html> 16 November 2001.

was the basis of a system of deference which, even at present, places the university professor at the top of the pyramid of status, ahead of physicians, cabinet ministers and business entrepreneurs.⁹

1.5. Decision-Making Authority

As independent “corporations”, the universities also had the right to *Selbstverwaltung* or self-governance in all academic matters.¹⁰ The right to *Selbstverwaltung* was as much a part of the notion of *akademische Freiheit* or academic freedom as the right to *Lehr- and Lernfreiheit*. However, only full professors participated in this exercise. They elected a rector and a senate from amongst themselves every year. The rector was a spokesman and representative of the university; the senate had extensive powers of jurisdiction over most university matters including academic discipline. Further, the traditional four faculties of philosophy, theology, law and medicine annually elected a dean. The faculties presided over academic appointments, the arrangement of lectures, the setting up of state examinations, the award of academic degrees and, crucially, the guidance of the careers of the *Privatdozent*, researchers and other members of the junior faculty. The various chairs or *Lehrstühle* were part of these faculties. Although in theory the university was “above” the faculties and faculties were “above” the *Lehrstühle*, it was at the level of chairs that the real power of universities resided and was exercised. Deans were the nominal coordinators of the chairs, and the rector was simply a *primus inter pares* representing the chairs externally. In reality, therefore, universities were essentially a loose assembly of chairs grouped according to fields of research. This led to a concentration of power

⁹ Jürgen Habermas, ‘The Intellectual and Social Background of the German University Crisis’, *Minerva*, vol. 9, (July 1971a), pp. 422-428.

¹⁰ Financially, though, universities were wholly dependent on the state and individual *Länder*.

and decision-making in professorial chairs and institutes as exemplified in the overwhelming control the *Ordinarien* had over research, administration and finances within individual institutes, including extensive powers of supervision over junior colleagues and students. The position of the mandarin can be summed up as follows.

Der Ordinarius, Inhaber des Lehrstuhls und Fachvertreter, Mitglied in der eigenen Fakultät, die alles entschied, allein rektorabel und dekanabel, in der Regel zugleich lebenslang Direktor seines Instituts oder Seminars und Herrscher über die Ressourcen für Forschung und Lehre, war die Zentralfigur der deutschen Universität ...¹¹

2. Survival of the Mandarin Tradition

The thesis extends beyond the study of professors as a class. It is principally concerned with evidence indicating survival of the mandarin tradition and its reasons. Overall the thesis proceeds by analyzing changes to the position of the mandarins within the universities and German society at large, against a background of major political, social and economic changes.¹² It examines the structure of academic

¹¹ Thieme, 2001.

¹² Ringer, however, examines mandarin attitude in terms of their response to the political and cultural issues during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The mandarins' extreme views in the form of cultural pessimism, despair about the machine and mass age, a die-hard nationalism and conservative, pro-establishment tendencies were amplified in the cultural and political climate at the turn of the nineteenth century and in the Weimar Republic when they faced a perceived decline in their role as "cultural guardians" of the nation. However, since 1933 there have been vast changes on political, cultural, economic and social fronts, posing fundamental problems in studying the mandarins and their views on culture and politics. Besides, professorial opinion in the period between 1933 and the end of the twentieth century on cultural and political matters is too varied and diverse to provide a homogenous or coherent representation of the mandarin viewpoint. However, a much clearer pattern emerges when one considers mandarin attitude towards higher education. This includes views of the professors on the role of *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung* and their views about their own position and authority within the universities. It is within this framework that the thesis aims to locate mandarin

hierarchy and the processes of decision-making and governance within the organizational units of the university (senates, faculties and institutes). It also looks at state involvement in university affairs. With respect to educational philosophy, the thesis studies the development of the concepts of *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung*. Additionally, it considers the historically apolitical attitude of the professors as well as their resistance to any university reform which might undermine the exclusivity of universities as institutions of higher learning or affect the professors' power and influence within them. The focus of the thesis is on discovering evidence of mandarin traits in university professors as a group irrespective of individual subject area. The inquiry is conducted for each of the three distinct periods in history of Germany since 1933, namely the Third Reich, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany.

2.1. The Third Reich

Ringer ends his thesis in 1933 believing that the fundamental ideology of the mandarins based on spiritual and moral upliftment could not have survived the barbarism and terror of the National Socialist regime. Evidence suggests, however, that his conclusion was precipitate. Although mandarin thought and culture could not manifest itself in any explicit form during the Nazi regime, it rapidly re-surfaced in the immediate post-War period indicating that its foundations had not been destroyed during the Third Reich. Its survival though cannot be considered a result solely of the inherent strengths in the mandarin tradition. As discussed in Chapter Three, the ineffectiveness of National Socialist university reforms, the brevity of the period of

characteristics that have persisted even under significantly changed political, social and economic circumstances.

Nazi rule and, to some extent the passive, the characteristically apolitical stance of the university professors to the aims of the *nationalsozialistische Hochschulpolitik* played an important role in the survival of the mandarin culture.

2.2. The German Democratic Republic

The period of socialist rule in the German Democratic Republic, on the other hand, succeeded to a far greater extent in dismantling the traditional institutional culture of the German university. The official policy of “proletarianisation” of the hitherto “bourgeois” institutions of higher education, the overhaul of the guiding philosophy and principles of the university in order to subserve the purposes of a socialist society and the widespread incursion of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (SED) into all university matters, undermined the socio-cultural and institutional basis of the mandarins’ authority and influence. At the same time, there is also conclusive evidence that the so-called “bourgeois professors” or old-style mandarins were in existence till the late 1960s. By this time, however, a new generation of “socialist” professors had been trained to replace the older generation of mandarins. These issues are discussed in Chapter Four which also notes that the socialist policy of preserving some aspects of the German university tradition as part of the culture of the country continued to ensure considerable recognition and prestige for the position of university professor in a wider social sense.

2.3. The Federal Republic of Germany

In West Germany the mandarin tradition made its presence felt soon after the end of the Second World War. A combination of factors contributed to the rapid resurgence of the mandarin tradition: the initial policy of restoration, the subsequent lack of

political will to reform and modernise the higher education system, and the persistence of institutional and social cultures which favoured the mandarins' superior status. The policy of restoration of pre-Nazi systems of functioning in the post-War period reinstated mandarin power and influence. In fact, in light of the numerous instances of professorial domination at the time, mandarin position was considered to have reached the highest point in its history. Subsequently, mandarin attitude and approach were evident at various times, especially in the response of the professoriate to the problem of mass higher education facing German universities in the 1960s, the effects of the university reforms in the late 1960s and 1970s and, most recently, the proposals to reform professorial remuneration and amend the requirement for the *Habilitation* in the late 1990s. Again, as discussed in Chapter Five, the reasons behind the survival of the mandarin tradition lay as much in the absence of consistent, adequate and timely university reform as in the inherent strengths of the tradition.

Overall, the analysis of the post-War experience of higher educational reform in Germany provides ample evidence of various manifestations of the mandarin tradition. The sixth and final chapter explores the intellectual, institutional and cultural basis of the tradition's remarkable resilience.

CHAPTER TWO

Ringer's Study of German Mandarins: a Critique

This chapter is devoted to an examination of *The Decline*, Ringer's path-breaking work on the subject of the German professoriate. The aim is to provide a background for the analysis of the subsequent chapters by identifying the origins, composition, power, and political and social influence of the mandarin class in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The chapter consists of four sections. The first section examines salient aspects of Ringer's work, especially those that relate to the origins of the mandarins, their phenomenal rise in status during the nineteenth century and the subsequent decline of this segment of the educated elite. The second section of the chapter considers the reception of Ringer's book by various scholars and their comments on his work. This section also includes a discussion of some fundamental issues regarding Germany's political and social history and its pattern of development since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The third section investigates the politically active role of German university professors in the 1830s and 1840s, a subject overlooked by Ringer in his otherwise comprehensive thesis. The fourth section concludes the chapter.

1. Ringer's Thesis

The Decline analyses the development of the professorial class in Germany from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the end of the Weimar Republic. It describes the phenomenal rise in power and influence of a section of the educated elite, namely,

the professorial class or the “mandarins” in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹ Accounting for the extraordinary rise of this academic group to a unique status forms an important theme of Ringer’s study. He ascribes this unusual phenomenon to Germany’s peculiar development as a nation: the country experienced a uniquely extended phase between being a semi-feudal agrarian system and a highly industrialised one. Ringer also discusses the decline in importance of the mandarin class towards the end of the nineteenth century with the advent of industrialisation and modernisation. During this period, according to Ringer, the mandarins exhibited extreme hostility towards sudden changes brought about by Germany’s rapid economic expansion. Accompanying this hostility was a peculiarly virulent form of cultural pessimism which reached its peak during the years of the Weimar Republic. The mandarins attributed their reaction to the “cultural crisis” facing the nation and the falling standards in education and learning. Ringer, however, links the mandarins’ intense feelings of pessimism to their perceived decline from an unparalleled position of power and prestige which they enjoyed during a major part of the nineteenth century.

1.1. Origins of the Mandarin Class

The origins of the mandarin class and its distinctive culture can be traced to the period at the end of the eighteenth century when education was becoming a recognizable means to improving social status in Germany. The non-aristocratic elements in society, in particular, attempted to acquire as much education as possible and use it to

¹ Ringer uses the term mandarin to describe German scholars in the same spirit as it has been used for the traditional elite of learned officials in China. It is thought that inspiration for the term came from Max Weber’s remarkable portrayal of the Chinese literati. Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, (eds), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).

join the bureaucracy, the clergy and the teaching professions as well as those of law and medicine. Thus, a kind of non-economic, academically trained middle class was created which soon assumed important positions in an increasingly powerful bureaucracy. Thus, at the turn of the eighteenth century, this segment of society had already gained much of the power and prestige that comes from being in a close, mutually supportive relationship with the state.

Ringer describes this class as

a social and cultural elite which owes its status primarily to educational qualifications rather than to hereditary rights or wealth.²

He observes the inclination of this section of the middle class to separate itself from the beginning from other sections – namely, the artisans and craftsmen and the propertied element of the middle class. The members of this class of “mandarins” included university professors, doctors, lawyers, Protestant ministers, government officials and secondary school teachers, all of who had completed a minimum period of study at universities and held academic degrees. The completion of a minimum curriculum and the passing of a series of official and qualifying examinations were mandatory requirements for membership of the mandarin class. As a result, German university professors became the obvious choice to be the leaders of this class since it was they who developed and supervised a system of academic and state examinations, degrees, titles and credentials by which entry was regulated, first into the civil service

² Ringer, 1990, p. 5.

and related professions, and later into the cultivated, elite segment of the middle class. Hence, given the importance of universities and university education in this whole set-up, it is clear that the entire institutional, social and cultural basis of the mandarins' prestige and influence was located at the universities.

1.2. Rise of Mandarins to the Status of Ruling Class

The central argument in *The Decline* is the theory of the uniqueness of the German mandarins. Ringer stresses the issue of uniqueness from the beginning:

[T]he non-noble bureaucrat in Prussia was equaled nowhere else in Europe. ... [T]he German scholar, the man of pure learning ... had less connection than his English or even his French counterpart with an emerging entrepreneurial class; he also lacked the French intellectual's contact with the cosmopolitan world of aristocratic or magisterial salons.³

In making this claim Ringer reinforces the general theory of Germany's uniqueness and its *Sonderweg* or deviation from the Western pattern of development. Ringer has argued that the mandarin elite in nineteenth century Germany enjoyed significantly greater power and prestige than its counterpart in other western countries. In fact, this academically trained section of the middle class had become the functional ruling class of the nation. Ringer cites Germany's unusual development as a nation – with an uncharacteristically long intermediary phase between the periods of aristocratic rule, during which wealth and power was wielded by landowners (mainly the aristocracy),

³ Ibid. p. 20.

and of full industrialisation, during which wealth and power had come to rest with the commercial middle class - as the key reason for the unique elevation of the mandarin class in the political and social hierarchy. He believes the lengthy period between an agrarian economy and full industrialisation was also conducive to the formation of a highly bureaucratic monarchy. Crucially, the members of the mandarin class belonged to the bureaucracy - another unusual German aspect in the development of administrative structures.⁴ This meant, as Ringer argues, that the mandarin elite was naturally positioned to play key functional and supportive roles for the state. As a result, the history of the mandarins became intimately linked to the history of the development of the bureaucracy in Germany and the universities became inter-linked with the official bureaucratic structures during the nineteenth century.

According to Ringer, circumstances in the nineteenth century were favourable for domination by the mandarins.

[S]ince the mandarins are in control of the education system, they dominate the very language of their nation. They greatly influence its political and social standards, and they reserve the right to announce the cultural purposes of the state.⁵

⁴ The original mandarin class of China was distinct as a non-hereditary, scholarly and bureaucratic elite which existed as officialdom for almost two thousand years. As mentioned earlier Ringer has drawn on the notion of the Chinese mandarin class - a highly educated bureaucracy which existed in a close relationship with the ruling powers - to characterize the German mandarin class. Bamber Gascoigne, *The Dynasties of China: A History*, (Carrol & Graf, 2003), p. 67.

⁵ Ibid. p. 12.

Indeed, in the absence of a unified nation, the state had to be defined in cultural rather than political terms. The notion of *Kulturstaat* which safeguarded German cultural heritage has its roots in this period. In this rather unique setting, the mandarins provided the rulers with cultural legitimacy; they, in turn, appointed them “guardians of culture”, endowed them with honorific titles, and granted them prominent official positions as well as academic freedom:

[T]he elite needs official sanction for its all-important system of qualifying examinations and for its prestigious social position generally. In return the ruler may expect a supply of loyal and capable civil servants and an ideological defense of a regime which he actually shares with the mandarins.⁶

This mutually satisfactory arrangement continued for a considerable part of the nineteenth century.⁷ Thereafter, Ringer asserts, the rise of the wealthy, entrepreneurial class and other powerful political and social groups signalled the decline of the German mandarins in both cultural and political terms.

1.3. Decline of the Mandarins

In line with its title, a considerable part of Ringer’s book is devoted to exploration of the reaction of German professors to events in the turbulent period of German history beginning around 1890 and ending in 1933 with the Nazi *Machtübernahme*. The period after 1890 coincided with vast changes in the socio-economic set-up in

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The mandarins evolved “organically” with the ruling class and provided ideological and cultural support to ensure the hegemony of that class. In this respect the German mandarins accord with the notion of “organic” intellectuals elaborated by Antonio Gramsci. Carl Boggs, *The Two Revolutions: Antonio Gramsci and the Dilemmas of Western Marxism*, (South End Press, 1985), p. 221.

Germany, not least the abruptness of Germany's industrialisation which had started sometime around 1870. The instability following the political Revolution of 1919 and the disastrous inflation in the post World War One period engendered even more drastic changes culminating in Nazi rule in 1933. These developments reduced the political and cultural influence of the mandarins. However, it is worth noting that institutionally the position of the mandarins did not change for a considerable length of time. Even in social terms the mandarins continued to be accorded unusual prestige until recent times.

The decline of the mandarins encompasses four phases in the historical development of Germany: industrialisation; the First World War; the Weimar Republic; and the onset of National Socialism.

1.3.1. Industrialisation

Ringer gives extensive accounts of the fears that gripped the professoriate in the wake of industrialisation as they perceived the threat posed by the arrival of new, increasingly powerful social groups such as the wealthy entrepreneurial class on the scene. This began to erode the mandarin's influence upon political and social affairs of the country. Industrialisation and urbanisation also brought the masses on to the fore which, to the mandarins, spelt the end of culture.

The mandarin intellectuals reacted to this threat conservatively, rejecting any attempt to support parliamentary or social reform. Instead, they preferred to support the traditional societal hierarchy and the illiberal aspects of the existing political regime as well to share in the fear and hostility that the ruling classes felt for the advancing

Social Democratic movement. They, thus, continued their historical compliance with the ruling powers, in this case with the Conservatives and the *Junkers*, rather than risk any change to their status and power. Besides this, as the cultivated elite, they bemoaned the cultural crisis facing the nation, bitterly criticised the sterile, mechanical and philistine times, and predicted an imminent end to the country's cultural heritage. However, much of their theory of cultural decadence was, as Ringer clearly demonstrates, a defensive measure by a priestly class of intellectuals which had been accustomed to setting the cultural and moral standards of the nation but was no longer in position to do so.

It is at this point that Ringer makes an important distinction between members of the mandarin class. He separates the "orthodox" from the "modernist" or the "accommodationist" mandarin. He states that the virulent, anti-modern and anti-democratic sentiments were in reality expressed by the orthodox wing of the class which, although a majority, did not represent the entire mandarin elite. Some of the best-known German scholars and eminent social scientists of the time belonged to Ringer's category of modernists who were "realistic and pragmatic" mandarins who accepted the inevitability of industrialisation and democratisation. They believed that an accommodating and compromising approach towards the large-scale changes of the age was the only way forward.

1.3.2. The First World War

The start of the First World War temporarily erased the differences between the orthodox and the modernist groups which were united in their nationalistic fervour and patriotism and together contributed to the "Spirit of 1914". Orthodox and

modernist mandarins alike saw a “cultural war” between Germany and the Allied powers; the latter with their shallow commercial ideology being no match for Germany’s infinitely superior cultural tradition. The anti-Western stance of the mandarins, whose roots lay in the rejection of the Western Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century, became now more pronounced than ever.

It took almost a year for the differences between the orthodox and the modernists to re-appear as the increasingly hopeless situation of the War became clear to the modernists. They realised the limits of German expansion, pointing to the futility of hostility with England, France, America *and* Russia. On the other hand, the orthodox mandarins, charged with what Ringer refers to as “super-patriotic emotionalism”, supported an ultra-annexationist policy. They used this opportunity to attack the Marxist left and other political elements connected with the Social Democratic Party who followed a more internationalist line of reasoning. Their intellectual and ideological attack of the West was also a direct criticism of all those elements and social groups which they considered to have been a cause of the nation’s cultural crisis. The orthodox mandarins, who were a majority, thus contributed in many ways to the re-kindling of the class war and the undermining of an already fragile national unity.

1.3.3. The Weimar Republic

The formation of the Weimar Republic did little to improve the situation. The orthodox mandarins became even more nationalistic and, as their writings demonstrate, displayed an acute nostalgia for the past and deep hostility towards the new regime and the liberal parties. The defeat in the War was attributed primarily to

the Social Democrats and other “unpatriotic” elements, all of who were suspected of having betrayed the German army and undermined the nation’s morale. The harshness of the demands of the Versailles Treaty was, in their opinion, a direct result of the policies of the new Republic. Anti-republicanism seemed to have affected the entire academic class, even the accommodationists, except that they, in their usual pragmatic way, realised that the Republic was the only kind of government which could re-unite the country. Ringer refers to Friedrich Meinecke’s expression of *Vernunftrepublikaner* to describe them: republicans only through reason and not at heart. He stresses that they were not democrats in the true sense and would certainly have preferred a moderate parliamentary monarchy to the Republic.

In spite of the obvious differences between the two groups within the academic class Ringer points out several similarities as well. The concern for the crisis of learning, the increasingly rare commitment to non-utilitarian cultural values and the separation of *Geist* from *Politik* was shared by a vast majority of the academics. Furthermore, the devastating inflation of the 1920s implied an economic downturn for the once well-to-do section of the middle class and added to their already dismal and gloomy outlook. Ringer’s hypothesis that many mandarins therefore took refuge in their historically apolitical stance, preferring to retreat into their pursuit of esoteric knowledge, thus does ring true.

1.3.4. National Socialism

The entry of the National Socialists on the political scene was not, in the initial stages, unduly worrying to German university professors. However, before long they began to realise that the “national movement” that attracted the students was not the spiritual

revolution they preached. And yet, many felt that the revolution was genuine at the core, just crude and violent in its manifestation. They expressed their concern at the excessive politicisation of the universities and the spread of a revolutionary mentality which undermined all established truths and values, but did so in their usual apolitical manner. Their writings typically defended historical continuity and tradition and despaired at the coming dangers to individual freedom and cultural tradition. More importantly, some mandarins still harped upon the dangers of the mass and machine age and linked the present developments to its delayed impact on the cultural heritage of the nation.

Ringer believes that the mandarin tradition rapidly succumbed in the face of the power and brutalities of the Nazis, surrounded as they were by a “mounting danger to all moral and cultural standards”.⁸ The average mandarin, states Ringer, “felt aloof and vaguely shocked” by the manner in which educational institutions were overrun by the National Socialists.⁹ After all, Nazi demands for *Gleichschaltung* of the universities created the image of German scholarship in the Third Reich as one “... gigantic assembly line working towards one aim”.¹⁰ The aim was the subjugation of scholarship to serve the ideals of *Volk*, *Rasse* and *Staat*, which hitherto, in the opinion of the National Socialists, had been ignored in German research and teaching. Such an atmosphere, it might be expected, would stifle the fundamental tenet of mandarin ideology i.e., the free pursuit of *Wissenschaft*, including the notions of *akademische Freiheit* and *akademische Selbstverwaltung*.

⁸ Ibid., p. 437.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 442- 443.

¹⁰ Max Weinreich, *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People*, (New York: Yiddish Scientific Institute, 1946), p. 68.

According to *The Decline*, the reaction of the mandarins to the advancing National Socialist onslaught was one of helplessness and despondency. They were unable to recognise fully the dangers inherent in the fascist ideology of the Nazis and remained passive on-lookers to the excesses of the totalitarian regime. Ringer concedes

[T]he scholarly controversies of the day contributed only indirectly to the problems of the Weimar Republic. The orthodox mandarins did not actively desire the triumph of the Third Reich; nor were they to blame for the actual propositions of National Socialist propaganda.¹¹

Nevertheless his judgement is severe:

They helped destroy the Republic, without having chosen its successor. They wilfully cultivated an atmosphere in which any “national” movement could claim to be the “spiritual revival”. They fostered chaos without regard for the consequences. ... [T]he mandarins abandoned intellectual responsibility itself.¹²

The Nazis abolished academic self-government, freedom and tenure and set about their task of *Gleichschaltung* within the university system without as much as a ripple of discontent. Ringer thus concludes that the fate of the mandarins was sealed and their once hallowed tradition swiftly collapsed.

¹¹ Ringer, 1990, p. 446.

¹² Ibid.

2. Critique of Ringer's Thesis

The Decline has the distinction of being reviewed by an array of prominent scholars which is further testimony to the path-breaking nature of Ringer's work. Jürgen Habermas, Geoffrey Barraclough, Felix Gilbert and R.R. Palmer are among the numerous well-known reviewers of the book.¹³ This section studies the various criticisms of Ringer's work which figure in the major reviews of his book. Substantive criticisms can be organised around five themes: the peculiarity of the mandarin tradition to Germany; the mandarins as the ruling class in nineteenth century Germany; the chronological limits of Ringer's work; Ringer's categorization of mandarins into orthodox and modernists; and Ringer's sampling of the views of mandarin intellectuals. These themes are discussed respectively in the following sub-sections of the chapter.

2.1. The Peculiarity of the Mandarin Tradition to Germany

The most challenging criticism of Ringer's thesis centred round the argument which formed the foundation of his thesis – his claim of uniqueness of the German mandarin tradition. As Palmer observes:

The force of the [Ringer's] basic argument depends on finding peculiarities in the German educational system, ways in which it differed from that of England or France, that are sufficient to explain the admitted peculiarities of German

¹³ Habermas, 1971a, pp. 422-428; R.R. Palmer, 'Some Recent Work on Higher Education', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 13, (1971), pp. 108-15; Geoffrey Barraclough, 'Mandarins and Nazis', *New York Review of Books*, 19 October 1972, pp. 37-42; Felix Gilbert, 'Review

thought as a whole ... Unfortunately the book does not provide this comparison ...¹⁴

Habermas, while praising Ringer's excellent attempt at providing an insight into "why Germany was different", criticises Ringer's disregard of three different attempts made by historians to theorise about what is referred to as "non-simultaneity of courses of development".¹⁵ In Habermas's opinion such theories could have provided valuable insights into Germany's peculiar path of development and the unusual status of its intellectual elite. The three theories in question are the theory of backward capitalistic movement, the theory of the retarded nation and the theory of delayed modernity. According to Habermas, Ringer has mentioned only the last one in his study.

In his review Sterling Fishman has contested, like many others, the uniqueness of German history upon which Ringer has based his theory.¹⁶ Fishman refers to two books which reflect typical mandarin characteristics within the educated elite in Britain. The first is Rupert Wilkinson's *Gentlemanly Power: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition* which illustrates an equally steeply hierarchical, caste-ridden British civil service.¹⁷ The second is Sheldon Rothblatt's *The Revolution of the Dons* which exemplifies the attitude of the dons at Cambridge who echoed the anti-industrial sentiments of the German mandarins.¹⁸ Fishman concludes by appealing for

Article: 'The Decline of the German Mandarins', *American Historical Review*, vol. 75, (June 1970), pp. 1475-1477.

¹⁴ Palmer, 1971, pp. 108-15.

¹⁵ Habermas, 1971a, pp. 422-428.

¹⁶ Sterling Fishman, 'German Mandarins and Weimar Culture', *History of Educational Quarterly*, vol. 10, (Fall 1980), pp. 381-386.

¹⁷ Rupert Wilkinson, *Gentlemanly Power: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

¹⁸ Sheldon Rothblatt, *The Revolution of the Dons: Cambridge and Society in Victorian England*, (New York: Basic Books, 1968).

German history to be considered as part of European history rather than as an aberration.

Sven-Eric Liedman, a Swedish scholar, who published his review as recently as in 1986, senses a similar need for comparative analysis of the German mandarins and their counterparts in other Western countries.¹⁹ For him this comparative perspective is provided by Martin J. Wiener's *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* which argues that a uniquely powerful resistance towards industrialisation and modernisation prevailed in England since 1850 and exists even in contemporary times.²⁰ Liedman too does not fully endorse Wiener's views. In fact he considers the examination of the period of industrialization in Germany in order to analyse the views of German and English professors as misguided. He concludes that what Ringer and Wiener proclaim as uniquely German and English features can quite easily be found in other Western countries such as France which had a well-known intellectual aristocracy.

Kenneth Barkin also disagrees with Ringer's belief in the uniqueness of the German academic tradition as far as Ringer's portrayal of anti-Semitism within the academic establishment in Germany is concerned.²¹ He wonders whether the situation was similar, if not worse, for Jewish academics in England and particularly in America,

¹⁹ Sven-Eric Liedman, 'Institutions and Ideas: Mandarins and Non-Mandarins in the German Academic Intelligentsia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 28, (Jan 1986), pp. 119-144.

²⁰ Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980*, (Cambridge, 1981).

²¹ Kenneth Barkin, 'Review Article: Fritz K. Ringer's The Decline of the German Mandarins', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 43, (June 1971), pp. 276-286.

where many Ivy League departments had not appointed a single Jewish member till the 1930s.

It is not necessary for the purposes of this thesis to enter into a discussion of the complex issue of Germany's *Sonderweg*. Evidence suggests that in many respects German university professors are unique: the combination of the privileges, authority and influence on an institutional level accompanied by simultaneous academic freedom, a civil servant status and unusual social prestige are not commonly enjoyed by their counterparts in other similar countries. Chapter Five of this thesis provides further details on the subject. The issue of the uniqueness of the German mandarin, however, had remarkable implications for the evolution of Ringer's own research since the publication of *The Decline*. In a new preface to *The Decline* written initially for the German translation of 1983, Ringer remarked: "My critics have forced me to pursue a rather difficult comparative analysis"²². Pursuit of this path, it turned out, took over twenty years and turned Ringer away from intellectual history altogether.

2.2. Mandarins as the Ruling Class in Nineteenth Century Germany

Habermas agrees with Ringer's representation of Germany's *Sonderweg* and acknowledges the privileged position in society accorded to the German university professors which places them above the other members of the educated elite. He, however, contests Ringer's depiction of the mandarins as the functional ruling class, stating that their position was defensive right from the start. In his opinion they possessed only delegated powers which until 1918 were founded on a compromise

²² Ringer, 1990, p. xiv.

between the economically dominant bourgeoisie and the politically influential rural aristocracy. Their role of performing a vital legitimatory function for the existing ruling powers in the nineteenth century came to an end with the advent of the bourgeois democracy of the Weimar period which had no requirement for legitimacy of this kind. The decline of the mandarins thus had less to do with the decline of the intellectual tradition they represented and was primarily due to the changes in social and institutional establishment at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Gilbert expresses a similar opinion but controversially goes a step further and questions the very position of privilege ascribed by Ringer to the mandarins in the nineteenth century.²³ According to Gilbert the mandarins were never the most influential but only one of the several important sections of the political elite. Moreover, the influence of the university professor within this select group would have been largely due to factors such as family status, social connections and wealth, with scholastic accomplishments and “learning” being only secondary contributors. However Gilbert himself appears to overlook the undoubtedly elevated of the universities and *Wissenschaft* at the time. Further, the fact that birth, wealth and land had all ceased to be the sole indicators of status in that period of Germany’s history is a view widely acknowledged by scholars.²⁴ Thus, Gilbert’s conclusion, in the context of Ringer’s portrayal of German university professors as mandarins, that

²³ Gilbert, 1970, pp. 1475-1477.

²⁴ Agatha Ramm, ‘The Making of Modern Germany 1618-1870’ in *Germany: A Companion to German Studies*, Malcolm Pasley (ed), (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 244.

the author has succumbed somewhat to the spell of this word and to the analogy with China that it implies²⁵

seems somewhat unjustified.

Kenneth Barkin observes that Ringer refrains from identifying the precise period when mandarins were supposedly the ruling class. Barkin himself tries to identify the period of mandarin rule by systematically considering the decades between 1800 and 1890. He first eliminates the *Vormärz* period (the pre-1848 era) during which Metternich's influence had resulted in the universities being suppressed under the stringent Carlsbad decrees. Similarly, he asserts that university professors could hardly have represented the ruling class during the revolutionary period of 1848 when they themselves were in the forefront of the movement. The Bismarckian era

in which the bureaucracy was ruthlessly purged and academic theories vilified was certainly no golden age for the mandarins.²⁶

That leaves only the reactionary 1850s; a decade which is not, as Barkin observes, generally associated with the influence of the academic elite on politics, given the failed revolution of 1848. Thus, Barkin, like other reviewers, acknowledges that the professorial class was immensely prestigious in the early nineteenth century but finds the notion of mandarins being the ruling class difficult to accept. This thesis agrees

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Barkin, 1971, pp. 276-286

with Habermas's and Barkin's assessments and finds Ringer's portrayal of the mandarins as the ruling class difficult to substantiate especially in light of the political events during the nineteenth century.

2.3. Chronological Limits of Ringer's Work

The year 1890 seems acceptable to most of Ringer's reviewers as the year when the socio-economic and political changes due to Germany's abrupt industrial expansion began to manifest themselves. Only Liedman directly questions the significance of the year 1890 in Ringer's thesis.²⁷ He notes that although the year was relevant to German political history in that it saw the dismissal of Bismarck from power, the passage of the *Sozialistengesetz* - banning socialist meetings and publications - and electoral victories for radical socialist parties, it did not signal any similar landmark event in intellectual history.

However, many of Ringer's reviewers find his assumption that the mandarin tradition had collapsed by 1933 far less acceptable. Habermas deals with this question in detail in his article, stating that it was only in the early 1970s that the mandarin tradition at German universities fell into terminal decline.²⁸ That was the period when large-scale reforms to the entire university structure were implemented in the wake of the student uprising of the 1960s. According to Habermas it was the re-organisation of the philosophical faculties into fields of specialisation which played a key role. With that the institutional foundation of the humanistic outlook which had characterised

²⁷ Liedman, 1986, pp. 119-144.

²⁸ Habermas, 1971a, pp. 422-428.

German higher education and been a mainstay of the mandarin tradition until then came to an end. Habermas concludes:

Thus, Professor Ringer's time-perspective which leads to 1933 is somewhat out of focus; the world which Professor Ringer believes disappeared in 1933 was in fact still in existence and taken for granted when I was a student in the early 1950s.²⁹

Others point out that the attitude of professors as recently as in the 1960s suggests that not much had changed as far as the fundamental mentalities and opinions of the professoriate were concerned. Fishman, portraying the contemporary situation, writes:

Many students have also accused their professor of precisely what Ringer describes – trading their intellectual integrity for social status. *The Decline of the Mandarins* provides us with a historical reference point for these charges. Perhaps the mandarins have not become an extinct species but have merely reappeared, albeit in a different plumage and habitat.³⁰

Ringer's assertion that the mandarin tradition came to an end with the advent of National Socialism was indeed the only aspect of his thesis that Jeffrey Sammons found objectionable in his review published in 1969.³¹ Indeed Sammons asserts that the book was relevant to the existing situation in West Germany:

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Fishman, 1980, pp. 381-386.

³¹ Jeffrey Sammons, 'The German Grove of Academe', *Yale Review*, vol. 58, (Summer 1969), pp. 610-613.

The hide-bound immobilism of many German professors, which is in such serious conflict with the aspirations and concerns of the younger generation that the very survival of the universities is being threatened, seems more easily comprehensible in the light of the development Ringer has described. The hierarchical structure of the university and its self-understanding is in important respects not very different today from the pattern Ringer has called mandarin.³²

2.4. Ringer's Categories of Mandarins

Ringer's categories of orthodox and modernist mandarins have, as we shall see, been widely adopted by many intellectual historians. Inevitably though, some of Ringer's reviewers have reservations about the categorization of several well-known intellectuals in *The Decline*. Kenneth Barkin, for example, raises the issue of Max Weber who, by Ringer's definition, is evidently a modernist. But Barkin, stresses that "men change during the course of their lives; thought is dynamic, not static".³³ In that context Barkin indicates that Weber was, at least for a decade, gripped by the aggressive imperialist mood sweeping Wilhelminian Germany and was a vociferous spokesman for views which prevailed among many of Ringer's orthodox mandarins. Felix Gilbert, on the other hand, objects to Ringer's inference – from Karl Mannheim's conception of the "*freischwebende Intelligenz*" – that Mannheim was also a mandarin. According to Gilbert, this conclusion was the result of Ringer's regarding intellectual attitudes as ideologies; Mannheim's attempt was guided by a

³² Ibid.

³³ Barkin, 1971, pp. 276-86.

search for objective truth and was not the product of conformity to any specific ideology.

In a similar vein, Sven-Eric Liedman draws attention to the fact that Eduard von Hartmann, whom Ringer characterises as being a mandarin on the right wing of the spectrum of mandarin opinion, was not a university professor at all.³⁴ He was thus a man of mandarin ideas but without a mandarin's status. Ringer selects four figures, Simmel, von Weise, Alfred Weber and Sombart, whose theories of cultural decadence he chooses as most representative of mandarin pessimism brought on by the perception of cultural crisis in Germany in the early twentieth century. Arthur Mitzman, in his review of the *The Decline*, argues that they were all modernists.³⁵ Indeed, he contends, three of them (von Weise, Simmel and Weber) were "radical modernists" whose theories

reflected not so much mandarin estrangement from mass society and bureaucratization as the estrangement of once-radical bourgeois intellectuals from the social rigidity of both modern Germany and the academy ...³⁶

Although these flaws mentioned can be considered lapses on Ringer's part, on the whole they do not detract from the credibility of the main argument in his thesis.

³⁴ Liedman, 1986, pp. 119-144.

³⁵ Arthur Mitzman, 'German Thinkers', *Dissent*, vol. 17, (Jan-Feb 1970), pp. 83-87.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

2.5. Ringer's Sampling of Mandarin Views

Ringer's preference for the views and opinions of the humanists and social scientists in order to study mandarin thought and culture has also attracted comment. He believes that it was the *Geisteswissenschaftler* who carried the mantle of leadership within the professorial group:

It is my impression that in their attitudes towards cultural and political problems, many German scientists followed the leads of their humanist colleagues.³⁷

At the same time Ringer acknowledges that his neglect of non-humanists is a "simplification" that he chooses in order to narrow the focus of his discussion:

Strictly speaking German professors of physics and chemistry were as much mandarin intellectuals as their colleagues in the social studies and the humanities. ... But I am unable to fully substantiate this conclusion ...³⁸

The exclusion of professors of non-philosophical faculties is a simplification in Ringer's sampling of the views of the mandarins which is not acceptable to some commentators. Kenneth Barkin, for example, criticises the lack of evidence in Ringer's account that anti-modernism was as prevalent among the members of the theological, medical and legal faculties as among philosophers. There was also no clear basis for the belief that members of non-philosophical faculties looked upon

³⁷ Ringer, 1990, p. 6.

³⁸ Ibid.

their colleagues in philosophy as spokesmen for their views or as torch-bearers of the group of the educated elite. Barkin's objection to accepting the pre-eminence of philosophers within the group of professors simply on faith leads him to keep an open mind on the subject until further research proves otherwise.

However, several studies on the scientific section of the academic community in Germany have provided evidence of mandarin thinking. Russell McCormach, investigating the views of scientists in Imperial Germany discovers that they had similar concerns about the effects of specialisation and about the professors' declining public role as the *Geisteswissenschaftler*.³⁹ In a recent study of professors of Genetics in Germany from 1890 to 1933, Jonathan Harwood has made use of Ringer's distinction between orthodox and modernist mandarins.⁴⁰ He concludes that Ringer's model of the German professoriate can be extended to include professors of Genetics as well though it needs to be supplemented with a further category. This category included professors who, according to Harwood, differed from Ringer's mandarins in two respects:

[T]hey were of more modest social class background than the mandarin faction and ... their conception of the academic role was altogether more modest than that of the 'culture-bearer'; they simply placed their expertise at the disposal of those in power. [Thus their] ... self-understanding and social background made them 'outsiders' in relation to the mandarin tradition.⁴¹

³⁹ Russel, McCormach, 'On Academic Scientists in Wilhelmian Germany', *Daedalus*, vol. 103 (Summer 1974), pp. 157-171.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Harwood, 'Mandarins and Outsiders in the German Professoriate, 1890-1933: A Study of the Genetics Community', *European History Quarterly*, vol. 23 (Oct 1993), pp. 485-511.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 486-487.

Robert Paul, in an article examining the relationship between mandarin ethos and German academic science, studies the extent of mandarin thinking among three outstanding natural scientists of the nineteenth century: Emil du Bois Reymond, Hermann von Helmholtz and Rudolf Virchow.⁴² Paul observes that while these scientists rejected certain tenets of mandarin ideology (upheld by their humanist colleagues) they remained largely committed to the unity of *Wissenschaft* and to the importance of academic freedom.⁴³

Apart from the above criticisms on the five major themes there were several others which figured in the reviews of *The Decline*. Ringer's attempt at explaining the nuances of the term *Wissenschaft* and, in particular, his consultation of the *Brockhaus Encyclopedia* to do the same attracted attention.⁴⁴ However, his definition of other terms and distinctions associated with the mandarin vocabulary, such as *Bildung*, *Kultur*, and *Zivilisation* were acclaimed by many. Ringer's own disapproval of mandarin thought and culture may have led to some acts of omission on his part. He ignored mention of the superiority of German higher education in the nineteenth century as well as the amazing productivity and quality of scholarship displayed in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic. Some of his reviewers felt that these merited greater recognition.⁴⁵

⁴² Robert Paul, 'German Academic Science and the Mandarin Ethos, 1850-1880', *British Journal for the History of Science*, vol. 17, no. 55, (1984), pp. 1-29.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Habermas, 1971a; p. 425, Liedman, 1986, pp. 119-144.

⁴⁵ Barkin, 1971, p. 281-82.

3. The Role of German University Professors in the 1830s and 1840s

This section of the chapter focuses on Ringer's omission of the politically active role played by the German mandarins in the 1830s and 1840s. Professorial involvement in the rise and spread of the liberal movements of the early nineteenth century highlights interesting deviations in mandarin attitude and ideology. To Ringer, the conservative, pro-establishment, anti-republican attitude of the mandarins follows an almost linear tradition since the educational reforms of the early nineteenth century. To this one must add his observation of a peculiar mandarin disdain for political involvement of any kind. He thus begins his study of the mandarin class in the last decade of the nineteenth century with the maintained belief that the forces of industrialisation and modernisation have only served to reinforce political conservatism and aloofness of the mandarins.

This view, however, ignores the fact that university professors, in the period leading up to the 1848 revolutions in several of the German states, formed an integral part of a politically active intelligentsia. In the process they played an important role in the development and spread of political and liberal thought. Further, the professors' refusal to comply with arbitrary rule even if it meant coming in conflict with the very state that they had as bureaucrats sworn allegiance to, their demand for a written constitution embodying the freedom of the individual as they understood it, and their awakening of a national spirit casts them in a new light. Its absence in Ringer's thesis overlooks a significant period in the history of and presents an incomplete perspective on the professorial class in Germany.

The first sub-section below investigates the rise of liberal thought in Germany. The second focuses on the end of the liberal phase in the political climate of the period. The rise of *Wissenschaft* and its significance for the role of the mandarins in the 1830s and 1840s is examined in the third sub-section. The fourth sub-section examines the post-1848 situation and with it, the decline of liberal thought and seemingly the end of active political engagement by university professors in Germany. The fifth section argues that the politically active role played by university professors provides valuable evidence of the supreme position attained by *Wissenschaft* and, therefore, by the German universities.

3.1. Rise of Liberal Thought in Germany

The politically active role of the professoriate during the first half of the nineteenth century is inexorably linked to the rise and development of liberal thought and values at the turn of the eighteenth century. University professors were members of a hitherto heterogeneous group, the *Bildungsbürgertum*, a class of people produced by and closely linked to the newly reformed higher education system. This class figured prominently in the rise of German liberalism to the extent that the foundation of the liberal movements between 1815 and the 1840s was acknowledged as being firmly rooted in it. Indeed, there exists an academic version of liberalism called *Bildungsliberalismus*. This interpretation of *Liberalismus* accommodated a variety of reformist ideas. According to Jarausch, academic liberalism encompassed the notions of social progress, personal freedom, individual ability, national unity and cultural

enlightenment.⁴⁶ In fact, it spanned the entire political spectrum from reforming conservatism and liberal Catholicism to constitutionalism or republicanism, with some intellectuals even supporting social liberalism.⁴⁷ Thus, university professors, along with other members of the *Bildungsbürgertum* came to be associated closely with the development of liberal political ideas at the turn of the eighteenth century.

The first evidence of a clearly *liberal* current in German thought was until recently accepted to be found in the last third of the eighteenth century. Yet it may well be that intellectual thinking in the direction of a political formulation of human freedom had been developing in Germany for almost half a century before the French Revolution.⁴⁸

An obvious catalyst for the rise of liberal German thinking was the French Revolution and the French liberal tradition. The most influential representative of French liberalism was Montesquieu with his *De l'Esprit des Loix* (1748).⁴⁹ Krieger notes that the reading of Montesquieu, the English Constitutionalists and the Encyclopedists had a profound influence on German thinkers, resulting in the rights and freedom of the individual becoming recurring themes in the political writings of the period.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Konrad Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Jarausch cites the often forgotten university reform conferences during and immediately after the 1848 revolution as proof of strength of *Bildungsliberalismus*. The evolution of *Bildungsliberalismus* and its varied composition indicates the polyvalent nature of mandarin culture and thought which, as we have seen, accommodated a wide variety of progressive reformist notions.

⁴⁸ Several views exist on the subject. Uwe Wilhelm cites the publication in 1717 of a 28 page document entitled "*Remarques über den Etat von Engelland*" by Paul Fyhn as evidence of the first German liberal work. Uwe Wilhelm, *Der deutsche Frühliberalismus: Von den Anfängen bis 1789*, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995), p. 21. James Sheehan briefly mentions that the intellectual ancestry of German liberalism can be traced even further back to the seventeenth century. James J. Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 7. Dieter Langewiesche, on the other hand, considers early German liberalism to have made a mark as late as 1815. Dieter Langewiesche, *Liberalismus in Deutschland*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 12-15.

⁴⁹ Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom: History of a Political Tradition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 71.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

At the end of the eighteenth century German liberals were represented by a relatively small group, comprising mainly academics and officials. These men were closely linked to the universities being either university-based or at least with a university education behind them. Within the next few decades, this liberal group of the educated elite was to assimilate ideas from the German bureaucratic and university traditions as well as from the European Enlightenment, thus laying the foundations of liberalism in Germany. Liberal currents in German intellectual thought of the period were to be found in Wilhelm von Humboldt's *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen* (1792), Immanuel Kant's writings of the 1790s and the publicist August Ludwig von Schlözer's theory on *Staatsrechtslehre* (1793).⁵¹

The rapid rise of liberalism in the early 1800s was primarily aided by political events. The disastrous defeat of the German states, especially of Prussia in 1806, at the hand of the French, intensified the search for new forms of political expression and provided fertile ground for liberal ideas to take firm shape. A succession of events temporarily brought liberal-minded reformists to office and resulted in a wave of reforms causing a major upheaval in the existing university tradition as well.⁵² The all-important Humboldtian educational reforms were instituted during this period. The way for large-scale university reforms had already been paved by Frederick William III's grand proclamation: "Der Staat muß durch geistige Kräfte ersetzen was er an

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany 1700-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 101-102.

materiellen verloren hat.”⁵³ However, the initial wave of higher education reforms was less successful. Several universities were closed directly as a result of French occupation forces which reflected the hostility of the Revolution towards universities.⁵⁴ It was only later, in the first decade of the nineteenth century, that new laws resulted in the reformation of universities in the recently expanded states of Baden and Bavaria. In Prussia, after the loss of Halle, plans were made for the establishment of a new university in Berlin, for the expansion of the one at Breslau and for the revival of the University of Bonn.⁵⁵

The Reform Era was followed by a brief period of liberation culminating in the so-called “Wars of Liberation”. The French conquest had led to a significant rise in patriotic fervour and support for movements towards national unity, both of which were directly influenced by liberal ideas.⁵⁶ State officials supported these developments since it meant the transformation of a hitherto apolitical public into a valuable ally not only against the French conquerors but also against domestic rivals such as the landed nobility, the churches, and traditional local authorities.⁵⁷

A positive and more significant outcome of these events was the drafting of constitutions in various states.⁵⁸ The constitutions advocated dualism of monarchic and parliamentary government which introduced representation of the people through

⁵³ Quoted in Hans-Peter Bleuel, *Deutschlands Bekenner: Professoren zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur*, (Bern: Scherz Verlag, 1968), p. 14.

⁵⁴ Trier, Cologne, Strasbourg, Bonn, and Mainz were early victims. Erfurt, Wittenberg, Frankfurt/Oder, Helmstedt, Herborn, Altdorf, Bamberg, Duisburg, and Fulda followed after 1800. McClelland, 1980, pp. 101-102.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Sheehan, 1978, p. 9.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

the formation of chambers of parliament.⁵⁹ Civil servants, which included numerous university professors, were well represented within the liberal groups in the individual state parliaments. In Bavaria 49 percent and in Württemberg 50 percent of parliamentarians were state officials. A sizeable number of university professors, especially historians, were what may be described as “moderate liberals” at the time.⁶⁰ They included Friedrich Dahlmann, the main proponent of the British Constitution as a model for Germany, Karl von Rotteck, an enthusiastic supporter of the French Revolution and Georg Gottfried Gervinus, an admirer of the *American Declaration of Rights*.⁶¹ Considerable influence was exerted by university professors in those German states where constitutions and representative institutions were developed. Dahlmann aided in drafting the constitution for Hannover, adopted in 1833 and Sylvester Jordan, a professor at Marburg, drafted the Hesse-Kassel constitution of 1831.⁶² In the period before 1848 Karl Rotteck and Karl Welcker were parliamentarians and Dahlmann, Gervinus and the Brothers Grimm were among the “*Göttinger Sieben*” who were expelled for their political activities from the university of Göttingen in 1837. Dahlmann, Welcker, Gervinus, Georg Waitz, Max Dunker, and Rudolf Haym were members of the Frankfurt Parliament. Ludwig Häusser was a member of the Baden legislature.⁶³

Apart from direct participation in the political process the contribution of professors to the development of liberalism included organisation of like-minded academics in

⁵⁹ Thomas Nipperdey, *Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck 1800-1866*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 305.

⁶⁰ Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: the National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*, (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), p. 98.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*; Bleuel, 1968, p. 25.

⁶² McClelland, 1980, p. 221.

⁶³ Iggers, 1968, p. 91.

national scholarly guilds⁶⁴ and, for the first time, use of literary activity as a way of influencing politics. In addition to articles, they founded, edited and contributed to specifically political works and periodicals.⁶⁵ Rotteck and Welcker's *Staatslexicon* was the bible for two generations of German liberals. Dahlmann edited the *Kieler Blätter*, Gervinus helped found the *Deutsche Zeitung*, aided editorially by Ludwig Häusser; and Friedrich von Raumer, a liberal Berlin professor, founded the *Historisches Taschenbuch* series. Johann Bluntschli, a Munich law professor, carried on the work of Rotteck and Welcker with his influential *Staatswörterbuch*. The *Preussischer Jahrbücher* were founded as a direct influence of the literary activity of the *Vormärz* period and was likewise a project involving liberal professors.⁶⁶

Ringer too notes that the educated classes were leaders of the reform movement in the first decade of the nineteenth century and that *Bildungsliberalismus* was perhaps the most important ingredient in the general sentiment that eventually led to the Revolution.⁶⁷ He, however, does not elaborate further on the participation or views of the professors and other members of the educated classes to the rise and spread of liberalism in Germany.

3.2. End of Reform Era

The first signs of change in this liberal atmosphere were apparent after Napoleon's defeat in 1815 which appeared to have heralded the end of support for reform and

⁶⁴ Sheehan, 1978, p. 45.

⁶⁵ McClelland, 1980, p.225.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ringer, 1990, pp. 124-125.

liberal activities by the German states. The conservatives came back in power in almost every state resulting in the restoration of previous administrative power and the re-establishment of traditional institutions.⁶⁸ Liberals were now regarded as sources of unrest and no longer considered important allies. As a result liberalism which had been partially located within state governments themselves was now to be found in small and scattered groups predominantly academic in composition.⁶⁹

The end of the era saw the resurgence of high-handed political and bureaucratic rule. The universities were the first to be affected. Tight limits were set on political activity, publications censored, and public organisations supervised. In 1819, Prince Metternich of Austria called members of the German Confederation to Carlsbad to resolve the issue of student unrest by purging the universities of “subversives”.⁷⁰ A set of decrees were formulated to repress student agitation and, to a lesser extent, professorial independence and political leadership.⁷¹ The infamous Carlsbad Decrees signalled the end of the period of reform of universities and simultaneously introduced an element of intimidation, curtailing the ability of academics and students to voice protest.⁷² The Carlsbad Decrees remained in place until 1848.⁷³ It is claimed though that the decrees were aimed more at curbing student rebelliousness rather than professorial freedom. Moreover, academics were seemingly subjected to less official

⁶⁸ Woodruff D. Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 15.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Ramm, 1982, p. 246.

⁷¹ McClelland, 1980, p. 220.

⁷² In spite of the restrictions there were several instances in the following decades of academics and students exhibiting dissatisfaction with the ruling powers – the Hambach Festival in 1832, the abortive student coup of the Frankfurt *Wachensturm* in 1833, participation in the initial surge of the Viennese revolution in 1848 and the student attempts to bring about university and general reform in the months following the 1848 revolution. As is evident these events involved students more than professors, who tended to choose more established channels of political activity. *Ibid.*

⁷³ Nipperdey, 1983, p. 249.

harassment in comparison to other liberals such as those, for example, who were regular civil servants. An important reason cited for that was the continued pre-eminence of Humboldt's educational policy which meant that academics enjoyed substantially greater freedom of speech.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, there were cases where liberal university professors faced severe persecution for their opposition to the political situation. The case of the *Göttinger Sieben* where Friedrich Dahlmann had to flee Hannover with six other professors from Göttingen, when the constitution he had helped create was abrogated by the new king in 1837, illustrates the point. The case of Friedrich List who was professor at Tübingen and was prevented from taking a seat he had won in the Württemberg legislature in 1819 and forced into exile, provides further evidence of the harassment professors were subjected to.⁷⁵ Other well-known professors who faced similar reactions during the period were: Friederich Schleiermacher at Berlin, Ernst Moritz Arndt at Bonn, Karl Rotteck and Karl Welcker at Freiburg. Some more radical professors, such as Lorenz Oken and Luden, suffered even more.⁷⁶

Ringer considers the severity of the Carlsbad Decrees as central to the professorial opposition during the period. He asserts:

The offenses of reactionary rulers against the rights of Geist probably did more to cause the Revolution of 1848 than has sometimes been realised.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Smith, 1991, p. 15.

⁷⁵ McClelland, 1980, p. 221.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

He cites the excesses of the state and the ministries in forcing the universities to focus on their practical role of producing civil servants as further cause for the professors' political participation in the 1830s and 1840s. Ringer appears to overlook the fact that state-dominance and suppression were not uncommon in the history of German universities. It is worth noting that German university professors do not appear to have reacted at any other time with the same fervour, commitment and political involvement that they exhibited in the 1830s and the 1840s.⁷⁸ The Bismarckian era, for example, was not well-known for its encouragement of academic culture. Bismarck's critical response to the overcrowding of universities illustrates his view of academic activity:

[D]iese Häufung von gelehrten Schulen [sind] ein Fehler, der sich früher oder später dadurch strafen wird, daß man ein noch viel stärkeres Maß von unbefriedigten Strebern erhält, welche nur aufgrund ihrer gelehrten Bildung Ansprüche machen, die der Staat in diesem Umfang nicht erfüllen kann.⁷⁹

The Minister for Education in Imperial Germany Friedrich Althoff's intervention and high-handedness in matters of higher education were far more excessive. In the early years of the twentieth century the universities found themselves under strict state control and centralised administration during Althoff's period in office.⁸⁰ Professorial

⁷⁸ As we shall see in the following chapters of this thesis neither the brutal authority exercised over universities during the Third Reich and nor the coercion of universities in East Germany to conform to socialist ideals provoked concerted, large-scale protest from the professorial group. These periods have however not been considered by Ringer.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Konrad H. Jarausch, 'Universität und Hochschule' in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, vol. 4, Christa Berg et. al. (eds), (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1998), pp. 316-317.

⁸⁰ Bleuel, 1968, p. 62.

reaction was, on the whole, typically submissive. In this context, thus, the words of a *Privatdozent* comparing the professors at the forefront of the liberal movement of the 1830s and 1840s and those of the early twentieth century are worth noting:

Persönlichkeiten und Männer im Sinne der als leuchtende Vorbilder genannten Fichte und Schleiermacher, Persönlichkeiten wie Savigny, Jacob Grimm, Böckh, Niebuhr, Lachmann, Mommsen, Dahlmann, Gervinus, Treitschke wird man heute, wenn überhaupt, sehr viel seltener als früher finden. Dafür ist an höfischen Gelehrten, an Virtuosen, an geschickten Poseurs, rücksichtslosen Strebern, Exzellenzen, Geheimräten, und Rittern hoher Orden durchaus kein Mangel.⁸¹

Ringer attempts to trace the history of the mandarins through the lens of their relationship with the ruling monarchy as opposed to attempting to place their unusual role during the early half of the nineteenth century in any kind of wider political and social context. He reads the situation quite simply as an understanding between the rulers and mandarins which the rulers happened to have transgressed:

A ruler who is trying to reduce the power of the traditional aristocracy has to create a more or less rational system of government, so that he can effectively extend his control into areas formerly under a regime of customary privilege. He therefore has good reason to support an emerging caste of non-noble

⁸¹ Quoted in Bleuel, 1968, p. 62.

officials ... [and] will hasten to cooperate with the most highly educated amongst his subjects to their mutual advantage.⁸²

According to him this symbiotic relationship between the mandarins and their rulers was adversely affected by the Carlsbad Decrees which severely curtailed academic freedom along with free thought and speech. Ringer thus concludes:

They [the mandarins] felt that their rulers had broken the tacit agreement which had been reached before 1812 and which was based on the model of the legal and cultural state.⁸³

And yet, as the examples in the above section indicate, the mandarins had never been known for their opposition to the ruling powers at any other period in Germany's history. The uncharacteristic attitude of the mandarins in the 1830s and 1840s does not seem to have been sufficiently explained by Ringer.

3.3. Pre-eminence of *Wissenschaft* and its Effects on Mandarin Outlook

The political role of the university professors in the 1830s and 1840s can be understood in its entirety if one considers the importance of *Wissenschaft* and its effects on professors and German society alike. This section examines mandarin attitude in light of the pre-eminent position that *Wissenschaft* had attained in the German states by the 1820s. The Napoleonic era had seen extensive changes to nearly all aspects of life including the universities and higher education. As mentioned

⁸² Ringer, 1990, p. 7.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 124.

earlier, the university reforms under Humboldt were to become the foundation for the development and success of universities in Germany for two centuries. Hence the widely accepted view of universities at the time was:

Sie [die Universität] nahm mit ihren außergewöhnlichen Forscherleistungen ... mit ihrer Ausbildungsfunktion insbesondere für die Staatsbeamtenschaft und die freien Bildungsberufe, mit ihrer normativen, vom Neuhumanismus durchdrungenen Bildungsidee eine beherrschende Stellung im kulturellen und politischen Leben der entstehenden Nation ein.⁸⁴

The importance of the *Bildungsbürgertum* and its brightest luminaries, the university full-professors, rose correspondingly with the rise in eminence of universities:

Der Staat selbst hob die "Gebildeten" durch verschiedene Privilegierungen heraus, unter anderem durch eigenen Gerichtsstand, durch Steuervergünstigungen und vor allem – in Preußen – durch das sogenannte "Einjährige", die Reduzierung der Wehrdienstzeit auf ein Jahr.⁸⁵

Wissenschaft, being a keystone of Humboldt's idea of university, soon assumed an unparalleled position within German society. The superior status of the *Ordinarien* quite naturally derived from the position attained by *Wissenschaft* in the early nineteenth century. As McClelland observes:

⁸⁴ Wolfgang Hardtwig, 'Der monarchische Staat und das Bürgertum', in *Deutsche Geschichte der neuen Zeit*, Martin Broszat et. al. (eds), (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1985), p. 110.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[T]he professoriate led the country in thinking of national political issues, because they had an ideology that permeated all corners of the German states, a faith in *Wissenschaft* to provide answers to Germany's problems.⁸⁶

The concept of *Wissenschaft* in its purest form thus may have influenced a generation of mandarins at the time. Its limitless potential to benefit mankind and its simultaneous non-utilitarian element was a potent combination whose appeal was incalculable for all men of letters. Thomas Nipperdey elaborates on the professors' own perception of *Wissenschaft*:

[T]he exploration of the unknown, the discovery of the new, the constant striving towards the truth and the expansion of knowledge – these became the highest moral duties of man, the highest form of his existence; they became almost holy, something which would grant him a share of immortality.⁸⁷

Nipperdey thus concludes:

This [belief] provided a heroic dimension to their quiet, civil-service existences; it provided them with a mission.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ McClelland, 1980, p. 152.

⁸⁷ Nipperdey, 1983, p. 417.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

In such a situation, the professors' immensely prestigious position, tied inexorably to the universal message of *Wissenschaft*, meant that despite being located in small university towns they naturally assumed the position of leaders not just of the middle class, but also of the people as a whole. Their political activity thus was almost directly a result of this phenomenon.⁸⁹

Ringer himself eloquently describes the heightened prestige of the concept of *Wissenschaft* during the early part of nineteenth century. However, according to him, the mandarins' belief in *Wissenschaft* served to secure their own positions and authority. Ringer appears unwilling to make the connection between the prestigious position of the universities and *Wissenschaft* and the professors' politically active role in the 1830s and 1840s. To be sure, over time several of *Wissenschaft's* connotations became ossified in attitudes and roles which exemplified the strong self-preserving instinct of the professoriate. In the decades following the failed revolution the mandarins' ivory-tower mentality, their unwillingness to dabble in petty politics and their constant criticism of utilitarian learning took precedence over *Wissenschaft's* universal and humanitarian ideas. It follows, therefore, that the defensive, ultra-conservative attitude that Ringer ascribes to the mandarins may have its beginnings at this point of time. Indeed he himself notes a marked change in mandarin attitude in the period following the revolution and provides the following reasons for that change:

⁸⁹ Ibid.

[C]hanging social realities forced the mandarins ... towards an ever more unquestioning support of the existing regime.⁹⁰

The changing social realities he mentions refer to the rise of the new, business and propertied members of the middle classes which began to form part of the nation's elite in the late nineteenth century. Thus, the political engagement of university professors in the pre-1848 period is significant as a point in the history of the mandarins after which they seemed to retreat from active politics altogether.

Ringer falls short of describing the professors as indispensable to the entire movement. He prefers to understate the political engagement of liberal minded professors of the time as merely acts of self-interest - in this case the need for constitutional reform in order to protect the legal state against the whims of the ruling powers (which naturally posed a potential threat to their own positions). Nipperdey, on the other hand, chooses to describe the situation as follows:

The political parties and political public life were unimaginable without these professors. And the value of science [Wissenschaft], as well as the legal autonomy of the universities, made it possible that even in the so-called authoritarian states the professors – who were, after all, civil servants – were leaders of the opposition.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Ringer, 1990, p. 127.

⁹¹ Nipperdey, 1983, p. 424-425.

Others hold similar views and, interestingly, elaborate on another source of mandarin status and influence:

The most characteristically German ... of the new claims to political power was that of the *Gelehrten*. The multiplication of states, by increasing the number of universities, which were state institutions, and the freedom of movement from university to university had encouraged the emergence of this group as a social class. In the flowering period of German literature, philosophy and letters the *Gelehrte* came into his own. ... it [is not] surprising that the nationalist movement of the early nineteenth century, with its intellectual roots, should have been fed by the academic workers in jurisprudence, history and philology.⁹²

The multiplication of states mentioned in the quote above was a vital aspect contributing to the social position and political leadership of the university professors. Ringer notes the severity of the censorship regulations and the ever-increasing interference by rulers in cultural affairs including university life after 1819 but overlooks the obvious benefit of mobility that the professors enjoyed during that period. McClelland, on the other hand, recognizes this advantage:

[T]he worst consequences of political reaction were sometimes attenuated by the federalization of the higher education system.⁹³

⁹² Ramm, 1982, p. 245.

⁹³ McClelland, 1980, p. 154.

He cites the examples of the *Göttinger Sieben*, expelled from Hannover in 1837, and the professors expelled from Leipzig in 1850 as those who managed to find positions for themselves in other German states.⁹⁴ Nipperdey mentions Johann Lukas Schönlein who was driven out of Würzburg in 1840 and went to Berlin; Lorenz Oken, who lost his chair more than once, at Würzburg, Munich and Erlangen, and eventually found one at Zurich in the 1830s; and Rudolph Virchow, who had to leave Berlin for his participation in the revolution but held a professorship in Würzburg in the intervening period before returning to Berlin.⁹⁵

3.4. Mandarins in the Post-1848 era

In general the effects of the 1848 revolution on German liberalism are well known. In the words of Hans-Peter Bleuel: “Der Höhepunkt dieser Entwicklung ist zugleich ihr Epilog”.⁹⁶ The failure of the revolution (that is, the failure of the liberal governments of 1848 to maintain themselves in power and the National Assembly in Frankfurt to unify Germany under a liberal regime) was clearly a setback to the liberal movement. The extent to which this spelt the end of the liberal movement in Germany remains a contentious issue.⁹⁷ The details of the revolution and its aftermath are in themselves of little importance for our purposes. Mandarin attitude leading up to the Revolution and to a lesser extent after 1848 is of greater significance in the development of the mandarin tradition.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Nipperdey, 1983, p. 418-19.

⁹⁶ Bleuel, 1968, p. 48.

⁹⁷ Historians have variously argued about the precise date heralding the decline of liberalism in Germany. If not in the revolutions of 1848, then was it during the constitutional conflict of the mid-1860s, with the unification of Germany from above in 1871, or at the time of Bismarck's break with the National Liberals in 1878-79? On the other hand, some historians now argue that the revolution was not in any real sense the beginning of the end for German liberalism. Sheehan, 1978, p. 273.

Despite the setback in the liberal movement, German university professors continued to be politically involved in the coming decade. However, the form of political engagement changed and some kind of de-politicisation of the academic profession did take place in the years following the debacle of 1848 and especially after 1871. Sheehan notes that whereas in the middle part of the century liberal professors had spoken of the need to combine scholarship and political commitment, most now believed that “whoever is devoted to the quest for truth cannot be a party man”.⁹⁸ If a professor spoke out on public issues, he would do so as an objective, neutral observer, as the opponent of “the vulgar opinions of the day” and “one-sided class interest”.⁹⁹ In a complete reversal of the view prevailing in the pre-1848 period, university professors considered neither making nor guiding public opinion as their role - they preferred to serve as an antidote to public opinion’s unhealthy influence.¹⁰⁰

Political disinterest though could not be ascribed to the academic community as a whole. That is especially the case since the term “apolitical” had more than one connotation. It would be applied to, amongst others, those who were deeply concerned with political issues but considered themselves above party politics and interest groups, those who were truly apolitical, whose attitudes gave passive support to the public image of scientific objectivity, and amongst the liberal academics those who

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Ringer’s description of mandarin apoliticism fully reflects these beliefs.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 234. Ringer cites Max Weber’s essays *Politics as a Vocation* and *Science as a Vocation* (1918) as classic formulations of the problematic relationship between scholarship and politics. Ringer, 1990, pp. 354-356. Weber advocated a clear separation of the political and academic worlds. In his opinion universities and learning should remain detached from political motives and agenda. At the same time Weber was not against the combining of the political and academic roles in the same person outside the lecture room. Max Weber, *Science as a Vocation*, <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Weber/scivoc.html> 28 June 2004.

adopted a moderate liberal ideological stance with rigid non-partisanship with respect to liberal parties.¹⁰¹ The *Verein für Sozialpolitik* is illustrative of the case. It was formed in 1872 by a group of academics and officials with members such as the historical economists, Adolf Wagner, Lujo Brentano and Gustav Schmoller in the nineteenth century and social scientists of the stature of Max Weber, Ferdinand Tönnies and Werner Sombart in the early twentieth century.¹⁰² The reasons for the formation of the *Verein* were overtly political - identifying social issues in need of academic research, organising research projects among its members, debating the results of the project and, finally, arriving at a consensus that would be passed to the state, the politicians, and the public in the form of recommendations for government action.¹⁰³ In practice this proved infeasible given the differences of opinion between the members of the *Verein* and by the turn of the century the association gave up the idea of recommending policy and concentrated on encouraging research and its discussion before a public audience. The notion of apoliticism the *Verein* represented was that reform should come about through a slow process of persuasion and education, not through fragmentary class conflicts or through parties representing the limited interests of particular groups. And, of course, it was the apolitical academic who should do the persuading and educating through research and a non-partisan engagement in politics.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Smith, 1991, p. 180. The various forms of mandarin apoliticism were evident in their reaction to subsequent events in the course of Germany's development. Mandarin attitude leading up to and during the First World War, the Weimar democracy and the National Socialist period indicate the varied nature of mandarin apoliticism.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

3.5. Effect of the Role of University Professors

Ringer's claim that mandarin attempts at political reform during the 1830s and 1840s were guided by their interest in constitutional reform at the expense of social and economic goals as well as democratic ideas, voting rights and ministerial government, is justified to some extent. Constitutional and legal guarantees of civic rights in order to guard the freedoms of thought, learning and expression were no doubt of paramount importance in the professors' agenda. Indeed, the failure of the revolution exposed these weaknesses in the liberal movement: its difficulties in maintaining a broad basis of support, the inapplicability of its ideology to the interest of many lower class segments of society, and the existence of splits within liberalism itself. While almost all liberals agreed about the need for representation, constitutional government, individual rights and some form of *Rechtsstaat*, some looked to the state as an instrument of reform, some sought to mobilize social forces in order to bring about political reforms, and some others supported more radical changes – tending to favour democratic institutions and the dissolution of the monarchies altogether.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, the entire period and the political ideas it gave rise to had had

a single effect, in so far as they stimulated a new openmindedness towards the problems of government and a sense, among those whom they influenced, that they themselves were responsible for their own fate. ... In concrete terms, the liberals of the nineteenth century expressed the notion of membership and self-dependence, which they derived from Kant and Humboldt, in demands for

¹⁰⁵ John Breuilly, 'State Building, Modernization and Liberalism from the Late Eighteenth Century to Unification: German Peculiarities', *European History Quarterly*, vol. 22, (1992), pp. 257-284.

elective parliaments, a free press, defence by a citizens' militia and trial by jury.¹⁰⁶

For the purposes of this chapter it is as much the *reasons* for mandarin opposition as the very *act* of opposing and rising against the ruling powers that is of significance. The activities and attitudes of liberal university professors is an example not just of political engagement but *oppositional* engagement of a group of individuals known principally for their political apathy or avowed conservative stance. However, at the same time, it would be incorrect to assume that Ringer's mandarins did not exist at the time. In fact they represented a majority of the university professors who were on the side of throne and altar.¹⁰⁷ Yet as Sheehan notes, the significance of the vocal, liberal minority was far greater than their small numbers.¹⁰⁸ As it happened, reform and revolution had redefined the status of academics. *Wissenschaft* had bestowed upon them a new kind of prestige. At the same time, paradoxically, stringent measures by ruling powers to curb academic freedom helped create some kind of fame and mystique around them. Their efforts to educate a largely apolitical public on liberal ideas reflected their feelings as citizens of a gradually modernising society rather than privileged subjects of princes in a hierarchical, semi-feudal social order. The following quote may appear over-optimistic in its conclusion, but serves to illustrate well the effects the period had on the general population:

¹⁰⁶ Ramm, 1982, p. 242-243.

¹⁰⁷ McClelland, 1980, p. 228.

¹⁰⁸ Sheehan, 1978, p. 19.

Man kann geradezu von einer Fundamentalpolitisierung der Bevölkerung sprechen. Selbst die Zeitgenossen nahmen diesen Vorgang verwundert wahr, wenn etwa die Breslauer Zeitung am 23. März 1848 berichtete, es sei “etwas ganz Gewöhnliches, Männer aus der untersten Klasse des Volkes, ja selbst Frauen über politische und soziale Fragen so klare und gesunde Ansichten entwickeln zu hören, als wenn sie darüber jahrelange Studien gemacht hätten.”¹⁰⁹

As far as Ringer’s work is concerned, greater emphasis on professorial opposition to reigning powers in the 1830s and 1840s would likely detract from the central thesis of the mandarins’ proximity to the throne and lead to a dilution of the perceived homogeneity of the group. A study of the liberal professors in the 1830s and 1840s would have, however, lent a new dimension to the analysis of the apolitical German university professors. It would have indicated that the German university professors were politically active as part of the liberal opposition to the ruling powers in the first few decades following the university reforms of 1809/1810. This politically active role played by university professors in the beginning of the nineteenth century provides valuable evidence of the supreme position attained by *Wissenschaft* and the universities in German society and consequently, in German psyche. This culture has, as this thesis argues in subsequent chapters, persisted for two centuries and constitutes an important reason why the German university tradition and its principal tenets occupy a central role in Germany even in contemporary times.

¹⁰⁹ Wolfgang Siemann, ‘Die Revolution von 1848/49’ in *Scheidewege der deutschen Geschichte: Von der Reformation bis zur Wende 1517-1989*, Hans-Ulrich Wehler (ed), (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1995), pp. 91-102.

4. Conclusion

Although Ringer's book has attracted its share of criticism it has been considered, since its publication in 1969, indispensable for studies on any aspect of the German professoriate and has laid the foundations for further research in the area. Its categories of orthodox and modernist mandarins have served as "ideal types" which researchers could use in investigation of other sections of the academic elite. For instance, Nipperdey, in his classic work on the history of Imperial Germany, employs the terms mandarins and modernists in his discussion of the universities.¹¹⁰ Martin Jay discusses the extent to which members of the Frankfurt School shared characteristics of Ringer's mandarins.¹¹¹ As mentioned in the previous section, Russell McCormach, Robert Paul and Jonathan Harwood have all utilized Ringer's thesis to study the views and opinions prevalent amongst scientists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The research of Konrad Jarausch and Charles McClelland on students, universities and the liberal professions in Germany also draws in important ways on the foundations laid by Ringer.¹¹² The term mandarin has come to signify the archetypal German university professors since Ringer first chose to portray him in this manner. Hauke Brunkhorst uses Ringer's characterization of the mandarins in his book: *Der Intellektuelle im Land der Mandarine*.¹¹³ Wolfgang Frühwald too discusses the position of university professors in modern Germany with the help of Ringer's

¹¹⁰ Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1866-1918*, vol.1, (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1991-92), p. 590.

¹¹¹ Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, (London: Heinemann, 1973).

¹¹² Jarausch, 1982, Konrad Jarausch, *The Unfree Professions: German Lawyers, Teachers and Engineers, 1900-1950*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), McClelland, 1980, Charles E. McClelland, *The German Experience of Professionalization: Modern Learned Professions and Their Organizations from the Early Nineteenth Century to the Hitler Era*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, England, 1991).

¹¹³ Hauke Brunkhorst, *Der Intellektuelle im Land der Mandarine*, (Frankfurt, 1987).

model in his article entitled: “Die Wiederkehr der Mandarine”.¹¹⁴ Hans Hahn treats the phenomenon of the German mandarin and its influence on scholarship and learning as a major theme in his book *Education and Society in Germany*.¹¹⁵ And, finally, James Albisetti dedicates an article as a retrospective of Ringer’s work in 1994, twenty-five years after the publication of *The Decline*, cataloguing in detail the influence and depth of the book and its author on the subject of German educational history.¹¹⁶

The present thesis similarly finds *The Decline* rich and inspirational. In the following chapters it seeks to extend Ringer’s thesis by examining an important aspect in the developmental history of the German professoriate which does not figure in the book. The issue concerns the longevity of the mandarin tradition, especially its survival after its putative demise in 1933. It provides evidence of mandarin thought and attitude in successive periods in Germany’s post-Second World War history. Chapter Three therefore, considers the mandarin tradition during the period of the Third Reich, Chapter Four examines university professors in the former East Germany, and Chapter Five takes a detailed view of the German professoriate in contemporary times. Chapter Six concludes the thesis by examining the basis for the continuation of the mandarin tradition.

¹¹⁴ Wolfgang Frühwald, ‘Die Wiederkehr der Mandarine’, *Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 13, no. 1, (1994), pp. 37- 47.

¹¹⁵ Hahn, 1998.

¹¹⁶ James C. Albisetti, ‘The Decline of the German Mandarins after Twenty-Five Years’, *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 4, (1994), pp. 453-465.

CHAPTER THREE

The Effect of the National Socialist Period on the German Mandarin Tradition

Ringer brings to a close his analysis of the mandarin tradition in 1933 on the grounds that the fundamental ideology of the mandarins, being based on spiritual and moral upliftment, could not have survived the barbarism and terror of the totalitarian Nazi regime. However, as Chapter Two of this thesis indicates, several reviewers of *The Decline* have suggested that the mandarin tradition survived the Third Reich and was very much in evidence even in the 1960s. In this vein, this chapter attempts to establish that mandarin tradition did not cease to exist under the Nazi regime. It argues that in addition to the intrinsic strength and resilience of the mandarin tradition, two factors that aided its survival during this period were: the failure on part of the National Socialists to develop and implement comprehensive changes in the university system; and the mandarins' stance of passivity - rather than active resistance - towards the Nazi efforts at reforming universities which, in its own way, helped preserve the principles and values associated with German university traditions.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section attempts to find evidence of the survival of mandarin thought and ideology during the Nazi regime. Since primary sources are difficult to obtain from the period of the Third Reich it is necessary to seek recourse to relevant evidence from the immediate post-War period which establishes that the mandarin tradition survived the regime. In fact, mandarin characteristics were dominant in universities in Germany in the *Nachkriegsperiode*, a

subject discussed in the first section. The second section of the chapter examines the reforms and changes to universities proposed and implemented by the Nazis. It focuses on those reforms which directly or indirectly affected the position of university full professors and the extent to which they were successful in achieving the aims of *nationalsozialistische Hochschulpolitik*.

The third section examines some deeper aspects of the relationship between mandarin culture and National Socialism. The Nazi perception of universities and professors was characterized, on the one hand, by suspicion and distrust of the universities as centres of anti-Nazi thought and resistance and, on the other, by an extremely low opinion of academic activity *per se*. The attitude of the majority of the mandarins was more difficult to categorise. Initially it was characterized by a policy of “wait and see” without reaching conclusions about the so-called “national movement”. Later, in the face of the terror and brutalities of the regime, their stance changed to one of passive apoliticism, as they took refuge from the realities of the Nazi regime in the esoteric world of *Wissenschaft*. The fourth section concludes.

1. Existence of the Mandarin Tradition in the Third Reich

The mandarin tradition manifested itself in different ways in the post-1945 period. Perhaps the most important element was the urgent call for return to the essence of the German learning traditions, especially to the concept of *Wissenschaft*. *Wissenschaft*, according to the mandarins, was the antidote to the moral turpitude caused by the destruction and devastation engulfing the country at the time. The first sub-section examines this aspect of the restoration of the mandarin tradition. Further, evidence of

the existence of the mandarin tradition was more explicitly reflected in the professors' attitude towards proposals of the occupying powers for university reform. This is discussed in the second sub-section of the chapter.

1.1. Return to the Realm of the *Geist*

The devastation following the end of the Second World War in Germany provided a natural backdrop for calls to return to the spiritually ennobling and morally uplifting traditions of learning. *Wissenschaft* became a kind of spiritual saviour of a morally wounded nation. Its fundamental characteristics and its potential to help the German people out of the moral and spiritual abyss they now found themselves in, was reinforced time and again. Gerhard Ritter, the noted historian, stated:

So richten sich die Blicke vieler auf die Wissenschaft, in der Hoffnung, hier, wenn irgendwo, die Lösung der vielen Lebensrätsel zu finden, die uns so ratlos machen, eine zuverlässige Orientierung zum mindesten über das Ganze unserer Lage, über die tieferen Gründe des großen Zusammenbruchs und über die Möglichkeiten, die uns etwa geblieben sind zum Weiterleben, vielleicht auch, mit der Zeit, zu allmählichem Wiederaufstieg.¹

The reiteration of the importance of *Wissenschaft* also as the essence of academic activity and the foundation on which German universities were based indicated the renewed presence of mandarin thought and culture. In a speech on the occasion of the

¹ Gerhard Ritter, *Die Idee der Universität und das Öffentliche Leben: Öffentlicher Universitätsvortrag gehalten in der Vortragsreihe "Das Menschenbild" am 18. Oktober 1945 in Freiburg im Breisgau*, (Freiburg im Breisgau: Novalis-Verlag, 1946a), p. 3.

re-opening of the University of Tübingen in 1945, the Rector, Hermann Schneider reflected:

Zu schwerem Schaden nur glaubte man im letzten Jahrzehnt, die Hochschule von ihren geschichtlichen Wurzeln abschneiden und sich von ihrem umfassenden Bildungsideal entfernen zu können. Heute ist man froh, sich wieder in seine Arme flüchten zu dürfen ... Es fühlt sich von Neuem dazu geführt, den ganzen Menschen zu suchen und auf ihn einzuwirken, zur Herrschaft des Geistes und zu einer innerlicheren Daseinsform zurückzufinden.²

The immense, though not irreparable, damage that *Wissenschaft* had suffered during the tumultuous years of Nazi rule naturally found a mention in most speeches and publications by university professors. This was an altogether more complex issue in which the professoriate's role during the Third Reich was also under the spotlight. In the immediate post-War period the mandarins' assessment of their role during the National Socialist period reflected typical mandarin behaviour and argument. For example, from the professors' point of view, the academic community had emerged largely successful from the Nazi debacle – the general consensus being that *Wissenschaft* had survived the totalitarian regime primarily because of the devotion of scholars and academics to the concept and its pursuit even in the face of the grim circumstances prevalent during the National Socialist period. Gerhard Ritter, thus somewhat sanguinely, refers to his role as a modern historian:

² Hermann Schneider, *Über Entstehung Träger und Wesen des Neuen in der Geschichte der Dichtkunst: Rede, gehalten bei der Neueröffnung der Universität Tübingen am 15. Oktober, 1945*, (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1950), p. 9.

... a thankful and beautiful one in the Third Reich ... How clearly did I see then that the mission of the university teacher was to give clear vision, a sure footing, sound principles and to transmit great traditions to an unbelieving, mistrustful and perplexed generation of youth.³

Ritter's account further alludes to the presence of a sizeable number of anti-Nazi professors who opposed the regime indirectly through their lectures and publications (which, according to Ritter, were incomprehensible to the crude and arrogant Nazi Party officers).⁴ However, it appears that in this context Ritter had been overly-optimistic; in fact, there had not been any significant resistance from professorial circles to the regime, and the phenomenon of the anti-Nazi professor simply did not exist.⁵ Ritter too was considered to be an "anti-Nazi professor" primarily because of his acquaintance with Carl Goerdeler (of the *Goerdeler Kreis*) and was therefore jailed for some time.⁶

Karl Jaspers, on the other hand, accepted that the complicity of a "minority" of university teachers and researchers with the Nazis was shameful and had harmed the ideal of *Wissenschaft*. Nevertheless, he firmly believed that the "inner emigration" and "seclusion" of German academics (an intrinsic part in the pursuit of *Wissenschaft*) had prevented further damage to the universities and to the guiding principles of learning and research:

³ Gerhard Ritter, 'The German Professor in the Third Reich', *Review of Politics*, (1946b), vol. 8, pp. 242-54;

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ernst Nolte, 'Zur Typologie des Verhaltens der Hochschullehrer im Dritten Reich', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 46, (1965), pp. 3-14.

⁶ Ibid.

Schwerer faßbar als die Zerstörungen an den Voraussetzungen der Wissenschaft, ihren Einrichtungen und ihrer öffentlichen Erscheinung ist die Zerstörung in den Wissenschaften selber. Die Wissenschaft als solche konnte nur durch die Forscher ruiniert werden. Daß dieses geschah, ist die Schmach unserer Universitäten, daß es in weitestem Umfang auch nicht geschah und das in der Verborgenheit zahlreicher Forscher unbeirrt durch die Jahre arbeiteten, ist der Ausgang unserer gegenwärtigen Zuversicht.⁷

On the subject of professorial inaction in light of the Nazi take-over of the universities, Jaspers chose a typical mandarin argument in defence of the role of universities and academics in the Third Reich. He traced the inability of *Wissenschaft* to resist the National Socialist onslaught on the universities to the presence of certain anti-“*wissenschaftliche*” elements.⁸ According to Jaspers, these anti-*wissenschaftliche* currents in German university principles and learning, having originated in the second half of the nineteenth century, had led to certain “Mängel im geistigen Leben der Universitäten”.⁹ That had resulted in the Nazis easily dismantling established university systems which would have been otherwise far more difficult. Jaspers’s views reflected characteristic mandarin concerns about the dilution of the essence of *Wissenschaft* (Ringer refers to similar concerns amongst the professoriate in the first half of the twentieth century¹⁰). Jaspers wished for a return to the core of the German university traditions, not merely to the pre-1933 period but to the *original* concept of

⁷ Karl Jaspers, *Die Antwort an Sigrud Undset, mit Beiträgen über die Wissenschaft im Hitlerstaat und den neuen Geist der Universität*, (Konstanz: Südverlag, 1947), p. 15.

⁸ Karl Jaspers and Fritz Ernst, *Vom lebendigen Geist der Universität und vom Studieren*, (Heidelberg: L. Schneider, 1946), p. 26.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Ringer, 1990, p. 81-127.

“*Wissenschaft und politische Besinnung*” as envisaged in the university reforms of the early nineteenth century:

Aus unserer Treue zur Humboldtzeit erstreben wir in den Formen unserer Institution keine radikale Neuschöpfung; wir stellen sie her im Sinne einer konservativen Revolution.¹¹

An age-old mandarin fixation too made its presence felt in the events during the period. The professors’ disdain of the idea of the university performing the role of a mass-educational institution had never been in doubt. Jaspers, in 1946, reiterated his earlier belief in the exclusivity of university learning:

[D]ie Leistung der Universität [ist] nicht unmittelbar für die breite Bevölkerung zugänglich. Die Universität ist nicht “Volkshochschule”.¹²

In another article he further stated:

An der Universität aber fordert ein lebendiger Geist, daß der Maßstab durch die Minorität der Besten gelte, nicht der Durchschnitt. An der Schule sollen alle mitkommen, damit die meisten ihr Ziel erreichen. Die Hochschule versagt, wenn sie diesem Prinzip folgt.¹³

¹¹ Jaspers and Ernst, 1946.

¹² Ibid., p. 33.

¹³ Ibid., p. 35.

Jasper's elitist notions represented the views of the majority of professors and eventually manifested themselves in university policy and reform in the decades that followed. As we shall see in Chapter Five of this thesis, mandarin opposition to the concept of the university as a mass-educational institution found official representation in the actions and decisions of the *Westdeutsche Rektorenkonferenz*, which, in the 1950s and 1960s, successfully resisted attempts to either establish new universities or convert other institutions of higher learning (mainly the *Fachhochschulen*) into full-fledged universities. As it turned out, this was to have catastrophic consequences for German universities in the ensuing period.

1.2. Restoration of the Status and Authority of the *Ordinarius*

The frequent reminders of *Wissenschaft's* curative properties and its unique role and importance in German universities were not the only evidence of the existence of mandarin thought at the time. The issue of reforming German universities as part of restoring normalcy in the educational sphere after the end of the Second World War further highlighted the presence of mandarin authority and influence. As it happened, the *Ordinarien* inevitably assumed the roles of decision-makers and adjudicators regarding the reforms and ensured that, eventually, their views on state involvement and centralisation of higher education prevailed.

Predictably, it was the occupying powers of the various zones of Germany who raised the issue of university reform. It is worth noting that none of the three occupying powers, the British, French or the Americans, fully endorsed the restoration of the classical German university. Each, according to its own assessment of the situation,

advocated fundamental changes to university structure, functioning, and curricula. In the French zone, for example, the authorized representative of the French Education Ministry, Raymond Schmittlein, stated in February 1946, in context of the universities of Tübingen and Freiburg:

Die traditionelle deutsche Universität ist zum Anachronismus in der modernen Welt geworden. Sie ist ein wahrer Fremdkörper inmitten des Volkes.¹⁴

Schmittlein's reform proposals extended to the temporary closure of Tübingen and Freiburg universities in order to bring about necessary changes in university function, structure and administration. Typically, in the atmosphere of the time, such proposals did not meet with success and the newly re-opened universities adopted the traditional character of the classical German university.¹⁵ Eventually, events led Schmittlein to withdraw from active participation in the affairs of Tübingen and Freiburg universities, leaving his deputies to follow a more moderate, officially acceptable restoration policy.¹⁶

The problem of high-handedness and arrogance of the professors was a widespread one and was frequently encountered by representatives of the British occupation forces during their efforts to "rehabilitate" and "de-nazify" universities in the post-1945 period. The British established a German commission that produced a report on

¹⁴ Stefan Zauner, 'Universität Tübingen und Leibniz-Kolleg in der Französischen Besatzungszeit 1945-49', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, vol. 119, (1999), pp. 209 - 231.

¹⁵ Ibid. In May 1945 the newly appointed Rector of Tübingen University, Hermann Schneider, notified the French *Ortskommandant* that the university had officially reverted to its original autonomous constitution.

¹⁶ Ibid. Schmittlein focused instead on the founding of the University of Mainz which was conceived as a shift away from the German model of a university.

German University Reform. *Das Blaue Gutachten*, as it came to be known, was to become a part of the history of German universities and proposed breaking up the ivory tower image of the German university in addition to reducing the enormous power of the *Lehrstuhlinhaber*.¹⁷ The difficulties in achieving this task are expressed in a Memorandum issued in May 1950:

The German universities have rightly to be regarded as a particularly hard nut to crack. Power is in the hands of oligarchies into which it is difficult for progressive elements to penetrate.¹⁸

In 1947 a delegation of the English Association of University Teachers invited to tour and offer advice to German universities concluded that lasting reform was not likely to come about solely through university initiative.¹⁹ They noted that academic attitudes were conservative, nationalistic and reactionary, and that there existed a strong sense of German superiority vis-à-vis other European countries as well as of individual intellectual arrogance.²⁰ The education officer in the University of Kiel, for example, summed up the situation in the following way:

One outstanding difficulty was that the faculties are autonomous, so that each Dean and indeed every professor was fighting for his own little empire. Much time was wasted by being asked to forward their particular interests. It was

¹⁷ David Phillips, *Pragmatismus und Idealismus: Das 'Blaue Gutachten' und die Britische Hochschulpolitik in Deutschland 1948*, (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1995).

¹⁸ Quoted in Kurt Jürgensen, 'Was there a British Policy towards Higher Education?', in *Hochschuloffiziere und Wiederaufbau des Hochschulwesens in Westdeutschland 1945-52, Teil 1: Die Britische Zone*, Manfred Heinemann and Ulrich Schneider (eds), (Hildesheim: Edition Bildung und Wissenschaft, 1990-91), p. 82.

¹⁹ Arthur Hearnden, *The British in Germany: Educational Reconstruction after 1945*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), p. 152.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

impossible to get them to co-ordinate their demands via the Dean. In order to spend more time with the students I opened a second office which professors were not supposed to enter, but I fought a losing battle. They just pushed the students aside. ... [T]he Dozenten were: ... a supine lot. Impossible to get them to express an opinion as they stood in fear and/or awe of their professors.²¹

Moreover, the non-cooperation of German professors in the reform efforts was a common feature at the time. The open confrontation between Robert Birley, the Educational Adviser to the British Military Governor in 1947, and the Senate of the University of Göttingen illustrates the case.²²

The phenomenon was repeated in the American sector. An in-depth study by American higher education authorities into the humanities in German and Austrian universities begins its analysis with the following observation: "University reform depends fundamentally upon the self-imposed inner reform of each professor".²³ The report highlights the plight of the *Privatdozent* and expresses urgent need for reform in this sector.²⁴ Yet, due to a lack of personnel, the occupying authorities had to call upon the expertise of available academics (a fact recorded in all the zones) - mostly established and middle-aged professors - in order to restore normalcy in the universities.²⁵ The mandarin class in the Nazi period had essentially been composed

²¹ Quoted in Phillips, 1995, p. 50.

²² Jürgensen, 1990-91, p. 81.

²³ Eugene Newton Anderson, *The Humanities in the German and Austrian Universities: A Report submitted to the American Council of Learned Societies*, (Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1950), p. 7.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Peter L. Stokes, *The German University-A View of its Reform*, London Association of Comparative Educationists, Occasional Paper Nine, (1983), p. 9.

of professors who had neither actively participated in nor provided resistance in any form to the regime. After the War these professors did not favour radical or stimulating policies, their prime concern being the revival of the fundamental structure of the classical German university. The guiding factor behind this position was that the vast majority of the *Ordinarien*, backed by their senates and faculties, were themselves unwilling to give up their newly re-acquired position and authority which had suffered under Hitler. As the report on the universities in the American Zone notes:

Many of the older men had been so colourless and harmless that the Nazis had not bothered about them. After the war these drab scholars returned to their professorships, ... regarding themselves as the sole custodians of that knowledge and wisdom derived from the days of freedom of the Weimar Republic ... The younger Dozenten say that these older gentlemen let the Nazi regime and the war pass by, or over, them without learning anything, and that they do not comprehend the disastrous effects of attempting to restore the old ways of the university.²⁶

As the above quote illustrates, there were then, as always, German academics, even professors, who recognised the need for, and were willing to accept reform. However, the nature of university reform they supported was fundamentally different from that proposed by others. In case of the universities, fundamental reorganisation of teaching and research was not possible without reforming traditional codes of practice and institutional culture. Hence, general calls for reform and reorganisation were

²⁶ Anderson, 1950, p. 11.

essentially pointless. In the end the importance of the preservation of classical traditions of German universities “relativized ensuing reform proposals and justified the opinion of those who argued against sweeping reforms”.²⁷

In sum, one can say that typical mandarin characteristics re-surfaced at various instances when university professors perceived any threat to their position or philosophy. Thus, when they found themselves faced with the new spirit of reform and renewal they exhibited a characteristic withdrawal from the reality of the situation. Respondek observes:

Dieser Konservatismus, der natürlich starke nationalistische Elemente beinhaltet, eher emotionale als intellektuelle, hat zur Folge, daß sie sich in ihre eigene Welt zurückziehen und einen stillen passiven Widerstand gegenüber dem neuen Zeitgeist aufbauen.²⁸

Others note that despite the period of upheaval: “...the average German professor, today as in the past, is a conspicuous seeker after power and social prestige”.²⁹ And, in light of the pressing demands of the day, the instances of professorial regret at the crisis facing the *Humanitätsideal* and resulting threat of dissolution of the Christian faith in the post-War era are ludicrous.³⁰ Finally, when faced with criticism the professors invariably countered the attack with the invocation of the Humboldtian

²⁷ *The World Yearbook of Education*, (London: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1971/72), p. 227.

²⁸ Peter Respondek, *Der Wiederaufbau der Universität Münster in den Jahren 1945-52 auf dem Hintergrund der britischen Besatzungspolitik*, (Münster: 1992), p. 354.

²⁹ R. H. Samuel and R. Hinton Thomas, *Education and Society in Modern Germany*, (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1949), p. 179.

³⁰ Hahn, 1998, p. 93.

principles, in particular, the importance of *Wissenschaft* and its pursuit. In the words of the Rector of the University of Munster:

Daß Wissenschaft nur dann gedeihen und nur dann erfolgreich sein kann, wenn sie in der Stille betrieben wird, das hat uns die nationalsozialistische Zeit mit ihrer Vernichtung der Wissenschaft ja zur Genüge bewiesen und ich glaube, daß niemand von uns die Absicht oder den Wunsch hat, daß eine solche Atmosphäre der Politik wieder an den Hochschulen einziehe.³¹

This section illustrates the re-appearance of aspects of mandarin culture and influence almost immediately after the end of the Second World War. It shows that the period of totalitarian rule, known for its anti-intellectual stance and ruthless methods for imposing its own pseudo-ideology, was unable to destroy the basis of the mandarins' position and authority.

2. University Reforms in the Third Reich

This part of the chapter focuses on the conception and implementation of university reforms and changes by the National Socialists. The aim is to assess the effects of *nationalsozialistische Hochschulpolitik* on the university professors. It should be mentioned here that the chapter is not an overview of *all* reforms pertaining to higher education proposed by the Nazis. It deals primarily with reforms directly affecting mandarins and their authority as, for example, the statute dismissing all Jewish, Marxist, and other so-called "anti-Nazi professors" or the incorporation of the

³¹ Quoted in Respondek, 1992, p. 366.

Führerprinzip in the higher educational system. Several authors have at various points analysed the Nazi university reforms. However, their purpose in doing so did not extend to showing continuity in the position and status of German university professors before and after the Third Reich.³²

The analysis below proceeds in four sub-sections. The first sub-section focuses on the expulsion of university academics deemed “unsuitable” by the National Socialist regime. The second sub-section highlights the absence of systematic, coherent reform policies for higher education at the beginning of the regime. The third sub-section exposes the inadequacies in Nazi organisation and planning, including the delay in implementing reforms in the universities. The fourth and final sub-section examines the *Führerprinzip* which was aimed at removing the powers of the full professors and transferring them to the office of the rector instead.

2.1. Expulsion of Anti-Nazi University Staff and Students

Official administrative actions to purge the bureaucracy (and therefore civil servants in the universities’ staff) of Jews, Marxists, pacifists and other such groups were the first steps taken by the National Socialists after assuming power that directly affected the universities. The policy was enforced by the passage of a law entitled the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Beamtentums* on 7 April 1933. Jewish and anti-Nazi students were similarly expelled from all higher educational institutions by virtue of

³² Hellmut Seier, ‘Der Rektor als Führer’, *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 12, no. 2, (1964), pp. 105-146; Arye Carmon, ‘Die Einführung des Führerprinzips in die Deutsche Universität’, *Neue Sammlung*, vol. 17, (1977), pp. 553-574; Reece C. Kelly, ‘German Professoriate under Nazism: A Failure of Totalitarian Aspirations’, *History of Education Quarterly*, Fall (1985), pp. 261-280; the book *Erziehung und Schulung im Dritten Reich, Teil 2: Hochschule und, Erwachsenenbildung*, Manfred Heinemann et. al. (eds), (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980) contains several articles on the subject.

the passage of the *Gesetz gegen die Überfüllung deutscher Schulen und Hochschulen* on 25 April 1933.³³

A general estimate is that by 1938 approximately one-third of all university teachers had been dismissed on grounds of their being “un-Aryan” or “anti-Nazi” or simply “unsuitable”.³⁴ The exact number of dismissals of academic staff is difficult to gauge. For example, official Nazi statistics claim a much higher figure - Hans Huber, a close associate of Bernhard Rust, the *Reichserziehungsminister*, stated that by 1939 (five years since the setting up of the *Reichsministerium*) 45 percent of official staff had been replaced. He also added that no other state organisation had had such a large turnover of staff.³⁵ 45 percent though over-estimates the proportion of staff dismissed by the Nazis since it includes those who retired or left for personal reasons.

There is evidence to suggest that this action of the Nazis did not come in for any serious criticism from the professors. In this context it should be noted that there were significant variations between universities in the number of academics dismissed. The Universities of Berlin, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Breslau, Göttingen, Freiburg, Hamburg and Cologne lost (in descending order) between 32 and 18 percent of their teaching staff.³⁶ At Rostock and Tübingen, on the other hand, the dismissals were very few in number.³⁷ The variations indicate the presence of anti-Semitic sentiments in academic

³³ Though exceptions were made for those “non-Aryan” students whose fathers had fought at the front in the First World War. Hans Maier, ‘Nationalsozialistische Hochschulpolitik’ in *Die Deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich*, Helmut Kuhn et. al. (eds), (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1966), p. 79.

³⁴ Hartmut Titz, ‘Hochschule und Nationalsozialismus’ in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte 1918-1945*, Christa Berg et. al. (eds), (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1998), p. 225; Sylvia Paletschek, ‘The Invention of Humboldt and the Impact of National Socialism’, in *Science in the Third Reich*, Margit Szoellosi-Janze, (ed), (Oxford: Berg, 2001), p. 44.

³⁵ Maier, 1966, p. 88.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 82.

³⁷ Ibid.

recruitment policies before 1933 - a fact recorded by Ringer who observes that mandarins were no strangers to anti-Semitic practices. At the University of Tübingen, for example, it had been a part of recruitment policy for a generation. Hence, only 2 percent of academic staff needed to be dismissed under the Nazi law, which was miniscule in comparison to other universities.³⁸

Further, it was observed that some established professors were pleased at the removal of some of their disliked colleagues; also, lower ranking teaching staff, who now saw their chances of promotion improve, were not wholly against the Nazi policy of expelling the so-called anti-Nazi elements from the universities.³⁹ Max Planck reportedly reacted to Otto Hahn's suggestion for an appeal by a group of well-known professors against the dismissal of Jewish professors in the following manner:

Wenn Sie heute 30 solcher Herren zusammenbringen ... dann kommen morgen 150, die dagegen sprechen, weil sie die Stellen der anderen haben wollen.⁴⁰

While the dismissal of some of the brightest scholars was a severe set-back for German universities (from which they never really recovered) it did not seem have delivered a body blow to the mandarin tradition *per se*. Ringer has observed that main body of mandarins did not include significant numbers of Jews, Marxists and Democrats in the first place. Thus, the dismissal of these elements did not fundamentally alter the composition of the mandarin class.

³⁸ Dieter Langewiesche, 'Die Universität Tübingen in der Zeit der Nationalsozialismus', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 23, no. 4, (1997), pp. 618-646.

³⁹ Titze, 1998, p. 227.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Titze, 1998, p. 227.

The “cleansing” of the universities of Jewish and other unsuitable elements was in effect the only Nazi measure in universities that was successfully implemented and left a lasting impression on German university and academic life. As we shall see the success of this venture and the simultaneous failure of the other Nazi reforms indicate a distinct imbalance in Nazi policy and approach towards the re-organisation of higher education.

2.2. Absence of National Socialist Higher Education Reform Policies

The Nazi *Gleichschaltung* of universities were characterised by a marked absence of well-conceived reform policies. Nazi literature on higher education is generally sparse, though some committed Nazis had expounded on the subject of *Wissenschaft* and National Socialism before 1933.⁴¹ After the *Machtübernahme*, in view of the absence of any cohesive plans for university reform or higher education as such, suggestions were taken from four well-known works which had just appeared in 1933: the Hamburg historian Adolf Rein’s *Die Idee der politischen Universität*, Johann Mannhardt’s *Hochschulrevolution*, Hans Freyer’s *Das politische Semester* and Maximilian Weller’s *Nationalsozialistische Universitätsreform und philosophische Fakultäten*.⁴² The outcome of these reform proposals is worth considering since they reveal an important aspect of mandarin behaviour during the Third Reich, i.e., a noticeable lack of enthusiasm amongst the general majority of professors to expound National Socialist ideology or to re-structure universities according to Nazi reform proposals.

⁴¹ Notable Nazi “philosophers” were Ernst Krieck and Alfred Bäumler, both of whom forged an academic career through the Party. Maier, 1966, p. 85.

⁴² Geoffrey Giles, ‘Die Idee der politischen Universität’ in *Erziehung und Schulung im Dritten Reich*, Heinemann et. al. (eds), 1980.

Gustav Adolf Rein's work was the most influential of all the above mentioned books. Given his Nazi Party affiliations Rein had risen swiftly from the position of *Extraordinarius* to the Rector of Hamburg University. His book was welcomed by the Nazis as a solution to their lack of policy on higher education.⁴³ Rein's main thrust was towards the creation of an interdisciplinary group holding lectures and classes of definite political relevance. He proposed to call it the *Politische Fachgemeinschaft der Fakultäten* (PFG), where the humanities and the social sciences would be combined and which would be granted a quasi-faculty status.⁴⁴ Rein managed to put his ideas into practice at Hamburg with the help of the student leadership, who hailed his ideas primarily because of their disenchantment with an ossified and outmoded university which had, in their opinion, lost touch with reality.⁴⁵ However, infighting among the student leadership and, non-cooperation on the part of the senior teaching staff⁴⁶ led to a progressive shrinkage of the activities of the PFG into simply a series of seminars with the involvement of about a dozen professors.⁴⁷

Johann Mannhardt's reform of the higher education centred around the creation of pre-university academies where students would spend two years developing a "*nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung*".⁴⁸ The third year would be devoted to gaining practical experience before formally entering the university. The universities

⁴³ Paletschek, 2001, p. 47.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴⁵ Langewiesche, 1997, pp. 618-646.

⁴⁶ The PFG was also aimed at promoting academic co-operation between faculties. It may be recalled that German professors took, in Ringer's words, "a lukewarm, indifferent, or actually hostile attitude towards the idea of interdisciplinary lectures or programs of study". Ringer, 1990, p. 109. Thus, their non-cooperation does not come as a surprise.

⁴⁷ Geoffrey Giles, *University Government in Nazi Germany*, Yale Higher Education Program, Working Paper YHEP-15, (1976), p. 16.

⁴⁸ Helmut Böhm, *Von der Selbstverwaltung zum Führerprinzip: Die Universität München in den ersten Jahren des Dritten Reiches (1933-36)*, (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1995), p. 96.

would then have “politically and ideologically mature” students who could be groomed for a variety of professions. The most objectionable aspect of Mannhardt’s idea was his proposal to exclude women from higher education altogether. That was incorporated into university practice (since it reflected the National Socialist ideology anyway) with the passing of the *Gesetz gegen die Überfüllung deutscher Schulen und Hochschulen*, which was aimed at keeping women, like Jewish students, out of universities.⁴⁹ Like Rein, the rest of Mannhardt’s proposals were restricted to his own university and there too were only partially implemented.⁵⁰

As the title of his book suggests, Hans Freyer’s reform proposal involved an obligatory “*politisches Semester*” for all beginners at university.⁵¹ Maximilian Weller’s vision of National Socialist higher education included a similar “*deutschkundliche Vorfakultät*”, which all university students would attend before taking up their chosen fields of study.⁵² Of all the proposals for university reform, it was probably Freyer’s which was most likely to succeed since it involved the least restructuring. Again, it was abandoned because of apparent unwillingness on part of academics to interfere with the *Lernfreiheit* of the students by introducing obligatory lectures.⁵³

Interestingly, the ideas towards genuine “National Socialist Higher Education Institutions” bore fruit outside the confines of traditional universities. The concept of the “*Hohe Schule*”, for example, was a credible proposition. It was planned for the

⁴⁹ Michael H. Kater, ‘Professoren und Studenten im Dritten Reich’, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 67, (1985), pp. 465-487.

⁵⁰ Giles, 1980, pp. 53-54.

⁵¹ Böhm, 1995, p. 96.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁵³ Giles, 1980, p. 55.

period after the War and was designed not to replace existing universities, but, in typical Nazi style, was accorded a position above that of universities, as the highest institution for National Socialist research, teaching and education.⁵⁴ The project gained prominence from 1937, when Alfred Rosenberg decided to promote it himself. Rosenberg, who was the leading representative handling the Party's *Weltanschauungsfragen*, envisaged that research at the *Hohe Schulen* would ultimately bridge the gap between Nazi *Weltanschauung* and science.⁵⁵ From 1940 onwards a few external Institutes of the *Hohe Schule* were founded in cooperation with existing universities like the *Indogermanische Geistesgeschichte* in Munich but they did not have a lasting impact on other universities or on university policy in general.⁵⁶

The episode of the *Hohe Schulen* highlights two important facts. First, the institutional inertia of established universities was so great that National Socialist ambitions regarding higher education stood a chance of success only outside the confines of traditional universities.⁵⁷ Second, despite the absence of coherent National Socialist university reform policies, the National Socialist ideas for higher education may well have borne fruit with time. The brevity of the Third Reich along with the emphasis, after the initial years, on War efforts meant that Nazi higher education initiatives never really had a chance of being seriously implemented.

⁵⁴ Paletschek, 2001, p. 47.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Other Nazi higher education institutions included the *Akademie für deutsches Recht* and Walter Frank's *Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*. The Nazis also preferred to takeover institutes not directly affiliated with universities such as the *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* in Berlin and the *Deutsche Akademie* in Munich. Peter Chroust, *Giessener Universität und Faschismus: Band 1: Studenten und Hochschullehrer 1918-1945*, (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 1994), pp. 80-83.

⁵⁷ Klemens Pleyer, *Die Vermögens- und Personalverwaltung der deutschen Universitäten*, (Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1955), p. 149.

At the same time, it is evident that projects such as the *Hohe Schule* were few and far between. In general, the Nazis restricted themselves to passing laws which can be seen as administrative measures geared at destroying or removing and not at creating and enabling. In that sense, the fate of the initial reform proposals captures the whole story of the mandarins and the Nazis. The Nazis, with all their power and coercive tactics, could not transform universities into National Socialist institutions in any real sense. Ernst Nolte, the noted historian, observes that the phenomenon of a “*braune Universität*” simply did not take place:

[D]aß dem Nationalsozialismus die vollständige Eroberung der Universitäten nie gelungen ist, läßt sich nicht ernsthaft bezweifeln ...⁵⁸

Ultimately, lack of expertise, time and policy, and the channelling of resources and efforts towards the War resulted in a situation in which the National Socialists never really got a grip on the universities and higher education. As one author sees it: “Die Welt der Hochschulen blieb dem Nationalsozialismus innerlich so fremd wie die Kirchen.”⁵⁹

The professors, in the meantime, played a low-key role in the entire proceedings. While the phenomenon of *Selbstgleichschaltung* had been observed at the beginning of the Third Reich⁶⁰, professorial participation in the subsequent years verged on inaction, displaying an unwillingness to take the initiative to implement Nazi plans unless forced to do so. Indeed, the failure of the proposals described in the beginning

⁵⁸ Ernst Nolte, ‘Die deutsche Universität und der Nationalsozialismus’, *Neue Politische Literatur*, vol. 12, (1967), pp. 236-239.

⁵⁹ Maier, 1966, p. 74.

⁶⁰ Langewiesche, 1997, pp. 618-646.

of the section to gain a foothold in everyday university life was, to a considerable extent, the result of a lack of commitment or enthusiasm on part of the professors. This was a rare instance of a sort of “non-cooperation” from an otherwise pliant professoriate. The implementation of the above mentioned reform proposals required a central administrative body to implement them. At the time there was none. In fact it took more than a year to establish the *Reichsministerium für Erziehung und Wissenschaft*.⁶¹ Without an official organisation backing them the success of the reforms depended almost entirely on the co-operation of the professors. The professors though seemed unlikely, of their own accord, to implement and sustain Nazi higher education reforms unless any real, credible and immediate threat from the regime was perceived. It would be mis-leading to describe this aspect of mandarin behaviour as “resistance” to National Socialism. Instead, it would be more appropriate to consider it as an aspect of the typical apolitical mandarin attitude. Initially the mandarins had displayed another facet of their famed apolitical stance – an active collusion with the Nazis in enabling the process of *Gleichschaltung* of the universities. Later, when the initial enthusiasm for the regime had evaporated, and when the reality of Nazi actions had begun to register, the mandarins became the embodiment of political disinterest towards the regime and its policies. In doing so they personified another aspect of apoliticism - the uniquely mandarin phenomenon of inner emigration.

2.3. Inadequacies in Nazi Organisation and Planning

The general situation in the first few months after the *Machtübernahme* resulted in a gap of several months before governance and power structures were defined in the

⁶¹ Kelly, 1985, pp. 261-280.

universities. In the initial phase, the universities, like all other institutions, were expected to participate in the *Gleichschaltung* process. It meant, in Dahrendorf's words

the abolition of uncontrolled autonomy. Wherever relatively self-sufficient institutions or organizations exist, they have to yield to organizations directed to the one purpose of the state and its personification in the Leader.⁶²

Thus, for universities it meant the abolition of academic self-government, the embodiment of the *Führerprinzip* and the presence of centralised state administration. The concept of *Rektor als Führer*, however, took a few months to come into effect with the passage of the *Vorläufigen Maßnahmen zur Vereinfachung der Hochschulverwaltung* on 28 October 1933.⁶³ The centralised state administration of universities and other institutions of learning in the form of the *Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung* took even longer to establish and did not come into existence until 1 May 1934. Thus, it took several months from the date Hitler became chancellor (30 January 1933) for a functional administrative and governance structure to emerge. Evidence suggests that till the creation of the *Reichsministerium* the universities functioned more or less as before, though with an "authority vacuum" of sorts.⁶⁴ This led to the creation of a weaker centralised system (than originally envisaged by Nazi officials) which eventually appeared in May 1934.⁶⁵ All of this typified a confusing and chaotic form of functioning which was

⁶² Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1967), p. 385.

⁶³ Seier, 1964, pp. 105-146.

⁶⁴ Carmon, 1977, pp. 553-574.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

referred to by one author as “*Führungschao*s im Führungsstaat”.⁶⁶ Ritter, too, assesses Nazi policies, organisation and functioning as inadequate. He believes that the Nazi rule was

designed for the “total comprehension” and supervision of the life of the German spirit. It was a gigantic machinery, but also for that reason extremely clumsy. Its internal difficulties were so great that it failed almost as often as it managed to function successfully. To a certain extent, it was a matter of luck whether one fell into the grinding gears of its machinery or not.⁶⁷

Further complicating the situation were the power struggles within the system. The most virulent and bitter form of this struggle was between the Nazi Party and the state organisation. Titze elaborates on the situation in the following manner:

Die höchsten Führer in Partei und Staat waren in andauernde Machtkämpfe verwickelt, in denen es um die Abgrenzung, Erweiterung oder Behauptung von Kompetenzen, Befugnissen und Einflußzonen ging: Die nationalsozialistische Lenkapparate waren mächtig, aber die vielen konkurrierenden Ämter und Dienststellen wirkten oftmals auch gegeneinander und lähmten sich wechselseitig in vielschichtigen Konstellationen und persönlichen Reibereien.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ R. Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner: Studien zum Machtkampf im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags - Anstalt, 1970).

⁶⁷ Ritter, 1946b, pp. 242-254.

⁶⁸ Titze, 1998, p. 229.

Ritter too refers to the incessant friction between official public authorities and the Party officials in Baden.⁶⁹ He describes the Party officials as arrogant propagandists who eventually caused the ministers and professors to form alliances to pass ministerial measures against Party officers.⁷⁰ At the top, Rudolf Hess, being the *Führer's* representative for the *Hochschulkommission*, directly contested decisions by the *Reichserziehungsminister* Bernhard Rust. Hess, in turn, found Alfred Rosenberg, the self-styled chief Party ideologue, challenging both him and the ministry.⁷¹

The differences between state and party were perhaps a matter of priorities. State officials in the ministries of education and in the universities were concerned with the practical necessity of re-establishing order and getting on with the work of the university. Party officials, on the other hand, were mainly preoccupied with ideological concerns and attempted to bring about revolutionary ideological changes especially in the universities, which were still (and would continue to be) perceived as institutions harbouring liberal, Marxist and anti-Nazi elements.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ritter, 1946b, pp. 242-254.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Kelly, 1985, pp. 261-280.

⁷² Ibid.

The fact that the National Socialists were slow off the mark, relatively disorganised and had unclear allocation of authority may not otherwise have mattered as much were it not for the fact that the entire period of the Third Reich lasted twelve years and a few months, of which nearly six years were spent in war. In simple, practical terms, the task of replacing a centuries' old administrative and governance structure is difficult enough. An entire overhaul of this system was implausible within the available time period and under the prevailing circumstances.

2.4. The *Führerprinzip* in German universities

In principle, the introduction of the *Führerprinzip* at the universities was, of all the statutes and reforms envisaged and implemented by the National Socialists, the most damaging to the mandarin tradition. It was the first act to seriously weaken professorial power over university governance in that it stripped the senate and the faculties of their powers, which were transferred *in toto* to the office of the rector, now known as the *Hochschulführer*. With that, the university governance and administrative structure in Germany, which had been in continuous existence since the beginning of the nineteenth century, was transformed.

As mentioned in the previous sub-section, the passage of the *Vorläufigen Maßnahmen zur Vereinfachung der Hochschulverwaltung* on 28 October 1933 repudiated the idea of self-governing universities. The traditional right of the universities to elect rectors was removed and taken over by the *Reichsministerium*. The rights and privileges of the senate were revoked and it was henceforth to exist only in advisory capacity. Further changes proposed as part of the *Führerprinzip* were stated in the new

Hochschulverfassung (part of the *Rechtlinien zur Vereinheitlichung der Hochschulverwaltung* passed on 1 April 1935):

Führer der Hochschule ist der Rektor. ... Er untersteht dem Reichswissenschaftsminister unmittelbar und ist ihm allein verantwortlich.⁷³

This empowered the rector to choose the deans and also made him the leader of both the *Dozentschaften* and the *Studentenschaften*. The deans too became the *Führer* of their respective faculties.

In practice the changes were not quite as drastic as they appeared. An indisputable fact was that the rector was still a member of the *Ordinarien* apart from being associated with his own faculty and subject area. That meant that his allegiance was very likely divided between the various interest groups. The deans were even more closely associated with the faculties and professors and, as the following quote demonstrates, were loath to do anything that would create problems for the professors:

[E]s gab zu wenige Professoren, die bereit waren, ihre Stellung als Rektor oder Dekan zum Vollzug rein politischer, der Wissenschaft schädlicher Parteiforderungen zu mißbrauchen. Übrigens konnte auf die Länge kein Rektor und kein Dekan den sachverständigen Rat seiner Kollegen praktisch entbehren.⁷⁴

⁷³ Quoted in Titze, 1998, p. 228.

⁷⁴ Ritter, 1946a, p.16.

The Marburg historian Helmut Seier, in his seminal work in 1964, described the phenomenon of *Rektor als Führer*, as fictitious.⁷⁵ According to him, it was

ein Beispiel für das Fiasko einer Ideologie, die im Konflikt mit der Tradition
... zur lebensfernen Phrase verblaßte.⁷⁶

Arye Carmon, describing the situation in the University of Heidelberg, similarly concludes that the *Rektor* was hardly in a position of being the *Hochschulführer* and was merely the “*nominelle Repräsentant des Machtdogmas*”.⁷⁷ Further, there is evidence to suggest that the concept of *Rektor als Führer* was never made clear and left room for a host of interpretations.⁷⁸ And finally, as was the case in Heidelberg, at times the *Hochschulführer* found himself in an unusually vulnerable position – being neither totally empowered by the Nazi authorities from “above” nor enjoying the support of the *Ordinarien* from below.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Seier, 1964, pp. 105-146.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Carmon, 1977, pp. 553-574.

⁷⁸ Seier, 1964, pp. 105-146.

⁷⁹ Carmon, 1977, pp. 553-574.

As with other Nazi reform plans the policy of *Rektor als Führer* could have enjoyed greater success had there been professorial cooperation and support. The tenacity of the mandarin tradition can be observed in such situations where collegial loyalty, group interests and adherence to tradition seem to play a bigger role than statutes from above.

3. Relationship between Mandarin Culture and National Socialism

This part of the chapter considers deeper elements in the relationship between the Nazis and mandarins. The Nazi perception of *Wissenschaft* and *Wissenschaftler* seemed to be built around two elements: scorn and suspicion. Both of these were related to a vague notion of intellectual activity as being un-German. Interestingly, however, several committed Nazi scholars did not disregard *Wissenschaft* and its central role in higher education. These themes are discussed in the first sub-section.

In the case of the majority of professors, on the other hand, feelings were less explicit. What began as an ambivalent stance of “wait and see” soon turned publicly into passivity (and privately, probably into cynicism) in the face of the terror and brutalities of the fascist regime. The second sub-section of this part of the chapter examines this aspect in greater detail.

3.1. Nazi Views on Universities and Learning

The distinctly anti-intellectual tendencies inherent in National Socialism made their presence felt from the beginning when the Nazis made learning and the learned

targets of derision. In 1938, speaking at the University of Berlin, the *Gauleiter* Julius Streicher criticised the professors incessantly. He ended the speech with the following contemptuous rhetorical question:

Wenn man die Gehirne sämtlicher Universitätsprofessoren in die eine Waagschale legte und das Gehirn des Führers in die andere, welche Waagschale, glauben Sie, wird sich senken? ⁸⁰

Hitler himself was as unflattering as possible about professors:

Die europaisch-intellektuelle Welt der Universitätsprofessoren, höhere Beamte, denen ein Wissen blöde eingetrichtert ist, die haben es nicht kapiert. Auf gewissen Gebieten wirkt jede professorale Wissenschaft verheerend: Sie führt vom Instinkt weg. Er wird den Menschen ausgeredet. Ein Zwerg mit nichts als Wissen fürchtet die Kraft. Statt sich zu sagen, die Basis des Wissens muß ein gesunder Körper sein, lehnt er die Kraft ab. Die Natur paßt sich den Lebensgepflogenheiten an, und würde die Welt auf einige Jahrhunderte dem deutschen Professor überantwortet, so würden nach einer Million Jahren lauter Kretins bei uns herumwandeln: Riesenköpfe auf einem Nichts von Körper. ⁸¹

Unsurprisingly therefore, between 1933 and 1945, the professors were clearly not a part of the elite officialdom. There was no professor (from among those who had not been promoted to the post in or after 1933 by virtue of their Nazi affiliations)

⁸⁰ Quoted in Seier, 1964, p. 105-146.

⁸¹ Quoted in Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941-42*, (Bonn: Athenaeum, 1951), p. 205.

occupying an eminent position in state or party offices (apart from a few in the *Reichsministerium*).⁸² The marked decline in the position and status of university professors in Germany is illustrated in a correspondence between the *Dozentenführer* and the Rector of Tübingen in which the former laments:

Es war früher eine *Ehre*, an einer Hochschule arbeiten zu können. ... Durch Vorwürfe die man den Hochschule gemacht hat, sehnt sich heute kein jünger Akademiker danach, an einem derartigen Platz arbeiten zu dürfen. Sie gehen lieber in das Heer oder in die Industrie.⁸³

As the above quote indicates there was a steady decline in the popularity of higher education and academic careers with the younger generation. This was not surprising considering the length of time and the amount of effort that had to be put into building an academic career, which was now associated with less prestige than before. At the beginning of the regime academic positions were easily filled. Later, the dismissal of a large number of teaching staff created a number of vacancies. These posts were now difficult to fill and there was a serious *Nachwuchsbedarf* which meant a severe shortage of qualified teaching staff at universities.⁸⁴ The Nazis were forced to take steps to make university-based careers more attractive to the younger generation; after all, it was not in their interest to actually *close* the universities. During the Third Reich, *Wissenschaftliche Assistenten* and *Dozenten* were awarded the status of

⁸² The case of Johannes Popitz, holding the offices of the *preußischer Finanzminister* and *Preisüberwachungskommissar*, is untypical first because he was an Honorary professor and second, because he eventually joined the resistance. E. Stockhorst, *Fünftausend Köpfe. Wer war was im Dritten Reich*, (Velbert u. Kettwig, 1967), p. 328.

⁸³ Quoted in Uwe Adam, *Hochschule und Nationalsozialismus: Die Universität Tübingen im Dritten Reich*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1977), p.151.

⁸⁴ H. Titze, A. Nath and V. Müller-Benedict, 'Der Lehrerzyklus' in *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, vol. 31, (1985), pp. 97-126.

Beamten (though subject to withdrawal under stipulated conditions); they earned a 50 percent increase in their income and allowances and, with the 1939 *Reichsassistentenordnung*, members of this group could even be elected to the Senates.⁸⁵ The significant improvement in the position of *wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter* and *Privatdozenten*, from increased income, more job security and better career prospects,⁸⁶ constituted a quiet revolution of sorts, given the hitherto inferior status of non-professorial staff in German universities. This is especially significant in light of the problems posed by the weak position of the *akademische Mittelbau* in the present-day German universities, as discussed further in Chapter Five. Certain disciplines such as psychology and business science are actually considered to have advanced under the Nazis.⁸⁷ The above facts illustrate the rare instances when the National Socialists did manage to have a positive impact on the universities.

Nevertheless, the National Socialists were throughout suspicious of the universities as places harbouring liberal, Marxist, and anti-Nazi elements. The fear that universities, even after the official dismissal of anti-Nazi elements, could produce liberal, pacifist thinkers was never far from the National Socialists' minds. This impression was strengthened by a kind of "non-conformist" stance taken by many of the professors when it came to efforts to propagate Nazi ideology. The fact was noted and criticised by many a high-ranking Nazi. However, public criticism and humiliation seemed to be the only recourse open to the Nazis when faced with this "unhelpful" attitude of

⁸⁵ Chroust, 1994, p. 51.

⁸⁶ Titze, 1998, p. 233.

⁸⁷ Rüdiger vom Bruch, 'A Slow Farewell to Humboldt?: Stages in the History of German Universities 1810-1945' in *German Universities Past and Future: Crisis or Renewal*, Mitchell Ash, (ed), (Providence: Berghahn, 1997), p. 23.

the mandarins. It is reflected in Nazi opinion on the role and function of universities as summed up in an official party statement in 1933:

Der Sieg der Hochschulrevolution ist mit wenigen Ausnahmen *ohne* Verdienst der Hochschullehrerschaft, mitunter sogar im schroffstem Gegensatz zu ihr erfochten worden. ... Die *universitas litterarum* hatte sich aufgelöst in ein unübersehbares Chaos in sich isolierter Einzelgebiete. Eingesponnen in das Dornröschen-Idyll einer wissenschaftlichen Autonomie, hatte die Wissenschaft kein Ohr mehr für den brausenden Strom des Lebens. ... So mußten die akademischen Repräsentanten des klassischen Liberalismus einer Bewegung voll instinktiver Feindschaft gegenübertreten die sich die Zertrümmerung der akademischen Selbstherrlichkeit und die Synthese aller Spezialwissenschaften sowie die Synthese von Wissenschaft und Politik als Programm gesetzt hatte. Der Zusammenstoß zwischen altem und neuem Geist war daher geschichtlich unvermeidlich.⁸⁸

National Socialist disapproval of the existing (mandarin) concept of *Wissenschaft* is evident from the above statement. *Wissenschaftliche Autonomie* is criticised as having lost touch with the *Volk*. The hallowed concept was accorded the lowest priority by Hitler himself:

Der völkische Staat hat ... seine gesamte Erziehungsarbeit in erster Linie nicht auf das Einpumpen bloßen Wissens einzustellen, sondern auf das Heranzüchten kerngesunder Körper. Erst in zweiter Linie kommt dann die

⁸⁸ G. Rühle, *Das Dritte Reich - Dokumentarische Darstellung des Aufbaues der Nation*, vol.1, (Berlin: Hummelverlag, 1934-39), p. 156.

Ausbildung der geistigen Fähigkeiten. Hier aber wieder an der Spitze die Entwicklung des Charakters, besonders die Förderung der Willens- und Entschlußkraft, verbunden mit der Erziehung zur Verantwortungsfreudigkeit, und erst als Letztes die wissenschaftliche Schulung.⁸⁹

However, at the same time *Wissenschaft's* commanding position in the principles of university research and learning was an aspect which even committed National Socialists could not ignore. Bernhard Rust, the *Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung*, recognized the dichotomy between the political interest of the Nazis and the traditional objectives of *Wissenschaft*. In a series of articles, he expressed his views on the controversial subject of "*politische Wissenschaft*".⁹⁰ National Socialism, he declared, had recognised that *Wissenschaft* could not exist without the veritable "*Voraussetzungen und ...wertmäßige Grundlagen*"; therefore, National Socialist *Wissenschaft* could not be political either.⁹¹ In fact, Rust believed that a "*parteiamtlich verordnete Wissenschaft*" was a contradiction in itself.⁹² Both Adolf Rein and Ernst Kriek had their own ideas about university education in which the role of *Wissenschaft* was paramount. Rein even spoke up for *Wissenschaftsautonomie*:

Die Wissenschaft kann nicht kommandiert werden, weder von oben noch von unten. Das Prinzip der Freiheit wird also in dieser Beziehung in der politischen Universität keineswegs geopfert, wenn nur der Gedanke einer

⁸⁹ Quoted in Peter Sturm, *Literaturwissenschaft im Dritten Reich: germanistische Wissenschaftsformationen und politisches System*, (Vienna: Verlag Editions Präsens, 1995), p.16

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Böhm, 1995, p. 93.

wurzellosen, einer voraussetzungslosen Freiheit ausbleibt, die jeder Willkür, jeder Subjektivität, jeder Beliebigkeit und jeder Nichtigkeit Raum gewährt.⁹³

He also saw the future of the university in professorial hands although he did draw limits to academic freedom.⁹⁴ Krieck, whose career as professor and ultimately Rector of Frankfurt University was a result of his devotion and commitment to the National Socialist regime, articulated a somewhat ambiguous conception of *Wissenschaft*. On the one hand, he declared the end of the era of “reinen Vernunft” and “voraussetzungslosen und wertfreien Wissenschaft”.⁹⁵ On the other, like Rein, he too believed in the freedom of *Wissenschaft*. He therefore clarified:

sie hörte auf Wissenschaft zu sein, wenn sie von vornherein auf fertige, angebliche Wahrheiten festgelegt würde.⁹⁶

In fact, Rein and Krieck’s reforms included a final commitment to scientific research and university teaching, which were not guided merely by practical or state interests.⁹⁷ Paradoxically, in doing so they represented aspects of the neo-humanistic outlook which otherwise had no place in the official Nazi view on universities and higher education.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Giles, 1976, p. 20.

⁹⁵ Böhm, 1995, p. 89.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Böhm, p. 89.

⁹⁷ Paletschek, 2001, pp. 47-48.

3.2. Mandarins and Nazis

On the face of it National Socialism and mandarin culture seem poles apart, one deep and philosophical, the other shallow and rabble-rousing. That is the feeling expressed by Ringer in his analysis. Nevertheless, it is evident that in some senses the ultra-conservative, nationalistic and anti-Semitic sentiments of the mandarins were not far from the extremes of National Socialist ideology. Before 1933 the professors had found in the DVNP (the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei*) their ideological soul-mates.⁹⁸ Since Hitler came to power with a compromise with the DVNP, the professors were inclined to believe that their ideas would get a national platform after all.⁹⁹ This was a likely reason for their support of the “national revolution” in the early stages of the regime and the familiar *Selbstgleichschaltung* by which they readily agreed to Nazi measures sometimes even before official acts were passed.¹⁰⁰

A less explicit reason, in line with the mandarin character, was that they supported the Nazis in order to safeguard their own interests until it became clear that such efforts were fruitless. A good example is the official statement issued by the *Hochschulverband* on 22 April 1933 expressing professorial opinion on the *Machtübernahme* and the future of Germany in National Socialist hands. The statement, known to be largely composed by Eduard Spranger, was filled with the customary praise for the rebirth of the German *Volk* and the rise of the German *Reich*. However, it ended on a note of hope, expressing the professors’ wish of maintaining their academic freedom, which included self-governance:

⁹⁸ Kater, 1985, pp. 465-487.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Langewiesche, 1997, pp. 618-646.

Die Wiedergeburt des Deutschen Volkes und der Aufstieg des neuen Deutschen Reiches bedeutet für die Hochschulen unseres Vaterlandes Erfüllung ihrer Sehnsucht und Bestätigung ihrer stets glühend empfundenen Hoffnungen. Wie sie das Reich Bismarcks im geistigen Sinne mitbegründet, es im Weltkrieg und gegen undeutsche Bedrohung der Nachkriegszeit verteidigt haben, so folgen jetzt ihre Professoren und Studenten den Führern, die der ehrwürdige Herr Reichspräsident eingesetzt hat, mit Vertrauen und Begeisterung ... Freiheit der Forschung verstehen wir nicht als Heimatlosigkeit des Geistes und als wertblinden Relativismus, sondern als eine Darstellung der uralten deutschen Geistesfreiheit, die aus sittlicher Verantwortung vor der Wahrheit an der Welt der deutschen Wissenschaft weiterbaut. Freiheit der Lehre verstehen wir aus der Verantwortung vor der deutschen akademischen Jugend, die durch Wahrheitserkenntnis stark zum Handeln werden soll ... [I]n diesem Bekenntnis liegt kein Bruch mit der Überlieferung unseres Hochschulwesens ... Wir verteidigen unsere alten ehrwürdigen Formen: die Selbstverwaltung durch Rektor, Senat und Fakultäten, die Selbstergänzung des Lehrkörpers.¹⁰¹

This behaviour was typical of the mandarins. As long as their own positions and interests were not compromised, they were willing to support the state in whatever form it was represented, irrespective of events around them.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund, *Bekenntnis der Professoren an den deutschen Universitäten und Hochschule zu Adolf Hitler und dem nationalsozialistischen Staat*, (Dresden, 1934).

¹⁰² Thus, the Hamburg University Senate sat on 10 February 1933 arguing over the difficult problem of when to remove and replace academic caps during university ceremonies. Giles, 1976, p. 6.

Furthermore it seemed that the full implications of the fascist regime came as a surprise to the mandarins. Martin Heidegger's initial enthusiasm for and eventual withdrawal from National Socialism is well known. In his first speech as Rector of the University of Freiburg, Heidegger went to the extent of undermining the intellectual basis of the university.¹⁰³ Some other well-known professors who had lent support publicly to National Socialism include: Carl Schmitt, Willy Andreas, Hans Freyer, Erich Jansch, Felix Krüger and Phillip Lenard. Of those professors who supported the regime some were collaborators, others simply enthusiastic supporters and many belonged to the category who lost their initial enthusiasm after a few years. The extent of the mandarins' mis-reading of the national revolution is exemplified by the case of Viktor Klemperer. Even though he was Jewish (though fortunately for him married to an "Aryan") and later persecuted for it, he admitted to not comprehending the full implications of the "national revolution" until he read *Mein Kampf* and Rosenberg's *Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*.¹⁰⁴

Later events give rise to a more complex picture. Given the paucity of information and documents relatively little is known about professors in the years after the upheavals of the *Machtübernahme* period. What is clear is that the mandarin tradition was at one of its lowest points, subjected, as it was, to the vagaries of an anti-intellectual, authoritarian regime. The removal of academic self-government, coupled with restrictions on academic freedom, freedom of expression and research and the inability to freely publish and attend conferences deeply affected all academics and their work. Naturally, the fear element was extremely high. Ritter states:

¹⁰³ Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität: Rede gehalten bei der feierlichen Übernahme des Rektorats der Universität Freiburg i. Br. 27.5.1934*, (Breslau, 1934).

¹⁰⁴ Hans Reiss, 'Viktor Klemperer: Reflections on his Third Reich Diaries', *German Life and Letters*, vol. 51, no. 1, (1998), pp. 65-92.

No matter how careful we were about our political and even our ordinary deportment, each of us was increasingly conscious of being watched.¹⁰⁵

The only issue which publicly saw mandarin involvement was in appeals to the state on the issue of falling academic standards, which had become a pressing problem exacerbated by the dismissal of the best intellects from the university.¹⁰⁶ In this context the professors did voice their concerns. The best known case was that of Wilhelm Gürtler, a Metallurgy professor in the University of Dresden, who in an open letter, appealed to Hitler to step in and stem the rot of falling academic standards afflicting the universities:

¹⁰⁵ Ritter, 1946b, pp. 242-254.

¹⁰⁶ Titze, Nath and Müller-Benedict, 1985, pp. 97-126.

So kann, so darf es nicht weiter gehen! Wenn Sie nicht eingreifen, geht die ganze kommende junge Techniker-Generation zum Teufel. ... Der ungeheure seelische Umbruch, die unvermeidliche und selbstverständliche innerste Anteilnahme auch den akademischen Jugend an dem atemberaubenden, tiefbewegenden und beglückenden Zeitgeschehen wurde andererseits zur unvermeidlichen Störung der nötigen Konzentration auf das Studium and machte uns Lehrern viele Sorgen, denen wir durch Intensivierung des Unterrichts so weit als möglich zu begegnen suchten.¹⁰⁷

Seier, who analysed this letter, believes that Hitler never read it.¹⁰⁸ Gürtler's appeal exposed the frustration of the majority of academics with the declining standards in universities and is indicative of the widespread cynicism amongst the professoriate, especially during the War years.¹⁰⁹

In conclusion, placing the attitudes and actions of the mandarins in the context of conditions prevailing in the Third Reich is useful – not as a defence of their behaviour in any way but to understand it in all its dimensions in order to see if the expectations of resistance from the mandarins are well-founded. In the mid 1960s (a period significantly named the second *Entnazifizierung* of Germany), the subject of the universities and National Socialism gained renewed interest. Ernst Nolte, commenting in 1967 on the proceedings of a series of discussions and publications between the years 1964-66 on National Socialism and German universities, noted that for the

¹⁰⁷ Hellmut Seier, 'Niveauekritik und partielle Opposition', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 58, (1976), pp. 227-246.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Kater, 1985, pp. 465-487.

participants of the seminars it was the lack of protest, during the Nazi regime, by professors and academics at the dismissal of their Jewish colleagues that was the most shameful aspect of academic behaviour.¹¹⁰ Nolte himself, however, preferred a slightly different view on the subject:

[E]s bleibt sehr umstritten, ob ein korporativer Protest auch nur in den ersten Monaten der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft überhaupt möglich gewesen wäre.¹¹¹

The issue of whether the mandarins, in the existing situation under the Nazis, could have put up any resistance is an interesting one to ponder. The answer would most likely be in the negative – this was out of mandarin character. The mandarins had rarely been known for their resistance to state authority. The sole exception was their role in the 1830s and 1840s. At all other times there had existed a mutual understanding between the universities and the state. This fact has been noted and commented upon extensively by Ringer. Further, the fact that university professors in Germany were civil servants had wide ranging implications for political allegiance as well as their (reduced) ability to join the forces of resistance. Barring the actions of the liberal professors in the 1830s and 1840s - when the Carlsbad Decrees resulted in the subjugation of the universities to state authority - university professors had historically, as state officials, always believed in the concept of the Humboldtian university with the state providing unstinting and disinterested support to pure learning.¹¹² Unfortunately, the fact that the state always possessed sufficient powers to

¹¹⁰ Nolte, 1967, pp. 236-239.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² See Chapter Two.

suppress unorthodox opinions in academic life had not generally been a cause for concern to the professors. The institutionalised freedom for “inner emigration” through the pursuit of *Wissenschaft*, enshrined in university culture and academic tradition, seemed to substitute for the institutional safeguards the university otherwise lacked.

Additional factors inhibiting resistance seemed to stem from personal, hedonistic considerations. The professors were loath to lose their hard-earned positions and suffer the indignities heaped upon the Jews, leftists and other discredited professors. Nolte, in another article, defends academics as possessing the same qualities and weaknesses as any other normal person during the Nazi period:

Hochschullehrer sind Menschen wie andere Menschen auch: mutig oder ängstlich, charakterfest oder opportunistisch, begeisterungsfähig oder nüchtern, opferwillig oder egoistisch.¹¹³

This argument can also be found more recently, in Helmut Heiber’s mammoth two-part book, *Universität unterm Hakenkreuz*, in which Heiber claims that in accepting the Nazis the professoriate acted no differently than other groups of the *Bürgertum*.¹¹⁴ Heiber further notes that the years of waiting and dependence for the average German academic for his appointment to the *Ordinariat*, resulted even more in a lasting spirit of the *Untertan* than was the case with other German *Bürger*.¹¹⁵ In general, the length of study along with the period of waiting before an academic finally obtains the all-

¹¹³ Nolte, 1965, pp. 3-14.

¹¹⁴ Helmut Heiber, *Universität unterm Hakenkreuz, Part 1: Der Professor im Dritten Reich*, (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1991).

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

important post of *Ordinarius* is unique to German universities and its effects are observed even in present times. Chapter Five discusses aspects of this in greater detail.

In the end it has to be said that mandarin ideology, with its belief in other-worldly idealism, was not able to provide a serious foundation for actual resistance of any kind. Instead the mandarins' attitude preceding and during the Third Reich exhibited both opportunism and withdrawal, whichever "apolitical" stance appeared suitable for their survival at the time. Indeed, as was clear after the end of the Second World War, such "apolitical" aspects of mandarin thought and action were considered by the professors to be a safeguard against the danger to *Wissenschaft* and the universities during the regime. In reality such an irresponsible neglect of their intellectual duty ended up undermining of their own notion of apoliticism.¹¹⁶ As Karl Friedrich Bracher notes, their "apolitical" role in the Third Reich dispelled several myths surrounding *Wissenschaft* and its pursuit:

[D]aß wissenschaftliche Bildung und Qualifikation auch zur moralischen Bildung führe; daß unpolitische Haltung wissenschaftliche Objektivität verbürge und der beste Schutz gegen politische Manipulation und ideologische Anfälligkeit sei; und daß so verstandene Wissenschaft als ein Hort der

¹¹⁶ The mandarins' lack of resistance at and passive acceptance of the diktats of the totalitarian regime made them guilty of displaying a politically, socially and morally apathetic stance even when faced with real and credible threats to universal and humanitarian values. The mandarins' apathetic stance and support of national interests irrespective of political realities, which were evident between 1914-1918 and in the period leading up to the Third Reich, are precisely the criticisms Julian Benda's makes against intellectuals. Julian Benda, Excerpt from *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, <http://www.swans.com/library/art9/jbenda01.html> 28 June 2004.

Wahrheit unabhängig im Wandel von Gesellschaft und Politik bestehen könne.¹¹⁷

Further, the mandarins' inability to counter the forces of fascism highlights a more general issue: the absence of robust and independent socio-political critique by a "free-standing" intelligentsia whose commitment to society was not compromised by its being a part of some patronage relationship. This issue has been a point of debate for many years. In Dahrendorf's words:

German intellectuals display political attitudes that, in effect, all serve to strengthen what exists; a critical intelligentsia that combines detachment and belonging is missing.¹¹⁸

Clearly, German mandarins, with their strong ties to the state and historically conservative and elitist stance, did not comprise this kind of critical intelligentsia, and their attitude and behaviour in the Third Reich merely reflected their own characteristics and shortcomings.

4. Conclusion

The National Socialists' views on scholastic and academic activity reveals the low esteem in which they held learning and the learned. At the same time they were also deeply distrustful of universities as harbouring anti-Nazi elements. The indifference

¹¹⁷ Karl Friedrich Bracher, 'Die Gleichschaltung der deutschen Universität' in *Universitätstage 1966: Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche Universität*, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1966), p. 131.

¹¹⁸ Dahrendorf, 1967, p. 276.

of the professors towards propagating Nazi ideology only reinforced this view. The typically mandarin attitude of passive apoliticism contributed to the fact that, barring the actions of the students before the *Machtübernahme*, the universities played a curiously insignificant role in the entire proceedings. Thus, the mandarins neither helped in the rise of National Socialism nor did they take part in the resistance.

In the context of the survival of the mandarin tradition, the crucial issue was the nature, effectiveness and sustainability of Nazi reforms. The chapter illustrates that Nazi changes to higher education were of a superficial nature and were unsuccessful in dismantling the entire system. Although brutal and destructive, these changes were not of such a nature as to take professors away from their traditional roles, as the rapid reappearance of the mandarin characteristics in the post-Nazi era illustrates. As soon as the shackles of Nazi dominance were loosened they quite naturally assumed the authority associated with their former privileged positions at the top of the academic hierarchy.

In all this however the Nazi principle of *Gleichschaltung* should not be underestimated. The National Socialists did set out, in theory at least, to dismantle an entire learning tradition, and replace it with their own values on education. That they could not manage to do so reflect shortcomings in their reforms and policies, and significantly, the lack of time they had to institute and implement changes.

The institutional basis for the mandarins' position remained because no real "re-structuring" had taken place. The senate consisting of full professors, faculties with deans as heads, and the chair system with the professor at the top of its hierarchy,

remained unchanged. Typically, Nazi reforms were decrees from above removing powers and rights of the top end of the governing bodies and granting them to a different apex body. Power never filtered down to the rest of the university population, i.e., the lower ranking academics and the students. Although they did achieve more representation in the senate and the faculties than before, they were never really granted official powers.¹¹⁹ Thus, after 1945, it was relatively easy, institutionally, to restore the powers of the respective academic bodies. Lessons were drawn from the Nazi era of how destructive the influence of state domination could be, leading to the universities gaining substantial independence from the state. The end result was of course that the mandarin tradition was restored with even greater vigour.

¹¹⁹ This happened in spite of the important role played by the students in the *Kampfzeit* (pre-1933), the *Machtergreifung* and the first few months of the new regime. Titze, 1998, pp. 212-216.

CHAPTER FOUR

The “Decline” of the Mandarins in East German Universities

The chapter examines the extensive changes undergone by universities in the period 1945-1989 in East Germany. It focuses on the position and role of the university professor, which, for the first time since the beginning of the nineteenth century, underwent radical changes in the face of large-scale reform of the higher education sector. Officially, the overall aim was the “socialisation” of universities, first in Soviet-occupied Germany and later then in the German Democratic Republic. In the process of socialisation fundamental changes were introduced in both, the structure and functions of universities as well as the guiding principles of higher education. The effects of these higher education policies and reforms on the role and position of the full professors in the universities is the focus of the chapter. It is divided into five sections. The first studies the significant decrease in numbers of the old-style *Ordinarien*, i.e. those educated before 1945. The second section looks at the persistence of bourgeois culture in East German universities. The third section considers the institutional changes to the position and authority of the full professor within the spheres of university governance and administration. The fourth section studies the fundamental changes in the ideas of university and learning under the communist regime, and its effects on the role and function of university professors. The fifth section concludes.

1. Decrease in the Number of Old-Style Mandarins in Soviet-Occupied Germany

The initial post-War period resulted in a significant decrease in the number of old-style mandarins or the so-called “bourgeois” professors from universities in the eastern zone of occupied Germany. There are two aspects to this development. The first was the initial reduction in the number of academic personnel from universities as a result of the phenomena of *Entnazifizierung*, *Auswanderung* and *Wissenschaftlerdeportation*. These are examined in the first three sub-sections. The second aspect relates to the two relatively longer term projects of *Entbürgerlichung* and *Proletarisierung* which were aimed at breaking the monopoly of the bourgeoisie in German universities, leading to the eventual decrease in the number of old-style mandarins. This is considered in the fourth and fifth subsections. The sixth and final sub-section examines the measures taken by the controlling authorities to restore normalcy in universities in view of the staff shortage caused by the loss of bourgeois academics.

1.1. *Entnazifizierung*

The controlling authorities in the immediate post-War period were the SMAD (*Sowjetische Militäradministration Deutschlands*) along with (from April 1946) the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*). The policies of SMAD and SED swiftly brought about fairly large-scale changes to the number and composition of established academic personnel at universities. Overall, the loss of academic personnel in universities under Soviet jurisdiction was in excess of two-

thirds of the total number of teaching staff.¹ The majority of this reduction occurred, the official sources claimed, as a result of dismissals on the grounds of National Socialist involvement. The Soviet zone of occupied Germany had been credited for some time as having carried out a particularly thorough and rigorous denazification of universities.² In fact, it has been considered “the most radical break in continuity suffered by a higher educational establishment in Eastern Europe”.³ However, it was evident that there was a tendency on part of the controlling authorities to publicize the significant reduction in academic staff as part of the process of *Entnazifizierung* and to suppress the existence of other reasons for this situation.

In course of time significant discrepancies were discovered. Inconsistencies have been observed in the numbers of university staff claimed to have been officially dismissed as part of the *Entnazifizierung* process and the actual membership of or active academic involvement with the NSDAP.⁴ It is evident that the official “socialist” version of involvement of academic personnel in Nazi activities during the Third Reich was exaggerated since it was claimed that an average of 80-90 percent of university teachers had been associated with the NSDAP!⁵ In reality the

¹ John Connelly, ‘Foundations for Reconstructing Elites: Communist Higher Education Policies in the Czech Lands, East Germany, and Poland, 1945-48’, *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 10, no. 3, (1996), pp. 367-392.

² *Ibid.*

³ John Connelly, ‘Humboldt Coopted: East German Universities 1945-1989’ in *German Universities Past and Future*, Ash, (ed), 1997, p. 74.

⁴ Ralph Jessen’s detailed study on the subject of university teachers in East Germany provides conclusive evidence of the fact. Ralph Jessen, ‘Diktatorischer Elitewechsel und universitäre Milieus: Hochschullehrer in der SBZ/DDR (1945-1967)’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 24, no.1, (1998), pp. 24-54.

⁵ Roland Köhler, *Die Zusammenarbeit der SED mit der SMAD bei der antifaschistisch-demokratischen Erneuerung des Hochschulwesens (1945-49)*, (Berlin: Zentralinstitut für Hochschulbildung, 1985), pp. 118-119.

estimated 83 percent of vacant academic positions included much more than just dismissals on grounds of involvement with the NSDAP. Since the number of NSDAP members amongst the total number of teaching staff before the end of the War was estimated at around 60 percent in all zones, *Entnazifizierung* could not have been the sole cause for this drastic reduction in teaching staff.⁶

1.2. *Auswanderung*

In this context the phenomenon of *Auswanderung* (which includes those academics who left the country of their own will) provides some answers. *Auswanderung* was related to that of *Entnazifizierung* since a significant number of university professors with proven NSDAP membership feared recrimination from the Soviet-led authorities and left for the “safe haven” of the western zones.⁷ However, some authors such as Jessen claim that the percentage of academics that left for reasons other than links with the fascist past was in fact higher than those who were dismissed for complicity with the Nazis.⁸ The following facts highlight the issue.

In the case of academics with no Nazi links the reason for emigrating to the western zones was inevitably their inability to tolerate the pressures exercised by the controlling authorities. Many well-known scholars came under the category of “politically unsuitable” and were eventually forced or voluntarily chose to emigrate to the West. Among them were such luminaries as Theodor Litt and

⁶ Jessen, 1998, pp. 24-54.

⁷ P. I. Nikitin, *Zwischen Dogma und gesundem Menschenverstand: wie ich die Universitäten in der deutschen Besatzungszone “sowjetisierte”*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), pp. 61-62.

⁸ Jessen, 1998, pp. 24-54.

Hans-Georg Gadamer from Leipzig. Having accepted professorial positions in the new regime (Gadamer was made Rector of Leipzig University), they were compelled to leave for the West in 1947 due to unacceptable conditions in the Soviet zone. Other well-known names included Johannes Kühn, Otto Vossler and Kurt Thomas from the same university.⁹ Eduard Spranger, who was appointed “*kommisarischer Rektor*” for the re-opening of the University of Berlin in the first few months after the War, left the country after a year in June 1946 for Tübingen. Spranger was harassed by the SMAD which claimed he was a “*Wissenschaftler mit reaktionären Auffassungen*”.¹⁰

There were numerous cases where professors resigned or were dismissed because they had expressed disapproval of the new system and were deemed “politically dangerous” or “reactionary” by the controlling authorities. The dismissal of Hans Leisegang from Jena University was one such case.¹¹ The first post-War Rector of Jena University, Professor Hund resigned when he was instructed to “reserve” 40 percent of university seats for candidates from the “*Arbeiter- und Bauern-Fakultäten*”, the pre-university course for workers and peasants.¹² He maintained that inadequate early schooling could never be overcome by bridge courses and that the doors of the university had never been closed to those who could make their way regardless of social origin.¹³

⁹ ‘Zur Wiedereröffnung der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften vor 50 Jahren’, *Universität Leipzig Journal*, no. 6, 1998, <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/journal/heft698/S28.htm>, 04/06/03.

¹⁰ Siegfried Baske, ‘Das Hochschulwesen’, in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, vol. 6, Christa Berg et. al. (eds), (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1998), p. 203.

¹¹ Baske, 1998, p. 205.

¹² Mina J. Moore-Rivoluceri, *Education in East Germany*, (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), pp. 97-98.

¹³ Ibid.

1.3. *Wissenschaftlerdeportation*

This phenomenon includes university-based intellectuals who were deported for reasons other than “non-compliance with the socialist regime” or for possessing “politically dangerous affiliations”. In this case *both* the Americans and the Soviets were guilty of purloining some of the best German intellects during their period of occupation in post-War Germany. The so-called *Zwangsdeportation* was carried out often against the will of the *Wissenschaftler* and through various surreptitious means.¹⁴ In the context of “luring” university-based intellects, the Americans played a greater role than the Soviet authorities, eventually appropriating approximately 200 academics (or 20 percent of total teaching staff) including professors, *Dozenten* and assistants from the universities of Jena, Halle and Leipzig.¹⁵ In contrast, the Soviets concentrated overwhelmingly on industry-based intellectuals (engineers, scientists and technical experts) with only a fraction coming from universities and other institutions of higher education.¹⁶

1.4. *Entbürgerlichung*

Although university professors were not singled out as a group whose power and authority had to be broken, they were regarded as an important part of the “*bürgerlich* monopolisation” of higher education which had to be brought to an end. Ringer’s mandarins were a part of the social and cultural elite which had

¹⁴ Jessen, 1998, pp. 24-54.

¹⁵ Saxony and Thuringia had temporarily (until 1 July 1945) been under American control. *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

hitherto been intrinsically linked to the rise and development of the *Bildungsbürgertum* in Germany.¹⁷ Thus, among the various institutions, the universities were perceived, not without reason, as centres of bourgeois ethics and values. They were regarded as one of the nuclei of the *Klassenkampf* where, eventually, the *Arbeiter- und Bauernklasse* would triumph over the *Bürgertum*. It was the Soviets' and the SED's long-term objective of breaking the educational privilege of the dominant middle classes or the policy of "*Entbürgerlichung*" that, in principle, struck at the roots of the mandarin tradition. Under socialist rule the professorial class, for the first time in a century and a half, was faced with the prospect of a fundamental alteration in its composition and background.

From the socialist point of view the list of grievances against the universities and bourgeois intelligentsia was long. The first charge was that German universities had, from the start, been bastions of the bourgeoisie. This had ensured a "*bürgerliches Milieu*" at the universities, which was a self-perpetuating system and had throughout excluded the lower classes from entry into the hallowed world of higher education:

In der bürgerlich-kapitalistischen Gesellschaft entstammt die Intelligenz auf Grund des Bildungsprivileges fast ausschließlich der Bourgeoisie. Mehr noch, das gesamte Bildungswesen von der Volkshochschule bis zur Universität wird von der Ideologie der herrschenden Klasse bestimmt.

¹⁷ Ringer, 1990, p. 9.

Unter diesen Bedingungen wird es nur selten einem Arbeiter oder Bauern gestattet, in die Reihen der akademischen Berufe einzudringen.¹⁸

Apart from being perceived as part of the “*Bildungsmonopol des Bürgertums*” the mandarin tradition was identified as an element of the archaic and antiquated traditions at universities which had no place in the new system. The role and significance of the academic tradition were described in the following manner:

Die Bourgeoisie war sich der Bedeutung der Hochschule zur Aufrechterhaltung ihrer Klassenherrschaft voll bewußt und erhob hier ihre Ideologie zu einer geheiligten Tradition. ... In Deutschland, in dem Standesdünkel und Kastengeist zum guten Ton gehörten, nahmen die akademischen “Traditionen” einen besonderes dumpfen, reaktionären Charakter an.¹⁹

Second in the list of grievances against the universities was the conviction that they and the bourgeois intelligentsia had failed to fulfil the ideals of the democratic movements:

[D]ie deutsche Intelligenz, die zur Führung unseres Volkes berufen gewesen wäre, ... [hat] die geschichtliche Prüfung nicht bestanden.²⁰

¹⁸ Oskar Hauser, ‘Intelligenz und Arbeiterbewegung’, *Einheit*, vol. 3, no. 3, (5 March 1948), pp. 247-253.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Mitteldeutscher Kulturrat, ‘Manifest des Kulturbundes zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands: Gründungsaufruf vom Juni 1945’ in *Kultur und Kulturträger in der DDR: Analysen*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993), p. 16.

The inability of the bourgeoisie to achieve victory in the struggle for democracy in 1848 (and also in 1918) meant that the “*Vollendung der demokratischen Erneuerung von 1848*” would now have to be brought about by the working classes.²¹ The bourgeoisie was criticized for “selling-out” and sacrificing the aims of the entire 1848 movement for its personal gains:

Die Bourgeoisie hatte sich 1848 durch einen feigen Kompromiß mit dem Junkertum die wirtschaftliche - nicht die politische! – Freiheit erschlichen. Für dieses einträgliche Geschäft war sie bereit, ihre revolutionären Ziele, die gerade in den Reihen der Studenten und Intellektuellen eifrige Verfechter gefunden hatten, schnellstens aufzugeben.²²

Further, the experience of the Third Reich was seen as evidence that the universities and the bourgeois intelligentsia had failed to provide resistance against the excesses of the Nazi regime.²³

Naturally, socialist ideology strongly emphasized the arrival of a new world order in which the middle class (which had already had its chance) had to make way for the rise of the worker and peasant class. The *Arbeiterklasse* was faced with the task of developing its talents and forming the new intelligentsia:

²¹ Ibid., p. 17.

²² Hauser, 1948, pp. 247-253.

²³ Ibid.

Da jede Gesellschaftsformationen, mit ihr also die jeweils herrschende Klasse, ihre eigene, ihr ergebene Intelligenz haben muß, wenn sie ihre historische Aufgabe erfüllen will, so muß die Arbeiterklasse in unserer Republik für die Ausbildung einer besonderen Schicht der Intelligenz sorgen. Es muß dies eine Intelligenz neuer Art sein, hervorgegangen aus den werktätigen Massen, eng mit ihnen verbunden und immer bereit, der Sache der Arbeiterklasse zu dienen.²⁴

And finally, socialist criticism was directed at the ever-widening gulf between the universities and the aspirations and needs of the common people. Institutions of higher education needed now to form an intrinsic part of society and its aims, and to become true *Volksuniversitäten*. Higher education had to have a purpose in order to fulfil the needs of the country as a whole. In the words of the Rector of the University of Rostock, Rudolf Schick:

[M]ancherlei Maßnahmen [wurden] ergriffen, um die traditionelle Isolierung unserer Universitäten und Hochschulen von den breiten Massen des Volkes zu überwinden, um eine enge Verbindung zwischen Theorie und Praxis, zwischen Universität und Produktionsstätten herzustellen, damit die Universitäten und Hochschulen unseres Landes beim umfassenden Aufbau des Sozialismus die Aufgaben erfüllen können, die ihnen zufallen.²⁵

²⁴ Werner Turski, 'Student und Studium an der Technischen Hochschule Dresden' in *125 Jahre Technische Hochschule Dresden, Festschrift*, (Dresden, 1953), pp. 255-262.

²⁵ Rudolph Schick, *Die gesellschaftliche Verantwortung der Universität: Rede*, (Stralsund: Ostsee Druckerei, 1963), p. 4.

In order to bring about the socialist reform of universities and to overcome the above-mentioned drawbacks of the existing system, a sort of crusade was launched in the post-War years. The catchphrases associated with these efforts were “*Brechung des Bildungsmonopols der Ausbeuterklassen*” and Lenin’s much-vaunted “... *stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft*”.²⁶ The “*Proletarisierung*” of the universities through the introduction of new socialist cadres of students was an integral part of this campaign. This is considered in the following sub-section.

1.5. *Proletarisierung*

The SED and the SMAD were aware throughout of the importance of the “*Umerziehung*” of the bourgeois academics. Given the time required to select and to train Communist cadres to become university teachers and the indispensability of the role of the bourgeois intelligentsia in economically rebuilding the country, the SED decided to concentrate on the student population instead. It was believed that students, inculcated with Marxist-Leninist ideology, could rapidly convert the “reactionary” institutions of higher education into centres for training and educating socialist elites.

Politically, the Party tried to gain influence in the universities by encouraging its various affiliated socialist student organisations (such as the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* and the *Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*) to play leading roles in the

²⁶ Alfred Kurella, ‘Der Sozialismus und die bürgerliche Kultur’, *Einheit*, vol. 16, no. 1, (1961), pp. 77-91.

student bodies of the universities.²⁷ There were surprising initial setbacks, such as a disastrous defeat of the communists in the student elections of 1947. By the end of the 1940s, though, the student body comprised overwhelmingly of SED members and supporters. This success was almost directly the result of a wave of arrests and purges following the dismal performance of the SED in the student elections of 1947.²⁸

Proletarisierung of the hitherto bourgeois universities meant encouraging students from lower classes, especially children of workers and peasants, to study at institutions of higher education. They had priority over students from bourgeois backgrounds - the traditional educated and other segments from the upper middle classes - for admission into universities. This policy began to manifest itself around 1947/48 when efforts began to fundamentally alter the composition of the student population at universities:

Bei der Aufnahme von Studenten gilt nachstehende Reihenfolge:

- a) Bewerber aus Arbeiter- und Bauernkreisen, sofern sie nicht Mitglieder der NSDAP waren, Absolventen der Vorstudienanstalten und Bewerber, die aus sozialen, politischen oder rassischen Gründen unter dem Naziregime benachteiligt wurden;
- b) Personen, die nicht Mitglieder oder Anwärter der NSDAP oder ihrer Gliederungen waren;

²⁷ Baske, 1998, p. 205.

²⁸ Connelly, 1996, pp. 367-392.

c) Personen, die nur Mitglieder der Hitlerjugend oder des BDM waren.²⁹

The primary purpose was the training of a new socialist intelligentsia as well as the gradual phasing out of the older generation of lecturers and professors. In order to achieve that aim provisions had to be made for alternative ways for entrance to universities since the majority of aspirants from lower classes did not possess the relevant qualifications for entry into universities. The *Vorstudienanstalten*, which were renamed the *Arbeiter- und Bauern- Fakultäten* (hereafter ABF) in 1949, were established at a number of universities to provide a pre-university course leading to university entrance.³⁰ Starting from a year-long preparatory course, it evolved into a two- and then a three-year study programme.³¹ Successful completion of the course entitled the student to university entrance on equal terms with other aspirants.³² The establishment of these pre-study institutes was highly successful for two reasons. First, these institutions brought about a significant increase in the number of university students from worker-peasant backgrounds, which gradually rose to 32 percent of the student population in 1949 and eventually peaked at 58 percent in 1958.³³ Given the fact that in 1932, only 3 percent of students were from worker and 2.2 percent from peasant background, the ABFs' achievements were, from the

²⁹ 'Bestimmungen für die Aufnahme von Studenten in die Universitäten und Hochschulen der sowjetischen Besatzungszone für das Wintersemester 1947/48', *Forum*, vol. 1, no. 8/9, 1947, p. 53.

³⁰ Baske, 1998, p. 205.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Paul S. Bodenman, *Education in the Soviet Zone of Germany - Bulletin*, no. 26, (Washington: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1959), p. 92.

³³ Baske, 1998, p. 205.

socialists' point of view, remarkable indeed.³⁴ Secondly, as noted by Connelly, the ABF were extremely effective since in them:

local Communist or Social Democratic pedagogues were able to educate worker students beyond the influence of conservative university milieus. These worker students were then introduced to university in yearly waves, like shock troops to the front.³⁵

This was one of the most crucial factors in the attempt to “socialise” East German universities.

Entbürgerlichung and *Proletarisierung* had, in principle, struck at the roots of the mandarin tradition which were until now firmly entrenched in the *Bildungsbürgertum*. Interestingly, although it eventually resulted in many changes in class structure and background of university professors, it did not necessarily transform universities into the much publicised *Festungen der Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Macht*. Jessen observes the following in his detailed study of the professorial class in the GDR:

Der akademische Beruf wurde entbürgerlicht, aber nicht proletarisiert: heimlicher Gewinner des sozialen Umbruchs waren nicht so sehr Arbeiter- und Bauernkinder, sondern die Mittelschichten ... Sie tradierten den

³⁴ Connelly, 1997, p. 59.

³⁵ Connelly, 1996, pp. 367-392. The *Aspiranturen*, (discussed in the previous sub-section), were, on the other hand, less successful. Jessen, 1996, p. 83.

professoralen Habitus und seine akademischen Distinktionsmerkmale, die das universitäre Milieu in der DDR über alle Brüche hinweg kennzeichneten.³⁶

A decisive factor in this development may have been the fact that since the 1960s the entire focus of the SED had been on achieving excellence in the scientific and technical spheres. The race to remain competitive especially in relation to the West had brought about a more practical, realistic view which had replaced the rigid class dogmatism of the fifties. Indeed the state ceased publishing statistical data on the social background of students after 1967 around which time the ABF were also quietly being phased out.³⁷ In the 1960s worker-peasant students numbered about half the total after which they steadily declined, being replaced by the children of the *Kleinbürgertum* or even those of the intelligentsia who eventually gained university places on the basis of merit. Eventually it may have been the case that the intellectual elite resorted to “*Selbstrekrutierung*”, once abhorred by the regime as the reason for the self-perpetuating nature of the bourgeois intelligentsia. The results of a recent analysis of the elite in East Germany reflect that view:

Die Leitungskräfte in der DDR rekrutieren sich, je konsolidierter der sozialistische Staat wurde, immer stärker aus der Intelligenz, also aus sich

³⁶ Martin Sabrow, ‘Loyale Mandarine’, *Die Zeit*, no. 40, (28 September 2000).

³⁷ Geoffrey J. Giles, ‘The Structure of Higher Education in the GDR’, *Higher Education*, vol. 7, 1978, pp. 131-156.

selbst heraus. Der Anspruch der DDR, die Elite aus Arbeitern und Bauern zu gewinnen, wurde im Lauf der Zeit immer weniger verwirklicht.³⁸

1.6. Measures to Control Loss of Academic Personnel

The process of *Entnazifizierung* was limited to the initial post-War years; the phenomena of *Auswanderung* and *Deportation* however, continued for a relatively longer period ending approximately with the building of the Wall in 1961. *Entbürgerlichung* and *Proletarisierung*, on the other hand, were longer-term projects and took several years to manifest themselves in the universities.

In general, the loss of academic personnel continued unabated until well after the end of the post-War period. Connelly brings to light three documents which provide conclusive evidence of the large number of *Wissenschaftler* leaving the GDR in the 1950s and until the building of the Wall in 1961.³⁹ Interestingly, the documents were part of the regular reports prepared by the officials of the *Abteilung Wissenschaft und Propaganda des Zentralkomitees der SED* and the *Kaderabteilung des Staatssekretariats für Hochschulwesen der DDR* and sent to the *Politbüro* to provide information on the “*Republikfluchten von Wissenschaftlern*” during the above-mentioned period.⁴⁰ The authors of these reports also had the unenviable task of providing explanations for the continuance

³⁸ ‘Wie die DDR wirklich funktioniert hat: Soziologen analysieren die Elite des Arbeiter- und Bauernstaats’, *Uni - Jena Journal*, February 2000, <http://www.uni-jena.de/journal/unifeb00/ddr.htm>, 26/02/02.

³⁹ John Connelly, ‘Zur “Republikflucht” von DDR-Wissenschaftlern in den fünfziger Jahren’, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, vol. 4, (1994), pp. 331-352.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

of this phenomenon and suggesting preventive measures to stem the tide of academic émigrés to West Germany.⁴¹

The SMAD and the SED employed various methods to cope with the critical problem of shortage of teaching staff in East German universities. First, they kept universities and other institutions of higher education formally closed until January 1946 due to shortage of staff.⁴² Second, even after re-opening, the authorities cut back on student numbers, keeping university enrolment well below capacity, until the staff-student ratios could be brought back to normal.⁴³ Third, there were simultaneous efforts to establish Soviet-style *Aspiranturen* which were more or less a “fast-track” method for would-be academics to qualify as teaching staff at universities⁴⁴. The added advantage of the *Aspiranturen* was that candidates were, from the beginning, inculcated with “*Grundlagen des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus*” thereby serving the Party’s primary aim of creating a new, politically reliable, socialist intelligentsia along with bridging the deficit in teaching positions in universities.⁴⁵

The fourth and most significant solution applied to overcome the shortage of academic staff was the extensive reinstatement of academics dismissed earlier in the immediate post-War period for their proven links with the NSDAP. This step has been regarded as fundamental to the East German universities’ return to normalcy by the end of the 1940s and the early 1950s. Naturally, the reinstated

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² The University of Jena was the only exception and re-opened in 1945. Baske, 1998, p. 203.

⁴³ Connelly, 1996, pp. 367-392.

⁴⁴ Baske, 1998, p. 206.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

academics had to pledge support for the new socialist principles and adapt themselves to the changed environment.⁴⁶ Unsurprisingly, many now held new memberships of the SED.⁴⁷ In this process, however, it appears that the “attenuation of university milieus was not reversed”.⁴⁸ The primary reason for that was that the reinstated university teachers were not returned to their former departments and universities but shifted around thereby reducing any impact they might have had on the ideological situation.⁴⁹

The majority of the reinstated academics belonged to the natural and technical sciences and to medicine.⁵⁰ From the very beginning, during the initial months of the post-1945 period itself, the necessity for research in and teaching of the natural and technical sciences and medicine was experienced in the Soviet Zone. There was a high demand for technically qualified personnel in the West as well. As a consequence the natural and technical sciences rose to elite positions within the realm of academics and research, challenging the position of the traditionally superior *Geisteswissenschaften*. The professors of these so-called “hard” disciplines thus found themselves in an enviable position being in demand on “both” sides. In the Eastern Zone their salaries were increased to several times that of professors in the West⁵¹, their Party affiliations overlooked, and even their

⁴⁶ Nikitin, 1997, p. 68.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Connelly, 1997, p. 60.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Jessen, 1998, pp. 24-54.

⁵¹ Marianne Müller and Egon Erwin Müller, “... stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft!”: *Die Sowjetisierung der mitteldeutschen Universitäten seit 1945*, (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1953), p. 311.

previous Nazi involvement ignored.⁵² Further, there was minimal interference in their work as compared to the professors of the humanities.⁵³ The latter, in contrast, found themselves in a particularly weak position. Given the nature of their subject area, they had to conform to the Marxist-Leninist principles and to incorporate them in their lectures and teaching material to a far greater degree than in case of the sciences. Moreover, they did not possess the “bargaining power” that professors of the natural and technical sciences had acquired by being in demand across the border as well.⁵⁴ The difference between the way in which the professors of the natural and technical sciences and the traditional *Geisteswissenschaften* were treated by the authorities was openly discussed. An SED member remarked:

Zum Teil quittieren wir das nur mit Lächeln; denn wenn ein reaktionärer Philosoph oder Historiker die Ostzone verlässt, so kann uns das nur freuen. Anders aber ist es, wenn es sich um Ärzte, Mathematiker, Physiker, Biologen oder gar um Techniker handelt, die wir brauchen, und die für uns unersetzlich sind.⁵⁵

Eventually, the building of the Wall in 1961 corresponded with a hardening of stance regarding university professors regardless of subject area. However, the increasing pace of technological and scientific advancement meant the SED even

⁵² Ralph Jessen, ‘Vom Ordinarius zum sozialistischen Professor’ in *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, R. Bessel and R. Jessen (eds), (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), p. 92.

⁵³ Jessen, 1998, pp. 24-54.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Jessen, 1998, pp. 24-54.

in the 1970s and 1980s continued to dither between “insistence on displays of communist orthodoxy and laissez-faire favouritism”⁵⁶ towards academics and researchers of the natural and technical sciences in order to procure their voluntary support.

Overall, the unprecedented loss of academics including many full professors dealt the first blow to the mandarin tradition at the universities. By virtue of thinning of their ranks the authority of the bourgeois professors or mandarins in universities was significantly reduced.⁵⁷ The phenomena of *Entnazifizierung*, *Auswanderung*, *Wissenschaftlerdeportation*, *Entbürgerlichung* and *Proletarisierung* together contributed significantly to a marked decline in the *bürgerliches Milieu* of universities. The process paved the way for the SED and SMAD to penetrate deep into the academic establishment, destroy remnants of the traditional system and begin building up their own intellectual elite. It can be said that in many senses the preparedness of the Soviet Union for the period of rehabilitation after Germany’s total surrender gave them a distinct advantage in their own zone over the western zones of occupied Germany. After all, the development of “socialist” universities with the aim of producing a trained workforce suited to the demands of industry and society and possessing the required socialist disposition to match was a process tried and tested by the Soviets.⁵⁸ Nevertheless bourgeois elements

⁵⁶ Giles, 1978, pp. 131-156.

⁵⁷ A peculiar situation existed within the universities for a brief period when the universities became *Ordinarienuniversitäten* in every sense of the term. For the first time in the history of German universities the *Ordinarien* outnumbered the number of *Nichtordinarien* and the *akademische Mittelbau* put together. Of course the situation stabilised within a few months. Ralph Jessen, *Akademische Elite und kommunistische Diktatur: die ostdeutsche Hochschullehrerschaft in der Ulbricht-Ära*, (Göttingen: Vandhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), p. 271.

⁵⁸ Baske, 1998, p. 204.

did not disappear overnight from East German universities. Indeed, as the following section illustrates, bourgeois culture was in evidence for at least two decades after the end of the Second World War.

2. Persistence of Bourgeois Culture in East German Universities

The efforts made to limit and eventually remove bourgeois influences from universities had mixed results since despite official policy neither the SMAD nor the SED could afford to ignore the importance of the “*alte bürgerliche Intelligenz*” at least for the first couple of decades. The reality was that universities in the eastern zone of occupied Germany would take time to be “socialised”. Paradoxically, the process required inputs from the members of the academia including even “non-socialists” in order to, first, restore normalcy to the universities and, second, institute the much publicized “democratic” reform of universities. The indispensability of academics was widely acknowledged as following quote illustrates:

Uns Sozialisten ist völlig klar, daß eine sozialistische Universität jetzt nicht diskutabel ist. Wir haben in Deutschland keine sozialistische Revolution gehabt, befinden uns vielmehr nach Krieg und Faschismus erst mitten in der demokratischen Erneuerung. Im Rahmen des konsequenten Zuendenführens der demokratischen Umwandlung Deutschlands verfechten wir auch die demokratische Erneuerung der Hochschule, die Schaffung der wahrhaft demokratischen Universität. Dazu rufen wir alle,

besonders auch die parteilose Intelligenz auf, und wir hoffen, mit allen fortschrittlichen Kräften gemeinsam dieses Ziel zu erreichen.⁵⁹

More importantly, as the previous section indicates, it was clear from the beginning that the economic reconstruction of the country depended on the efforts and achievements of the bourgeois intelligentsia:

Wir können unseren Zweijahrplan nicht erfüllen, wir können unsere Friedenswirtschaft nicht aufbauen, unsere Produktivkräfte nicht entwickeln, den Lebensstandard der breiten Massen unseres Volkes nicht heben ohne enge Zusammenarbeit der Arbeiterklasse mit der Intelligenz.⁶⁰

Further, socialist ideology consistently stressed that “*bürgerliche Kultur*” had to be “used” by the socialists to fulfil their own aims.

Wir müssen von der gesamten Kultur, die der Kapitalismus hinterlassen hat, Besitz ergreifen und aus ihr den Sozialismus aufbauen. Wir müssen von der gesamten Wissenschaft und Technik, von allen Kenntnissen und von der Kunst Besitz ergreifen. Anders können wir das Leben der kommunistischen Gesellschaft nicht aufbauen.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Wilhelm Könen, ‘Lehrende und Lernende’, *Einheit*, vol. 3, no. 2, (1948), pp. 143-150.

⁶⁰ Klaus Zweiling, ‘Intelligenz und Arbeiterklasse’, *Einheit*, vol. 4, no. 5, (1949), pp. 385-402.

⁶¹ Kurella, 1961, pp. 77-91.

At the same time the Party was fully aware of the danger posed by “non-socialist” academics with their “reactionary” ideas and their unwillingness to conform to socialist ideals. These elements had to be swiftly nullified:

[A]n den Universitäten [ist] die bürgerliche Ideologie trotz der wachsenden Zahl der Arbeiterstudenten noch sehr stark verankert. Diese Ideologie mit ihren überlebten Traditionen, die vom Bürgertum mit allen Mitteln verteidigt wird, ist zweifellos für den jungen, nicht genügend klassenbewußten Arbeiter eine nicht zu unterschätzende Gefahr, sie kann ihn seiner Klasse entfremden.⁶²

The pervasiveness and tenacity of bourgeois culture in universities was noted and regarded as a perennial danger to the socialist state. In the case of the ABF students, for example, it was observed that they displayed

eine gewisse Neigung ... sich an das in vieler Hinsicht reaktionäre Hochschulniveau zu assimilieren, statt bewußt die Umstellung der Intelligenz auf ihre neue gesellschaftliche Funktion zu fördern.⁶³

Initially, especially before 1961 and the building of the Wall, official opinion on the bourgeois academics reflected these changing views and the SED fluctuated from being supportive and tolerant to being suspicious and dominating. Thus, the SED took a vaguely compromising stance. On the one hand, bourgeois academics

⁶² Hauser, 1948, pp. 247-253.

⁶³ Zweiling, 1949, pp. 385-402.

were granted huge increases in salary and other material benefits to stop their westward emigration or indeed to lure some back from the western zones. The official line on this policy was the following:

Die deutsche Intelligenz erhält ... nicht nur die materiellen Voraussetzungen für ihre Forschungs- und Lehrarbeit ... sondern sie wird auch ihrer persönlichen Sorgen um Nahrung, Kleidung und Wohnung ... in weitem Masse und in bevorzugte Weise enthoben. Indem das deutsche Volk seinen Wissenschaftlern, Lehrern und Künstlern solche bevorzugten Lebens- und Arbeitsbedingungen schafft, während es selbst in seinen breiten Massen noch vieles zum Leben Notwendige entbehrt, ehrt es seine Intelligenz in einem Masse, das in bürgerlich-kapitalistischen Staaten völlig unbekannt und niemals auch nur annähernd erreichbar ist.⁶⁴

On the other hand, the socialist state took severe action against what it considered “reactionary” and “politically dangerous” elements of the academic body. It also stressed the necessity of “re-schooling” bourgeois academics into the socialist view of life. The process of “re-schooling” or *Umerziehung* was accorded prime importance as the following quote from an official report published in 1949 on the development of *Wissenschaft*, culture and the intellectual state of the country demonstrates:

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Die rückständige und schädliche Ansicht, daß eine demokratische Gesellschaft und ein neues Leben ohne Heranziehung, Umformung und Umerziehung der alten Gruppen der bürgerlichen Intelligenz zur gemeinsamen schöpferischen Arbeit möglich seien, muß abgelehnt werden.⁶⁵

The complexity of the situation gave rise to a number of problems in the sphere of universities and higher education. There was frequent friction between the old-style bourgeois university lecturers and professors and the communist-majority student bodies. In a publication in 1949 the SED described the so-called “*sektiererische Radikalismus*” against “*parteilose*” Professors as the most serious problem facing the SED’s *Hochschulpolitik*.⁶⁶ As Müller and Müller elaborate:

Für die SED war es nicht leicht, einesteils die ständige “konkrete Auseinandersetzung” mit den Erscheinungsformen des sogenannten Objektivismus von der Studentenschaft zu fordern und andererseits zu erwarten, daß dabei die Autorität und das Prestige der Professoren erhalten blieben. Der massiv geführte “Kampf gegen den Objektivismus der bürgerlichen Wissenschaft” mußte zu der zwangsläufigen Entwicklung führen, daß die Studenten ihre Professoren und Dozenten nicht für

⁶⁵ ‘Verordnung über die Erhaltung und Entwicklung der deutschen Wissenschaft und Kultur, die weitere Verbesserung der Lage der Intelligenz und die Steigerung ihrer Rolle in der Produktion und im öffentlichen Leben’, *Zentralverordnungsblatt, Teil 1*, (Amtliches Organ der deutschen Wirtschaftskommission und ihrer Hauptverwaltung sowie der deutschen Verwaltung für Inneres, Justiz und Volksbildung), no. 28, (1949), p. 227.

⁶⁶ Müller and Müller, 1953, p. 302.

kompetent genug hielten, ihr Studium zu leiten, und es ihnen gegenüber an der nötigen Achtung fehlen ließen.⁶⁷

It became obvious very early on that the *Umerziehung* would be a difficult task. Professors were targeted for their lack of enthusiasm for incorporating socialist ideals and values. Socialist students, who considered it their duty to bring about a socialist *Umerziehung* of universities, ended up causing acrimony in the day-to-day life at universities. This led to official efforts to “calm” the situation:

Wir Marxisten wissen sehr wohl, daß sich manche unter uns überheblich gegenüber denen benehmen, die den Marxismus noch nicht akzeptiert haben. ... Wir ... wollen niemand zu unseren Anschauungen zwingen. Wir sind selbstverständlich der Überzeugung, daß sich schließlich die marxistische Erkenntnis auf allen Forschungsgebieten der Wissenschaft durchsetzen müßte. Wir wissen aber, daß der Übergang manchmal gar nicht so leicht ist und daß er durch Überheblichkeit in jedem Falle nur erschwert wird.⁶⁸

The extraordinarily generous remuneration as well as associated benefits offered to university academics in order to stem the flow of émigrés to the West caused further rancour.⁶⁹ Again, the step had to be publicly defended by high-level Party members and officials:

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 302-303.

⁶⁸ Könen, 1948, pp. 143-150.

⁶⁹ Müller and Müller, 1953, pp. 311-313.

Jeder Wissenschaftler ... soll ungehindert lehren und forschen können. ...
Es gilt weiter, den alten Wissenschaftlern die Existenzfurcht zu nehmen
und ihre materielle Sicherstellung zu vertreten.⁷⁰

Ordinary citizens who were surprised at the scale of the benefits awarded to
members of the academic class had to be pacified with earnest promises:

Alles, was die Werktätigen heute der Intelligenz geben, erhalten sie
materiell und politisch zehn- und hundertfach von ihr zurück ...⁷¹

It is evident that the integration of non-socialist university academics into the
socialist system was fraught with problems. This problematic situation continued
for some period of time. For example, in 1958, on occasion of the third
Hochschulkonferenz of the SED, the Secretary of the *Zentralkomitee*, Kurt Hager
bitterly complained:

Am bemerkenswertesten scheint mir die Erklärung eines Greifswalder
Professors, der sagte: "Den Marxismus-Leninismus hat es zu meiner Zeit
nicht gegeben, deswegen kann ich ihn auch heute nicht anwenden",
während ein anderer Professor den Marxismus-Leninismus ablehnte, da er
keine Bedeutung habe. ... Ich nehme nicht an, daß der eine Professor schon
über hundert Jahre alt ist, denn so alt ist der Marxismus, und daß der

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Zweiling, 1949, pp. 385-402.

andere Professor die Zeit verschlafen und nicht gemerkt hat, daß die Welt ihr Gesicht veränderte und heute bereits auf einem großen Teil des Erdballs das siegreiche Banner des Marxismus weht. Vielleicht handelt es sich eher um eingewurzelte Vorurteile und Ressentiments gegenüber dem Marxismus, die aber ... den wissenschaftlichen Forschungsdrang vermissen lassen.⁷²

A similar situation was observed with regard to the integration of students. There were instances of antagonism between ABF and non-ABF students since the former group relatively easily procured the limited university places and also benefited from generous scholarships and a waiver of examination fees (which was a particularly contentious point for the non-ABF students).⁷³ Further, there is evidence of discrimination against ABF students by other students, creating frequent rifts between the two groups.⁷⁴ In a speech in 1957 the *Staatssekretär*, Wilhelm Girus, recalled an incident in which some professors and students tried to “calumniate” as “elements foreign to the university” politically loyal workers who had come ostensibly to “talk” with the younger generation.⁷⁵ Girus of course chastised the professors and students, declaring that universities in a socialist order did not represent

⁷² ‘Der Kampf für die weitere sozialistische Umgestaltung der Universitäten und Hochschulen der DDR’, Referat des Sekretärs des ZK und Vorsitzenden der Schulkommission beim Politbüro der SED, Kurt Hager, auf der III. Hochschulkonferenz der SED vom 28. Februar bis 2. März 1958, *Zur Sozialistischen Kulturrevolution, Dokumente*, vol. 1, (Berlin, 1960), pp. 280-314.

⁷³ Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, ‘Es schreibt sich besser auf unbeschriebenen Blättern’, *Das Hochschulwesen*, vol. 1, (1996), pp. 28-37.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Wilhelm Girus, *On the Idea of a Socialist University: Address at the Meeting of the Chancellors in Berlin on June 14, 1957*, (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1957), p. 29.

aristocratic academic republics enjoying rights of extraterritoriality according to their rank.⁷⁶

However, his observation that

these advocates of the out of date ideas of college feudalism have not broken away from academic conceit of past times⁷⁷

is evidence of the persistence of the *bürgerliches Milieu* in universities which still had a long way to go before they became truly “socialist”.⁷⁸

During the same period, however, at the Thirty Sixth Plenary Session of the *Zentralkomitee der SED* in 1958, Walter Ulbricht himself promised to relax political pressure on older professors educated under the pre-War system, in the hope that their knowledge and experience could be used fruitfully for the betterment of the socialist society:

At the universities one must consider that a part of the bourgeois specialists will not be in a position within a reasonable time to contribute to socialistic training. They will therefore carry on their scientific teaching in mathematics etc. ... The interim solution is that we will work loyally and in friendship with these professors as with all others, that we will give

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

them the necessary quiet to perform their scientific work, and will make it possible for them to become acquainted with socialistic development without being disturbed in their own work. ... We place different requirements on the lecturers and assistants who were trained in our universities after 1945 than on the professors who grew up in the capitalist system ...⁷⁹

This attitude can be considered both an acceptance of reality and the growing astuteness of the Party in using bourgeois talent and expertise to serve its own aims until a new generation of academics trained in the “socialist” system and infused with the ideals of Marxism-Leninism could replace the older generation of bourgeois intelligentsia. University professors, especially those educated before 1945, were thus accepted in the system as long as they did not show signs of dissent or opposition.

However, by the early 1960s and especially after the building of the Wall in 1961, the bourgeois culture at universities was in decline. The westward flight of academics unable to adapt to the socialist system implicitly meant that those who remained were either committed Marxists or “conformed” to the new principles or, in many cases, had accepted the new regime and its ideology.⁸⁰ The forced removal of large numbers of students ostensibly “opposed” to the SED too

⁷⁹ Quoted in Bodenman, 1959, p. 96.

⁸⁰ It is noteworthy that despite the existence of old-style mandarins in East Germany there was a lack of organized and united protest against the state’s authoritarian measures including efforts to subjugate institutions of higher education. Again it was their understanding of the academic profession and its responsibilities and of their historically “apolitical” role which partly shaped their actions in the GDR.

contributed to a lessening of the bourgeois influence at universities. Stray incidents highlighted the fact that bourgeois culture had not died out completely but it was no longer a force to reckon with.

3. Institutional Changes to the Position and Authority of the *Ordinarius*

In the immediate aftermath of the War, universities reverted to the statutes and rules of governance and administration of the Weimar period, thereby restoring, in principle, the corporative self-governing status of universities and institutions of higher education.⁸¹ Unofficially, though, the SMAD and the *Deutsche Verwaltung für Volksbildung* (DVV) figured prominently in all decisions and processes regarding higher education.⁸² Formal institutional changes though occurred in 1949 with the passage of the *Vorläufige Arbeitsordnung der Universitäten und wissenschaftlichen Hochschulen der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*. The law “systematised” the influence of state and Party over universities and institutions of higher education and among other measures legally removed the right to self-governance of universities.⁸³

Subsequent reforms, such as the *Verordnung über die Neuorganisation des Hochschulwesens* in 1951, *Die Dritte Hochschulreform* of 1967 and the cluster of laws and statutes surrounding these reforms served to reinforce the changes initiated in the post-War period and formalised with the so-called *Erste*

⁸¹ Jessen, 1999, pp. 176-177.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Klaus Westen, ‘Das Hochschulrecht in der DDR’, *Jahrbuch für Ostrecht*, vol. 1, (1971), pp. 39-74.

Hochschulreform of 1949. The reforms had a two-fold effect on the mandarin tradition. First, there were fundamental changes in the role, authority and composition of the various decision-making bodies of the universities such as the office of the rector, the *Senat* and the *Engere Fakultät*. Second, there was reorganisation of the institutes and faculties into *Sektionen* which undermined the concept of the traditional *Ordinarienuniversität* in the GDR. These changes are considered in the next two subsections below.

3.1. Changes in Organs of University Self-governance

In the post-War period the DVV and subsequently the *Staatssekretariat* or the *Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen* reserved the right to uphold all decisions and processes regarding election within universities.⁸⁴ As a result, the ability of the universities and therefore of the full professors to elect the rector, deans, members of the *Senat* and those of the *Engere Fakultät* was severely curtailed as candidates had to be politically vetted before going through the motions of an election.⁸⁵ For example, even before the re-opening of universities in 1946, the candidature of the newly elected rectors was first officially approved by the Soviet authorities.⁸⁶ Despite that, the level of interference of the controlling authorities was so high that, of the six rectors, two were soon replaced for being “unsuitable” for the position of rector in the socialist regime. Professor Friedrich Zucker of the University of Jena (a non-Party member) was dismissed because “he did not make a good impression”. In the other case, Professor Lohmeyer of the

⁸⁴ Jessen, 1999, p. 177.

⁸⁵ Westen, 1971, pp. 39-74.

⁸⁶ Nikitin, 1997, pp. 63-65.

University of Greifswald, was arrested on charges which were never formally proven.⁸⁷ Further, Lohmeyer's successor, Rudolf Seeliger, a well-known physicist, was also swiftly replaced. The official reasons for his replacement were characteristically vague:

[E]r [war] viel zu sehr in seine Wissenschaft vertieft, ... so daß er sich seinen Rektorpflichten gegenüber recht gleichgültig verhielt und natürlich keinerlei politische Aktivitäten entwickelte, sich also nur ungenügend der "Arbeit zur Demokratisierung der Universität" widmete.⁸⁸

In principle, the rector retained his representative status though his functional role was reduced to that of a state bureaucrat.⁸⁹ In the end he had to take the "advice" of numerous bodies, be "assisted" in his duties by several "*Prorektoren*", and was ultimately under the jurisdiction of the *Volksbildungsminister* himself:

Der Rektor ist dem Minister (bzw. dem Leiter des staatlichen Organs, dem die Hochschule untersteht) verantwortlich und rechenschaftspflichtig, wobei dieser Dienstvorgesetzter des Rektors ist.⁹⁰

The provision for four prorectors to be appointed by the *Staatssekretariat* not only reduced the authority of the rector but was also evidence of the fact that entry into the highest echelons of university governance was no longer restricted to full

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Connelly, 1997, p. 66.

⁹⁰ Quoted in Westen, 1971, pp. 39-74.

professors. Of the four prorectors one was responsible for the *gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Grundstudium* as well as for courses in German and Russian Language and Literature. A second *Prorektor* was entrusted with matters relating to research activities as well as evening and correspondence courses. A third was expected to oversee the development of future university staff, the *Aspiranten*. And finally, a fourth *Prorektor* was appointed to take care of student affairs.⁹¹ The fact that the first two prorector positions could be occupied even by *Dozenten* and that incumbents of other two positions need not even belong to the university teaching staff allowed for a significant increase in Party influence on universities and for a decline in mandarin power and position.⁹²

Official measures also repudiated the exclusive rights of the *Ordinarien* to take part in the electoral processes within the organs of university self-government. Representatives of both the *Senat* and the *Engere Fakultät* (later changed to the *Rat der Fakultät*) included new, non-professorial members with voting rights who were directly appointed by the Party.⁹³ The idea of democratic centralism, Lenin's much-publicised slogan, was at the core of these re-organisations.⁹⁴ The aim was to provide representation to all groups in the governing bodies of the university.

The position of *Studentendekan* was a further addition to the plethora of new posts. Again, the candidate could be of any academic rank and was appointed

⁹¹ Jessen, 1999, p. 178.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid. pp. 177-178. In the case of the *Engere Fakultät* the number of non-professors however could not exceed a third of the total number of members.

⁹⁴ Rudolph Hedwig and Rudolph Husemann, *Hochschulpolitik zwischen Expansion und Restriktion*, (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1984), p. 33.

directly by the *Staatssekretariat* and reported directly to the *Volksbildungsminister*.⁹⁵ The list of functions ascribed to the *Studentendekan* highlights the fact that major decisions concerning students – regarding admissions, scholarships, and even details of study - were taken out of professorial hands.⁹⁶ The final step in placing universities under permanent Party surveillance was the creation, in the 1950s, of the all-important position in the Senate for the first secretary of the SED.⁹⁷ Many believe that the real power in the university had since been wielded from this position.⁹⁸

Over time, however, these positions and their functions underwent extensive amendments. By the end of the 1970s there was only one permanent “first prorector” who, in effect, was the deputy of the rector. The number of additional prorectors was not specified although, in general, the two posts of the *Prorektor für Prognose und Wissenschaftsentwicklung* and the *Prorektor für Gesellschaftswissenschaften* continued throughout to be in existence.⁹⁹ A *Wissenschaftlicher Rat* was created as a parallel body to the *Senat* and *Fakultäten*, eventually taking over some of their exclusive functions.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, in all this, at no time did authority and control go back in the hands of the *Ordinarien*. This de-corporatisation of university structure served the purpose of making inroads into traditional professorial territory and of creating numerous possibilities

⁹⁵ Jessen, 1999, p. 177.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Connelly, 1997, p. 64.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 66

⁹⁹ Giles, 1978, pp. 131-156.

¹⁰⁰ Jessen, 1999, p. 183.

for Party and state intervention in the governance and administration of universities. As Jessen concludes:

Fakultät und Senat hatten ihre Qualität als Kollegialorgane der Ordinarien eingebüßt. Sie waren zu leicht manipulierbaren Hybridgremien umgebaut worden: gewählte Mitglieder standen neben ernannten Mitgliedern; Fachprofessoren, die Titel und Stelle "legitim" führten, trafen auf politisch protegierte Wahrnehmungsprofessoren und Dozenten sowie auf Dozenten der Gesellschaftswissenschaften, die den Titel führten, ohne auch nur promoviert zu sein.¹⁰¹

3.2. The Replacement of the Institutes with the *Sektionen*

The *Dritte Hochschulreform* of 1968 brought about permanent changes to the institute-system which had been in continuous existence in German universities since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In place of the institutes, *Sektionen* were established which were no longer grouped around individual chair-holders as before.¹⁰² This basic organizational unit replaced the large fragmented faculties with their abundance of independent institutes. For example, in the University of Leipzig 10 faculties with 114 institutes, 24 clinics and 3 centrally directed institutes were replaced with 16 *Sektionen* with 6 centrally directed institutes, streamlining the entire structure of universities and making them more

¹⁰¹ Jessen, 1999, p. 179.

¹⁰² Giles, 1978, pp. 131-156.

manageable than before.¹⁰³ The structure and function of the *Sektionen* was described in the *Staatsratsbeschuß* of the *Dritte Hochschulreform* as follows:

Die Sektionen [sind] die entscheidenden, die neuen Maßstäben der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit, der Dynamik der Wissenschaftsentwicklung und der engen Verflechtung von Wissenschaft und sozialistischer Großproduktion gemäßen Glieder der Hochschulen, in denen sich die Forschung, Ausbildung, Erziehung und Weiterbildung vollzieht.¹⁰⁴

Each section had a director whose candidature was proposed by a *Rat der Sektion* and endorsed by the Ministry and the rector to whom the director was directly responsible.¹⁰⁵ The appointment was on a fixed-term basis, normally lasting four years.¹⁰⁶ Within the sections, teachers and students worked as co-partners in *Arbeitsgruppen* which facilitated cooperation between various *Sektionen* within universities and other *wissenschaftliche* institutions outside the universities.¹⁰⁷ The areas of research were tailored to meet the aims of a national standardized curriculum and the demands of industry.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the *Sektionen* promoted even closer ties between universities and industry.¹⁰⁹

The reform of the universities in the socialist regime had by now reached the grass-root level. Institutes headed by full-professors and chair holders had always

¹⁰³ Connelly, 1997, p. 65.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Westen, 1971, pp. 39-74.

¹⁰⁵ Giles, 1978, pp. 131-156.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Westen, 1971, pp. 39-74.

¹⁰⁸ Connelly, 1997, p. 65.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

been the smallest functional and organisational units within institutions of higher education. Historically, as was the case during the Third Reich, changes in the higher strata of universities did not have any significant effect on these self-contained units.¹¹⁰ In the GDR too the day-to-day functioning of universities within the institutes may have continued unchanged until the recent reforms. In fact, until then, there was evidence of persistence of individualism and egotistic attitudes within the institutes as an article elaborating on the university reforms of the late 1960s notes:

Die modernen Methoden der Forschung in Natur und Technik zwingen zu einem konzentrierten Einsatz wissenschaftlicher Kräfte an Schwerpunktthemen. ... [U]nser ganzes Bemühen [muß] darauf gerichtet sein, durch die Überwindung der Ideologie des Individualismus und Institutsegoismus solche Arbeitsbedingungen zu schaffen, die dem Konzentrationsprozeß gerecht werden. Viele der in der letzten Zeit gebildeten Sektionen stellen eine solche sowohl für die Forschung als auch für die Ausbildung geeignete Form dar.¹¹¹

Jessen cites several cases of reservation and rejection of the *Sektionen* in its conceptual stages by the *Institutsdirektoren* or chair-holders.¹¹² Their shared view was that the abolition of the institutes would reduce the independence of the

¹¹⁰ See Chapter Three.

¹¹¹ Ernst-Joachim Giessmann, 'Ziele und Aufgaben der sozialistischen Hochschulreform', *Das Hochschulwesen*, vol. 16, no. 5, (1968), pp. 306-314.

¹¹² Jessen, 1999, pp. 197-198.

various researchers and directors which was potentially harmful to research output.

It was evident that the dismantling of the institute system would contribute to a significant decline in the authority and position of the mandarin as *Lehrstuhlinhaber* or *Institutsdirektor*. Naturally, the mandarins would oppose the replacement of institutes since they would no longer enjoy sole jurisdiction over their institutes, they would have to make provisions for team work and communication between various departments, and in general, be open to pressures from various quarters.¹¹³ Further, since the position of the *akademische Mittelbau* was to improve significantly with the reforms - their positions were to become salaried, tenured and less dependant on the *Institutsdirektor*¹¹⁴ - the mandarins' sphere of influence would certainly become limited under these circumstances. Professorial reluctance about the replacement of the institute system thus reflects the persistence of mandarin views about the innate structure of the university even in the late 1960s.

The replacement of the traditional institutes with the *Sektionen* is widely regarded as the most fundamental and far-reaching reform to have occurred, not just in the sphere of higher education in the GDR, but in all of Eastern Europe. The East German universities' success in fulfilling the demands of a planned economy was directly attributed to the performance of the *Sektionen*.¹¹⁵ Indeed, other East

¹¹³ Jessen, 1999, pp. 197-198.

¹¹⁴ Westen, 1971, pp. 39-74.

¹¹⁵ Giles, 1978, pp. 131-156.

European countries attempted to emulate it within their systems of higher education.¹¹⁶ For the mandarins this success came at a personal cost. As we have seen, institutionally, their authority, spheres of influence and position suffered badly. The high percentage of party members and functionaries and non-professorial positions accommodated within the governing and administrative bodies of universities destroyed not just the corporate, self-governing character of the East German university but also the mandarin dominance of universities.

Evidence suggests that until the building of the Wall, in practical terms, the professors were not that distant from decision-making processes in the universities. However, the post-1961 period saw a definite “hardening” of position on part of the Party and state towards *Hochschulautonomie* as such. By the 1970s the traditional structures and hierarchy of university administration and governance had undergone such a transformation that professorial experience and competence were no longer a pre-requisite for governance and administration at the universities.

4. Fundamental Changes in the Ideas of University and Learning

Traditionally, the mandarins’ status and position was irrevocably linked to their role as the guardians of *Wissenschaft*. This unique function along with the influence of the mandarins on the system of state examinations and professions had formed the basis of the mandarin tradition in the past. Changes in the

¹¹⁶ Connelly, 1997, pp. 66-67.

perception of *Wissenschaft* could therefore be expected to result in implicit changes in the position of the mandarins. In the GDR, *Wissenschaft* was never underestimated in view of the indispensable role of the concept in technological and industrial progress. However, the original notion of *Wissenschaft* was considered to have become tainted by its close association with the bourgeoisie and capitalism, and therefore needed to be “redefined” to correspond to a “new socialist world”. This section of the chapter considers fundamental changes in the perception and role of *Wissenschaft* in socialist Germany in the context of the mandarin tradition. The section is divided into three sub-sections. The first is an overall examination of “socialist” *Wissenschaft* vis-à-vis the traditional concept of *Wissenschaft*. The second sub-section examines the predominantly utilitarian function of *Wissenschaft* pursued by the socialist state, with emphasis on scientific-technological advancement. The third sub-section considers changes to the fundamental *wissenschaftlich* principle of *Einheit von Lehre und Forschung*, which was now reinterpreted to serve different aims and objectives. It had a lasting influence on the role and perception of the university professor for whom the unusual role of *Erzieher* was accorded greater importance than that of the traditional *Lehrer-Forscher*.

4.1. Socialist *Wissenschaft* vis-à-vis traditional *Wissenschaft*

The importance of the classical notion of the university with its stress on the pursuit of *Wissenschaft* was acknowledged from the beginning by the socialist state. The fact that *Wissenschaft* was, in principle, the very essence of the *Universitas litterarum*, the guiding theory behind the German tradition of learning

and education, was frequently recalled.¹¹⁷ In general Humboldt and his educational principles were ritualistically invoked at appropriate occasions. The renaming of the University of Berlin as the Humboldt University in February 1949 was perhaps the first of various official attempts made to preserve the cult of the educational reformer. Humboldt's educational philosophy continued to play an important role in universities insofar as they did not conflict directly with socialist educational aims. In an interview in 1983, the Rector of the Humboldt University, Helmut Klein explained:

It is in the nature of socialism to draw the progressive and humanistic elements from the traditions of the past and use them to solve present-day problems. We attach great value to the educational principles of Wilhelm von Humboldt, the University's spiritual father, and are at pains to put them into practice in a form appropriate to our present-day circumstances.¹¹⁸

According to socialist ideology the humanitarian element of *Wissenschaft* was one of its finest aspects. The humanistic ideals of the German university tradition were perceived to be common to socialist notions of higher education as well; indeed socialism itself was considered fertile ground for the humanistic elements of *Wissenschaft* to develop in a practical, not illusory, manner:

¹¹⁷ Dieter Pälke (ed), *Universitas litterarum heute: Im Auftrage des Rektors der Martin Luther Universität Halle*, (Halle: Abteilung Wissenschaftspublizistik der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 1978).

¹¹⁸ 'Students and Colleges: Higher Education in the GDR', *Panorama DDR*, (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1983), pp. 16-17.

Die Universitäten und Hochschulen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik können stolz darauf sein, die progressive, humanistische Seite der Tradition der deutschen Universitäten und ihres Beitrages zur Entwicklung der Kultur fortzuführen. ... Die den Sozialismus auszeichnende Einheit von Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik ist ... realer, wirksamer, tagtäglich praktizierter Humanismus, Verwirklichung Jahrhunderte alter Ideale.¹¹⁹

This “incorporation” of Humboldtian principles into the idea of a socialist university was part of a larger picture in which the East German socialist policy of *Erb- und Traditionspflege* played a major role:

Alles Große und Edle, Humanistische und Revolutionäre wird in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik in Ehren bewahrt und weitergeführt, indem es zu den Aufgaben der Gegenwart in eine lebendige Beziehung gesetzt wird.¹²⁰

In the new socialist world, *Wissenschaft* along with *Kunst* were an integral part of the *kulturelle Erbe* bequeathed to the working classes. Under socialism the “regrettably elitist character” of *Wissenschaft* would also be brought to an end. Eventually *all* citizens would have the opportunity to benefit from the advantages of the concept:

¹¹⁹ Dieter Bergner, ‘Universitas litterarum heute: Zur Tradition und den philosophischen Grundlagen der sozialistischen Universität’, in Pälke, (ed), 1978, p. 18-51.

¹²⁰ Quoted in Rosemarie Ahrbeck, ‘Zur Traditionsproblematik der sozialistischen Universität’ in Pälke (ed), 1978, p. 85.

Zu den engen Verbindung von Theorie und Praxis, die ein Grundgesetz des sowjetischen Gesellschaftsbetriebs ist, gehört auch, daß man tunlich jeden Fabrik- und Landarbeiter mit geeignetem wissenschaftlichem Rüstzeug auszustatten sucht. Der Unterschied zwischen Handarbeiter und Kopfarbeiter soll mit der Zeit verschwinden. Man will den Arbeiter geistig näher an die Wissenschaft heranbringen, aber es ist natürlich keine Rede davon, daß man ihn zum Wissenschaftler machen wollte. Er soll zum wissenschaftlichen Denken angeleitet werden und in dieser oder jener Disziplin mehr als oberflächliche Erkenntnisse erwerben.¹²¹

Aspects of the Humboldtian tradition which were perceived to be in conflict with socialist ideology, were, however, actively discouraged:

Das sozialistische Bekenntnis zu Wilhelm von Humboldt ist ein "Aufheben" im dialektischen Sinne: bewahren und überwinden zugleich.¹²²

Kurt Hager, the Head of the Department of *Wissenschaft und Hochschulen* of the *Zentralkomitee* of the SED also distinguishes clearly between aspects of university traditions to be retained and those to be discarded:

¹²¹ Arthur Baumgarten, 'Die deutsche Wissenschaft in ihrem Verhältnis zur Sowjetunion' in *Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Berlin; Vorträge und Schriften*, vol. 47, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1952), p. 10.

¹²² Quoted in Werner Flöschendröger and Gunter Steiger, *Magister und Scholaren, Professoren und Studenten: Geschichte deutscher Universitäten und Hochschulen im Überblick*, (Leipzig: Urania - Verlag), p. 248.

[E]s gibt gute und schlechte Traditionen. Wenn man unter Tradition die wissenschaftliche Gelehrsamkeit, den Forscherfleiß, die hohe Qualität der wissenschaftlichen Leistung versteht, so sind wir unbedingt für die Beibehaltung, ja Förderung dieser Tradition. Wenn man darunter jedoch die Losgelöstheit der Universität von den Werktätigen, die Verbindung reaktionärer und militaristischer Ideen, die Verfälschung und Verleumdung des Marxismus, die Nichtzulassung der Arbeiter- und Bauernkinder versteht, so haben wir mit dieser Tradition ein für allemal gebrochen. ... Wenn unter Tradition die Beibehaltung der Struktur und Verfassung der früheren Universität verstanden wird, so zeigt die Geschichte der Universitäten, daß es keine unwandelbare Struktur gibt.¹²³

It was only natural to expect that in a socialist system the relevance of the Humboldtian educational philosophy and learning traditions established more than a century back would be questioned. That was more so the case since the modern university and its founding fathers had been an intrinsic part of the bourgeois aims and aspirations at the time:

Humboldt möchte bekanntlich die Ausstrahlungskraft der bürgerlichen Intelligenz seiner Zeit einsetzen als Instrument einer umfassenden Gesellschaftsreform, nachdem das absolutistische Preußen unter den Schlägen der Napoleonischen Armeen zusammengebrochen war. ...

¹²³ Quoted in Baske, 1998, pp. 209-210.

Humboldts Konzeption erwächst aus einer massiven Gesellschaftskritik. ... Sie gilt zugleich auch schon dem Profitstreben der heraufziehenden kapitalistischen Ordnung ... Daher die Aufwertung der Persönlichkeit und die Abwertung die Praxis, daher die Behauptung, daß, wer die Wissenschaft als Mittel des Lebensunterhalts, als "Brotstudium" betreibe, unsittlich sei.¹²⁴

In the end the efforts of the socialist state to overcome the elitist character of *Wissenschaft* would have to be acknowledged. The policy of preserving the progressive elements of the German university traditions was also well-intentioned. However, the instrumental use of *Wissenschaft* by the Socialists to achieve technological and industrial superiority, while achieving short-term goals, was not, as discussed in the following sub-section, sustainable in the long term.

4.2. Utilitarian Aim and Purpose of University and Higher Education

A key element in the idea of a university in the nineteenth century was that institutions of higher learning should have "a spiritually ennobling rather than a narrow utilitarian influence upon the disciples of learning and upon the nation as a whole"¹²⁵. The training and education of future personnel was considered to be an unavoidable part of the university's duties, not the primary one. Socialist ideology, however, brought with it a distinct utilitarian connotation to the idea of university and learning:

¹²⁴ Ahrbeck, 1978, p. 77.

¹²⁵ Ringer, 1990, p. 104.

Die Wissenschaftspolitik der marxistisch-leninistischen Partei in den sozialistischen Ländern ist darauf gerichtet, die günstigsten Bedingungen für die schöpferische Entwicklung der Wissenschaft zum Wohl der werktätigen Menschen zu schaffen, die wissenschaftlichen Resultate rasch in die Praxis zu überführen und die internationale Zusammenarbeit zu entwickeln.¹²⁶

The impractical, abstract, and theoretical world of *Wissenschaft* was, according to socialist principles, obsolete in contemporary times. Scholarship in any form had to have a purpose and that was to serve the betterment of society. Indeed in the absence of a fixed aim *Wissenschaft* was in danger of losing its creativity and originality:

Man wird einwenden, ... daß die Wissenschaft keinem anderen Zweck dienen dürfe als dem Fortschritt der Erkenntnis: La science pour la science. Auch die edelste, humanste Verfolgung von Zwecken, die nicht in ihr selbst begriffen waren, sei ihr nachteilig. Sie verliere ihre Verwendungsmöglichkeiten für praktische Zwecke, sobald ein anderes Streben als das nach Erkenntnis sich in ihr geltend mache. ... Indessen läßt sich in dieser Weise das Wesen des Menschen nicht aufspalten. Jede wissenschaftliche Betätigung hat noch einen anderen Zweck als den der Erkenntnis um der Erkenntnis willen, mag er ein individueller oder ein

¹²⁶ *Kleines Politisches Wörterbuch*, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1988), p. 1100.

kollektiver sein, mag er dem Wissenschaftler bewußt sein oder vom Unbewußten her wirken.¹²⁷

Indeed *Wissenschaft* was, in a world guided by Marxist-Leninist principles, free from pressures to protect its elusive and almost mythical image:

Die Zeit des großen Irrtums von einer "voraussetzungslosen" Wissenschaft ist vorüber. ... [D]ie Wissenschaft ist im Raume des Sozialismus *frei* geworden ... frei von der Abhängigkeit von Launen aller möglichen und oft genug unmöglichen Fürstlichkeiten; von Verboten und Verfolgerungen klerikaler Inquisition; von den zu schlechten Kompromissen führenden Zwang, unter Bedingungen der Ausbeutung des Menschen durch den Menschen existent zu bleiben; von den Wissenschaftlern in der imperialistisch-kapitalistischen Gesellschaftsordnung gesetzten Grenzen ihrer Forschung; von ihrer systematischen Einordnung in ein grundsätzlich unfriedliches Gesellschaftssystem.¹²⁸

The importance of *Wissenschaft* lay in its ability to fulfil the needs and demands of the Communist state which was the production of a politically reliable, "socially" conscious, technically qualified workforce to serve as scientists, economists and administrators. Since the 1950s, the importance of technological advancement was heightened manifold. The *Verordnung über die*

¹²⁷ Baumgarten, 1952, p. 9.

¹²⁸ Johannes Dieckmann, 'Freiheit und Wissenschaft' in *Wissenschaft aus nationaler Verantwortung: Beiträge zum nationalen Kulturvorbild der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik auf dem Gebiet der Wissenschaft*, Elmar Faber et. al. (eds), (Leipzig: Karl-Marx-Universität, 1963), pp. 3-9.

Neuorganisation des Hochschulwesens passed in 1951 linked the higher education sector with the demands of a centrally-controlled, planned economy.¹²⁹ Thus, *Wissenschaft*'s non-utilitarian character was replaced by real, long-term goals:

Das Hauptziel war, die Produktivität der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit durch eine direkt auf die Produktion ausgerichtete Zweckforschung zu erhöhen.¹³⁰

In the 1970s and 1980s the state, under increasing pressure to “technologically outperform” West Germany, directed even more resources towards the practical achievements of *Wissenschaft*.¹³¹ The drive towards practical result-oriented goals resulted in obvious drawbacks in the East German higher education system. The overwhelming emphasis on applied research to serve the needs of industry not only distorted the image of *Wissenschaft* and the classical German university but was also infeasible in the long run. Giles observes in the late 1970s:

The short-term benefits of this for industry may well be outweighed by the serious long-term consequences, if a decided shift in favour of basic and pure research is not rapidly effected. In recent years this danger for long-range scientific progress has been recognized, but the remedial steps are being taken only haltingly. The sponsors still think in terms of the practical results accruing to them.¹³²

¹²⁹ Connelly, 1997, p. 63.

¹³⁰ Baske, 1998, p. 209.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Giles, 1978, pp. 131-156.

Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that East German universities had “by degrees ... thoroughly and apparently quite effectively adapted to the function required of them in a Communist society”.¹³³ The East German system of planning of research activities in conjunction with local enterprises (as the link between the *Kombinat* Carl Zeiss and the University of Jena illustrates¹³⁴) is, for example, particularly telling. It is especially interesting because in present-day Germany the subject of coordinating higher education with the demands of industry and economy has assumed paramount importance.¹³⁵

4.3. Role of University Professor as *Erzieher* rather than *Lehrer-Forscher*

This section focuses on the changes in the role of the university professor. Traditionally, professors were the *Lehrer-Forscher* with research inevitably assuming prime importance. In the GDR professors were entrusted with the task of inculcating socialist values in the new generation thereby becoming *Lehrer-Erzieher*. Further, the introduction of “structured” research and teaching as well as efforts made towards inter-disciplinary cooperation brought about a significant change in the principles guiding higher education and in the position and role of the full professor in the university.

It would be natural to expect a reluctance on part of the professors to accept the role of *Erzieher*. Traditionally, academic freedom implied the freedom to pursue

¹³³ W.H. Bruford, ‘German Political, Legal and Cultural Institutions’ in *Germany: A Companion to German Studies*, Malcolm Pasley (ed), (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 111-112.

¹³⁴ Franz Bolck, ‘Schritte auf dem Weg einer sozialistischen Universität’, *Das Hochschulwesen*, vol. 27, no. 10, (1979), pp. 278-281.

¹³⁵ See Chapter Six.

research and teaching according to individual preferences which translated into a stress on research sometimes even at the cost of teaching. In view of this scenario efforts were made to introduce the task of transforming students into ideal socialists to *all* university teachers:

[W]ir wollen ja nicht nur Fachleute an unseren Universitäten ausbilden, wir wollen Menschen ausbilden, die Leiter von Kollektiven, Lehrer und Erzieher sein können. Das ist aber nur möglich, wenn wir uns selbst an unseren Universitäten zu vollwertigen Menschen der sozialistischen Gesellschaft entwickeln. ... Es gibt heute keinen Streit mehr darüber, daß das nicht eine Aufgabe der Dozenten und Professoren für das gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Grundstudium ist. Alle Hochschullehrer unserer Universitäten wissen, daß diese Erziehung nur von uns allen gemeinsam geleistet werden kann. Hierbei muß das Beispiel des Hochschullehrers eine entscheidende Rolle spielen.¹³⁶

The SED however, was from the beginning dissatisfied with the efforts of professors to inculcate students with Marxist-Leninist ideology. This criticism of professors continued well into the 1970s:

[Die] Forderungen nach einer marxistisch-leninistischen Durchdringung aller Lehrveranstaltungen bewirkten jedoch nicht in jedem Falle die gewünschte Erhöhung der politisch-ideologischen Wirksamkeit der Lehre

¹³⁶ Schick, 1963, p. 19.

und des Lehrkörpers. ... Zunehmend [wurden] Tendenzen zum Ausweichen vor der politischen Erziehungsarbeit und zum Zurückziehen auf solche erzieherische Potenzen sichtbar, die unmittelbar und direkt aus der fachspezifischen Arbeit erwachsen.¹³⁷

Again, the university teachers were criticised by the *Inspektions- und Hospitationsgruppen der Abteilung Marxismus-Leninismus*. The *Inspektions- und Hospitationsgruppen* concluded that in the academic years of 1972/73 und 1973/74 the quality of ideological content in the lectures and seminars was substandard. The reasons for that were cited as follows:

Einerseits wurden die Werke der Klassiker sowie die Dokumente der SED und der anderen kommunistischen und Arbeiterparteien durch die Lehrkräfte noch unzureichend theoretisch-ideologisch ausgeschöpft und zu wenig in die Arbeit im Seminar einbezogen. Andererseits waren noch nicht alle Mitarbeiter mit der Konzeption und dem Grundanliegen des Lehrprogramms sowie mit der Ziel- und Aufgabenstellung der einzelnen Kurse und Themen ausreichend vertraut.¹³⁸

A further development in East German universities brought about fundamental changes in the traditional roles of the mandarins. The universities were no longer the primary centres for research in the country with pure research being

¹³⁷ Regina Schneider, *Konzeption zur Gestaltung der Hochschulbildung in der DDR – historischer Überblick (1971-80)*, (Berlin: Zentralinstitut für Hochschulbildung, 1988), pp. 32-33.

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 34-35.

transferred into various *Akademien* and *Parteiinstitute*. This resulted in fundamental change to one of the guiding principles of the German university, i.e., the principle of *Einheit von Forschung und Lehre*. Pure research was to be carried out at the *Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (previously known *Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften*), which re-opened in August 1946.¹³⁹ The *Akademie* very soon assumed mammoth proportions, taking over the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute* and later, in 1957, bringing around 40 more institutes under its jurisdiction.¹⁴⁰ Thus, in 1957, it had 75 different research institutes and by 1962, a total of 109 institutes under it.¹⁴¹ The *Akademie* was one institution of several which now had the right to grant degrees including doctorates.¹⁴² As institutions universities no longer had the monopoly of awarding degrees or academic qualifications. This development adversely affected the unique position and status granted to universities since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

University professors had been accustomed to the practice of according research top priority; teaching and other duties were considered peripheral in comparison. In the GDR the universities became first and foremost responsible for producing highly qualified, socialistically aware students; research was categorized as one of several other tasks the university had to perform. In the *Gesetz über das einheitliche sozialistische Bildungssystem* passed in February 1965, the following statement

¹³⁹ Jessen, 1999, p. 158.

¹⁴⁰ Giles, 1978, pp. 131-156.

¹⁴¹ Jessen, 1999, p. 158-59.

¹⁴² Some *Fachhochschulen* and *Technische Hochschulen* were also granted the same status as universities. Ibid.

In der Ausbildung an den Universitäten und Hochschulen gilt das Grundsatz der Einheit von Lehre und Erziehung¹⁴³

appears before the pronouncement

Die Einheit von Lehre und Forschung gilt für die gesamte Arbeit an den Universitäten und Hochschulen.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, despite official policy, Baske notes that East German universities continued to function as important centres of research until the end of the republic.¹⁴⁵

Existing literature suggests that flagrant transgression of the Humboldtian ideal was often questioned within academic circles. An example is the change in *Wissenschaft's* key role in the development of personality with its stress on *Allgemeinbildung* as opposed to *Spezialisierung* in the socialist era. Jürgen Kuczynski, as Director of the *Institut für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, refers to the renewed attention the question *wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbildung* was receiving in East German academic and intellectual circles in the early 1960s.¹⁴⁶ He counters the issue with the customary reiteration of Marxist-Leninist educational principles:

¹⁴³ Quoted in Flöschendrüger and Steiger, pp. 239-240.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Baske, 1998, p. 217.

¹⁴⁶ Jürgen Kuczynski, *Über einige Probleme der Ausbildung und Bildung des Wissenschaftlers*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1963), p. 7.

Zugleich aber forderte die schnelle Entwicklung aller Wissenschaftszweige in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft eine strenge Spezialisierung. ... In voller Klarheit darüber, daß Spezialisierung sowohl für die Formung der sozialistischen Persönlichkeit wie auch für den praktischen Einsatz des jungen Absolventen der Universität gefährlich ist, wenn sie nicht mit einer breiten und tiefen Allgemeinbildung verbunden ist, sorgen wir dafür, daß auch an den Universitäten die Allgemeinbildung, und zwar vor allem in Form des Grundstudiums des Marxismus-Leninismus, eine große Rolle spielt.¹⁴⁷

Associated with *Spezialbildung* was the practice of externally planned study programs and non-interactive methods of studying. Although the practice had effectively dealt with the problem of *Dilettantismus* that had afflicted German university students for over a century, it had other less pleasant outcomes as well such as total dependence of students on teachers. This fact was noted in the past too though the blame was assigned to the lecturers. In 1968 an article on the *Hochschulreform* noted:

Verbreitet ist gegenwärtig ... unter Hochschullehrern die Tendenz, zunächst unter sich Konzeptionen und Maßnahmepläne zu beraten und ausreifen zu lassen, um sie nach einer Vorentscheidung dann den Studenten als fertiges Material zur Kenntnis zu bringen. Dem liegt nicht

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

selten die falsche ideologische Position zugrunde, daß Studenten noch nicht reif genug sind, fundierte Vorschläge zu unterbreiten.¹⁴⁸

The issue of *Allgemeinbildung* persisted throughout and emerged at the forefront again in the late 1970s.¹⁴⁹ Major problems, centered round the dependence of students on their teachers, lack of personal responsibility and an alarming loss in creativity (the cost of ignoring the principle of *Lernfreiheit*, some would argue), cropped up. In November 1979, prior to the *V. Hochschulkonferenz*, the *Minister für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen* raised the question of whether students would benefit from more independence and responsibility, thereby increasing their ability to take risks, though naturally within the limits of a socialist *Weltanschauung* and politically correct disposition.¹⁵⁰ Several discussions and publications appeared on the subject at the time:

Unsere Arbeitserfahrung zeigt jedoch, daß ein von vornherein einseitig auf ein enges Berufsziel ausgerichtetes Studieren den Anforderungen der sozialistischen Gegenwart und Zukunft nicht entspricht ...Das moderne gesellschaftliche Leben im Sozialismus braucht ... Menschen, die mit einer breiten und tiefgründigen allgemeinen Bildung und einer soliden speziellen wissenschaftlichen Ausbildung in der Lage sind, den ...Anforderungen der kommenden Jahrzehnte gerecht zu werden. Ich glaube, daß das Niveau der wissenschaftlichen Ausbildung und der

¹⁴⁸ Giessmann, 1968, pp. 306-314.

¹⁴⁹ Baske, 1998, pp. 221-222.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Allgemeinbildung an den Universitäten und Hochschulen damit übereinstimmen muß.¹⁵¹

However, policy and decision-makers did not offer any practical solutions to the problem and, as was customary in the GDR, merely tended to reiterate vapid ideological views instead. The entire episode illustrates that the ideal of the Humboldtian university continued to be used as a yardstick to assess fundamental problems afflicting East German universities.

5. Conclusion

The chapter examines some far-reaching changes, institutional and otherwise, which deeply affected German university traditions as well as the mandarins. The Soviet occupation of Eastern Germany and later, the German Democratic Republic, was successful to a considerable extent in dismantling the traditional higher education system. The ultimate aim was to bring about the technological superiority of the socialist state with the aid of *Wissenschaft* and thus to provide legitimisation to the regime. Thus, *Wissenschaft* was assigned the hitherto uncharacteristic “utilitarian” task of achieving technological superiority over the capitalist world. The importance of universities and other institutes for higher education lay, in the eyes of the Party, in the production, on demand, of highly specialised functionaries for science, economics and administration. Further, members of such a trained workforce had to be instilled with the values and ethics of Marxism-Leninism in order to fulfil without protest the “social norm” imposed

¹⁵¹ Bolck, 1979, pp. 278-281.

upon them. By and large, the universities managed to fulfil the task entrusted to them, though not without a fundamental transformation in structure, function, administration and governance.

Although there are obvious hazards in drawing parallels between the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic, some comparisons in the context of university reforms and the effects on the mandarin tradition are instructive. In both cases the state was dealing with higher educational institutions steeped in traditions, mentalities and modes of conduct that had been in place for more than a century. From the Nazi viewpoint, one of the biggest problems was the limited time span in which they had to bring about fundamental alterations in the universities. Besides, the majority of National Socialists, with their pseudo-ideology and shallow understanding, found themselves totally out-of-depth in the world of intellectuals and scholarship. Finally, the Nazis did not have a comprehensive plan or solution for reforming universities. The SED, on the other hand, had the help and expertise of the more experienced Soviets and went about the task in a systematic way. It brought about fundamental changes in the nature of the university as a self-governing corporation, changed decision-making processes and opened up channels for extraneous influences. The Party also targeted the self-perpetuating nature of the intelligentsia (and therefore of the professoriate) as a class and attempted to remove the bourgeois culture (synonymous with mandarin thought) prevalent at German universities for more than a century.

The mandarin tradition was in continuous decline in the period 1945-1989 in the GDR as it was faced fundamental alteration of its primary tenets. The gradual erosion of the basis of the authority and influence of the full professor contributed to its decline. However, there is conclusive evidence of its existence in various forms till the late 1960s. The presence of bourgeois professors indicates that mandarin thought clearly persisted in the older generation of professors, i.e., those educated before 1945. The late 1960s, corresponding to the passage of the third *Hochschulreform*, signalled that the “socialisation” of universities was complete and the end of mandarin thought and tradition was in sight. The structural transformation of the university, which included the abolition of institutes, expedited matters. By this time a new generation of professors, trained in the “socialist” method and mostly being members of the SED itself, had replaced the older full-professors. Their behaviour over the next few decades shows both their socialist affiliations and mandarin characteristics. The relatively passive role played by university professors in the movements of 1953, 1956/57 and to some extent 1989 was seen by many as indicative of their acceptance of socialist values and principles. Also the persistent element of support for the existing state has been interpreted as an aspect of their traditional apolitical mandarin stance. An article in *Die Zeit* entitled “Loyale Mandarine” adopts this view:

Am Ende ... stand eine enthierarchisierte und homogenisierte Hochschullehrerschaft in der DDR, die dem neuen Staat bis zum Ende loyal diente.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Sabrow, 2000.

Although it seems unlikely that full-professors enjoyed their earlier authority and influence in the 1970s and 1980s, recent evidence suggests that their status continued to be one of the highest in the country. Great emphasis was certainly paid on titles and honorific like *Doktor* and *Professor*, supposedly because salaries in higher education were low and wealth had ceased to be a status symbol.¹⁵³ The significance of titles is illustrated by the fact that a long list of political functionaries had opted to retain their “*Professor*” titles in the *Arbeiter- und Bauern-Staat*.¹⁵⁴ Most surprisingly, though, West German observers noted after re-unification that, in East German universities, the rector was still addressed as *Magnifizenz* and the deans as *Spektabilität*.¹⁵⁵

Thus, it would seem that as long as university traditions did not directly conflict with Party ideology they were not only accepted but also encouraged. Further, as we shall see in Chapter Five, traditions and mentalities within institutions and societies tend to persist even after regime changes. In this respect one can speak of a sort of continuation of the mandarin tradition in East Germany even though other more important and “visible” aspects of it may have been rejected. The reinstatement of the mandarin tradition occurred, not surprisingly, in the post re-unification period. The institutional and structural changes in East German universities after 1990 found full professors back in their original elite positions within universities. In this case, however, the vast majority were West Germans;

¹⁵³ Rosalind M.O. Pritchard, *Reconstructing Education: East German Schools and Universities after Unification*, (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999), pp. 160-61.

¹⁵⁴ Sabrow, 2000.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

East German professors having been dismissed from their posts either due to closure of entire departments or due to poor academic standards.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Pritchard, 1999.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Mandarin Tradition in West and Re-united Germany

There is general acceptance of Ringer's original argument that German university professors, the *Ordinarien*, occupied a singularly important position within the university. This chapter examines the continuation of the mandarin tradition and the reasons for its survival in successive periods in West and the now re-united Germany. The analysis proceeds through five sections. The first section focuses on the reasons for the restoration of the tradition German university. The second section considers the role of the professors in the debates over university reform in the 1950s and 1960s as well as the effect on the professorial class of the student movement of the late 1960s. The third section discusses the post-1968 era, in particular the formulation and passage of the first *Hochschulrahmengesetz* in 1976. The fourth section examines the contemporary situation including recent attempts at university reform which have posed arguably the most serious threat to mandarin position since the late 1960s. The fifth section concludes.

1. The Post-1945 Period in the Western Zones of Occupied Germany

The reappearance in full force of the mandarin tradition immediately after the end of the War cannot be disputed. However, it would be simplistic to ascribe the reasons for its resurgence to only the tenacity of mandarin thought and ideology or indeed to the power and position of the mandarins. Several other factors contributed to the "restoration" of the traditional German university system of which the mandarin culture was an integral part. In essence, the primary focus in the immediate post-War

period in the western zones of Germany was on rebuilding the nation, which included rebuilding the higher education system. General consensus favoured return to the pre-1933 systems, especially in the case of institutions like universities which, at the time, had been considered to have emerged relatively untainted from the National Socialist period. Hence, recent events notwithstanding, the governing philosophy behind German higher education, i.e., the Humboldtian tradition and its moral and spiritual essence, was considered sound and worth upholding.

1.1. Restoration of German University Traditions in the Post-1945 Period

This restoration eschewed any major reform of the structure and function of the universities which essentially reverted to their pre-Nazi system of functioning.¹ Power and authority were restored in their original, pre-Nazi form to the faculties and senate resulting in the entire institutional set-up at the universities, along with the academic hierarchy, remaining unchanged.

There were two primary reasons for the restoration of the pre-Nazi model of higher education. The first was the preoccupation with the more important and immediate tasks facing the country at the time: reconstruction of the war-ravaged country and its economy, establishment of social order and stability, and the inculcation of democracy in the youth of the nation. The second, apparently less explicit reason was a powerful desire to reinstate and nurture certain intrinsically German cultural and moral values which would provide much-needed self-confidence and security for a devastated country and its people. The reinstatement of the Humboldtian educational traditions played an important role in the process.

¹ Nicholas Lobkowitz, 'The German University since World War Two', *History of European Ideas*, vol. 8, no. 2, (1987), pp. 147-154.

With respect to the first factor, the experience of total disruption following the Nazi period led people to look to old, trusted traditions for security and created a general distrust of “new beginnings” and experiments.² Further, in view of the enormity of the task of re-building the shattered country and economy, experimentation with new systems - in place of tried and trusted systems, especially those seemingly not discredited by direct association with the Nazis - seemed an unattractive option. Moreover, there was a general desire to restore material well-being and social stability first. The lack of serious reform effort and the sluggish pace of change in higher education is widely attributed to these factors.³

The changes that did occur in higher education policy in the immediate post-War period focused on the task of democratic schooling. Habermas notes that in conjunction with this policy numerous political education programmes appeared in university courses along with a concurrent emphasis on the hitherto sidelined subjects of political science and sociology.⁴ Apart from that, however, he finds hardly any change:

[T]he university was inserted into democratic society with a certain political extension of its traditional self-understanding, but otherwise *just as it was*. A by-product of the latter, of course, was a certain immobilism, for it turned out to be an impediment to self-motivated university reform.⁵

² S. B. Robinsohn and J. C. Kuhlmann, ‘Two Decades of Non-reform in West German Education’, *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 11, no. 3, (1967), pp. 311-330.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics*, (London: Heinemann, 1971b), p. 5.

⁵ Ibid.

The second reason for restoration was the strong desire to re-establish those aspects of German culture which had once been the source of national pride and self-esteem and which, in the present period, did not bear the stigma of shared beliefs or direct association with National Socialism.⁶ The Humboldtian tradition was considered to have emerged untainted from the twelve years of the Third Reich. As Paletschek observes:

[T]he National Socialist rejection of the timeless concept of the German university discredited from 1945 onwards any proposed deviation from the Humboldtian ideal.⁷

This reflected a more general trend at that time of the emergence, in Germany, of a psychologically defensive state which in turn produced a form of “defensive nationalism”. As a publication of the Max Planck Institute explained:

This form of nationalism made no claims to racial superiority but redefined the existence, rights, cultural heritage and dignity of the German people as a whole.⁸

The phenomenon of defensive nationalism eventually contributed to a

⁶ It was not until the student uprising in the late 1960s, which uncovered several Nazis who had continued in their earlier professorial positions and also highlighted the lack of resistance of the so-called cultivated and educated segment within the universities towards Nazi barbarism, that academic complicity and impotence against the rise and domination of the National Socialists was acknowledged.

⁷ Paletschek, 2001, p. 53.

⁸ Max Planck Institute for Human Development and Education, *Between Elite and Mass Education: Education in the Federal Republic of Germany*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), p. 74.

constellation of forces which made criticism of the educational system strongly suspect as a threat to one of the cornerstones of the reconstructed, fragile, politico-cultural German identity.⁹

Further developments in the Soviet Zone had a defensive effect on decision-makers in the West where “educational traditionalism” was taken altogether more seriously than in the East.¹⁰ The western zones saw themselves as representing the traditions of the German nation as well as those of the Christian West.¹¹ Researchers at the Max Planck Institute noted:

Developments in the Soviet Occupation Zone ... only reinforced this liberal orientation.¹²

Hence, restoration at West German universities got strongly linked to a revival of the original Humboldtian academic principles and traditions.

1.2. Legal Relationship between State and University

At a different level, however, changes did occur, which paradoxically served to further strengthen mandarin culture in German universities. The changes were reflected in the legal nature of universities in relation to the state. In light of the disastrous consequences of state control during the Third Reich, in which rigorous

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ As elaborated in Chapter Four of this thesis, in the East the ultimate purpose of the repeated invocation of Humboldt’s educational philosophy was never a genuine return to the idea of a Humboldtian university.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 72.

¹² Ibid.

restrictions had been imposed on intellectual and academic freedom, the universities sought to free themselves from the institutional ties binding them to the state. Recalling Humboldt's landmark work, *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen*, Gerhard Ritter states:

Heute, nach dem Scheitern des totalitären Regimes, lesen wir die kleine Schrift mit ganz anderen Augen, weil wir aus bitterster eigener Erfahrung wissen, wie notwendig es ist, der Wirksamkeit des Staates bestimmte Grenzen zu ziehen.¹³

The tasks undertaken by the state, as the following quote highlights, were extremely restricted in nature:

Die Hochschulen waren sorgsamst auf Wahrung und Ausbau ihrer autonomen Rechte bedacht, staatliches Handeln beschränkte sich weitgehend auf die Verbesserung der materiellen Bedingungen.¹⁴

A report on the university "re-structuring" and "re-education" in the British Zone also supports minimal state involvement in university affairs:

Die Universitäten werden von den einzelnen Provinzen finanziert, aber in vielen Dingen müssen sie von sich aus handeln. In der Vergangenheit war ihre Selbständigkeit gering, da der Staat ihre Finanzen und die Berufungen

¹³ Ritter, 1946a, p. 8.

¹⁴ Eberhard Böning, 'Zum Regierungsentwurf eines Hochschulrahmengesetzes für die Bundesrepublik' in *Bildung und Gesellschaft*, Hans Steffen, (ed), (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), p. 75.

kontrollierte ... Die ... große Einflußnahme des Staates hat sich vermutlich schädlich auf eine selbständige Meinungsbildung an den Universitäten und damit auf die geistige Reife und kritische Fähigkeit der Männer ausgewirkt, die sie erzogen. Nachdem jetzt die Frage der staatlichen Einflußnahme zwangsläufig in den Vordergrund getreten ist, werden sie wohl langsam den Mut fassen, auf ein größeres Maß von Autonomie zu drängen.¹⁵

The general trend was towards a reduction in state authority in self-governing institutions.¹⁶ In the case of the universities it resulted in the scaling down of state involvement in university matters to a historically low level:

Die Autonomie der Hochschulen ist in der deutschen Universitätsgeschichte niemals so weit aufgefaßt und so pflöglich behandelt worden ...¹⁷

In the context of administration and governance the same restoration that took place in other areas of university life therefore did not occur. Almost immediately after the War the universities found collective representation in the *Rektorenkonferenz* (later renamed the *Westdeutsche Rektorenkonferenz*), re-established first in the British Zone and later in the remaining zones. Its first chairman, the Rector of the University of Göttingen and professor of law, Rudolf Smend suggested a “partnership” between the university and the state.¹⁸ According to Wilhelm Hennis, it implied, in reality, “efforts

¹⁵ Lt. Col. G.F.Savage and F.R.Perraudin, *Jugend und Hochschule: Immatrikulations-Reden an der Westfälischen Landesuniversität 1945/46*, (Recklinghausen: Verlag Bitter & Co., 1946), p. 25.

¹⁶ Ludwig v. Friedeburg, ‘Die deutsche Universität nach 1945’ in *Wie neu war der Neubeginn?: zum deutschen Kontinuitätsproblem nach 1945*, Helga Grebing and Everhard Holtmann (eds), (Erlangen: Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1989), p. 72.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ In an article in the 1920s Smend advocated a strengthening of academic autonomy in the face of increasingly partisan politics threatening higher education. Rudolf Smend, ‘Hochschule und Parteien’ in *Staatsrechtliche Abhandlungen und andere Aufsätze*, (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1955), p. 277.

to conceive of the university solely as a 'corporation', through continuous re-interpretation of its legal rights".¹⁹ Thus, ties to the state were already being loosened. More significantly, the university would be from now on responsible for both academic and administrative matters, the latter including budget, certain financial decisions, building development and the requirements of the technical institutes.²⁰ In effect, all power now would be vested with the faculties and senate without much state interference.

Thus, implicitly, the resurrection of the classical traditions of German universities was augmented by an even stronger support for the principle of academic freedom than existed in the 19th century.²¹ The university was now, by and large, the professors' personal domain. The observation of the renowned physicist and philosopher, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, sums up the entire situation of the time:

In Wirklichkeit war die Universität niemals in ihrer ganzen Geschichte so sehr von den Professoren allein beherrscht wie kurz nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Vorher hatte immer die Obrigkeit, der Staat in die Universität hineinregiert. Nun hatte man aber ein Horror vor Staat ... Der Staat selbst traute sich auch nicht, hineinzuregieren. ... Die Universität, die den Nationalsozialismus überlebt hatte in einer Igelstellung, regierte sich selbst, und das heißt die Professoren regierten. ...²²

¹⁹ Wilhelm Hennis, 'The Legislator and the German University', *Minerva*, vol. 15, (1977), p. 286-315.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, 'Universität und Gesellschaft' in *Wem nützt die Wissenschaft? Beiträge zum Verhältnis vom Universität und Gesellschaft*, (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981), pp. 87-88.

2. Mandarin Presence in German Universities in the 1950s and 1960s

The period of the 1950s and 1960s marked an important phase in the continuation of the mandarin tradition. The full implication of the restoration of the classical university as well as the freedom of universities from state jurisdiction was felt during this period. Mandarin ideology and influence was clearly evident in matters of higher education and its reform. The period culminated in the student revolt of 1968 which turned universities, the havens embodying “*Einsamkeit und Freiheit*”, along with their professorial class, into public spectacles.

In the first sub-section below the persistence of mandarin ideology in the reform efforts and debates surrounding higher education in the 1950s and 1960s is the focus of examination. The second sub-section considers the effects of the student movement on the mandarin tradition. It also discusses how the entire higher education debate was elevated to the national level, which led to public criticism and opposition of mandarin influence and authority. The period ended with a near unanimous verdict that professorial power had to be curbed once and for all. However, subsequent events were to reveal, yet again, the difficulties and complexities in achieving that objective.

2.1. Reform Efforts

The influence of mandarin thought and ideology can be glimpsed in the attempts at university reform in the 1950s and early 1960s. At that time German universities began to feel the effects of the so-called “educational explosion” in the form of a sharp rise in the number of students enrolling at universities.²³ It was a phenomenon

²³ OECD, *Thematic Review of the First Years of Tertiary Education, Country Note: Germany*, OECD Publications, <http://www.oecd.org/pdf/M00024000/M00024609.pdf> (April 1997), 3 August 2000, p. 5.

experienced in almost all industrialised countries soon after the completion of the “re-building” process following the end of the Second World War.²⁴ For German universities, which were still steeped in an elitist tradition and consequently geared to catering to a select minority of the population, this was to prove catastrophic.

It was widely agreed that there were two solutions to the problem of accommodating the increase in number of students: the first was to expand existing universities and the second to establish new ones.²⁵ During this period mandarin spirit and thinking was embodied in the position taken up by the *Westdeutsche Rektorenkonferenz* (henceforth WRK)²⁶, an inter-university coordinating body, comprising rectors representing all universities in the country. The WRK concentrated on what it called “preserving standards” which, in practice, translated into vetoing or attempting to veto the establishment of new universities.²⁷ It took up every opportunity to block even the most moderate proposal to establish new institutions with university status, or convert the *Fachhochschulen* into universities, or elevate the *Pädagogische Hochschulen* to the level of *wissenschaftliche Hochschulen* or fully “academic” institutions. All manner of argument was used to support the fact that *wissenschaftliche Hochschulen* implied only universities of the traditional kind.²⁸ These actions were carried out against the advice of the *Wissenschaftsrat*, (a co-ordinating body, founded in 1957, for facilitating long-term planning and funding of research, which was the most important advisory committee in the field of higher education in Germany) which had proposed setting up new universities to solve the problem of increasing student

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Rosalind M. O. Pritchard, *The End of Elitism: The Democratisation of the West German University System*, (New York: Berg, 1990), p. 79.

²⁶ Max Planck Institute, 1979, p. 272.

²⁷ Hennis, 1977, pp. 286-315.

²⁸ Ibid.

numbers.²⁹ The bitter resistance on the part of the WRK towards the idea of founding new universities was based on the argument that new universities could only be justified on scientific or scholarly (i.e. *wissenschaftlich*) grounds; regional, social or local factors and requirements were inconsequential.³⁰ Eventually, several new universities were founded between 1960 and 1970 with innovative and fundamentally different guiding principles than those of the old, traditional-style universities.³¹ However, since the new universities were small in size, and together enrolled only as many students as one average traditional German university, the problem of rising student numbers remained largely unresolved.³²

In fact, the problem was more than a numerical one of accommodating larger numbers of students in higher educational institutions.³³ In the post-War period, universities were faced with the challenge of adapting to the varied demands of a new and growing economy. The traditional Humboldtian ideals of scholarship could no longer be the sole objective of university education.³⁴ This idea, though, was anathema to mandarin culture and thinking, which opposed any kind of fundamental change in universities. Hence, university reform in the early sixties concentrated mainly on the new universities such as Bielefeld, Konstanz, Regensburg and Bochum, while the older, traditional universities were scarcely affected by them.³⁵ A comment on the

²⁹ Pritchard, 1990, p. 79.

³⁰ R. Tilford, *The West German University: The Problem of Social Responsibility*, Inaugural Lecture, University of Bradford, (16 March 1976), pp. 12-13.

³¹ Pritchard, 1990, p. 82.

³² Hennis, 1977, pp. 286-315.

³³ Arthur Hearnden, *Education, Culture and Politics in West Germany*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1976), p. 129.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Joachim H. Knoll, *Bildung und Wissenschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977), p. 100.

drawbacks of the university reforms of this period indicates that the traditional universities were indeed unaffected:

In Wirklichkeit ist der Versuch, Hochschulreform überhaupt konkret in Gang zu setzen, von Seiten des Staates im wesentlichen auf die wenigen Reformuniversitäten abgeladen worden, und es wäre schon deshalb mehr als unbillig, sie auch dafür noch zusätzlich tadeln zu wollen.³⁶

The state was equally responsible for the ensuing higher education crisis. As noted, new universities were not created in sufficient numbers to absorb the growing student population. And as the existing universities grew in size, the government did not significantly increase the number of chairs, choosing instead the less costly method of increasing the number of teaching assistants and professors without a chair.³⁷ In the past this system worked well as long as most of the professors occupied a chair, each surrounded by a few younger scholars. The present situation of rising student numbers necessitated a substantial increase in the number of middle and junior staff (the *Mittelbau*) to fulfil teaching and administrative duties. This led to an even steeper hierarchical structure with the professor at the top of the academic pyramid. Consequently professor-student ratios deteriorated rapidly – in some institutes it was 1 professor to 250-300 students in 1960 in contrast to an average of 1 to 37 in 1928.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ By the sixties a large university would typically consist of about two hundred chairs but ten times as many junior lecturers and academics who had very little say in the affairs of university governance and function. Lobkowitz, 1987, pp. 147-154.

³⁸ Max Planck Institute, 1979, p. 273.

As for junior academics, their career opportunities declined rapidly with the much sought-after position of *Ordinarius* becoming even less attainable than before.³⁹

The WRK's position and role during the 1950s and early 1960s as well as the reluctance on part of the professors to support any real change in the spirit and objectives of a university was clear evidence of the tenacity and influence of mandarin ideology. The Humboldtian concept of university and learning was used, in practice, to precipitate a situation in which neither the universities nor the government took active measures to meet contemporary challenges and student demand. Overall, it is worth noting in this context that universities were essentially dictating to relatively weak state authorities on almost all matters. Matters eventually came to a head with the student revolt, resulting in the introduction of "rigorous" state intervention in all matters of university life - although, it turned out, without much real success.

2.2. Deepening of the Crisis Confronting German Universities

The student uprising of the late 1960s marked the lowest point in the crisis afflicting German universities. It sparked off two separate developments. First, it placed the highly debated subject of university reform well and truly on the public and political agenda. Professors and their privileged positions were put under the spotlight as part of the idea of "democratisation" of universities, a significant issue in university reform. Second, a complete reversal of power and authority occurred in the university-state relationship. Given the seriousness of the situation, the state claimed

³⁹ As we shall see in the following sections of the chapter, in subsequent decades, and especially in present times, it is this lack of career opportunities for the *Mittelbau* which has become a focal issue and a major drawback of the German university system.

back its historical control over universities, creating yet another turning point in the history of German universities.

2.2.1. Public Focus on Mandarin Position

It became increasingly evident by the mid-1960s that the universities were unable to adapt their classical ideologies to the demands posed by changing social and economic conditions. The publication of the Heidelberg theologian Georg Picht's landmark work, *Die Deutsche Bildungskatastrophe*, and Ralf Dahrendorf's influential book, *Bildung ist Bürgerrecht*, brought the issue of the crisis facing German universities to the forefront.⁴⁰ Both concentrated on identifying the inadequacies of the existing system of education. This opened up the issue of higher education reform to public debate.

Georg Picht's message was stark:

Bildungsnotstand heißt wirtschaftlicher Notstand. Der bisherige wirtschaftliche Aufschwung wird ein rasches Ende nehmen, wenn uns die qualifizierten Nachwuchskräfte fehlen, ohne die im technischen Zeitalter kein Produktionssystem etwas leisten kann.⁴¹

He provided evidence of the extent to which Germany had fallen behind other comparable countries and stressed the importance of bringing the state of affairs to

⁴⁰ Georg Picht, *Die Deutsche Bildungskatastrophe: Analyse und Dokumentation*, (Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1964); Ralf Dahrendorf, *Bildung ist Bürgerrecht: Plädoyer für eine aktive Bildungspolitik*, (Hamburg: Die Zeit-Bücher, 1965).

⁴¹ Picht, 1964, p. 17

public knowledge.⁴² He further indicated that the strength of tradition and ideology would make the task of educational reform extremely difficult:

Eine Wahrheit, die heilsam sein soll, ist meistens schmerzhaft; dies gilt besonders auf dem Felde der Kulturpolitik, denn nirgends wuchern die Ideologien so dicht, nirgend sind die Tabus so schwer zu durchbrechen.⁴³

Ralf Dahrendorf's book *Bildung ist Bürgerrecht*, as is evident from the title, raises the issue of education for all citizens. Dahrendorf advocates a broadening of the criteria for entry into higher education, in order to meet the varied and growing demands of a successful economy. Only then, he asserts, can the success of an economy be sustained:

[Dafür], daß der Weg zur Gesellschaft im Wohlstand ein Bildungswunder nicht verlangt, hat die Bundesrepublik das Zeugnis geliefert. Ob ein Land reich bleiben, die Gesellschaft in Wohlstand erhalten kann, ohne seine Schulen und Universitäten weit zu öffnen und von Grund auf zu verändern, ist die Frage ...⁴⁴

In addition, he stressed the fundamental issue - made more significant in the context - of imparting modern, liberal values to the younger generation. In order to achieve it every German needed to exercise the citizen's right to education:

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁴ Dahrendorf, 1965, p. 9.

Modernität gibt keine Garantie für Liberalität. Aber Modernität ist Voraussetzung auch für Liberalität, und was immer daher sonst an Entscheidungen und Entwicklungen nötig ist, um eine freie Gesellschaft zu schaffen, setzt die moderne Gesellschaft voraus. Für sie aber ist die Verwirklichung des Bürgerrechtes auf Bildung Bedingung.⁴⁵

These publications caused a stir in the general public.⁴⁶ Hitherto unknown facts and their unforeseen implications served to highlight the crisis engulfing schools and universities. Before long, the tide of events, especially the student uprising, transformed earlier discussions into a raging public debate. It is worth noting that until now the universities had existed in a sort of cocoon. As Peisert and Framhein observe, discussions about reform were limited to academic circles and carried out at a leisurely pace and with respect accorded throughout to tradition.⁴⁷ Universities were indeed ivory towers, and the public at large had little idea about their day-to-day functioning. Further, as Habermas notes, up to the mid-1960s, relations between the university and state were of a rather private, almost intimate nature.⁴⁸ They rested upon the understanding that matters of conflict and disagreement could be settled in a cordial spirit of decency and without the unwelcome glare of publicity.⁴⁹

All this changed in the late 1960s when virtually all aspects of university life were thrown open to public scrutiny and criticism. With regard to the mandarins, there

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 137.

⁴⁶ Hansgert Peisert and Gerhild Framhein, *Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany*, Monographs on Higher Education, (UNESCO, CEPES, 1990), p. 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Jürgen Habermas, 'Universität in der Demokratie - Demokratisierung der Universität', *Universitätstage*, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), pp. 67-79.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

seemed to be, for the first time, a noticeable awareness of the position, privileges and influence enjoyed by them within the university, and a discussion of the implications.

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute note:

[T]he professorial freedoms that characterized the *Ordinarienuniversität* – the traditionally structured university dominated and run by the permanently appointed professors as an aggregate of autonomous academic entrepreneurs - were attacked not just for being an annoying anachronism, but also because they were seen as the reason why German research in certain fields was lagging behind.⁵⁰

In addition, the “undemocratic” structure of individual faculties, especially with regard to the numerous untenured and unsalaried *Mittelbau* staff, was declared unfair and unacceptable.⁵¹ Thus, the dismantling of the *Ordinarienuniversität*, the breaking up of large faculties into smaller units (which would significantly affect the “rule” of the mandarins), and the granting of voting rights for all non-professorial staff and students in university matters was accorded top priority.⁵² From the outset, the idea of democratisation in the university acquired the objective of depriving chairholders of their powers.⁵³ The longer the discussion continued, the more the impression was created that most of the “inefficiency” of the system would disappear as soon as equality was reached.

⁵⁰ Max Planck Institute, 1979, p. 273.

⁵¹ Pritchard, 1990, pp. 89-91.

⁵² Peisert and Framhein, 1990, p. 17.

⁵³ Pritchard, 1990, pp. 89-91.

The idea of “*Mitbestimmung*” had been floated as early as in 1961 (to counter the undemocratic situation in university administration and governance), when the *Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund* (SDS), the primary body representing students, stated in a *Hochschuldenkschrift*:

Durch das Anwachsen der Universitätsinstitute zu wissenschaftlichen Betrieben bei gleichzeitiger Beibehaltung der überkommenen ständischen akademischen Verfassung, in der nur die privilegierte Oligarchie der Ordinarien über die Angelegenheiten der Universität entscheidet, setzte eine quasi-klassenmäßige Spaltung der akademischen Bürgerschaft ein: Auf der einen Seite stehen die Direktoren der Institute, die durch ihre Machtstellung zu ‘Besitzern’ dieser Betriebe, der wissenschaftlichen Produktionsmittel, werden; auf der anderen Seite die große Mehrheit der ‘Nicht-Besitzer’, der abhängigen Angestellten der Lehrstuhlbesitzer (Assistenten, Hilfskräfte, Lektoren, Kustoden, Bibliothekare) ...⁵⁴

Nikolas Lobkowicz, a former President of the Catholic University of Eichstätt, notes that by the mid-1960s even conservative politicians felt a reform, consisting mainly of bringing about an end to *Ordinarienoligarchie*, was overdue.⁵⁵ It would be unfair to lay the blame solely on the professors for the crisis, but in their position, and with their privileges, they were obvious and easy targets. In Habermas’s words:

⁵⁴ *SDS-Hochschuldenkschrift*, (Frankfurt: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1972), p. 82.

⁵⁵ Lobkowicz, 1987, pp. 147-154.

a discontented society has presented the cumbersome university corporation with a bill for which it is admittedly not solely responsible.⁵⁶

In retrospect, the events of the mid and late 1960s were, for the mandarin class, a crucial turning point, since they served to validate criticism of the university and its highest academic functionaries.⁵⁷ Evidence suggests that before the war, and even in the fifties, universities were among the most popular institutions; a university professor was ranked immediately below minister and bishop in public opinion. Until the late 1960s a dean was addressed by students and professors alike as *Spektabilität*, although he was rarely elected for longer than a year.⁵⁸ In the wake of the student movement there was talk of a “counter culture” in which the highly formalised personal relationships between professors and students (*Ja, Herr Professor*) would be replaced by more informal forms of address – *du* instead of *Sie*.⁵⁹ It would have been unlikely (as confirmed by subsequent events) that changes of such magnitude would ever occur; however, their mere discussion pointed to the fact that professorial aura had faded to some extent.

2.2.2. University vs. State

The student uprising also transformed the nature of the university-state relationship, with the state acquiring a clearly dominant role. Traditionally, even at the height of university influence over decisions regarding the higher education sector, the state had retained essential decision-making powers – for example, in matters concerning the types of professions for which the universities should train their students, the entrance

⁵⁶ Habermas, 1971b, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Pritchard, 1990, p. 96.

⁵⁸ Lobkowitz, 1987, pp. 147-154.

⁵⁹ Tilford, 1976, p. 15.

requirements and the scale of financial support. However, in the decades following the end of the War the state had chosen not to exercise these rights and played a relatively submissive role.⁶⁰ Now, given the political ramifications of the reform of the higher education system as a whole the state reversed this implicit arrangement and, pressurised by public opinion, made itself the spokesman and implementer of university reform.⁶¹ Indeed, the student movement goaded the state governments to take sides against universities and openly declare their “historical” alliance null and void.⁶² This was a precursor to the opportunism and tendency towards appeasement of the voting public which was to characterise government policy and reform efforts in the decades to come.

In almost every way the student protest shook the universities (and the state) out of their placid, cosseted existence. The universities, along with the professorial class, were cast in dubious light. For the better part of two centuries, full professors had been accorded unquestioned prestige and authority; now they faced not just a critical student population, but also an increasingly disenchanted public.⁶³ However, expectations of the mandarins’ fall from grace, following the negative publicity surrounding their “unjustified” and “undemocratic” position and prestige, were not fully realised. After a brief period of decline, the mandarin position was reinstated to a considerable extent, paradoxically by those very reforms which aimed at “modernising” the traditional German higher education system. In the course of the next few decades the mandarins, despite incurring the resentment of various interest

⁶⁰ Hennis, 1977, pp. 286-315.

⁶¹ Klaus Künzel, ‘The State and Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany’, *European Journal of Education*, vol. 17, no. 3, (1982), pp. 243-257.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Hearnden, 1976, p. 125.

groups and sections of the general population, managed to maintain their unique position and authority within the university.

3. The University Reforms of the 1970s

The intensity of student reaction spurred reforms at both regional and national levels. However, the general process of reform was quite disorganized. Individual *Länder* had begun passing laws soon after the end of the student protest movement and by the early 1970s most *Länder* had instituted reforms in universities within their jurisdiction.⁶⁴ However, plans for a new federal university law had already been afoot, following the federal government's newly acquired jurisdiction in the sphere of higher education.⁶⁵ Thus, many of the *Länder* laws had to be amended and indeed some were even ruled unconstitutional – Niedersachsen's interim law for example – in order to comply with the *Hochschulrahmengesetz*, the Federal Law on Higher education.⁶⁶ The *Hochschulrahmengesetz* (henceforth referred to as HRG) was the first federal higher education law to be enforced in Germany and it set out to unify the entire sphere of higher education. Predictably, it took years to be conceived and was finally passed in January, 1976. Apart from the extensive time period involved, the political struggle over it indicated deep schisms within the German higher education system.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Baden-Württemberg and Berlin passed reform laws in 1968 and were followed in 1970 by Hamburg, Nord-Rhein Westfalen, Hessen, Bremen and Rheinland-Pfalz. In 1971 the Saarland followed and Niedersachsen enacted an interim law – a *Vorschaltgesetz*. Schleswig-Holstein and Bayern were the last two to act, passing their reform laws in 1973. Hennis, 1977, pp. 286-315.

⁶⁵ The *Grundgesetz* had been amended by federal law in 1969 thus providing for an opportunity for a unified federal university law. Stokes, 1983, p. 24.

⁶⁶ Hennis, 1977, 286-315.

⁶⁷ The first draft was drawn up by the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands / Freie Demokratische Partei* and addressed the issues which had been of prime importance during the student movement. Later, political wrangling resulted in the final text emerging as relatively "liberal" in the context of the burning issues of the times. Furthermore, the *Christlich-Demokratische Union / Christlich-Soziale Union* opposed a national model dictated by the SPD/FDP and therefore set out to ensure the *Länder* kept as much control over details as possible and allowed universities in CDU/CSU states to retain and develop more traditional models. Pritchard, 1990, p. 101.

This section of the chapter considers the changes proposed and implemented to the position of full professors in this period of reform in Germany. For the purposes of this chapter the “democratisation” of the decision-making processes in the universities and the structural reorganisation of faculties and institutes are of relevance. They are examined in the first sub-section. The following two sub-sections broaden the analysis to discuss respectively changes in the relationship between the state and university and the unique role occupied by legislation in Germany. Both these issues are closely related to the continued existence of the mandarin tradition.

3.1. Effects of the 1976 *Hochschulrahmengesetz* on University Professors

Two major proposals of the HRG were directly relevant to the position of the *Ordinarius*. The first was the idea of democratisation of decision-making processes within universities. The second was the reorganisation of academic personnel, aimed at revamping the complex, hierarchical staff structures in existence since the nineteenth century.

3.1.1. Democratisation

Democratisation was, not unexpectedly, at the forefront of the reform proposals and the *Drittelparität* principle was the acceptable solution.⁶⁸ The *Drittelparität* later changed to *Viertelparität* with the addition of the non-academic staff.⁶⁹ A measure of *Mitbestimmung* was thus proposed for all interest groups on various university bodies: professors, students, *wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter*, *künstlerische Mitarbeiter* and

⁶⁸ The *Drittelparität* system provided for the three major interest groups, the professorial staff, non-professorial staff and students to each be granted one-third of the votes in all decision making committees in the universities. Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Hochschulassistenten in addition to other staff members.⁷⁰ A natural consequence of this was that the universities, which had stood at one extreme of *Ordinarienoligarchie*, now moved to the other. Until the 1970s decision making within the universities had been concentrated in the hands of the chair-holders. Recent changes in the voting system now ushered in four distinct groups: the professors, the assistants, the students and the non-academic staff.⁷¹ The fate of the entire university now seemed dependent upon which particular members, representing which interest group (serving which political interest), would win election to the department, council, senate, assembly, or financial or planning committees.⁷²

This caused widespread dissent amongst professors who saw their futures dependent on decisions taken publicly by various non-professorial bodies, including cleaners.⁷³ As a result, a group of professors in Niedersachsen took the matter of equal parity to the Federal Constitutional Court, claiming the proposal of equal parity to be an infringement of their right to academic freedom which was guaranteed in the *Grundgesetz*.⁷⁴ The professors argued that academic issues such as teaching and research required decision-making to be in the hands of those qualified and responsible for the job.⁷⁵ They also feared the various forms of pressure from what they called “radical groups”, all of whom now had vested interests in securing their place within universities.⁷⁶ In order to provide a “counterforce” against the increasingly vociferous demands of students and non-professorial staff for equal

⁷⁰ Stokes, 1983, pp. 28-29.

⁷¹ Lobkowitz, 1987, pp. 147-154.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Hearnden, 1976, p. 126.

⁷⁵ Walter Rüegg, ‘The Intellectual Situation in German Higher Education’, *Minerva*, vol. 13, (1975), pp. 103-120.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

parity, the professors collectively established the *Notgemeinschaft für eine freie Universität* (later *Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft*).⁷⁷ In the end the Federal Court upheld the professors' claim:

On all bodies with powers of decision-making on research, creative arts projects, teaching and the appointment of professors, the professors shall have the absolute majority of votes. Further, if the second round of voting produces no decision, then in accordance with section 38(5) ... the majority vote of the professors in that body shall suffice for taking the decision concerned.⁷⁸

This had the consequence of leaving effective control of university matters in professorial hands, ensuring the return of mandarin authority and influence.

For obvious reasons, the *Drittelparität* issue was a thorny one and represented a considerable threat to professorial position. It should be noted, however, that the whole issue of parity was, as with everything else concerning the reforms, a heavily politicised one. The inclusion of non-academic staff in the representative structure of the university was, for example, advocated by the CDU in order to produce a political counterweight to offset the influence of the radical students and junior teachers.⁷⁹ The federal state sought to tackle core problems afflicting universities through a combination of appeasement of various factions and meticulous legislation, both of which served to heighten rather than ease the higher education crisis.

⁷⁷ Hahn, 1998, p. 128.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Stokes, 1983, p. 28-29.

⁷⁹ Hennis, 1977, pp. 286-315.

3.1.2. Academic Reorganisation

The HRG's proposal of reorganising the institutes and faculties (which had been the basis of the power of the *Ordinarius* in the past) into *Fachbereiche* targeted, in principle, the core of the mandarin tradition.⁸⁰ The proposal followed the American model and included replacing faculties with smaller, specialised departments, headed by elected Chairmen, which were to be the basic organisational units of universities.⁸¹

A significant increase in professorial chairs was to follow this step and it was predicted that all this would lead to a dispersal of the authority of the *Ordinarien*.

However, these changes were introduced without giving due consideration to the fact that German universities were fundamentally different from American universities.⁸²

In the German model faculties were organised around professional educational programmes in a much stricter sense than in American departments. The break-up of faculties, therefore, while easing problems somewhat in the scientific and technical sciences, created unforeseen problems in the humanities and social sciences.⁸³

The smallness of units in these subjects led to a weakening in their significance and efficiency; it also contributed to their losing the benefit of exchange of ideas with the professional world and the society at large.⁸⁴

Within a few years it became clear that the problems of isolation and encapsulation faced by numerous small departments far outweighed the advantages of dissipating the power of the *Ordinarius*. It therefore came as no surprise when the 1985 Amendment to the HRG reintroduced the original concept of research institutes and larger units grouped under a single subject area.⁸⁵

This was accompanied by deans being granted *ex officio* representation on the senate

⁸⁰ Pritchard, 1990, p. 102.

⁸¹ Hennis, 1977, pp. 286-315.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Pritchard, 1990, p. 201.

and all professors becoming eligible to vote on new appointments and on doctoral and post-doctoral theses.⁸⁶ Thus, the professors, as a group, emerged from this episode regaining their original authority and influence, and some believe, with more power than before.⁸⁷

Academic reorganisation, in addition, involved revamping the rigid hierarchy of *Ordinarius*, *Extra Ordinarius* and other junior academic staff.⁸⁸ A standardization of staff structure, according to function, was proposed instead.⁸⁹ Academic personnel were to consist of the professors (a uniform group comprising all professors), a new group of *Assistenzprofessoren*, academic employees, and teachers for special assignments.⁹⁰ As with the other measures proposed by the HRG this was, according to Peisert and Framhein, not satisfactorily implemented.⁹¹ In fact, changes to the personnel structure were so slow that in the years that immediately followed, a variety of pre-1976 positions and pay scales continued to exist alongside new posts and positions.⁹² Further, the 1985 revision of the HRG created more positions for young scholars resulting in three overlapping historical layers of staff structure: the pre-1976 one, the one created by the 1976 HRG and the one resulting from the 1985 revision of the HRG.⁹³ The professorial category was subdivided into C2, C3 and C4, which pertained to the various salary scales in the group. It was only a matter of time before the C4 group, the highest level in the category, reserved for the former chairholders, were officially granted back their title of *Ordinarius*, in order to distinguish them

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Yvonne Jeanette Dorf, *Der Universitätsprofessor: Hochschullehrer im Beamtenverhältnis*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 42.

⁸⁹ Böning, 1972, p. 85.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Peisert and Framhein, 1990, p. 91.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 93.

from the rank and file of the newly formed professorial group.⁹⁴ And finally, the reforms intended with the introduction of the position of the *Assistenzprofessor* (C1 salary scale) were never fully realised – in course of time the relative independence from professorial jurisdiction that was meant to characterize the position came to an end, with the 1985 Amendment to the HRG advising closer contact between the *Assistenten* and full professors.⁹⁵

3.2. State Control over Universities

As we have seen in the previous section, in terms of the relationship between university and state, the student movement and the subsequent reform period brought forth changes of a precisely opposite nature to that which had taken place in the post-War period, i.e., the state assumed the dominating role in the relationship. In 1968, when the *Bundestag* held its controversial debate over university reform policy, the Bavarian Minister for Culture declared:

[I]f it proves impossible to come to a sensible agreement with the universities, the public should not regard it as state intervention if we, as governments, are forced to see university reforms through ourselves.⁹⁶

Teichler states that there were instances when ministers would proudly declare to parliament how frequently they had appointed professors who were not the first choice of the university in question.⁹⁷ In 1980 at the Comprehensive University in

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 94.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Künzel, 1982, pp. 243-257.

⁹⁷ Ulrich Teichler, 'Recent Developments in Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany', *European Journal of Education*, vol. 17, no. 2, (1982), pp. 161-176.

Kassel, a University President elected by the *Senat* was refused the post by the minister of education; this had occurred for the first time in post-War history.⁹⁸ However, accompanying these developments was a serious concern that scholarship *per se* was unlikely to benefit from such governmental interference.

The HRG was not entirely a manifestation of the traditional German model of state governance over universities. However, in comparison to the Anglo-Saxon model, it appeared to be a reiteration of a tradition of state superiority over universities.⁹⁹ To many external observers, the limited autonomy of German universities had always been problematic; to have to conclude that a significant outcome of the first federal higher education legislation was an increase in state interference in university affairs, was even more disconcerting.¹⁰⁰ Other commentators, such as Böning, preferred to support closer cooperation between government bodies and universities rather than merely granting institutions of higher education more independence.¹⁰¹ Dahrendorf provided perhaps the most rational solution to the predicament facing universities and the state at the time:

Die deutsche Universität besteht durch den Staat. Ihr Dasein ist politisch abhängig. Wenn der Staat sein langfristiges Interesse begreift, wird er ihre Stellung indessen sichern vor seinen wechselnden Mehrheiten wie vor seinen eigenen bleibenden Herrschaftsansprüchen. In einer Zeit rascher Veränderungen bedeutet das, die Universität in Ruhe zu lassen.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ralf Dahrendorf, 'Autonomie der Universität?' in *Universität heute*, Andreas Flitner and Ulrich Herrmann (eds), (Munich: R.Piper & Co. Verlag, 1977), p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Stokes, 1983, p. 32.

¹⁰¹ Böning, 1972, p. 87.

*Wohltollendes Desinteresse ist der beste Weg zur Sicherung akademischer Freiheit.*¹⁰²

3.3. Role of Legislation

Overall, the entire higher education reform process of the 1970s had been a series of exaggerated proposals leading to over-legislated policy solutions. It exposed a specifically German way of doing things - the uniquely important position occupied by legislation in Germany.¹⁰³ This repeatedly manifest trait is regarded as fundamental to any reform debate in Germany. It would seem that legislation produced a sense of security: disputes could be clearly defined and argued out in courts of law, which would provide legal solutions to all problems whatever their nature.¹⁰⁴ In the context of universities this *Verrechtlichung* or “legal over-regulation” threatened to erode the fundamental concept of academic and university self-government by increasing dependency on legal and state authorities.¹⁰⁵ Over-legislation resulted in the strengthening of both university administration and the bureaucracy of the ministries of education at the cost of academic autonomy.¹⁰⁶ Lobkowitz notes how university presidents now had a large team of legally trained staff, on whom they were completely dependent for even minor matters.¹⁰⁷ The ministries of education too increased manifold in size, acquiring even more bureaucratic authority over most university matters.¹⁰⁸ Since all this replaced the

¹⁰² Dahrendorf, 1977, p. 31.

¹⁰³ Stokes, 1983, p. 31.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Pritchard, 1990, p. 204.

¹⁰⁶ Lobkowitz, 1987, pp. 147-154.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

previous *Ordinarienoligarchie* in university life it would seem that old problems were merely replaced with newer ones. In view of the situation Hennis concludes:

[A]ny law must be flexible. But as a result of the HRG the entire system of higher education has been placed in a straitjacket in which, for the foreseeable future, it can neither breathe nor expire.¹⁰⁹

Thus, the long-awaited overhauling of the entire higher educational system did not materialise and another key opportunity for reform of the universities, including an end to mandarin dominance, was lost. Luhmann noted:

[E]twas nicht sehr Gutes [wurde] durch etwas Schlechteres ersetzt Das heißt, man hat die Chance einer Reform verpaßt. Man hätte mit wenigen und klaren rechtlichen Regelungen die Strukturen durchsichtiger machen und die Willkür gewisser professoraler Machtansprüche brechen können.¹¹⁰

Pritchard went a step further and held the academic elite of the classical university tradition responsible for the failure of the HRG. In the context of the unsuccessful attempt at introducing the concept of comprehensive universities (a major provision in the HRG) she declared:

It would be wrong to conclude that the state really wanted to sabotage comprehensive higher education; on the contrary it invested money and effort

¹⁰⁹ Hennis, 1977, pp. 286-315.

¹¹⁰ Niklas Luhmann, 'Erfahrungen mit Universitäten: Ein Interview' in *Universität als Milieu*, (Bielefeld: Verlag Cordula Haux, 1992), p. 111.

in the pilot studies and in the attempt to introduce facilitating legislation. The major obstacle to successful merger was the stance adopted by the academic staff of the classical university tradition. When they were able to harness the Constitutional Court to the defence of their interests, their position became well-nigh unassailable. The fact that the political system permitted them to do so requires explanation and analysis.¹¹¹

In conclusion, it should be noted that the HRG, despite obvious flaws, was a significant attempt to tackle the problem of professorial dominance and power by introducing equal parity in decision-making inside universities, dismantling the faculty system and reorganising academic personnel structures, all of which were sources of mandarin power. However, as discussed above, the entire issue of reform had become overly politicised, the details of the reforms were poorly conceived, and there was widespread inability to implement them. In course of time, power went back to the professoriate, especially with the 1985 Amendment to the HRG, and the old system of functioning reasserted itself. In this regard, the following view of the Max Planck Institute may be too optimistic:

Während in der früheren "Ordinarienuniversität" die Lehrstuhlinhaber die alleinigen Entscheidungsträger der Selbstverwaltung waren, wurde seit Ende der sechziger Jahre mit der Demokratisierung und Modernisierung der Hochschulorganisation die Verwaltungsfunktionen professionalisiert und die Beteiligungsrechte aller in der Hochschule vertretenen Gruppen ausgebaut.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Pritchard, 1990, p. 201.

¹¹² Max Planck Institute für Bildungsforschung, *Das Bildungswesen in der BRD: ein Überblick*, (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990), p. 638.

Nevertheless, it is true that one cannot speak anymore of the existence of the old-style *Ordinarienuniversität*; though one suspects that this has been brought about as a result of the dynamics of higher education in the past decades as opposed to any concerted effort to reform this element of the German university tradition.

4. The Contemporary Situation

Thirty years after the passing of the *Hochschulrahmengesetz*, during which time there have been several amendments to the Law as well as new HRGs in 1993 and 1995, changes to the professorial position are still being discussed, albeit on a different note. It is generally agreed that the *Ordinarienuniversität* came to an end with the student movement of the late 1960s.¹¹³ Numerous changes have occurred in the higher education sphere in Germany since then, though the persistence of several traditional aspects suggests lesser impact on the mandarin world. The existence of the individual institute system, the structure of academic personnel, and the dependency of the lower ranking academics on full professors, together indicate that German mandarins continue to occupy a uniquely privileged position, not shared by their counterparts elsewhere in the world. In general, German universities have fallen markedly behind international leaders with respect to their courses and curricula, length of study, degrees awarded, staff-student ratios, and inflow of foreign talent. The resulting higher education crisis has, especially in the recent past, been the subject of intense debate in Germany.

¹¹³ Ibid.

The contemporary mandarin situation is just a part of this crisis afflicting Germany's higher education sector, a symptom of a deep and complex problem. As in the 1960s, the mandarins have tended to draw criticism because of the "perks" associated with their jobs, and have incurred the resentment of taxpayers who demand justification for maintaining these "figureheads" within the universities. The clamour surrounding the authority, salary, workload, performance and competence of professors has increased tremendously over the past few years, leading to serious accusations against this category of university personnel. This section studies the renewed attack on professors in light of these recent developments and their defence against their critics.

The section is divided into five sub-sections. The first sub-section examines the existence of the mandarin tradition in present-day German universities. The second assesses the long-term effects of the continuance of mandarin culture on German universities. The reform proposals relating to professorial salary and the *Habilitation* are the subject of investigation in the third sub-section. It includes a detailed analysis of the reaction of mandarins and "non-mandarins" to the reform proposals. The fourth section considers the mandarin tradition in the overall context of the crisis facing German universities. The final sub-section focuses on a specific aspect of university reform - the import of American elements of higher education to Germany - and the reaction of various interest groups to the proposed changes.

4.1. Existence of Mandarin Culture in Contemporary German Universities

[D]eutsche Professoren [erfreuen sich] ... eines höchst anständigen Gehalts, haben einen unkündbaren Job, der genug Freiheit und Freizeit für lukrative

Nebenbeschäftigungen bietet, genießen eine durch den Beamtenstatus gesicherte, auskömmliche Pension und immer noch hohe gesellschaftliche Reputation. Nicht zuletzt gehört dazu auch das Privileg, sich bei der Arbeitseinteilung 'ihrem Biorhythmus hingeben zu können', wie es eine Universitätsangestellte einmal bezeichnete.¹¹⁴

Such views are not uncommon and not just limited to disapproving journalists. Various interest groups directly or indirectly associated with German universities, and the population at large, share the opinion. The prevalence of such views is indicative though of the fact that the mandarin tradition still exists, albeit with significant variations. As the details in the quote above indicate, German university professors continue to present an extraordinary spectacle, given the contemporary economic and industrial situation. Despite numerous attempts at higher education reforms and extensive changes in the country's political and economic situation, which were responsible in varying degrees for the observed decline of the old-style *Ordinarienuniversität* over the past two decades, German professors can still be singled out as a group endowed with unique privileges. The mandarins' enviable combination of "*Beamtenrecht*" and simultaneous "*akademische Freiheit*" is, in the words of an observer, "eine Art Schlaraffenland, in dem es sich bequem leben läßt".¹¹⁵ In the wider society, the position of chaired professor continues to be generally well-respected. A survey, held in October 1990, which sought to establish whether the prestige and reputation of university professors had changed in recent

¹¹⁴ Sabine Etzold, 'Professor Uralt: Die Universitäten kranken an ihrer Stellenstruktur', *Die Zeit*, no. 17, (1996), <http://archiv.zeit.de/daten/pages/1996/17/prof.txt.19960419>, 3 August 2000.

¹¹⁵ Wolfgang Hoffmann, 'Den Muff aus den Talaren', *Die Zeit*, no. 36, (1999), <http://archiv.zeit.de/daten/pages/199936.kolumne.html>, 3 August 2000.

times, came out with the following results: 49 percent of those questioned felt there had been no change and 13 percent felt it had actually improved.¹¹⁶

Internationally too, the existence of the mandarin tradition has been often cited as something unique and distinctively German. It has attracted attention primarily because its persistence is, in many ways, inexplicable given the present international economic situation and the resulting competitive environments associated with higher education institutions everywhere. Although there is evidence *worldwide* of a strong tendency within the professorial group to adhere to traditional forms of structure and functioning, German university professors, nevertheless, are considered to have significantly more influence, and a far greater say in the *Wissenschaftssystem*, than their counterparts in any other comparable country. Consequently their opinions and views are of greater significance than professors elsewhere.¹¹⁷ This viewpoint was expressed by educational expert Richard J. Brook in an interview with *Die Zeit*:

Ein deutscher Lehrstuhlinhaber oder Institutsdirektor bei Max Planck ist wirklich mächtig. Er braucht sich von oben nicht hineinreden zu lassen und kann Impulse von unten ignorieren ...¹¹⁸

An “official” confirmation of the singular position of the German mandarin is provided by an extensive review of tertiary education in developed countries

¹¹⁶ Elisabeth Nölle-Neumann and Renate Köcher (eds), *Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie 1984-1992*, (Munich, 1993), vol. 9, p. 180.

¹¹⁷ Martin Spiewak and Thomas Kerstan, ‘Forschungsbeamte? Ein Paradox: Ein Gespräch mit Richard J. Brook’, *Die Zeit*, no. 34, (1999), <http://archiv.zeit.de/daten/pages/199934.brook-interview.html> 3 August 2000.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* Richard Brook led the *Brook-Kommission* in analysing problems and providing solutions for German higher education and research.

undertaken by the OECD in 1997. The report, intended to highlight the predicament of the *akademische Mittelbau*, (again, a phenomenon almost exclusively confined to German universities and a by-product of its traditional university system), acknowledges the uniqueness of the position of the *Ordinarius* and identifies the source of the prestige and authority associated with it, viz., a unique grounding in constitutional law:

That position [of the Ordinarius] derives from the Basic Law which guarantees the independence of professors, free from interference by state authorities. *An extremely important principle in a modern democracy (and rarely stated so clearly in national legislation anywhere) this independence of the professoriate ...*¹¹⁹

Individual studies have brought out further differences between German professors and professors elsewhere in the world. For example, with respect to overall job satisfaction, a 1997 survey of university teachers in Europe and North America found the highest levels of personal job satisfaction among German professors (the British were among the lowest!), with over 70 percent of them declaring themselves satisfied or very satisfied with their positions.¹²⁰

It would be extremely unusual of course if Germany's university professors were to have nothing in common with professors in other parts of the world. Similarities have been observed in France, Italy and Japan; the last is thought to have been deeply

¹¹⁹ OECD, 1997, p. 22.

¹²⁰ Ray Rees, 'Reforming Germany's Universities', *Royal Economic Society Newsletter*, no. 106, (July 1999), pp. 8-10. Ray Rees holds the Chair of Economics in the Economics Faculty at the University of Munich.

influenced by the Humboldtian concept of the university.¹²¹ A study of international trends in managing academic staff in changing university systems places France, Italy and Japan in the same group as Germany, as countries in which universities exhibit a persistence of

elements of collegial tradition in the culture of higher education, with the professoriate retaining much of its traditional academic hegemony and organizational power ... at the expense of junior colleagues. ... [T]hese human resources flexibilities provide contractual cushions which protect the professional and employment interests of the tenured professoriate.¹²²

Nevertheless, even within the context of this general study, the position of German *Ordinarius* can be singled out as more privileged by virtue of the fact that Germany's non-permanent staff (who are wholly dependent on the *Ordinari*) vastly outnumber those in the other countries in the group. Hence, the tenured, permanent professorial staff are at the top of a steeply pyramidal hierarchy.¹²³ Moreover, as a separate examination of decision-making powers of German and French university professors concludes, German professors have greater authority and freedom of action within the university than their French counterparts.¹²⁴ This can be attributed to

¹²¹ Walther Ch. Zimmerli, 'Universitäten: Vorbild Amerika', *Die Zeit*, no. 40, (1996), <http://archiv.zeit.de/daten/pages/1996/40/staatsun.txt.19960927.html>, 3 August, 2000.

¹²² David Farnham, 'Towards the Flexi-University' in *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems: International Trends and Comparisons*, David Farnham (ed), (Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press, 1999), p. 347.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Carola Beckmeier and Ayla Neusel, 'Decision-Making Processes in French and German Universities', *Higher Education Management*, vol. 2, no. 1, (March 1990), pp. 7-19.

the decentralised appointments practice in accordance with university autonomy, and ... the traditional concept of the role of university teachers in the Federal Republic of Germany, which has evolved from the former claim of the university professor to universality in the presentation of his subject.¹²⁵

German mandarins, consequently, can be said to occupy a unique and privileged position in relation to their counterparts in other countries. Within Germany, as noted in the following sub-sections, contemporary events highlight the existence of mandarin privileges, on the one hand, and resentment and criticism of mandarin position from various interest groups, on the other. Together they provide useful insights into the extent of and the reasons for the persistence of the mandarin tradition in Germany.

4.2. Long-term Effects of the Continuance of the Mandarin Tradition

The overall implications of the continuance of the mandarin tradition for Germany's higher education, economy and society at large are, on the whole, complicated to assess. This is because, as emphasized in Chapter Six of this thesis, the mandarin tradition does not exist in isolation: several vestiges of the classical Humboldtian university still linger on in German universities today. Therefore, an overall assessment of the mandarin tradition can only be attempted in conjunction with an examination of Humboldtian principles in the modern German university. That said, the mandarin tradition does have a direct effect on the day-to-day functioning of the university in various ways. This sub-section examines these effects. On balance, the

¹²⁵ Ibid.

elevated position and exceptional authority of the mandarins appears anachronistic and adversely affects modern institutions of higher education.

First, the mandarin influence prolongs the rigid, archaic staff structures prevalent at German universities. In the current age of “flexibility” when universities all over the developed world are allowed the freedom to build their teaching staffs according to their own preferences and economic demands, these tenured, civil service posts serve as obstacles to adaptation and change.¹²⁶

Second, the privileges and institutionalised independence of the German professors insures them against pressures of demand-driven responsiveness and change. German mandarins are endowed not just with civil servant status and a corresponding salary which is linked to age not performance, but simultaneous academic freedom (including freedom to pursue other related activities as well), and additional powers to take part in the governance of the universities.¹²⁷ The civil service status is for life, meaning guaranteed salary levels, protection from redundancy and generous pension arrangements.¹²⁸ Academic freedom entails institutional academic self-management by the professors, freedom in carrying out research, and integration of research and teaching activities in ways suitable to themselves. Academic autonomy also includes monitoring and assessing the activities and performance of their assistants and junior staff members.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Burton Bollag, ‘German Higher Education Faces a Period of Tough Transitions’, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, (16 January 1998), <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~mayer/Unis/bollag.html>, 11 September 2000.

¹²⁷ Dorf, 2000.

¹²⁸ Owen E. Smith, *The German Economy*, (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹²⁹ Farnham, 1999, p. 110.

The present economic and competitive environment in higher education internationally necessitates introduction of notions of accountability, formal appraisals of staff efficiency and productivity, and performance-related benefits (such as pay and perks), thus exposing, little by little, the inner workings of the proverbial ivory tower.¹³⁰ These “international” notions and regulations apply just as much to Germany not just for the sake of competition but also because, as stated by Dagmar Schipanski, the Minister for Education in Thuringia:

[D]ie Gesellschaft [fordert] mehr und mehr das Recht [ein] zu verstehen, was hinter den Mauern der Alma mater geschieht – nicht zuletzt, weil nicht unerhebliche Gelder dorthin fließen ...¹³¹

Third, the privileged position of the professorial class in Germany has a detrimental effect on the position of the junior academic staff, in particular the *akademische Mittelbau*. The OECD report cited in the previous sub-section highlights this problem stating that the unique position of the *Ordinarius* denies the numerous ranks of the *akademische Mittelbau* the security, position, freedom and salary scales enjoyed by persons of the same rank elsewhere in the developed world:

Lack of career opportunities of this Mittelbau of assistants, lack of security, dependence on a professor and therefore lack of professional autonomy highlight the very distinctive, not to say privileged, position of the professoriate.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ ‘Weltoffen und Dialogbereit: Über die Zukunft Europas und der Universität’, *Uni-Journal Jena*, (February 2001), pp. 12-13.

¹³² OECD, 1997, p. 22.

The situation is as follows. The *Mittelbau* or the middle or intermediate level of academic staff includes lecturers and researchers and together makes up 65 percent of all university academics. It includes three major groups: academic assistants (possessing doctoral degrees and constituting 5 percent of the total *akademische Mittelbau*), academic employees (pursuing doctoral studies and their *Habilitation* who constitute 86 percent of the *Mittelbau*), and teachers for special assignments (engaged in imparting practical skills and knowledge for which professorial qualifications are not required, and constituting the remaining 9 percent).¹³³ Of the total number of the *Mittelbau*, however, less than 20 per cent enjoy tenure of some kind (which, in any case, is hardly as attractive as those of the professors) and some 22 per cent are on part-time contracts.¹³⁴

The members of the *Mittelbau* have to fulfil requirements as determined by their professorial mentors and have to adjust to the stipulated teaching and research structures of institutions. In comparison, the professors enjoy near complete autonomy in research and teaching decisions.¹³⁵ Further, since the professoriate is actually responsible for appointing all *Mittelbau* staff in addition to being responsible for renewing their short-term contracts, the future and career of the *Mittelbau* are entirely in the hands of the university *Ordinarien*. In terms of pay-scales, less than half (44 per cent) of the *Mittelbau* staff consider their average annual salaries of US\$19,393 adequate whereas 65 per cent of professors were satisfied with their annual pay of

¹³³ Peisert and Framhein, 1990, p. 94.

¹³⁴ Farnham, 1999, p. 103.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

approximately US\$66,690.¹³⁶ And yet, in almost all cases, the *Mittelbau* as a group forms the backbone of universities, carrying out most of the teaching duties and a sizeable amount of research involved.¹³⁷

Fourth, the particular nature and structure of the steep academic hierarchy over which an *Ordinarius* presides creates significant disincentives in terms of the sheer time required to establish an academic career in German universities. For a prospective academic, the first degree has to be followed by two phases of qualification (as a member of staff carrying out research and teaching duties) which require close professorial supervision and take up to an average of twelve years to complete: a first stage of completing doctoral studies (4-5 years) followed by the *Habilitationsphase* (7-8 years).¹³⁸ Consequently, the average age of professorial appointees is 42, far higher than in other comparable higher education systems.¹³⁹ Further, adding to the *Mittelbau's* woes is the small chance of achieving that all-important post of *Lehrstuhlinhaber* at the end; the steep pyramidal hierarchy still prevalent with only a few full professors at the top means that just one in five academics with the *Habilitation* is likely to secure a tenured professorship¹⁴⁰. Thus, the advice of Gunta Saul Soprun, a career counsellor for aspiring academics is:

¹³⁶ Jürgen Enders and Ulrich Teichler, 'Doctoral Staff in German Higher Education', *Higher Education Policy*, (1994), vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 31-36.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Peisert and Framhein, 1990, p. 95.

¹³⁹ Farnham, 1999, p. 107.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Der Weg bis zur ersten Professur ist schier endlos, beschwerlich und riskant. Und mit etwas Pech heißt es am Ende "C4 – versenkt". Wer das macht, muß sehr von sich überzeugt sein ...¹⁴¹

Those who end up without a professorship face the unenviable task of beginning a professional career away from the university at an advanced age. This situation is also deplorable from the institution's viewpoint, since junior staff, representing qualified workforce, regularly turn their backs on academia. Moreover, evidence suggests that an ageing workforce can seriously affect research output, raising concerns about the innovative and creative potential of German scholarship *per se*. As one author notes:

Es widerspricht geradezu dem Sinn einer Hochschule als einer gedachten Pflegestätte von Begabten aller Art, wenn tüchtige and begabte Studenten jahrelang von Institutsleitern und Seminardirektoren mit staatlichen Alimentationen in deren Aktionsbereich gehalten werden, um entweder persönlichen oder institutsbezogenen Egoismen zu dienen. Es gibt heute an jeder Hochschule Dutzende von Wissenschaftlichen Assistenten, denen Jahr um Jahr und mit allen verwaltungsmäßigen Tricks die Beschäftigungsverträge bis zum bitteren Ende verlängert werden.¹⁴²

In sum, the drawbacks of being a member of the *Mittelbau* staff are numerous: a long and arduous period of the *Habilitationsphase*, untenured or fixed-tenured positions which are disproportionately poorly salaried, dependence on individual chairholders,

¹⁴¹ 'Karriere an der Uni: Kriechgang für Himmelstürmer', *Der Spiegel*, (24 October, 2001), <http://www.spiegel.de/druckversion/0,1588,163851,00.html> 29 October 2001.

¹⁴² Günther Schnür, *Die deutsche Bildungskatastrophe: 20 Jahre nach Picht – Lehren und Lernen in Deutschland*, (Herford: Verlag Busse und Seewald GmbH, 1986), p. 93.

and little or no involvement in institutional management. Unsurprisingly, these factors have not just blunted the incentive for younger academics to continue striving for a career in academia, they have also significantly contributed to making the academic career unattractive to the new generation. Junior academics eventually either opt for careers outside the field of higher education or take up academic positions outside Germany.¹⁴³ Either way this “brain drain” indicates an insecure future for German academia. The situation in the academic labour market merits concern as well; statistics suggest that by the year 2005, approximately half of the 37000 German professors will have retired. This “vacuum” in the job sector could very rapidly see the entire higher educational system in chaos.¹⁴⁴

4.3. Proposals for University Reform

In order to avert this imminent crisis facing the higher education system, the Federal Minister for Education and Research, Edelgard Bulmahn, came up with an unprecedented solution in the form of recent higher education reforms.¹⁴⁵ For the purposes of this chapter an examination of the reform proposals and reaction of the various interest groups is instructive. It provides further evidence of the existence of the mandarin tradition in addition to insights into its actual form and nature in contemporary times; and, perhaps more importantly, it assists in a deeper understanding of how and why German university traditions have persisted and why

¹⁴³ As a study of doctoral staff in German higher education concludes that the majority cite poor career prospects of junior staff, employment conditions at universities and academic salaries as reasons for leaving. Enders and Teichler, 1994, pp. 31-36.

¹⁴⁴ Julia Koch and Joachim Mohr, ‘Kohle für Koryphäen’, *Der Spiegel*, no. 16, (2000), <http://www.spiegel.de/druckversion/0,1588,72773,00.html> 20 April 2001.

¹⁴⁵ Edelgard Bulmahn, *Mut zur Veränderung: Deutschland braucht moderne Hochschulen*, (April 1999), www.bmbf.de/pub/m-vede.pdf 3 August 2000.

universities have, despite radical changes in Germany's political, social and economic status, been impervious (so far) to large-scale reforms.

The entire hierarchy of positions in the classical university has existed, with some minor changes, for approximately two centuries. In the words of Edelgard Bulmahn:

Die Personalstruktur unserer Hochschulen stammt aus dem vorigen Jahrhundert. Um den heutigen Anforderungen gerecht zu werden, müssen die Personalstrukturen in unseren Hochschulen modernisiert werden. ... Besoldungsunterschiede an Hochschulen sind derzeit nicht durch Kompetenz und Leistung zu begründen. Es bestehen kaum Meinungsverschiedenheiten darüber, daß viele Aufgaben in der Lehre nicht nur von Professoren wahrgenommen werden müssen.¹⁴⁶

The principal inherent weaknesses of the system are identified in the above statement. The focus of reforms was, therefore, twofold: performance-linked professorial salary and changes in the long and arduous *Habilitationsphase*, including introduction of the post of the *Juniorprofessor*.¹⁴⁷ The *Dienstrechtsreform* thus essentially consisted of two parts: the *Gesetz zur Reform der Professorenbesoldung*, and the *Fünftes Gesetz zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes* which addressed the issues of professorial salary and the introduction of the post of *Juniorprofessoren* in universities and institutions of higher education. The *Professorenbesoldungsreform* set out the following aim:

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Zur Verbesserung der Effektivität und Qualität von Lehre und Forschung soll eine stärker leistungsorientierte Professorenbesoldung mit einer wettbewerbsfähigen, flexiblen Bezahlungsstruktur eingeführt werden.¹⁴⁸

This aim is to be achieved through removal of age-dependent salary levels, introduction of the concept of “*variable Leistungsbezüge*”¹⁴⁹ apart from the *Grundgehalt* (the basic pay, unchanged from the previous HRG) and removal of the ceiling capping salaries (B10) for the topmost level of academics, among other changes. Further, professors already in job would not suffer salary cuts but would also not be granted any new “*Berufungs-* or “*Bleibezuschüsse*”. The government’s promise, to assuage mandarin fears, is:

Mit ihm [dem neuen Besoldungssystem] soll nicht weniger, sondern gerechter bezahlt werden. Außerdem soll im Wettbewerb mit ausländischen Hochschulen und der Industrie in Zukunft auch Marktgegebenheiten bei der Gewinnung von Nachwuchswissenschaftlern und Professoren besser Rechnung getragen werden können.¹⁵⁰

Of course, current professors could switch to the new system whenever they wished.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ *Gesetzentwurf: Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Reform der Professorenbesoldung*, Drucksache 14/6852, (31 August 2001), www.bmbf.de/pub/bt_drs_hrg.pdf 23 October 2002.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Reform des Hochschuldienstrechts*, Bericht der Expertenkommission, (7 April 2000), <http://www.bmbf.de/pub/Bericht-.pdf> 18 October 2002.

The other major reform is essentially geared towards simpler, shorter ways to achieve that all-important professorial status.¹⁵² It addresses the following problems:

- Die lange Qualifikationsdauer des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses
- Die im internationalen Vergleich unzureichende Selbständigkeit der Postdoktorandinnen und Postdoktoranden
- Das hohe Erstberufungsalter von Professorinnen und Professoren¹⁵³

The solution to the above mentioned problems was the introduction of US-style “*Juniorprofessor*” as a new route towards a full professorship. *Juniorprofessoren* would have the right to teach and pursue research independently. The *Habilitation* would no longer be a pre-requisite for professorial aspirants, the hitherto existing prohibition on career advance of junior staff in their current universities would be relaxed, and employment contracts for *Mittelbau* staff would undergo a complete transformation.¹⁵⁴

Predictably, since the reform proposals were first circulated for discussion in 1998, they have raised storm after storm in the academic world. They presented the opportunity to critics of the mandarin tradition to come out in the open with their views on professorial power and privileges. That, in turn, caused a furore amongst the old guard of the mandarins who, with some justification, held the state and the

¹⁵² *Fünftes Gesetz zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes und anderer Vorschriften*, (16 February 2002), http://www.bmbf.de/pub/5_hrg_aendg.pdf, 23 October 2002.

¹⁵³ *Entwurf eines Fünftes Gesetzes zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes und anderer Vorschriften*, Drucksache 14/6853, (31 August 2001), http://www.bmbf/pub/bt_drs_hrg.pdf, 23 October 2002. Addressing these problems would ensure that the average age of professorial appointees would drop significantly, to between 33 and 38 years which would be in line with international standards. Koch and Mohr, 2000.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

bureaucracy responsible for the present state of affairs. The following sub-sections consider the issues in greater detail.

4.3.1. Reaction of Non-Mandarins to University Reforms

It is interesting to note the extent of support the reforms attracted. Apart from official bodies such as the *Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* (The *Westdeutsche Rektorenkonferenz* was in the 1970s renamed the *Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*, hereafter HRK) and the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* as well as the representatives of the *Ständige Kultusministerskonferenz*, the reforms also secured the approval of an independent high-level commission set up primarily to comment on the reforms. To the above list can be added members of the media, individual bureaucrats and functionaries, politicians and policy-makers as constituents of a “non-mandarin group” which, over the recent years, has been a vocal critic of the universities’ outdated and inefficient structures and styles of functioning, of which the mandarin position and privileges are perceived to be an important element. The reform proposals thus found support across the board.

As expected, support for the reforms was accompanied by a barrage of criticism of the professors as “undeserving” of their privileges and status. The subject of reforming professorial pay cleared the ground for open criticism of the mandarins, sometimes from former allies of the mandarin group such as the HRK: “Faulen Professoren muss der Rauschmiss drohen”, declared Klaus Landfried, President of the HRK.¹⁵⁵ To his list of complaints against the professorial class in Germany, he added the following:

¹⁵⁵ Klaus Landfried, ‘Faulen Professoren muss der Rauschmiss drohen’, *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, (26 July 1999), http://file:///C:/My%20Documents/Die%20HRK.mht!http://www.hrk.d.../haz_990726.ht 3 August 2000.

Mit Frustration über ungünstige Rahmenbedingungen seien Pflichtverletzungen vielleicht zu erklären, aber nicht zu entschuldigen. 'Dahinter steckt manchmal auch der Versuch, auf Kosten der jungen Generation ständische Privilegien der Professorenzunft aus dem 19. Jahrhundert ins nächste Jahrtausend zu retten.'¹⁵⁶

With this statement, Klaus Landfried expressed the widely held notion that professorial privileges were out-of-date and unfair.

Elsewhere, the sentiment found resonance in the views of almost 500 academics of German origin employed at American universities, including two Nobel Laureates. In an open letter to the Education Minister they called on all concerned including representatives of the state and political parties to support these reform proposals. They also noted with regret the efforts of "interest groups" opposed to reforms in order to preserve their positions:

Wir halten die vom Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) geplanten Reformen für einen entscheidenden Schritt in die richtige Richtung. Deshalb sehen wir mit Bedauern, daß das Reformvorhaben auf heftigen Widerspruch von Interessengruppen stößt, die um ihre Macht und ihre Privilegien fürchten. ... Wir fordern hiermit alle Verantwortlichen in der Bundesregierung, in den Regierung der Länder und in den Parteien auf, sich

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

für eine rasche Umsetzung des Reformkonzepts noch in dieser Legislaturperiode einzusetzen.¹⁵⁷

The press and media too discovered an ideal opportunity to recount details of professorial authority and prestige and its anachronism in the context of modern universities. Articles variously entitled “Den Muff aus den Talaren”¹⁵⁸, “Kohle für Koryphäen”¹⁵⁹, “Eine akademische Bastion wankt”¹⁶⁰ or quite simply “Welchen Wert hat ein Professor?”¹⁶¹ suggested deep-seated opposition to professorial power.

Interestingly, the Education Minister’s reform proposals were, from the outset, considered immensely courageous as well. Clearly, few politicians had risked venturing this far into mandarin territory. “...die bislang mutigste Bildungsreform der Bundesregierung”¹⁶², an article in *Der Spiegel* called it. Mandarin opposition to the reform proposals was reflected in an article entitled “Bulle wider Bulmahn” in *Die Zeit*.¹⁶³ Apart from courage, Ms. Bulmahn’s willingness to handle what was evidently a complex task also received a favourable reaction:

Professoren auf Lebenszeit kann auch bei miserabler Leistung die Besoldung nicht gekürzt werden. Wer dagegen viel leistet, will auch mehr verdienen. Folglich weicht er auf lukrative Nebentätigkeiten aus. Individuell ist beides

¹⁵⁷ *Offener Brief an BMBF und KultusministerInnen*, (27 March 2001), <http://www.geocities.com/hochschulreform/Hochschulreform1.htm> 13 March 2002.

¹⁵⁸ Hoffmann, 1999.

¹⁵⁹ Koch and Mohr, 2000.

¹⁶⁰ Karl-Heinz Reith, ‘Eine akademische Bastion wankt’, *Unispiegel*, no. 2, (2001), <http://www.spiegel.de/druckversion/0,1588,128838,00.html>, 20 April 2001.

¹⁶¹ Sabine Etzold, ‘Welchen Wert hat ein Professor?’, *Die Zeit*, (23 March 2000), http://www.archiv.zeit.de/daten/pages/200013.dienstrecht_.html, 3 August 2000.

¹⁶² Koch and Mohr, 2000.

¹⁶³ Martin Spiewak, ‘Bulle wider Bulmahn’, *Die Zeit*, no. 14, (2001a), http://www.zeit.de/2001/14/Hochschule/200114_2_leiter.html, 20 April 2001.

ökonomisch, für die Gesellschaft jedoch ist es verheerend ineffizient, weil es zu Lasten der Lehrtätigkeit geht. Diesen Teufelskreis zu brechen ist Sisyphusarbeit. Daß Bulmahn sie auf sich nimmt, verdient Respekt...¹⁶⁴

It may be a fact not overlooked by the Minister herself - her major report on the state of higher education is entitled: *Mut zur Veränderung; Deutschland braucht moderne Hochschulen*¹⁶⁵.

Professorial inadequacies and privileges thus took centre stage and conferences and discussions on higher education frequently began with references (either as criticism or reassurance as shown in the following examples) to mandarin characteristics. An unexpectedly high profile anti-mandarin statement came from Gerhard Schröder himself. During the opening of a private “Manager-Academy” the German International Graduate School of Management and Administration (GISMA) in Hannover he expressed the following view:

Es steht nirgends in Stein gemeißelt, daß ein Professor lebenslang beschäftigt werden muß.¹⁶⁶

He further suggested that in order to improve performance and motivation in the universities, one had to search for “Vergütungsstrukturen ..., die marktgerecht und flexibel sind”.¹⁶⁷ In contrast, at an open discussion about teaching assessment

¹⁶⁴ Hoffmann, 1999.

¹⁶⁵ Bulmahn, 1999.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Schröder verlangt grundlegende Hochschulreform’, *Spiegel Online*, (22 October 1999), <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518.druck-48926,00.html> 12 March 2002.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

exercises in universities (another issue which the mandarins are fighting tooth and nail) the vice president of the HRK, Cornelius Weiss, attempted to allay professorial fears by clarifying at the outset:

Die HRK befürwortet Qualitätssicherung nicht etwa, weil sie der Professorenschaft Faulheit, Desinteresse und Mißbrauch von Privilegien unterstellen will.¹⁶⁸

Such examples highlight the present situation: a widespread opposition to professorial privileges and the existence, simultaneously, of a powerful professorial lobby which remains, in all probability, a formidable force.

4.3.2. Mandarin Reaction

The tone of the mandarin reaction to the reforms and to the public criticism of professorial position and authority is ideally captured by considering the reaction of the main official organisation representing professors and academics, the *Deutscher Hochschulverband* (hereafter DHV). In a resolution entitled “Resolution gegen die Diffamierung der Hochschullehrer”, the DHV countered each of the criticisms separately, laying the blame on the politics of the time:

Die Universitätsprofessoren sind nicht bereit, den Sündenbock für eine verfehlte Hochschul- und Finanzpolitik der letzten 20 Jahre abzugeben.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ ‘Leitbild der Hochschule – Qualität der Lehre: Fachtagung der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin und der Hochschulrektorenkonferenz’, *Beiträge zur Hochschulpolitik*, (February 2000), vol. 2, p. 8.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Resolution gegen die Diffamierung der Hochschullehrer’, *Resolutionen des 47. Hochschulverbandstages 1997*,

html:file://C:\MyDocuments\Resolutionendes47_Hochschulverbandtages1997.mht 3 August 2000.

The DHV claimed that government policies on financial cutbacks in higher education leading to worsening staff-student ratios, working conditions and facilities at universities, was one of the primary reasons for the current crisis.¹⁷⁰ The DHV alleged further that the current “Diffamierungskampagne gegen Hochschullehrer” was politically motivated:

Es gehe bei dieser Nebelkerzenkampagne in Wahrheit darum, das eigene Versagen in der Hochschulpolitik zu verschleiern, die unerträglich gewordene Unterfinanzierung der Universitäten zu tarnen und den Boden für Gehaltskürzungen von Professoren zu bereiten.¹⁷¹

There were public displays of mandarin dissent as well which included the President of the DHV, Hartmut Schiedermaier, storming out in January 2000 out of the *Bulmahn-Kommission* meeting. Later an official statement was issued:

[D]er Deutsche Hochschulverband, dessen über 17000 Mitglieder mehr als alle anderen von den geplanten Reformen betroffen sind, ist nicht bereit, sich an einem solchen Verfahren zu beteiligen.¹⁷²

Publicly, the DHV’s main concern was the likely problems with implementing the reforms. Schiedermaier claimed that presenting the reforms as “cost-neutral” was

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ ‘Deutscher Hochschulverband fordert: Offenes Visier statt Nebelkerzen’, *Aktuelles Pressemitteilung*, no. 14, (28 July 1999), mhtml:file:///C:/My Documents/Nebelkerzen.mht, 3 August 2000.

¹⁷² Etzold, 2000.

misleading since the likely outcome would be pay cuts, in effect degrading the quality of professorships and driving newly appointed professors into industry or abroad.¹⁷³ Second, it was doubtful whether “deserving” professors would get to see a penny of the “*Leistungsbezahlung*” which remained a decision for the Finance Minister, not the Education Minister.¹⁷⁴ Aside from the DHV’s reactions, individual professors from various universities also voiced their scepticism at the general idea of evaluating professorial performance in order to link it with salary. Commenting on the situation of academic medicine at Hamburg university, one professor observed:

Professoren sollen zeitnah beurteilt werden nach ihren Leistungen (wie?), auf Zeit angestellt werden (wie lange?), bezüglich der Lehre beurteilt werden (von wem?) ... Auf welchen Kriterien beruhen die Entscheidungen, die dann zu fällen sind? Und was ist das Resultat? Entlassung? Degradierung? Von C4 nach C1 oder Strafpunkte ...? Andere Verwendung? Wo?¹⁷⁵

Another *Lehrstuhlinhaber* for Law at Jena University drew attention to the fact that such “exercises in evaluation” would mean, on part of the professors, filling out more forms, writing more reports and informing more committees, thereby increasing workload and decreasing efficiency. Moreover, it would cost a great deal more for not just the above-mentioned administrative tasks but also for the evaluation of one professor by (hopefully) others of similar rank and stature on a regular basis. Finally

¹⁷³ Hartmut Schiedermaier, ‘Das neue Dienstrecht ist ein Sparpaket’, *Unispiegel*, (5 June 2001), <http://www.spiegel.de/unispiegel/jobundberuf/0,1518,druck-137897,00.html> 12 March 2002.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Peter von Wichert, ‘Ein Plädoyer für Deregulierung, Entbürokratisierung und akademische Freiheit’, *Forschung und Lehre*, (October 2001), <http://www.forschung-und-lehre.de/archiv/10-01/wichert.html> 16 November 2001.

he posed the crucial question: How was the government planning to fund this scheme?¹⁷⁶

The issue of abolishing the *Habilitation* provided the mandarins with more opportunities to criticise higher education reform policy. Schiederemair elaborated on how the creation of the *Juniorprofessor* would be detrimental to existing academics on lower rungs of the ladder.

Frau Bundesbildungsministerin Bulmahn hat ... den Fehler gemacht, die Juniorprofessur ... als einzigen Weg für die Qualifikation des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses festzuschreiben. Das ist schon schlimm genug, denn die Habilitation hat sich in vielen Fächern als Qualifikationsnachweis durchaus bewährt. Im Reformübereifer sind aber die bereits im Wissenschaftssystem tätigen Nachwuchswissenschaftler auf dem Altar der Juniorprofessur geopfert worden.¹⁷⁷

He maintained that the “reform experiment” under the guise of promoting more independence for young researchers, would fail precisely because the post of *Juniorprofessor* was independently funded (with no access to departmental funds) and would therefore not be considered part of the research teams within faculties (creating the risk of being disregarded by the rest of the academics). It would eventually suffer

¹⁷⁶ Eberhard Eichenhofer, ‘Die Ordinarien bitten zur Kasse: Zur leistungsgerechten Bezahlung der Professoren’, *Uni-Journal Jena*, (December 1999), <http://www.uni-jena.de/journal/unidez99/kasse.htm> 26 February 2002.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Schiederemair: “Hochschulrahmengesetz sofort reparieren”’, *Deutscher Hochschulverband Presseinformation*, no. 1, (25 January 2002), <http://www.hochschulverband.de/presse/pm0102.html> 12 March 2002.

the same fate that had befallen the position of “*freischwebende Assistenzprofessor*” created in the 1970s, and would have to be withdrawn.¹⁷⁸

And finally, in an unusual move, the DHV published a four-page advertisement in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, entitled “Schützt die Universitäten vor der Abwanderung ihrer Spitzenkräfte”.¹⁷⁹ The advertisement warned that such political actions would have disastrous consequences for universities - lowering standards further and forcing almost 3800 established academics to emigrate to other countries. Later, in context of the advertisement, Schiedermaier declared:

Die Professoren in unserem Land sind nicht länger bereit, stillschweigend zuzusehen, wie die Wettbewerbs- und Leistungsfähigkeit der deutschen Universitäten von der Politik unter wohlfeilen Parolen leichtfertig aufs Spiel gesetzt werden. Die Professoren haben sich an die Öffentlichkeit gewandt – aus Sorge um die Zukunft der deutschen Universität und des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses.¹⁸⁰

This was by far the biggest “operation” mounted by the DHV in defence of its members. Keeping the rates of the FAZ in mind, the advertisement would have cost a massive 240000 marks!¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Schiedermaier, 2001.

¹⁷⁹ ‘Schiedermaier: “Quittung für eine gegen die Universitätsprofessoren gerichtete Politik”’, *Deutscher Hochschulverband Presseinformation*, no. 3, (March 2001), <http://www.hochschulverband.de/presse/pm0301.html> 6 March 2002.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Jochen Leffers, ‘Die Professorenlobby macht mobil’, *Unispiegel*, no. 1, (2001), <http://www.spiegel.de/druckversion/0,1588,125312,00.html> 24 April 2001.

This section of the chapter illustrates that professorial clout should clearly not be underestimated even though the old *Ordinarienuniversität* no longer exists. The ability of the German mandarins to collectively defend their position when under pressure, while raising justifiable objections to the charges being levelled at them, is noteworthy. It is difficult to imagine a scenario where professors mount such a unified and concerted attack on the establishment and policy-makers in any other comparable country. During this entire affair mandarin reaction was perceived as typical in its attempt to safeguard its own position. As the examples above indicate, the mandarins concentrated on identifying implementational and practical drawbacks of the reform proposals. Frequent references were made to the real and credible dangers such reforms posed to future academics, and to the future of university education and research. Further, instead of donning the mantle of moral and spiritual guardians (as in the past) they portrayed themselves as much victims of the system as the lower ranking academic staff, who have all suffered under the excessive bureaucratisation of higher education:

[V]iele Professoren [verbringen] ihre [für den Steuerzahler teure] Arbeitszeit damit, Aufgaben zu erledigen ... wie etwa das Führen von Registern, das Ausfüllen von vielen hundert Formularen und den im Umfang ständig steigenden Papierkrieg mit Ministerien, Hochschulverwaltung und Drittmittelgebern. Weil sie aber damit beschäftigt sind, bleibt für die Aufgabe, für die sie sich nun einmal qualifiziert haben, nämlich für die Forschung und Lehre, zu wenig Zeit.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Peter Gutjahr-Löser, 'Kontrolle ist gut – Vertrauen ist besser: Warum Universitäten nicht wie Unternehmen organisiert sind', *Forschung und Lehre*, (March 2000), <http://www.forschung-und-lehre.de/archiv/03-00/gutjahr.html>, 24 October 2002.

References to the mandarins' concerns (and outrage) about the threat to their own positions and authority were at best "tangential" and usually made in conjunction with dangers such occurrences implied for the future of the concept of *Wissenschaft*:

Die Aufgaben der Zukunft können nur mit Hilfe der Wissenschaft gelöst werden. Wer die Träger der Wissenschaft diffamiert und unsachlich angreift, stört den Erneuerungsprozeß der Wissenschaft. Die fähigsten Köpfe werden sich anderen Berufen zuwenden und sind für die Wissenschaft verloren.¹⁸³

Wissenschaft has always been the winning argument in the past. When all else failed, the mandarins could count on raising concern about how the pursuit of pure learning was being adversely affected (whenever the guardians of *Wissenschaft* felt their position was threatened). The raging debates on the danger to *Wissenschaft* and its pursuit in Imperial Germany and during the Weimar democracy¹⁸⁴ are indicative of that; *Wissenschaft* also provided justification for professorial inaction during Nazi Germany¹⁸⁵ and was depicted as the reason for the restoration of the universities in the post-War period. As we shall see in the next chapter, the concept of *Wissenschaft* and the associated traditions of the Humboldtian university occupy a unique position in German thought and culture and its ripple effects are felt in the political and social spheres as well. Up till now the mandarins have successfully used that to their advantage.

¹⁸³ 'Resolution gegen die Diffamierung der Hochschullehrer', 1997.

¹⁸⁴ See Ringer, 1990.

¹⁸⁵ See Chapter Three.

However, at the same time the mandarins hold, with considerable justification, the state responsible for financially starving the universities thereby creating the present crisis:

Die schwierige Lage, in der sich die Universitäten zur Zeit befinden, beruht zuerst und vor allem auf ihre chronische Unterfinanzierung. Sie sind Opfer einer Politik, das Studium für immer mehr Studierende zu öffnen, ohne dies bezahlen zu wollen.¹⁸⁶

The underlying message was that in the end the universities were state institutions and they themselves were state officials. Historically, the impetus for institutional reform has come from the state; to unexpectedly shift, at times of crises, the onus of reform on to the professors was unfair.

It would be of course incorrect to assume that the sole intention of professorial objections to the reforms and higher education policies disadvantageous to university professors was the desire to preserve power and privileges. Many ideas were well-meaning and useful. For example, the noted historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler voiced genuine concerns about the introduction of the post of *Juniorprofessor*:

Es [das Gesetz] schaltet Tausende von jungen Wissenschaftlern und Wissenschaftlerinnen aus dem Wettbewerb um die begehrten Lebenszeitprofessuren, aber auch um attraktive Projektstellen kurzerhand aus. Denn sie alle dürfen, vom Promotionsbeginn ab gerechnet, nicht mehr als

¹⁸⁶ 'Resolution gegen die Diffamierung der Hochschullehrer', 1997.

exakt zwölf Jahre (sechs bis zur Promotion, sechs danach) hinter sich gebracht haben, ganz gleich ob als Stipendiaten, wissenschaftliche Hilfskräfte oder Mitarbeiter, Assistenten oder Privatdozenten. Dann senkt sich das Fallbeil: Massenentlassung, akademischer Exitus, ab in die freie Wildbahn, wo die Arbeitslosigkeit sie erwartet.¹⁸⁷

However, it is evident that the mandarins do not appear to have emerged out of this episode unscathed. Given the barrage of criticism they have had to face from political and other forces in the recent past changes to their position seem inevitable. Concerted mandarin reaction to the reforms does not necessarily mean that as a group they are powerful enough to single-handedly reject government policies. However, as one article put it:

Die Ordinarien werden das Bulmahnsche Gesetz nicht verhindern, viele aber werden die Umsetzung zu torpedieren versuchen.¹⁸⁸

4.4. The Crisis Facing German Universities

The current view of German universities is that of crisis-ridden institutions in need of urgent reform. Their problems now go beyond just the age-old one of catering to massive increases in student numbers.¹⁸⁹ Serious doubts have arisen about their ability to innovate and produce world-class research and about the capability of German graduates to meet the challenges of globalisation and international competition in new

¹⁸⁷ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, 'Auf die freie Wildbahn geschickt', *Die Zeit*, Feuilleton, (June 2002), http://www.zeit.de/2002/06/Hochschule/print_200206_berufsverbot_3.html, 8 April 2002.

¹⁸⁸ Spiewak, 2001a.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

markets and technology.¹⁹⁰ Particularly regrettable from the German point of view has been its loss of pre-eminence in research, especially in relation to the US.¹⁹¹ Lately, they have had difficulty in attracting foreign students while, at the same time, there is substantial evidence to suggest that the best German minds are leaving the country in droves, again usually for the U.S.¹⁹² Apart from archaic staff structures, the crisis is a sign of problems in the undergraduate and student stages as well. The high rate of student drop-outs in German universities contrast unfavourably with the US and UK as does the unusually long length of study at universities – the average time taken to complete the first degree in a major subject qualifying for the labour market was a lengthy 12.4 semesters in 1986.¹⁹³ The overall duration of studies is 13.8 semesters, which translates to seven years of study making an average German graduate about 28 years old.¹⁹⁴ All of the above seems to centre round the fact that the curricula at German universities are essentially designed to prepare students for academic careers and research. In view of this situation the then German President, Roman Herzog, said that the existing situation in German universities: "... should jolt us the way the sputnik shock jolted the United States".¹⁹⁵ He stressed the need to overhaul the entire university system and cautioned that for Germany to remain competitive internationally, its universities would have to move away from the traditional German model, in which all students received an education designed to prepare them for careers in the academe.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ Hans-Olaf Henkel, 'Wissenschaft in Not', *Die Zeit*, no. 46, (2001), http://www.zeit.de/2001/46/Wissen/print_200146_henkel_lang.html 8 April 2002.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Martin Spiewak, 'Flucht der Forscher', *Die Zeit*, no. 21, (2001b), http://www.zeit.de/2001/21/Hochschule/200121_braindrain.neu.html 13 March 2002.

¹⁹² Bollag, 1998.

¹⁹³ Edgar Frackmann, 'Resistance to Change or No Need for Change? The Survival of German Higher Education in the 1990s', *European Journal of Education*, vol. 25, no. 2, (1990), pp. 187-202.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Bollag, 1998.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Since the mid-nineties the problems facing universities have again come to a head with a large-scale student protest occurring at the end of 1997. Students voiced their disapproval at the chronic under-funding of the higher education institutions, the proposed introduction of tuition fees, cuts in maintenance grants for lower income students, reductions in the number of university teachers, and poor conditions for study – overcrowded lecture halls, dilapidated buildings and inadequate library, laboratory and computer facilities.¹⁹⁷ For the point of view of this chapter it is interesting to note the difference in student attitude towards mandarins. This time the professors were no longer the prime targets of student dissent, which was mainly a protest against the government and its education policies. Professors were mentioned in the context of the worsening student-staff ratio, though professorial disinterest in undertaking teaching duties and their unapproachable attitudes have long been commented upon by students.¹⁹⁸ Students' comments on teaching usually include all teaching staff and a general demand for "*mehr Ehre der Lehre*" prevails, as cited in the OECD report

because they see teaching undervalued and experience teachers who neglect their teaching duties.¹⁹⁹

Furthermore, this time, students enjoyed considerable faculty empathy for their situation, in contrast to 1968.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., Christoph Hesse, 'Hochschul-Herbst '97: Politischer Streik oder konformistische Revolte?', *Marxistische Blätter*, vo l. 36, no. 1, (1998), pp. 8-10.

¹⁹⁸ Bollag, 1998.

¹⁹⁹ OECD, 1997, p. 19.

²⁰⁰ Frackmann, 1990, pp. 187-202.

Recent student behaviour places mandarin culture, exceptional as it may be, in some kind of perspective. It is a reminder of the fact that in the end, professorial position and authority are not, by any means, the decisive factors in the crisis facing German universities. In fact, given that German universities have always been state institutions and heavily bureaucratic at that, it may be fair to argue that the problems afflicting higher education, including the “outdated” mandarin tradition is a result of the state’s unwillingness and inability to tackle head on the fundamental issues concerning universities. Edelgard Bulmahn, in her publication calling for more “modern” institutions of higher education, admits and attempts to address this problem.²⁰¹ Besides, as the OECD report of 1997 cited earlier notes, Germany’s higher education problems are not unique but exist in various forms in many countries. In view of the fact that Germany is the largest and most complex country of Continental Europe and that it was “a country with a very strong and rich tradition of both academic and technical education with quite distinctive structures and procedures”, it is perhaps unsurprising that its educational problems turn out to be equally complex.²⁰²

4.5. “Americanisation” of German universities

The idea of importing successful aspects of the American universities to Germany has been around for a long time and indeed, like Humboldt’s principles, emerges every time university reform is discussed. At present it is again a subject central to the higher education debate because of the Education Minister Edelgard Bulmahn’s much publicised tour of America in January 2001, in conjunction with a project financed by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* called “Project Talent - German

²⁰¹ Bulmahn, 1999.

²⁰² OECD, 1997, p. 3.

Scientists in the USA: Challenges for Higher Education and Science Policies (CRIS)".²⁰³ The purpose of the project was essentially to establish why some of the best German *Nachwuchswissenschaftler* were leaving for America in the postdoctoral stages of their careers. It was hoped that by informing these academics and researchers who had been educated in Germany about recent changes in German universities, a process of "enticing" them back to their home country could be started.²⁰⁴ As discussed subsequently below, the mandarin tradition plays a key role in this account, as it is one of the deciding factors behind the "brain-drain" of young German academics and researchers to the US.

The increasing "export" of young scholars and specialists in science and engineering to the United States is a source of concern in many developed countries, but Germany, with its beleaguered university system, might well feel the brain drain more than others.²⁰⁵ This is especially the case because given the surplus of applicants for full professorships at German universities, German scholars are easy targets for American universities.²⁰⁶ Germany ranks in the third place after China and Japan among the countries sending the largest numbers of post-doctoral students to the United States and in the fifth place, after China, India, Taiwan and the United Kingdom, among the countries of origin of foreign-born faculty at U.S. higher education institutions.²⁰⁷ Across all disciplines, between 12 percent and 14 percent of all young academics who

²⁰³ 'Project Talent: Ziele, Themen und Highlights', *Center for Research on Innovation & Society*, (April 2001a), <http://www.crisinternational.org/project-talent/>, 25 January 2002.

²⁰⁴ Edelgard Bulmahn, 'Opening speech: Recent Developments in Higher Education and Science Policy in Germany', *Center for Research on Innovation & Society*, (January 2001), www.crisinternational.org/project-talent/openingspeech.pdf 25 January 2002.

²⁰⁵ Spiewak, 2001b.

²⁰⁶ 'Project Talent: German Scientists and Postdocs in the United States', *Center for Research on Innovation & Society*, (January 2001b), <http://www.crisinternational.org/project-talent/summary.pdf> 25 January 2002.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

have earned their PhD in Germany migrate to the U.S.²⁰⁸ Between a fourth and a third of post doctoral students stay in the US on a long-term basis although not necessarily for good.²⁰⁹ Further, the results of interviews with 62 current and former German post-doctoral students in the U.S. lend support to the notion of *crème de la crème* selection in that it is often the very best from among the selected group of German science émigrés who permanently turn their backs on the German academic system.²¹⁰

The most significant aspect of young, qualified academics leaving Germany for America in large numbers is that this phenomenon is closely linked to the mandarin tradition and its persistence in Germany. An account of the experiences of outstanding scholars in America of German origin is strewn with criticism of the rigidity, formality and archaic modes of functioning which exist in conjunction with the mandarin tradition.²¹¹ Herbert Krömer, a former Nobel Prize Winner for Physics, in the context of suggesting university reforms, surprisingly uses the now rarely used term of *Ordinarienuniversität* to refer to the subject.²¹² He extols the advantages of the “American Department system”, which separates the administrative from the actual research duties of academics and concludes by saying:

Wenn so ein ‘Department’ über die Jahre hinweg lebt, dann ändern sich auch die Themen. Und da ist es in einem so großen Verein viel leichter sich

²⁰⁸ Bulmahn, 2001.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Project Talent, 2001b.

²¹¹ ‘Podiumsdiskussion: ‘Erfahrungen prominenter deutscher Wissenschafts’emigranten’’, *Center for Research on Innovation & Society*, (January 2001), <http://www.crisinternational.org/project-talent/podiumsdiskussion.pdf> 25 January 2002.

²¹² Ibid.

anzupassen als unter dem traditionellen Ordinarius-System, wo jeder so ein kleiner König ist mit einem kleinen Königreich.²¹³

Ralph Reisfeld, a German-born scientist in the field of Immunology and Cancer Research, has over the years helped in setting up the careers of numerous academics of German origin in the U.S. His experience, as *Gastprofessor* in Frankfurt University for three months, was:

Dort [war] alles sehr steif und formal. Es kam mir vor wie ein feudales System. Um Ordinarien zu treffen, mußte man wirklich ein Appointment machen, und das gestaltete sich mithin sehr schwierig, denn es waren viele Türen verschlossen. Nur ein Beispiel: Ich wollte abends ins Labor gehen, brauchte dafür aber ... drei Schlüssel, aber die habe ich bei meiner Ankunft nicht bekommen. Also mußte ich zum Dekan gehen, der mich dann fragte, was ich denn abends dort machte. Ich sagte, daß ich arbeiten wolle. Das sei doch unmöglich und womöglich auch noch am Wochenende, erwiderte er.²¹⁴

German scholars in America cite attractive employment conditions and career prospects in the US as reasons for leaving German universities. German post-doctoral students in the US criticize the following aspects of German universities:

[L]ack of adequate positions in Germany that honor and utilize returnees' foreign research experience; the subalternate status and high level of personal dependency of young scholars and scientists within the existing academic

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

career system; the large amount of time consumed by teaching commitments; and the German higher education system's lack of international openness.²¹⁵

The existing system of professorships meets with unanimous disapproval:

Viele Nachwuchswissenschaftler leiden unter ausgeprägten Hierarchien und der Dominanz eines übermächtigen Lehrstuhlinhabers. Kriterien, die zur Förderung oder Nicht-Förderung eines Assistenten ...führen, sind oft nicht klar definiert und intransparent. Viele fühlen sich in ihrer Karriere abhängig vom guten Willen und der Wohlgesonnenheit des Lehrstuhlinhabers.²¹⁶

This was the conclusion of the working groups in the CRIS Workshop. Edelgard Bulmahn too refers to the “*Ordinarienculture*” while conveying the message that recent reforms mean that German universities will no longer be

merely a kind of waiting room for young scholars – and a safe haven for professors at all times.²¹⁷

The reforms, she promises, will bring to an end “the patriarchal tutelage of the old professorial system.”²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Project Talent, 2001b.

²¹⁶ ‘Reformbedarf aus der Sicht verschiedener Disziplinen’, *Center for Research on Innovation & Society*, (January 2001), <http://www.crisinternational.org/project-talent/WorkGroups.pdf>, 31 October 2002.

²¹⁷ Bulmahn, 2001.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

The primary reason for introducing American elements in German universities has always been to emulate the success of American higher education institutions. A variety of factors have been used to support that notion: a drop in the number of Nobel laureates from German universities being the most favoured but by no means the only one²¹⁹; research output; capacity to attract and retain foreign talent (which is now considered a keystone of success in any institution); and, most importantly, provision of suitable opportunities to domestic talent. Germany seems to have fallen behind America on all these counts making it imperative, in the opinion of many, to import American ideas.²²⁰ Not just successful German academics from America but well-known voices from Germany as well, such as Hans-Ulrich Wehler, have been unequivocal in their assessment:

Wer die Massenuniversität bejaht, muß dem amerikanischen Vorbild folgen, denn die Fiktion der Humboldtschen Gelehrtenvereinigung ist längst passé. ... Viele von uns haben das jahrzehntelang gefordert, vergebens.²²¹

Besides, as many rightly point out, it is natural that there should be Americanisation of German universities in the twenty-first century just as there had been a similar “Germanisation” of American institutions of higher learning at the turn of the nineteenth century:

Insofern stimmt der Vorwurf, die Reformen würden zu einer Amerikanisierung der deutsche Hochschullandschaft führen, allerdings –

²¹⁹ Schnür, 1986, p. 84.

²²⁰ Zimmerli, 1996.

²²¹ Wehler, 2002.

genauso wie der Vorwurf der Germanisierung amerikanischer Hochschulen vor 100 Jahren zutraf, als die glanzvollen Vorbilder Berlin, Heidelberg oder Göttingen hießen. Die amerikanischen Hochschulen paßten das deutsche Modell damals ihren Bedürfnissen an. Vor dieser Herausforderung stehen heute umgekehrt die deutschen Universitäten. Sie müssen Teile des amerikanischen Wettbewerbssystems übernehmen, ohne die eigenen Stärken preiszugeben.²²²

Critics of Americanisation have argued tirelessly that the American educational culture is vastly different from the German one and in order to “Americanise” universities one would have to change the entire cultural and perhaps even societal value system in Germany. Hans-Joachim Mayer, for example, disagrees with American-inspired changes to universities for these fundamental reasons:

Eine Übernahme des amerikanischen Universitätsmodells ist ausgeschlossen, denn das würde zunächst erfordern, das amerikanische Gesellschaftsmodell zu übernehmen. Die amerikanische Universität ist ein Unternehmen, das in der Gesellschaft agiert. Die deutsche Universität ist eine Einrichtung, die sich mit dem Staat auseinandersetzt. So lange wir öffentlich-rechtliche und öffentlich finanzierte Universitäten haben und ich hoffe, daß wir sie behalten, wird sich daran auch nichts grundlegend ändern. ...[A]merikanische Erfahrungen [sind] mit Sicherheit hilfreich, aber die entsprechenden Institutionen dürfen nicht blind kopiert werden. ... Ein Board ist ein Board, und ein Rundfunkrat ist ein Rundfunkrat. Und ein deutscher Universitätspräsident ist kein amerikanischer

²²² Martin Spiewak, ‘Ex-Vorbild Deutschland’, *Die Zeit*, no. 21, (2001c), http://www.zeit.de/2001/21/Hochschule/200121_braindrain_kaste.html 17 July 2001.

Universitätspräsident, auch wenn beide Ämter in gleicher Weise bezeichnet werden.²²³

The mandarins, collectively, have not lagged behind on the subject and have made their opinions on the “Macdonaldization” of German universities public through a newly formed organisation in December 2000, *Der Allgemeine Fakultätentag*.²²⁴ The organisation represents all 16 *Fakultätentage* in the country and includes among its aims the safeguarding of interests of the faculties against political and public influences as well as the strengthening of the ability of German universities to compete internationally. Americanisation, the *Allgemeiner Fakultätentag* maintains, is not a solution to the present crisis faced by German universities. The Vice-President of the organisation, Peter Huber states:

Man wolle nicht die bewährten deutschen Qualitätsstandards nach dem Vorbild drittklassiger amerikanischer Provinzuniversitäten ausrichten.²²⁵

The statement touches on the core theme that German universities are, on the whole, better than American ones, if all universities in both countries are taken into account. The President of the *Allgemeiner Fakultätentag*, Reinhold Grimm, reinforces that point in an interview:

²²³ Hans-Joachim Mayer, ‘Ist Humboldts Universität noch zu retten?’ in *Kultur, Wissenschaft und Politik am Ende des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts: Erwartungen, Visionen*, Hans-Ludwig Schreiber (ed), (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999), pp. 43-44.

²²⁴ Hermann Horskotte, ‘Allgemeiner Fakultätentag: Professoren gegen Hochschulrektoren’, *Der Tagesspiegel*, (15 December 2000), <http://www2.tagesspiegel.de/archiv/2000/12/14/ak-ws-15490.html>, 11 March 2002.

²²⁵ Ibid.

Das Beispiel USA, das uns stets vorgehalten wird, bezieht sich immer auf die paar Spitzenuniversitäten, die Politiker und Wissenschaftsfunktionäre von Besuchen her kennen. Dabei ist die normale deutsche Universität wahrscheinlich besser als die durchschnittliche Universität in den USA. Beide Systeme sind eben schwer vergleichbar. Man kann nicht einzelne Elemente aus der angelsächsischen Hochschullandschaft herausgreifen und den deutschen Universitäten aufpropfen, ohne das unser System in Schiefelage gerät.²²⁶

The argument of the anti-Americanisation lobby is significant, though an important aspect of this debate should have been that the ability to compare and learn from other systems, especially successful ones like America, is one of the principal facets of scholarship.²²⁷ Yet, this aspect has been sidelined by critics of the American system, of whom the mandarins are a significant and vocal group. It would be difficult to obtain conclusive evidence linking the mandarins' anti-American stance to the safeguarding of their own interests and the tradition as such, but the tone and manner of protest suggest that that is the case.

5. Conclusion

It is evident that the mandarin tradition continues to exist in some form. Between the immediate post-War period and the student movement of the 1960s one can speak of the existence of the *Ordinarienuniversität* of the past. However, the student protest

²²⁶ Martin Spiewak, 'Reformen mit Augenmaß: Deutsche Professoren verbünden sich gegen die Amerikanisierung der Hochschulen', *Die Zeit*, no. 52, (2000), http://www.zeit.de/2000/52/Hochschule/200052_antireformer.html 17 July 2001.

²²⁷ Bulmahn, 2001.

and the host of reforms in the wake of the protest have seen fundamental changes to the phenomenon of *Ordinarienoligarchie* at German universities. Nevertheless, crucial aspects of the mandarin culture and authority persist even in the present times.

Reform efforts undertaken so far have been important for making in-roads into new territory. However, many of these, especially the earlier ones, appear to have been relatively easily countered by forces within the establishment. This implies that there are deeper elements which delimit both the scope and pace of change in a manner that somehow allows the mandarin tradition to survive, despite vocal opposition from specific individuals and interest groups. The following chapter of the thesis considers this issue in further detail.

CHAPTER SIX

Social Context and Continuity of the Mandarin Tradition

A review of the developments in the university sector in Germany after 1933 provides ample evidence of manifestations of the mandarin tradition. Reform attempts in each of the various contexts frequently included measures to curb mandarin power and influence. The experience of the Third Reich and of West Germany illustrates, in a way, the resilience of mandarin culture and ideology. Indeed, the experience of East Germany serves to underscore this power and resilience by showing the scale, scope and intensity of reform that was required to overcome the mandarin culture.

This chapter seeks to explore the roots of the mandarin tradition. It argues that the basis for the continuation of the tradition extends beyond the elements intrinsic to the mandarin culture to a series of political, institutional and societal factors. These factors can be grouped under three related themes: the continued importance of the Humboldtian principles of higher education - of which the mandarin culture is one of several manifestations; the institutional culture within the universities; and the significance of the unrivalled past successes of German universities.

Together these factors have played a significant role in shaping attitudes and opinions in debates over higher educational reforms. The classical university was and is considered a part of the cultural heritage of Germany and, in light of its unrivalled past successes and widespread international recognition, one whose core strengths should be preserved as far as possible. This argument has continued to play a vital role, occupying centre stage in any discussion about German universities up to the

present day.¹ Similarly, various aspects of the mandarin tradition have conditioned responses of key interest groups and influenced the content and pace of reform. Together these have served to create a set of circumstances which have allowed for persistence of mentalities and codes of practice associated traditionally with the mandarin tradition. The three factors are discussed respectively in the three sections below.

1. The Mandarin Tradition as Part of the Humboldtian University Tradition

Es gibt wohl kaum einen anderen Bereich staatlichen Handels, in dem so oft auf die Wurzeln einer historischen Entwicklung geschaut wird wie in dem des Hochschulwesens auf Wilhelm von Humboldt. Humboldt wird wieder und immer noch in vielen Diskussionen als letzte Instanz zitiert.²

It is not just fitting but essential that the thesis, in its concluding chapter, attempts a wider view, both historically and institutionally, of the Humboldtian traditions at German universities. This is especially relevant since, as we have seen in Chapter One, the mandarin tradition is essentially an outcome of the Humboldtian educational reforms of the early nineteenth century. It is inconceivable that the mandarin tradition should exist on its own as an island, a nineteenth century relic, in the midst of modern surroundings. Thus, the tradition should be considered in the context of the

¹ Konrad H. Jarausch, 'The Humboldt Syndrome: West German Universities, 1945-1989 – An Academic Sonderweg?' in *German Universities Past and Future*, Ash, (ed), (1997).

² Wilms, 1985, p. 5.

persistence of the Humboldtian system of universities and learning in Germany in the present times.

Humboldt's ideas on the university and learning have been the guiding principle of German universities for more than two centuries. Almost all major discussions on the subject of higher education in Germany have had Humboldt's idea of a university as a focal point and in every crisis facing German universities in the twentieth century Humboldt's ideas and their suitability for the universities of that period have been fiercely debated.³ The discussions over universities and research institutes in 1911, the issues surrounding the Prussian Education Minister Friedrich Althoff's infringement of academic freedom, the more recent upheaval of universities in the wake of the student movement in the 1960s and the debates surrounding the framing and passage of each *Hochschulrahmengesetz*,⁴ have all seen the invocation of various aspects of Humboldt's educational philosophy. Further, the problems and failures facing universities have often been attributed to the fact that Humboldtian principles had been compromised to achieve changes wholly unsuitable for German universities.⁵

To this date Humboldt's legacy finds a mention in official ceremonies of universities where it is customary to carry out the incantation of at least one of his principles. For example, in a speech in January 2002, the Rector of the University of Heidelberg, Peter Hommelhof chooses to highlight the enduring Humboldtian notion of the unity of teaching and research as well as the unity of teachers and students:

³ Paletschek, 2001, pp. 38-39.

⁴ Knoll, 1977, p. 100.

⁵ Lobkowitz, 1987, pp. 147-154.

In dieser Preis-bewehrten Präsentation offenbar[t] sich die Ruperto Carola in ihren Profil-prägenden Grundelementen als Volluniversität, die mit ihren Inseln der Exzellenz in den Geistes- und in den Naturwissenschaften, aber auch in der Medizin die Einheit von Forschung und Lehre so pflegt, daß diese Einheit von allen Universitätsangehörigen, insbesondere den Studierenden und den Doktoranden, immer wieder erlebbar wird.⁶

The character and nature of institutions and their reform are best understood in context of their traditions and culture. The significance of this is highlighted in a comparative analysis of twenty case studies of European universities by UNESCO:

The diversity of institutional traditions (e.g. the Humboldtian tradition ...) is clearly an important factor in presenting a facilitating environment or constraints to developments of particular types [of universities].⁷

The following sub-section therefore examines aspects of the Humboldtian university that are relevant to the study of the survival of the mandarin tradition. The next subsection examines the inter-play between Humboldtian norms and current economic and institutional pressures with regard to the structure and functioning of contemporary German universities. The final subsection briefly examines changes in

⁶ 'Auch mit ihren Eliten können sich deutsche Universitäten vom Zuschnitt der Ruperto Carola weltweit sehen lassen', *Pressemitteilung der Universität Heidelberg*, (26 January 2002), <http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/presse/news/2201preise.html> 20 February 2002

⁷ John L. Davies, 'A European Agenda for Change for Higher Education in the 21st Century', *European Regional Forum Working Documents*, (1997), <http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/wkeurope.htm> 20 March 2002

the fundamental Humboldtian tenet of the supremacy of the *Geisteswissenschaften* within the university.

1.1. The Humboldtian University

Humboldt aimed to change both the spirit and organizational structure of the eighteenth-century German university. Central to that endeavour were the following elements: the unity of research and teaching; the function of a university as a research institution; and the right to academic freedom. Academic freedom was essentially represented by the right of the university to self-governance, the right of the academic staff to teach what they liked and the right of the students to choose their mode of study. Linking all these functions was the pursuit of *Wissenschaft* free from utilitarian demands and vested interests. Further, *Wissenschaft* was to be practised in an atmosphere of solitude and freedom in keeping with the principle of *Innerlichkeit*. Thus, the university was perceived as a haven, an island where an undisturbed quest of *Wissenschaft* could be practised.⁸

As far as the practical aspects of functioning and organisation were concerned, it would seem that a certain ambiguity existed about specific aspects of the internal structure of the newly reformed universities. Humboldt appeared to take immense pains in appointing chairholders, consistent with his ultimate belief that the State would be best served if led by men of scholarship.⁹ However, it is unclear to what extent Humboldt himself supported the idea of a university dominated by the persona of the *Ordinarius*. It is, for example, by no means as clearly demarcated as the role of the state on which Humboldt postulated at length. He, however, did see the need for

⁸ Hahn, 1998, p. 14.

⁹ Hearnden, 1976, p. 122.

certain rules of organization and although they were not outlined in detail, the structure could be envisioned as unitary, even hierarchical, and deriving from the unity of philosophy as the supreme discipline around which other subjects would revolve.¹⁰ Peter Lundgreen's analysis of the significance of Humboldtian principles in contemporary times indicates that Humboldt, following Schleiermacher's advice, pleaded for a continuity of corporate self-government as the fundamental constitutional feature of universities.¹¹ This internal autonomy was to ensure the freedom of research, i.e., its independence from the utilitarian objectives of the state.¹² Academic freedom in this form was of prime importance for Humboldt in his vision of university.

Some of Humboldt's objectives, however, seem to be in complete contrast to the eventual position and role of the mandarin. The objectives of a university were to be fulfilled in a harmonious setting with both teachers and students in a university together serving the purposes of pure *Wissenschaft* and existing as a community. Indeed, as he saw it, the professor did not "possess" a monopoly of truth and wisdom any more than his students did and in that sense both teacher and learners were always "searching" and were therefore equal. Neither could be regarded as custodian and owner of knowledge.¹³ Such views undermine any suggestion that Humboldt may have been inclined towards mandarin intellectual dominance. Privately, his opinion of "the learned" might even spark disbelief. The following was expressed in context of

¹⁰ Stokes, 1983, p. 4.

¹¹ Peter Lundgreen, 'Mythos Humboldt Today' in *German Universities Past and Future*, Ash (ed), (1997), pp. 143-144.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Wilms, 1985, p. 12.

intellectuals as a group, and almost certainly included the mandarins. He wrote in a letter to his wife Caroline in 1810:

Gelehrte zu dirigieren ist nicht viel besser als eine Kommödiantengruppe unter sich zu haben...Mit wieviel Schwierigkeiten ich...zu kämpfen habe, wie die Gelehrten, die unbändigste und am schwersten zu befriedigende Menschenklasse – mit ihren ewig sich durchkreuzenden Interessen, ihrer Eifersucht, ihrem Neid...ihren einseitigen Absichten, wo jeder meint, daß nur sein Fall Unterstützung und Förderung verdient, mich umlagern...davon hast du keinen Begriff.¹⁴

Perhaps he already had a premonition of a situation in which collegiality had rapidly become limited to the *Ordinarien* and prevailed within the faculties, and the affairs of the university as a whole were handled by an executive senate composed entirely of full professors. In any case, it seems clear that in practice the *Ordinarienuniversität* did not correspond to Humboldt's vision of higher education and learning.

Historically, the achievements of German scholarship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were linked, not surprisingly, to the existence of the Humboldtian university and therefore to the mandarin tradition. The establishment of the institute system with paternalistic structures headed by individual *Lehrstuhlinhaber* became, regardless of whether it was truly Humboldtian or not, the basic functional unit or the core of the university. The origin and development of the unique mandarin culture occurred within these institutes or decentralized units. In due course of time, the

¹⁴ Quoted in Horst Kern, 'Rückgekoppelte Autonomie' in Hans Ludwig Schreiber (ed), *Die Universität Göttingen: ein unbeweglicher Tanker?*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999), p. 23.

mandarin tradition became part of the myth surrounding the Humboldtian idea of a university; certainly the professors played their part in promoting mandarin culture as part of Humboldt's original design of a university. Künzel notes that "intimate" link between organised science and a single category of university personnel, i.e. the chairholders.¹⁵ The genesis of higher education, he maintains, provides sufficient evidence of how the reputation of individual universities and disciplines has always been dependent on the academic achievements of a few distinguished chairs.¹⁶ Others, however, find the link between mandarin position and the pre-eminence of German research and scholarship tenuous at best. Pritchard, for example, disagrees with the claim, stating categorically that Germany achieved its pre-eminence in research not through its full professors but through the employment of young graduate students to teach and to research under the tutelage of the *Ordinarien*.¹⁷

1.2. Pressures for Change in German Universities

The Humboldtian university clearly provides a normative model for structure and functioning of universities. However, German universities, despite the jealously guarded notion of academic freedom, have not been genuinely independent. First, the universities have had to increasingly serve the demands of both the economy and industry. Second, historically, their existence as state institutions binds them firmly to the state and its authority. As discussed in the next two subsections, these factors created their own dynamics of change.

¹⁵ Künzel, 1982, pp. 243-257.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Pritchard, 1990, p. 46.

1.2.1. Universities vis-à-vis Economic Forces

Higher education institutions based on Humboldt's principles were meant to educate and enlighten rather than provide mass training or narrow technical expertise. The educational process in the nineteenth century was not linked to defined professional and social models but predominantly oriented towards research. Over time financial cut-backs led to severe problems in maintaining the level of research activities originally envisaged and practised in universities in the nineteenth century.

Universities increasingly have to fulfil the demands of industry and the economy, both efficiently and "cost-effectively". In recent times, especially since the 1960s, the problem of rapidly rising student numbers has led to a worsening of the situation. German universities face the same dilemmas over the struggle to accommodate increasing student numbers as several other western countries including Britain which have experienced the transition from an elite to a mass system of higher education.¹⁸ Besides, in the present trend towards cost consciousness in matters of public expenditure, there has been increasing emphasis on cost-effectiveness and financial stringency, so that the generous staff-student ratios of the past are practically impossible to sustain. According to the above mentioned CRE-UNESCO report:

It appears to be widely recognised ... that the traditional models of university education, whether from the Humboldtian or other traditions, have definite limitations when confronted with the combination of massification and declining resource bases.¹⁹

¹⁸ 'The Ruin of Britain's Universities', *The Economist*, (November 16-22, 2002), pp. 29-30.

¹⁹ Davies, 1997.

Nevertheless, despite various constraints such as lack of adequate staff and facilities, research is still accorded top priority and guides university policy since it is the primary means to earn reputation and additional funds.²⁰ In this regard, Germany is only following the worldwide trend of selective and concentrated research, with

strong national centres with international reputations; institutional research niches; industrial funding for research through a variety of mechanisms and organisations; competition for research funds at an unprecedented level; and international strategic alliances for the most effective exploitation of know-how ...²¹

in order to remain competitive in the field of world-class research.

The achievements of independent research institutes such as the Max Planck Institutes, GMD, Fraunhofer Institutes and the national research centres associated with the Helmholtz Association as well as the singular position attained by the *Fachhochschulen* seem to go against the grain of the Humboldtian principle of unity of research and teaching in higher educational institutions. Luhmann asserts:

Die Humboldtsche Universitätsidee war von einem Bildungsgedanken ausgegangen, der heute nicht mehr reaktualisiert werden kann. Die Forschung selbst sollte pädagogisch wirken.²²

²⁰ Frackmann, 1990, pp. 187-202.

²¹ Davies, 1997.

²² Luhmann, 1992, p. 82.

Further, the basic assumption that each academic will be involved in teaching *and* research is now being widely questioned. Some feel that the system in Germany differs significantly from other comparable systems:

Während in anderen Ländern Forschung und Lehre getrennt sind oder nur im lockeren Zusammenhang stehen, versuchen die wissenschaftlichen Hochschulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland auch unter den veränderten Bedingungen des 20. Jahrhunderts diese Eigenheit aufrecht zu erhalten.²³

While the subject of universities vis-à-vis research academies has generated controversy since the beginning of the twentieth century, the success of the *Fachhochschulen*, with their strong emphasis on vocational studies and emphasis on transfer of skills from teacher to student, is a more recent phenomenon. Certainly the original objective of every university to pursue every subject (the unity of *Wissenschaft*) seems to be difficult to maintain, given the professional and industrial functions the universities have to fulfil.

In Germany there has always been a reluctance to accept that the state of the economy influences the existence and function of institutions. In defining the role of the state in university affairs, a publication by the Max Planck Institute states:

[T]he principle (of state control over universities) entrusts the state with the fiduciary responsibility of using its powers to control and influence the university in such a way as to protect university training, science, and research

²³ Knoll, 1977, p. 89.

against the potential constraints of ideological and political partisanship and economic interests.²⁴

And yet economic interests are arguably what sustain the higher education institutions in contemporary times. Dahrendorf clearly spells out the financial dependency of German universities on external interests as a determining factor in the universities' rights and freedom. He further identifies a characteristic shying away from linking financial aspects with the pursuit of *Wissenschaft*:

*Die deutschen Universitäten sind in einem Kernbereich nicht autonom. Schon die Art ihrer Finanzierung macht sie direkt von außeruniversitären Instanzen und Interessen abhängig. In einer Zeit schrumpfender öffentlicher Haushalte wird diese Abhängigkeit noch ausgeprägter. In der deutschen Literatur zur Universität kommt die finanzielle Grundlage der Hochschulen meist nur am Rande vor; von der Idee der Universität ist viel die Rede, auch von ihrer Verwaltung, aber die reale Basis bleibt in vielleicht charakteristischer Weise ausgespart.*²⁵

The success of universities is inexorably linked in modern times to the awareness of the relationship between the economy and the university and to actively exploiting it. Georg Picht, whose book was one of the first to highlight the educational crisis in Germany in 1962, commented later in 1972:

²⁴ Max Planck Institute, 1990, p. 99.

²⁵ Dahrendorf, 1977, p.18.

Die Entdeckung, daß in der technischen Welt das Bildungspotential einer Gesellschaft einen wesentlichen, ja vielleicht den ausschlaggebenden Faktor ihrer wirtschaftlichen Leistungsfähigkeit darstellt, hat die Bildungssysteme in ein neues Koordinatennetz gerückt. Es gelang in der Mehrzahl der Industriestaaten erstaunlich schnell, politische und wirtschaftliche Interessen für Bildungspolitik und Bildungsreform zu mobilisieren, die sich zuvor aller Kultur und Bildung gegenüber indifferent, wenn nicht feindlich verhalten hatten. In der Bundesrepublik war freilich der Widerstand der reaktionären Kräfte so stark, daß sie, wie ihr kürzlich durch die OECD bescheinigt wurde, im internationalen Vergleich der hochentwickelten Staaten in einen Rückstand geraten ist, der nicht mehr aufgeholt werden kann. ... Wenn das Wirtschaftswachstum von der Kapazität und Leistungsfähigkeit der Bildungsinstitutionen abhängig ist, muß das Bildungswesen in seiner Gesamtheit als Teil des wirtschaftlichen Potentials betrachtet werden.²⁶

In Germany the dominance of the classical university traditions ensured that the link between pure scholarship, which was always stressed as the primary aim of university education, and industrial demand was never very strong. Thirty years on, the debate about linking scholarship with industrial demand carries on. In a symposium in 1985, dedicated to the theme *Humboldt und die Universität heute*, the principles of Humboldt and the growing distance between them and contemporary reality was the centre of discussion. It was observed that the changed circumstances and standards

²⁶ Georg Picht 'Bildungsplanung und Zukunftsforschung' in *Bildung und Gesellschaft: zum Bildungsbegriff vom Humboldt bis zur Gegenwart*, Hans Steffen (ed), (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), p. 93.

surrounding higher education made it imperative to “extend” the Humboldtian ideals to include elements of *Ausbildung* as well:

Die Annahme, daß allein eine Vermittlung von Bildung einen zu praktisch jedem Amt im öffentlichen Dienst befähigt, müssen wir aufgeben. Der Staat selber ist ja nicht bereit, diese Gebildeten bei sich aufzunehmen, sondern er fragt durchaus auch danach, was sie denn für einen Anteil an Ausbildung gehabt haben.²⁷

Such views, though common in discussions (and it seems in wider society as well) rarely translate into practice owing perhaps to a lack of political will and appropriate reform efforts. Despite evidence of change in the demands on and output expected of the universities, the idea of linking practical and functional economic and labour market considerations to the intensely theoretical concept of *Wissenschaft* is perceived as transforming the hallowed institutions of higher education into mere business enterprises. That has always met with intense criticism from various factions in Germany:

Eine Universität ist kein Wirtschaftsunternehmen im üblichen Sinne, auch wenn Prinzipien der Unternehmensführung durchaus zur Anwendung kommen können. Eine Universität entwirft keine materiellen sondern ideelle und virtuelle Güter, die aber für die Zukunft der Gesellschaft von nicht geringerer Bedeutung sind als jene. Es ist grundfalsch und führt zu Aufgabe des akademischen Prinzips der Universität, deren “Effektivität” mit Verfahren

²⁷ *Humboldt und die Universität heute*, 1985, p. 38.

der Betriebswirtschaftslehre messen zu wollen. Vielleicht erst nach Jahrzehnten, wie die Geschichte lehrt auch erst nach Jahrhunderten, wird die Bedeutung einer Universität deutlich (z.B. Wittenberg im 16 Jh., Berlin im 19. Jh.). Eine solche Entwicklung zu ermöglichen ist Aufgabe der jeweiligen Jetztzeit, im Jetzt aber nicht meßbar.²⁸

This sentiment finds resonance throughout the academic world, irrespective of country, but interestingly finds most empathy in Germany. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the “*Collegium Europäum Jenense*” in the University of Jena, during a discussion on the future of Europe and its universities, the subject of the university fulfilling its role in providing the required number of graduates for industry without itself becoming a “*Massenbetrieb*” aroused significant interest. The representative from England, the Oxford Professor of Literature, Terence J. Reed, noted with sorrow:

[In] England sind Universitäten fast schon zu Fabriken verkommen. ... Für mußevolle Reflexion [ist] kein Raum mehr.²⁹

Although none of the participants could provide an immediate solution to the problem, there was general agreement that the danger existed in universities all over Europe.³⁰ It would seem that the perceived danger to academic pursuits is here to stay given the present climate of financial stringency. Certainly German universities, with their dependency on state funding and hence public support, would find it difficult not

²⁸ Wichert, 2001.

²⁹ ‘Weltoffen und Dialogbereit’, 2001, pp. 12-13.

³⁰ Ibid.

to adopt “industrial and management” principles in order to stay viable in the future. The only solution to arise time and again is to grant universities freedom from the shackles of the state and allow them to be privately funded.³¹

1.2.2. The German University as a State Institution

Humboldt’s concept of university advocated basic state involvement in educational affairs. Indeed Humboldt himself was throughout suspicious of state control as his essay *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen* amply illustrates.³² It perceives the state as:

... guardian, delivering material support for education and guaranteeing competent teachers and optimum teaching conditions, but not interfering in educational matters such as the syllabus ...³³

As with several other aspects of Humboldt’s original concept, this was conceived with a view to the political, economic and social situation of the early nineteenth century.³⁴

In general, successive periods in Germany’s history saw considerable state control over universities. However, efforts were made after 1945 to loosen the ties binding the universities to the state in light of repressive state control experienced under the Nazi regime. Still, in order to ensure checks and balances, several committees, bodies and councils were established to coordinate higher education. The already highly

³¹ This suggestion follows the American model given that America may well be the only country which has managed the relationship between economic demand and higher education to a satisfactory level.

³² Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen*, (Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1962).

³³ Hahn, 1998, p. 4.

³⁴ Wilms, 1985, p. 10.

bureaucratized universities were now saddled with even more bureaucracy making the universities, over time, ill-equipped to deal with changing circumstances. Niklas Luhmann focuses on this aspect of higher education institutions in Germany:

[D]ie immense Zunahme von Regulierungen und formal erforderlichen Entscheidungsprozessen ist eine unbestreitbare Tatsache. Jede Reform, wie anders könnte sie sich durchsetzen, fügt dem Bestande eine neue Schicht hinzu. So bildet sich um einen, wie man hofft, gesunden Kern Schicht um Schicht. Die Schichten hängen fest miteinander zusammen, denn jede weitere ist durch die Mängel der vorangehenden motiviert. Ob der Kern noch gesund ist, ob er überhaupt noch vorhanden ist, kann dann nach einer Weile niemand mehr feststellen. Die Struktur trägt sich selbst, und man kann überzeugend nachweisen, daß genug Mängel vorhanden sind, die die ständige Suche nach Korrekturen, Verbesserungen, Abhilfen antreiben. Die Bürokratie beschäftigt sich in bürokratischen Formen mit sich selbst.³⁵

More recently, the heavily bureaucratic nature of the entire sphere of higher education prompted Edelgard Bulmahn to pose the following question:

[Ist] unser föderales System mit seinen zahlreichen Konferenzen, Kommissionen, Ausschüssen und Entscheidungszentren in der Lage ... den globalen Wettbewerb im 21. Jahrhundert zu bestehen [?] ... Zukunft definiert sich heute nicht mehr nur national, sondern international. ... Ist unser Hochschulsystem darauf vorbereitet?³⁶

³⁵ Luhmann, 1992, p. 74.

³⁶ Bulmahn, 1999.

Excessive bureaucratic practices are not the only problems burdening German universities. Their subjugation to the state authority (including financial dependency on the state) is, according to many, the core of the crisis surrounding universities. International commentators find the aspect of state regulation over higher educational institutions detrimental to Germany's overall development as well. Jeffrey Sachs, the well-known Harvard Economist, regards rigid state control over German universities as one of the major reasons for weaknesses in the German economy:

Besonders die Universitäten seien zu wenig dynamisch und flexibel ... Unternehmungsgründungen seien schwieriger als nötig, und die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Industrie und Universitäten im Hochtechnologie-Sektor lasse zu wünschen übrig. ... Die Universitäten sind unter derart rigider staatlicher Kontrolle, daß sie derartige dynamische und flexible Partnerschaften nicht schließen.³⁷

Sachs, who expressed the above opinion in a meeting with Gerhard Schröder, however adds that it was not necessary to regard the US brand of free market, which had caused severe disruption of social structures, as an ideal. But Germany would still do better by strengthening its private sector and encouraging free enterprise (along with freeing the universities from state control) in order to accelerate technology and innovation.³⁸

³⁷ 'Tipp vom Harvard Professor: Schröder soll das Unternehmertum fördern', *Spiegel Online*, (2 February 2002), <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/0,1518.druck-180485,00.html> 12 March 2002.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

In conclusion it has to be said that the state plays a major role in the development of institutions of higher education. Thus sensible and thorough reform of a country's institutions, by definition, necessitates state involvement requiring, as it does, political motivation and a public reform culture. These have, until now, been lacking in the German context. A credible explanation for the absence of a "reform-receptive" culture is provided by the Stanford University President, Gerhard Casper. Born and educated up to postgraduate level in Germany, he sees state and politics unwilling to agree to major university reforms for a variety of reasons:

Das größte Defizit ist die mangelnde Autonomie. Der Staat mischt sich viel zu sehr in die Angelegenheiten der Universitäten ein. ...Vor allem die Politiker wollen die Kontrolle über die Hochschulen nicht aufgeben. Und sie sind auch nicht bereit, die Finanzierung der Universitäten zu ändern und Studiengebühren einzuführen. Im Grunde ist vielen der Status quo sehr angenehm. Denn den Wählern wird etwas umsonst angeboten, was eigentlich viel Geld kostet. Das kommt natürlich gut an und bringt Stimmen bei der nächsten Wahl.³⁹

1.3. The *Geisteswissenschaften*

This sub-section briefly examines the fundamental change in one of the most important tenets of the Humboldtian university - the idea that all disciplines should be represented within the university, with the faculty of philosophy functioning as the core. Up till the 1960s the *Geisteswissenschaften* faculties were still the most important of faculties in the universities. Dahrendorf notes during this period how

³⁹ Joachim Mohr, 'Es fehlt Wettbewerb', *Unispiegel*, no. 3, (August 1999), <http://www.spiegel.de/unispiegel/studium/0,1518.druck-33177,00.html> 12 march 2002.

little the *Hochschullandschaft* had changed in two decades after the end of the Second World War. In the context of the continued pre-eminence of the philosophical faculties he states:

Der ihr zugrundeliegende Begriff der Wissenschaft trägt noch immer vormoderne Züge; in der Ideologie der Universität zumindest hat die Philosophische Fakultät Humboldtscher Provenienz, damit der deutsche Begriff der Geisteswissenschaften, seine Prägekraft noch nicht verloren.⁴⁰

However, the *Einheit von Wissenschaften*, which once symbolised the unified nature of scholarship and placed the humanities or the *Geisteswissenschaften* as the central subject around which all other disciplines revolved, is no longer the norm.⁴¹ The phenomenon illustrates that in many ways German universities have not been immune to forces of change. The decline of the *Geisteswissenschaften* was affected by the rearrangement of faculties and disciplines in the wake of the student movement of the 1960s and the reforms of the 1970s. In this respect Germany began to follow international trends.⁴² Indeed, of late, the future of the humanities itself seems to be in doubt and several universities have been speculating whether to do away with these departments altogether. The problem, by and large, centres round the issue of finance:

Wer Krankheiten bekämpft, neue Maschinen baut, Manager ausbildet, den fragt man nicht, wofür er Geld braucht. Wer jedoch Gedichte interpretiert, alte

⁴⁰ Dahrendorf, 1968, p.115.

⁴¹ Peisert and Framhein, 1990, p. 3.

⁴² Max Planck Institute, 1979, p. 285.

Dokumente liest oder Fragen nach Sinn und Gerechtigkeit stellt, hat es schwer, an Geld zu kommen ...⁴³

The perception of the humanities in the present times has also undergone a sea-change. As the Chairman of the *Philosophische Fakultätentag*, Reinhold Grimm, regretfully states:

Nicht nur in der breiten Öffentlichkeit, sondern auch in den maßgebenden hochschulpolitischen Zirkeln, den Hochschulleitungen und den Ministerien haben die Geisteswissenschaften zur Zeit wohl die schlechteste Presse unter allen Fächerkulturen der Universität.⁴⁴

The *Geisteswissenschaften*, once the spirit of the classical university, had been relegated to the sidelines and overtaken by the sciences, medicine and technology, and business studies and management:

Während der 68er-Jahre kamen die Anstrengungen, die alte Ordinarienuniversität auszulüften, Forschung und vor allem die Lehre zu modernisieren, von Soziologen und Politikwissenschaftlern, Philosophen oder Philologen. Heute kommen die Protagonisten der Hochschulneuerungen aus den Reihen der Natur- oder Wirtschaftswissenschaften".⁴⁵

⁴³ Martin Spiewak, 'Noch leben sie: Die Humanwissenschaften tun sich schwer mit der Erneuerung der Hochschulen', *Die Zeit*, no. 49, (2000), http://www.zeit.de/2000/49/Hochschule/200049_g-krise2.html, 17 July 2001.

⁴⁴ Reinhold R. Grimm, 'Wieder im Orchester mitspielen: Die Geisteswissenschaften im hochschulpolitischen Diskurs', *Forschung und Lehre*, (2001), <http://www.forschung-und-lehre.de/grimm.html>, 16 November 2001.

⁴⁵ Spiewak, 2000.

Nevertheless, some observers like the President of the WRK (a scientist) see the advantages of the humanities:

[E]in Kulturstaat leiste sich seine Geisteswissenschaften, weil er sonst mittelfristig Gefahr laufe, seine kulturelle Substanz zu verlieren ...⁴⁶

For the mandarin tradition, this phenomenon indicates a significant shift away from the earlier model, whereby professors of *Geisteswissenschaften* were supreme figures within the university and were considered to be moral, spiritual and cultural emissaries in their own right.⁴⁷ In fact the decline of the old *Ordinarienuniversität* after the debacle of the student movement in the late 1960s is largely the result of the decline in importance of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. It is, however, beyond the scope of the thesis to undertake a detailed analysis of the decline of the humanities and the simultaneous rise of the technological and medical sciences and, later, of business and management studies. It suffices to say that in this respect that Germany has followed worldwide trends, albeit only from the 1970s onward.

2. University Traditions and Institutional Culture

German universities have remained largely committed to the Humboldtian tradition through the numerous political, social and economic upheavals since the beginning of the nineteenth century. During this period a particular institutional culture has

⁴⁶ Quoted in Grimm, 2001.

⁴⁷ 'Anspruch und Herausforderung der Geisteswissenschaften: Dokumente zur Hochschulreform', *Westdeutsche Rektorenkonferenz Jahresversammlung*, no. 56, (1985), (Bonn: Dokumentationsabteilung der Westdeutschen Rektorenkonferenz, 1985).

originated and thrived within the confines of the classical German university. The mandarin tradition is an integral part of that institutional culture. The survival of the mandarin tradition is therefore linked to the persistence of elements of that institutional set-up such as the academic hierarchy, the significance of titles within and outside the universities and a support in wider society for these institutional practices. The following three subsections examine the developments in these spheres.

2.1. Academic Hierarchy

University reforms, however extensive, cannot change day-to-day functioning and practices in universities. Changes in mentality are even more difficult to bring about. For example, the faculties, which were considered the core of the universities and instrumental in generating and sustaining mandarin culture, were dissolved and replaced with departments as part of the higher education reforms in the 1970s. In principle, therefore, mandarin culture should have ceased to exist without the structures and procedures supporting it. However, as it turned out, the internal hierarchy did not undergo a great transformation, since the dependency of juniors and all manner of non-professorial staff on the full professors continued. In due course course, the reforms of the 1970s were reversed and professors more or less recovered their original decision-making roles and authority.

The discussions surrounding a recent reform, the introduction of the *Juniorprofessor*, tell a similar story. The position of the *Juniorprofessor* faces the same problem of being “under” the Ordinarius in the academic hierarchy despite assurances of its independent funding. Already there are rumblings about the *Juniorprofessor* not being part of the “Team” (led by the *Lehrstuhlinhaber* of course) and therefore being treated

as an outsider without adequate support from the rest of the department.⁴⁸ As the spokesperson of the *Allgemeine Fakultätentag* admits:

[Es] mag den einen oder anderen Lehrstuhl geben, wo Nachwuchswissenschaftler sich nicht frei entfalten können und für ihren Professor Hilfsdienste leisten müssen. Doch es ist naiv zu glauben, daß sich mit der Juniorprofessur daran irgendetwas ändert. Ich glaube nicht, daß eine Fakultät, in der solche Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse existieren, in Zukunft mit der Juniorprofessoren anders umgehen will. Mißbrauch gibt es überall.⁴⁹

An examination of individual faculties in the University of Jena corroborates that above fact. Despite fundamental changes in faculties, for example, the introduction of salaried “junior faculty members” (in contrast to the *Privatdozent* of the past), the author concludes that due deference is still accorded to the professors.⁵⁰ Another author notes that:

Viele Meister ihres Faches neigen dazu, Assis [Assistenten] als mobiles Inventar ihres universitären Ritterguts zu betrachten. Geradezu “feudale Strukturen” hätten sich an vielen Lehrstühlen herausgebildet.⁵¹

⁴⁸ ‘Sturm auf die Rittergüter’, *UniSpiegel*, no. 3, (2001), <http://www.spiegel.de/unispiegel/jobundberuf/0,1518,134441,00.html>, 17 July 2001.

⁴⁹ Martin Spiewak, ‘Reformen mit Augenmaß: Deutsche Professoren verbünden sich gegen die Amerikanisierung der Hochschulen’, *Die Zeit*, no. 52, (2000), http://www.zeit.de/2000/52/Hochschule/200052_antireformer.html 17 July 2001.

⁵⁰ Michael J. Hofstetter, *The Romantic Idea of a University: England and Germany, 1770-1850*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 135.

⁵¹ ‘Sturm auf die Rittergüter’, 2001.

Thus, this institutional culture is part of the mentality - an informal system of functioning - which formal legislation may not be able to displace easily. In an article the Rector of the University Halle-Wittenberg, Reinhard Kreckel explains:

Die deutschen Universitäten sind Einrichtungen mit einer uralten Tradition. Ihre Leistungs- und Überlebensfähigkeit hängt nicht nur von Gesetzen und Verordnungen ab, sondern auch von vielen ungeschriebenen Regeln und Selbstverständlichkeiten.⁵²

In general, institutional culture is difficult to change, not just in Germany but all over the world. As Douglass C. North, a Nobel-prize winning economist and institutional specialist, puts it:

Although formal rules may change overnight as a result of political or judicial decisions, informal constraints embodied in customs, traditions, and codes of conduct are much more impervious to deliberate policies.⁵³

Certainly, in view of the strength of its traditions and principles, institutional culture in German universities will be particularly difficult to dislodge.

⁵² Reinhard Kreckel, 'Der komplette Artikel: Der Streit um die Habilitation: Für eine frühe Professur auf Probe', *Die Zeit*, no. 17, (1997),

<http://www.archiv.zeit.de/daten/pages/1997/17/thema.txt.19970418.html> 3 August 2000.

⁵³ Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 6.

2.2. Significance of Titles

Institutional culture has over time become ossified into rigid codes of conduct. This is exemplified in the significance of titles within and outside the universities:

[D]er Titel [hat] nach wie vor ein außergewöhnliches Sozialprestige. Jenseits der Hochschulmauern hält sich hartnäckig der Glaube, ein Professor sei zwingend überdurchschnittlich klug und begütert. In den Hochschulen weiss man dies besser. Dennoch ist der Titel und die Institution der Professur sakrosant.⁵⁴

The distinction between professors and non-professorial staff has always been clear. Pasternack observes the following:

Wenn ein deutscher Professor einen anderen anspricht, sagt er “Herr Kollege”, gegebenenfalls “Frau Kollegin”. Darauf müssen jene Gelehrten, die womöglich klüger, aber nicht mit einem ProfessorInnentitel ausgestattet sind, verzichten. Sie sind nur zum Beispiel, “Herr Dr. Schulz” oder “Frau Dr. Müller”. Man sollte solche Feinheiten nicht unterschätzen.⁵⁵

To non-Germans this extreme of formality reflects the peculiarity of the phenomenon especially because of the difference between the image of a university professor in Germany and in other countries. In the words of an American journalist (a Fulbright scholar based in Berlin):

⁵⁴ Peer Pasternack, ‘Uni-Profes nicht wegzukriegen’, *Die Tageszeitung*, (15 October 2001), <http://www.taz.de/pt/2001/10/15/a0096.nf/text>, 12 June 2002.

⁵⁵ Pasternack, 2001.

[I]f you've ever been to a German university, you've probably run into Herr Professor Doktors and Herr Professor Doktor Doktors too. Presumably, a simple "Herr Professor" doesn't reflect the qualifications on which his authority should be based. And you had better get these distinctions right ... bungling a scholar's title is a Fettnapf ...⁵⁶

Citing the above example does not mean that the American extreme of informality, which may be just as idiosyncratic, should be accepted as the norm. The extensive usage of titles and the prevalence of formalities that accompany these titles in Germany even in the present day merely serve to illustrate the uniqueness of the phenomenon and the high esteem which the German university professor continues to enjoy despite sea changes in the political and economic scenario.

2.3. Societal Support for the Humboldtian University

It may further be argued that institutions and politics do, over time, reflect the interests of the society as a whole. Theoretically, this should be the case in a liberal democracy like Germany. The persistence of the institutional culture prevalent in the classical German university is embedded in support for the culture in the wider society as well. This argument appears frequently during discussions about importing aspects of American higher education into Germany. Hans Joachim Mayer notes:

⁵⁶ Hugh Eakin, 'Where Formality is Mandatory and Titles are King', *FAZ.NET*, (11 March 2002), /docmain.asp?rub={B1311FE5-FBFB-11D2-B228-00105A9CAF88}&doc=7236559A-E 11 March 2002.

Institutionen funktionieren nur in ihrem wechselseitigen Zusammenhang und im Geist einer über längere Zeit gewachsenen Gesellschaft.⁵⁷

Consequently, he argues, transferring the American system of higher education to Germany would not work quite simply because American society was different from German society with respect to its values, culture and traditions.⁵⁸

Niklas Luhmann too, in the context of “Status Quo als Argument”, links the persistence of traditions to forces in society:

Es darf vermutet werden, daß traditionales wie auch traditionalistisches Denken an Gesellschaftsstrukturen gebunden sind und einen bestimmten Grad gesellschaftlicher Komplexität voraussetzen. Traditional sich einstellen kann man nur, wenn die Struktur der Gesellschaft keine andere Zukunft in Aussicht stellt, wenn also ins Technische umsetzbare Wissenschaft, positive Gesetzgebung, strukturverändernde politische Revolutionen, sichtbar ansteigende Produktivitätsraten usw. fehlen. Lassen sich solche Änderungsmöglichkeiten nicht mehr leugnen, kommt allenfalls noch traditionalistisches Denken in Betracht.⁵⁹

In the context of the mandarin tradition, this reaction strengthens the argument that German universities, as institutions embodying German tradition and culture, find implicit support in wider society as well. It is a society in which reform proposals (of

⁵⁷ Mayer, 1999, p. 48.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Luhmann, 1992, p. 18.

any kind) are not guaranteed public support. Even when formal laws are passed there is the risk of failure to achieve the stated objectives unless the public itself sees evidence of improvement. As Gerhard Schröder himself notes:

Wir als ein im internationalen Vergleich immer noch sehr, sehr reiches Land, haben eine Gesellschaft, die festhält an dem, was sie hat. ... Vielleicht nicht gegen besseres Wissen, sondern in der Angst, Veränderung könnte Verschlechterung bedeuten. Insofern braucht jeder Reformprozeß Legitimation durch den Beweis, daß das Bewahren dessen, was ist, nicht einfach reichen würde, um jenen Wohlstand zu bewahren, den wir haben. Wer verändern will, muß mehr erklären als der, dem es nur um bewahrende Politik geht. Und er braucht Mehrheiten in den Institutionen, im Bundestag, vor allem aber in der Gesellschaft. Die aber sind bisweilen nicht so leicht zu beschaffen, wie es notwendig wäre. Wohlhabende Gesellschaften wie unsere sind also schwieriger veränderbar, weil viele Gruppen etwas zu verlieren haben.⁶⁰

In general there exists in Germany a political, institutional and social inertia hindering any kind of reform. Notably, it is a feature even of the present times. The title of an article on Germany in *The Economist* says it all: "The trouble with Contentment: When life is so pleasant, there is little incentive for radical change". The article elaborates further:

⁶⁰ Gunter Hofmann, Michael Naumann and Elisabeth Niejahr, 'Am Ende der ersten Halbzeit: Ein Zeit-Gespräch mit Gerhard Schröder', *Die Zeit*, no. 34, (2002), http://www.diezeit.de/2002/34/Politik/200234_interview_schroe.html 19 August 2002.

[Germany] remains rich, stable and, for the overwhelming majority of its people, very pleasant to live in. Growth may be slow, unemployment high and the Mittelstand gloomy, but on the whole the climate of society still strikes the outsider as fairly sunny.⁶¹

If we add to the fact that, overall, Germany's labour force is widely-regarded as the most expensive, inflexible and protected labour force in the world ⁶², the mandarins emerge as positively average in the manner of things!

3. Past Success of a Quintessentially German Institution

Having established that German university traditions survive because of, among other reasons, an institutional culture which gained and retained implicit support from the wider society, it is useful to investigate the reasons why Germany's educational traditions occupy such an important position in the nation's psyche. This regard for educational traditions extends well beyond a wish to preserve key elements of the culture of a country. The appeal of the German university system and its traditions lies in its unique achievements since the early nineteenth century, i.e., in the undisputed and unrivalled success of German scholarship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The achievements of the German university scholars in the period between the middle of the nineteenth century and the advent of National Socialism were truly outstanding.

⁶¹ 'The Trouble with Contentment: A Survey of Germany', *The Economist*, (December 7-13, 2002), p. 24.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Universities were uniquely German institutions, in concept and practice, which were simultaneously praised and imitated throughout the world. Rüdiger vom Bruch lists three examples to support this argument.⁶³ The first is that in the early twentieth century American research organizations began pressing for changes in the Nobel Prize committees in light of the predominance of German scholars among the winners. Second, subscriptions to German scientific journals by foreign libraries reached unprecedented numbers. And finally, German became the leading international language of science in various fields at the time.⁶⁴

The unique aspects of German higher education such as the importance of research for students and the seminar system of learning, to name a few, have achieved international fame. Bruford notes how

[i]nnumerable foreign students have gratefully acknowledged their debt to some German professor who has fired their interest and guided their first steps in research. ... The seminar method of studying a topic, by getting a small group of students to compare their ideas on various aspects of it, under supervision, and the extraordinarily fruitful development from this, the study of a vast scientific problem, usually in the natural sciences, by team work, a professor selecting the field of research and breaking it up into separate research subjects, each capable of being tackled under his supervision as a doctoral thesis by a young member of his seminar, these are generally acknowledged to be invaluable ideas which the world owes to German

⁶³ Rüdiger vom Bruch, 'A Slow Farewell to Humboldt', in *German Universities Past and Future*, Mitchell Ash (ed), (1997), p. 19.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

scholarship, not to speak of the enormous contributions to knowledge which have been the fruit of these methods.⁶⁵

All this helped to create a lasting impression of the uniqueness and importance of concepts like *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung* and the Humboldtian idea of a university upon German society and the country at large. In fact according to Georg Picht:

Der Aufstieg Deutschlands in den Kreis der großen Kulturnationen wurde im neunzehnten Jahrhundert durch den Ausbau der Universitäten und der Schulen begründet. Bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg beruhten die politische Stellung Deutschlands, seine wirtschaftliche Blüte und die Entfaltung seiner Industrie auf seinem damals modernen Schulsystem und auf den Leistungen einer Wissenschaft, die Weltgeltung erlangt hatte. Wir zehren bis heute von diesem Kapital.⁶⁶

Thus, it would seem that the genesis of a world class institution, with its inherent philosophy of combining research with teaching, imitated almost throughout the western world and having made in the past outstanding contributions to knowledge and scholarship, even today produces a sense of quiet pride in the country's people; or at the very least, in the people who matter in this field, in bureaucrats and state officials, in politicians and functionaries, and as noted by the Max Planck Institute, in middle class parents, university and *Gymnasium* teachers (naturally) as well as in the employers, the vast majority of whom have experienced at first hand life at such

⁶⁵ W. H. Bruford, 'German Political, Legal and Cultural Institutions' in *Germany*, Malcolm Pasley (ed), (1982), p. 113.

⁶⁶ Picht, 1964, p. 16. Picht went on to state that this capital had now been exhausted and the educational system at the time seemed incapable of restoring it, hence the imminent *Bildungskatastrophe*.

hallowed institutions of higher learning.⁶⁷ All the above groups share a common view on the essential features of school and university structures, curriculum content, status of teachers, and education in general.⁶⁸ Together, this traditional definition of a German university contributes to the way in which German society defines the university student, its staff and its role in society.⁶⁹ Hearnden voices similar views when identifying the motives behind the upsurge in radicalism in the 1970s in Germany:

[T]here is a temptation to think that it has been an unshakeable respect for past achievements and traditional virtues on the part of the great majority of the population that has spurred the proponents of radicalism to such extremes of commitment.⁷⁰

Furthermore, in recent times, plagued by successive crises, this pride has translated itself into a profound faith that the Humboldtian formula which had once resulted in creating world class German universities would work its magic again. In this context there is a widespread feeling that destroying the Humboldtian university would destroy any chance Germany has of regaining that eminent international position. The following quote, made in context of the first *Hochschulrahmengesetz* of 1976 and its eventual effect on the universities, is illustrative:

Everybody admits that traditional institutions such as universities ought not to be forced into radical reforms; many are aware of the fact that the old system

⁶⁷ Max Planck Institute, 1979, p. 72.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p, 264.

⁷⁰ Hearnden, 1976, p. 145.

was much sounder than the present one. Yet nobody knows of a strategy to revive a traditional system that was famous throughout the world, and then wilfully destroyed.⁷¹

As may be expected, the emotions surrounding the subjects of falling standards and unfavourable comparisons with other countries run high. The loss of pre-eminence of German scholarship and research as well as the growing success of higher education systems which have been based on German traditions, such as the American universities, is even more distressing. A chair-holder of philosophy in the Universities of Bamberg and Erlangen-Nürnberg ruefully reflects:

Den deutschen Universitäten, einst Prunk- und Ausstellungsstück europäischen Kultur- und Bildungswesens, im letzten Jahrhundert sogar noch heißbegehrter Exportschlager (immerhin strukturierte Japan seine Universitäten nach dem deutschen Vorbild), geht es an den Kragen.⁷²

This depth of feeling cannot be explained in simple terms; it needs to be experienced in the way Germany and its people have experienced it. The following quote attempts to highlight the emotions generated:

Kaum eine Nation, für die Wissenschaft integraler Bestandteil ihres gesellschaftlichen Lebens ist, hat eine solche nationale Katastrophe, eine solche Infragestellung ihrer eigenen Traditionen, eine solche Krise des

⁷¹ Lobkowitz, 1987, pp. 147-154.

⁷² Zimmerli, 1996.

persönlichen Selbstverständnisses jedes einzelnen, auch jedes einzelnen Wissenschaftlers erlebt wie die deutsche.⁷³

An uncertain future awaits this once-world famous ideal of the university; sooner or later it will have to adapt to the powerful economic and political forces. Whether Germany will have lost a part of its history or whether the new universities will manage to regain their international status by incorporating fundamental changes remains to be seen. In the words of Walter Rüegg, erstwhile rector of the University of Frankfurt as well as a former President of the WRK:

It might well be that German universities, after their century-long period of brilliance, are sinking into insignificance and will have to make way for other types of educational institutions. This would undoubtedly have very severe consequences for the German economy and society.⁷⁴

4. Conclusion

It is clear that as long as Humboldt's principles and the corresponding position and status of *Wissenschaft* and therefore of *Wissenschaftler* occupy the important position they do in the German mode of thinking, the mandarin tradition will continue to exist in some form or the other. It should be mentioned here that the political and economic breakdown of East Germany and the subsequent reunification has tended to strengthen such traditions in the Western *Länder*, as opposed to providing new

⁷³ Dietrich Goldschmidt, *Die gesellschaftliche Herausforderung der Universität: historische Analysen, internationale Vergleiche, globale Perspektiven*, (Weinheim: Deutsche Studien Verlag, 1991), p. 84.

⁷⁴ Rüegg, 1975, pp. 103-120.

influences and stimulating fundamental reform.⁷⁵ Further, Germany's higher education system will continue to be, for the time being, a mass education system attempting to uphold, to a great extent, the values and norms of the traditional university. How it manages to cope with the increasing pressures generated by demands of both the economy and society remains to be seen.

However, there may be grounds for optimism as well which deserve to be highlighted at the end. On a more positive note, Steven Muller, President Emeritus at the Johns Hopkins University, observes:

Cries for major reforms have been issuing from and around German universities for years, so far with only modest results. Perhaps this can be cited as evidence that German universities have not wasted their time and effort on relative trivia and will therefore be in a great position to make the grand and comprehensive changes that are now required.⁷⁶

In similar vein, Mitchell Ash concludes in the context of university reforms in Germany:

German industrialization happened very rapidly but it didn't happen first. There are certain advantages to waiting and seeing what other countries make in the way of mistakes and then organizing it better.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Frackmann, 1990, p. 200.

⁷⁶ Mitchell Ash (ed), *German Universities Past and Future*, (1997), p. 208.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

Perhaps Germany will indeed tread that path and emerge with a world-class higher education system once again. Obviously that will require a courageous political and reform culture. Edelgard Buhlman's reform proposals may be just the initial steps in that direction.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Mandarin Tradition in Retrospect

Chapter Six described the social, cultural and institutional factors in Germany which shaped attitudes and opinions in a way that favoured survival of the mandarin tradition. This chapter brings together various strands of the thesis to show how a revision of Ringer's original claim about the decline of the mandarin tradition is justified. A key aspect highlighted is the ambiguity and polyvalence which has characterised some aspects of the tradition's evolution and manifestation in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The intellectual roots of the mandarin tradition lie in the idealistic and neo-humanistic principles, laid down by Humboldt and other neo-humanist reformers, which aspired to put society on a long-term path of social and moral upliftment. However, in its subsequent development the tradition showed considerable variation, indeed disjunction, in the interpretation and adoption of the Humboldtian vision and the liberal ideas: from professorial involvement in the rise and spread of liberal movements in the 1830s and 1840s to collusion with illiberal values and illiberal forms of the modern state; from a belief in *Innerlichkeit* to insulate academics from immediate social and political pressures to the creation of a self-serving model of political inertness; and from the espousal of apoliticism as a means to protect integrity of scholastic pursuits to a distant and detached notion of the metapolitical which, in practice, allowed for abdication of immediate moral and intellectual responsibility.

The overall structure of the chapter is as follows. The first two sections focus on the two formative influences, or roots, of the mandarin tradition. Sections Three and Four respectively provide an integrated discussion of two themes that recur in the thesis and are crucial to a deeper understanding of the mandarin tradition: mandarin apoliticism, and the role and

responsibilities of mandarins as critical intellectuals. Section Five recounts key aspects of the case presented in the thesis to show continuity of the mandarin tradition during and after the Third Reich.

Section One, on intellectual roots, emphasises that the Humboldtian legacy endowed the mandarin tradition with two distinctive characteristics: the ideal of pure, non-utilitarian scholarship - institutionalised through supporting academic arrangements - and the notion of individual upliftment along with a liberal, humanizing influence on society. The former has continued to be the guiding principle of the mandarin tradition, as shown by the appeal of and role played by *Wissenschaft* even in contemporary academic discussions. On the other hand, there has always been a certain ambiguity in beliefs and actions with respect to the liberal, humanizing element.

The source of this ambiguity is explored in Section Two which revisits the social roots of the tradition. The concurrent elite bureaucratic status, enjoyed by the German professoriate, inevitably involved them - like the eponymous Chinese mandarins - in a supportive, legitimising role for the state. This affected their public and political role and impact in two fundamental ways: first, it narrowed the scope and public space for acting as critical, liberal intellectuals; and second, as newer social groups and political forces emerged, the German mandarins clung ever more tightly to their traditional sources of power and prestige, adopting backward-looking and reactionary positions despite being the customary torch bearers of *Wissenschaft* and related Humboldtian ideals.

Since the liberal, humanizing function in society of the mandarin tradition relates intrinsically to the public and political dimensions of the intellectual endeavour, the issue of polyvalence

and ambiguity with regard to the former essentially coincides with the broader issue of mandarin apoliticism. Section Three recounts the principal themes that arise in the discussion of mandarin apoliticism throughout the thesis. The many, often contrasting forms assumed by the mandarin tradition can be understood better in the context of its twin roots. On the intellectual side, the mandarin ideal of pure, non-utilitarian scholarship naturally implied some notion of “distance” between politics and intellectual activity. However, interpretations varied. To some this legitimised an inner migration which shut out political thought and action altogether. To others, apoliticism had instrumental value: pure scholarship, uncontaminated by political passions, was seen as instrumental in generating better political thought and action, thus linking with the liberal, humanizing role. On the social side, the position of mandarins as bureaucratic elite conditioned their political postures. The vested interest in preserving status quo to protect existing privileges led some to adopt a self-serving interpretation of apoliticism as political inertness or inner migration, which allowed them to escape responsibilities of a critical public role or avoid censure. Paradoxically, though, the same vested interests led some others into overt political roles, displaying fiercely nationalistic and even reactionary sentiments.

Section Four, on the role of German mandarins as critical individuals, throws into sharp relief the consequences of the persistent polyvalence and ambiguity within the mandarin tradition of an intellectual’s public and political roles and responsibilities - a key aspect of the liberal humanizing element. It recounts how the behaviour of the professoriate during the Third Reich amounted to a complete abdication of any semblance of intellectual and moral duty. Arguably, the overall pattern of professorial passivity and subservience during the Third Reich in itself may not have been dramatically different from the immediate past. It is instructive in this regard to use some external perspectives (for example, the views of thinkers

such as Julian Benda and Noam Chomsky) on the public roles and responsibilities of intellectuals to recognise the full extent of “deviation” that occurred because of the deep political ambiguities surrounding mandarin tradition - and how this produced the stark tragedy of system supposedly based on liberal Humboldtian values ending up in collusion with the most illiberal values and illiberal forms of the modern state. Even more deplorable though, as Chapter Three reported, was the fact that the ambiguity regarding public and political roles - and hence regarding any norms of action and accountability - was used by mandarins after 1945 to absolve themselves of any moral or social stigma relating to their behaviour during the National Socialist regime.

Section Five highlights the principal arguments and evidence, provided in the earlier chapters, to show that the mandarin tradition has persisted until the present day.

1. The Intellectual Roots: Humboldtian Legacy and the Liberal, Humanizing Element

As noted in Chapter One of this thesis, the intellectual roots of the mandarin tradition lie in the Humboldtian educational principles of the reform era in early nineteenth century. Humboldt and other leading philosophers of the era were deeply influenced by the concepts of neo-humanism and idealism. *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung*, both embodiments of pure scholarship and learning, along with the notions of *Einsamkeit*, *Freiheit* and *Innerlichkeit* became central to the principles of higher education. Genuine learning to enrich the mind and spirit was preferred to the mere acquisition of practical training and skill formation. Freedom and solitude from socio-economic and political pressures became a pre-requisite for the pursuit of scholarship. This formed the educational philosophy of the mandarins.

To create an academic environment for “pure, non-utilitarian” scholarship, Humboldt elaborated an institutional framework in which state pressures and material concerns would not compromise intellectual pursuits. An enlightened elite of academics was to be given a secure socio-economic position, free from material cares, in the form of a civil servant status. Academics would also be free from state interference within a system of university self-governance.¹ The state, for its part, would provide full financial support to the institutions of higher education and exist only in the role of *Nachtwächter*, the “nightwatchman”, overseeing the work of the universities without influencing their functioning.

The neo-humanistic educational reforms envisaged a long-term humanization of society emerging out of the newly reformed educational institutions. This form of education was genuinely seen as a liberation of the people from the constraints of social status and family background, especially with regard to adoption of particular professions. Its objective was the transformation of an agrarian and fundamentally feudal society into a self-dependant, confident and politically aware entity. This idea has been forcefully expressed by Nipperdey:

the idea of education arising from neo-humanism and idealism was not the privilege of the silver-spoon class, not a harking back to a supposedly ‘more democratic’ line of the Enlightenment. Its true significance was moral and political. It sought to lay the foundations for a free society of enfranchised citizens and eventually a bourgeois constitutional state.²

¹ Chapter Six highlights the ambiguities that existed about the exact nature of the internal university structure and organization.

² Nipperdey, 1983, p. 47.

Chapter Two details the significance and effect of the reform principles on society in the beginning of the nineteenth century. *Wissenschaft*, which embodied the notion of pure scholarship and Humboldtian humanitarian values, achieved a commanding position. The Humboldtian principles became the guiding principles of German learning and education for the future. To this date they provide a normative model for the structure and functioning of German universities. Chapter Four has shown that even in East Germany, where the universities were systematically transformed to serve the essentially utilitarian scientific-technological goals of the socialist state, notional adherence to and ritual invocation of the Humboldtian principles remained the norm. In West and reunified Germany they continued to command remarkable consensus, remaining beyond debate even during radical attempts at university reform, including those in the wake of the student revolts.

However, as elaborated in the thesis, the manifestation of the mandarin tradition during various phases in the history of Germany shows considerable ambiguity on the part of university professors with regard to the liberal humanizing element which lies at the core of these principles. Understanding this ambiguity, especially the role played by the social roots of the mandarin tradition, yields a deeper insight into how and why the tradition continued.

2. The Social Roots: Mandarins as Bureaucratic and Social Elite

Ringer's analysis, reported in Chapter Two, clearly showed that historically German university professors were an academic and bureaucratic elite existing in a close relationship with the state. The towering social status of the German university professors was acquired in the early nineteenth century largely as a result of the combination of bureaucratic status and intellectual vocation in a primarily backward, agrarian society. Ringer's perceptive use of the

Chinese term “mandarin” to identify the university professors in Germany captured the privileges, responsibilities and constraints experienced by a bureaucratic elite. The members of the Chinese bureaucracy had been a scholarly elite, enjoying the power and prestige that comes from being in a close relationship with the ruling class.³ In fact, Ringer drew on Max Weber’s account of the Chinese mandarins. Weber noted in particular the

system of using educational qualifications as a basis for appointment to bureaucratic positions: this had the consequence of binding the officialdom to the Emperor and to the state.⁴

As a group, the German mandarins were reminiscent of the Chinese mandarins because of the importance of the bureaucracy in both countries. As Ringer noted, in Germany’s case, the country’s unusually long period between an agrarian economy and full industrialisation was conducive to the emergence of a highly bureaucratic monarchy. The bureaucracy was endowed with power and prestige and, in both the German and the Chinese cases, entry to this class was determined through a set of qualifying examinations.⁵ In Germany the examination system revolved around the universities thus making the full professors, who controlled the system, an important and influential elite class in the country.

³ The Chinese bureaucracy originated in the Ch’in dynasty between 221-206 BC. Mandarin supremacy was attained during 141-87 BC in the Han dynasty when an Imperial university was established to train and test officials. This created a non-hereditary elite comprising scholar-gentry who staffed the bureaucracy. Somewhat reminiscent of nineteenth century Germany it was the spread and interpretation of Confucianism that established the Chinese bureaucracy as the officialdom. The original Confucian vision involved men of scholarship, with independent ideas, advising a selfless and attentive ruler. However, what developed eventually was a self-perpetuating and stifling bureaucracy obsessed largely with preserving its status and influence. Bamber Gascoigne, *The Dynasties of China: A History*, (Carrol & Graf, 2003), p. 67.

⁴ Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory; An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*, (Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp.175-176.

⁵ Gascoigne, 2003, p. 67.

A vital aspect of the close relationship between the ruling powers and the academic elite was the supportive role played by the latter for the former. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Ringer has argued that, as the educated elite, the mandarins dominated the language of political and social discourse. At a time when the state tended to be defined in cultural rather than political terms (in the absence of a unified nation), the mandarins were in a position to provide both an ideological defence and cultural legitimacy to the rulers.

Interestingly, in this respect the mandarins accorded to Gramsci notion of “organic intellectuals”. According to Gramsci, intellectuals represent the most mature expression of existing traditions and culture.⁶ They help devise a historical purpose to social activity while providing ideological defences of particular class interests. Further, the intellectual class facilitates the blending of popular consciousness with the dominant political ideology.⁷ Intellectuals are able to carry out this role because they grow *organically* with the dominant social group, represent its thinking and organizing element, and are produced by the educational system precisely for ensuring the hegemony of the group.⁸ The German mandarins, akin to Gramsci’s organic intellectuals, appeared organically linked to the ruling class inasmuch as they were the product of the dominance of the bourgeoisie and as intellectuals performed the role of sustaining and legitimising the hegemony of that class.

This unique history and status of the German intellectual class had a profound influence upon its role and impact in at least two ways. First, in performing the legitimacy role, the mandarins, in many instances, compromised their ability to play a meaningful public

⁶ Carl Boggs, *The Two Revolutions: Antonio Gramsci and the Dilemmas of Western Marxism*, (South End Press, 1985), p. 221.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Barry Burke, ‘Antonio Gramsci and Informal Education’, *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*, <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-gram.htm> February 14 2004, 28 June 2004.

intellectual role. Second, as newer social groups or political forces emerged, the mandarins were forced into ever narrower, backward-looking and reactionary roles, despite being the customary torch bearers of *Wissenschaft* and related Humboldtian ideals.

With regard to the first factor, the mandarins' extreme reactions during the First World War and their vicious opposition to the fledgling Weimar democracy bears testimony to their partisan standing. Weber's damning indictment of mandarin behaviour during the period is worth recounting.

The *littérateurs* in Germany today are in truth the last people to make judgements about political 'maturity'. They collaborated with and applauded *almost all the mistakes* of German policy before the War and the lack of judgement nourished by irresponsible demagogy during the War. ... Certainly it is much cheaper for the prebendaries of the state to chide the parties in the Reichstag, as happens at present. ... Where fear about their prestige (those with a university degree) is involved - and that is what lies behind all the ranting against 'democracy' and 'parliamentary amateurism' - that section of society was blind and always will remain blind, following its instincts rather than sober reflection; this is how university men, in the mass, will always behave in Germany.⁹

In the context of the second factor, the rapid social and political changes associated with Germany's abrupt industrialization saw the mandarins adopt ever more conservative, nationalistic and elitist views. As noted in Chapter Two, Ringer argued that the natural erosion in mandarin influence and status due to the rise of new social groups caused the

⁹ Peter Lassman (ed), *Weber: Political Writings*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 267-268.

mandarins, on the whole, to cling ever more desperately to the traditional social hierarchy to which their power was anchored.¹⁰ The resulting illiberal stance, which rejected support for political reform and shared in the ruling classes' fear and hostility of the advancing Social Democratic movement, condemned them to a path in which, head in sand, they ended up in compliance with the National Socialist regime, vainly believing that the revolution was genuine in its core but undisciplined in form. In the words of Habermas:

[T]heir [the mandarins'] difficulties were the result of the collapse of the basis of the system of authority for which academic intellectuals enjoying official status had performed useful legitimatory services. The bourgeois democracy no longer needed the submissive testimonials of the apolitical. The mandarins who had become politicised in response to events outside themselves, could no longer feel themselves one with the state; they experienced a crisis of identity which unintentionally coincided with the phases of another crisis of the state which had been engendered by other more powerful forces. The pitiable role of the German universities in 1933 and under the Nazis cannot be understood without reference to their persistent demoralisation prior to 1933.¹¹

3. Mandarin Apoliticism

A distinct characteristic of the mandarin tradition has been its legendary apoliticism. As described in Chapter Two the mandarin belief in apoliticism grew out of the elevation of scholarship above the world of practical realities, work and other economic and social factors.

¹⁰ As reported in Chapter Two, there were some clear distinctions between the opinion of members of the professoriate which Ringer handled by creating the stylised categories of "orthodox" and "modernist" mandarins.

¹¹ Habermas, 1971a, pp. 422-428.

The new concept of education, influenced by neo-humanistic and idealist philosophies, had introduced the notions of *Einsamkeit*, *Freiheit* and *Innerlichkeit* as freedom from compulsions of state and society. However, solitude and freedom in academic life did not have the apolitical connotation the mandarins later chose to adopt and was clearly not meant to inculcate an ivory-tower mentality in academics and scholars. Indeed, Humboldt firmly believed that the state would be best served if men of scholarship became its leaders.¹² The fundamental idea was that pure, non-utilitarian scholarship, uncontaminated by political passions, would lead to better political thought and action and eventually to the liberal, humanizing goal. Nipperdey, for instance, argued that a metapolitical perspective was justified as a means of encouraging unfettered and fundamental political thought; interpreting *Innerlichkeit* as an escape route to inner life was unjustified:

Such freedom beyond politics has value, in that it provides a corrective against the domination of politics and society, which were becoming ends in themselves beyond the needs of human beings. In no sense did the supporters and spokesmen of this movement retreat from political life. On the contrary they saw this metapolitical education as providing the strongest impetus towards a new era of political thought.¹³

However, as reported in this thesis, there have been a number of facets, some contradictory, of mandarin apoliticism with regard to both interpretation and action. As described in Chapter Two, political activism was an established part of the early mandarin tradition. In fact, the “liberal” mandarins of the 1830s and 1840s went beyond direct political participation by aiding the formation of scholarly guilds as well as through involvement in literary political publications. They sought to raise political awareness and promote social progress, personal

¹² Hearnden, 1976, p. 122.

¹³ Nipperdey, 1983, p. 46.

freedom and cultural enlightenment. In doing so they acted more as leaders of a gradually modernising society than as privileged advisers of princes in a hierarchical, feudal social order.

The retreat of university professors from active political activity occurred gradually in the aftermath of the failed revolution of 1848. Yet despite the mandarins' public detachment from political matters, they were not strictly apolitical. As mentioned in Chapter Two of this thesis apoliticism had several connotations. A deep interest in political issues without involvement in party politics and membership of associations devoted to the research and discussion of political issues were also considered to lie within the sphere of apoliticism. In this context it is appropriate to recall Max Weber's famous speech "*Wissenschaft als Beruf*" delivered in 1919. Weber's views may be considered another version of apoliticism - an apolitical culture within the universities with clear separation of the political and the academic roles.¹⁴

[T]he qualities that make a man an excellent scholar and academic teacher are not the qualities that make him a leader to give directions in practical life or, more specifically, in politics. It is pure accident if a teacher also possesses this quality ... The professor who feels called upon to intervene in the struggles of world views and party opinions, he may do so outside, in the marketplace, in the press, in meetings, in associations, wherever he wishes.¹⁵

It is noteworthy that Weber did not decry the idea of the possibility of the political and academic roles to be combined in the same person outside the classroom. He essentially

¹⁴ Max Weber, *Science as a Vocation*, <http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/DSS/Weber/scivoc.html>, 28 June 2004.

¹⁵ Ibid.

wished to protect the process of the pursuit of knowledge from political motives and agenda, a notion which went back to Humboldt's original idea of university and learning.

However, *Innerlichkeit* somehow was interpreted as a spiritual, inner freedom away from political and social realities and worldly matters. This was a narrow, self-serving understanding of the original Humboldtian principles. Benda's criticism of intellectuals in the late 1920s is particularly apposite in this case. Benda criticised intellectuals for their political, social and moral apathy in the face of real and credible threats to humanitarian and universal values. However, he noted the tendency of intellectuals, during the First World War, to immerse themselves in the material world of political passions. This tendency was the prime target of Benda's criticism.¹⁶ Interestingly, it was precisely this form of politicization that the German mandarins believed was beneath them. Yet, at almost every occasion, they had allowed their passions to dominate over any level-headed assessment of the political situation. Weber's criticism (mentioned earlier) that during the First World War and the Weimar democracy the university professors had preferred their instincts to sober reflection is evidence of the fact. Habermas, too, observed that the mandarins had indeed become politicised in response to the world events. Unsurprisingly, given the nature of their passionately "(a)political" engagement, they had been unable to adapt to the rapidly changing world order, culminating in their deplorable role during the Third Reich.

4. The Role of German Mandarins as Critical Intellectuals

Mandarin attitude leading to and during the Third Reich demonstrates the hollowness of their claim of leading apolitical scholarly lives. The mandarins managed, within the role of

¹⁶ Julian Benda, Excerpt from *The Treason of the Intellectuals*,
<http://www.swans.com/library/art9/jbenda01.html>, 28 June 2004.

apolitical observers, to display a variety of intellectual opinion on National Socialism. The tradition itself was, as already discussed, amorphous enough in this regard to accommodate the diverse intellectual and ideological standpoints. As observed in Chapter Three, many mandarins were “fascinated with fascism” and became willing intellectual collaborators of the National Socialists. Some held ambivalent views, for example, that the revolution was genuine in core and undisciplined in form. Many others, however, adopted ideological and political stances which were essentially driven by narrowly partisan and opportunistic considerations. As the chapter notes, the mandarins’ belief in the ideology of the DVNP before 1933 led them, on the whole, to support the advent of National Socialism. This was because the National Socialists had come to power with a compromise with the DVNP, and hence, the mandarins hoped, might eventually provide a platform for their own views.

Even amongst those university professors who were taken in by the fascist ideology, some exhibited initial support but later (perhaps when they could no longer overlook the full extent of the brutalities of the regime) conveniently retreated to the world of *Wissenschaft*. At the same time the entire professoriate, including the section which, in theory, fundamentally disagreed with fascist ideology, showed a conspicuous lack of resistance of any kind. This included an astounding lack of protest at the unfair dismissals of their Jewish colleagues. Anti-Semitism was clearly a characteristic the mandarins shared with the rabble-rousing Nazis. During the life of the regime, however, it is worth noting that university professors, as a whole, did very little to further the cause of the Nazis in transforming German universities into truly “national socialist” institutions. Their inert role in implementing Nazi reforms of higher education played its part in the failure to bring about permanent changes in the period.

The period of the Third Reich was an exhibition of the mandarins' complete abdication of any semblance of intellectual and moral duty. It is a tragic paradox that mandarin thought and culture, with its roots in the neo-humanist ideals of the nineteenth century, allowed for such perversions of moral and intellectual values. Within and outside Germany mandarin thought had generated perceptions of the German university professor as an apolitical figure, immersed in the hallowed concept of *Wissenschaft*, elevated above the travails of day-to-day living.¹⁷ The political aloofness attributed to German intellectuals was not seen in a negative light - instead, its origins, the [corruption of] concept of *Innerlichkeit*, was feted as a unique German characteristic.¹⁸ After the end of 1945 the mandarins used apoliticism not just as an excuse of their behaviour during the Third Reich but also to absolve themselves of any moral and social duty or stigma relating to their behaviour during the regime. As Chapter Three demonstrates, their forceful argument and persuasive power was so great that they even managed to praise their pitiful role during the regime as devotion to *Wissenschaft* in the face of extreme danger thereby preventing further damage to the universities and learning.¹⁹

In reality, mandarin political detachment and retreat to their esoteric world of *Wissenschaft* in the face of terror and brutality amounted to aiding and abetting a tyrannical regime. Their attitude and action leading to and during the Third Reich were reminiscent of Benda's "laymen" as opposed to that of highly educated scholars.²⁰ Contrasting the "clerk" or the intellectual and the "layman" Benda stated that the former believed and preached spiritual and universal truths while the latter allied himself with realism and national interests.

¹⁷ Mark Lilla, *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics*, (New York: The New York Review of Books, 2001), p. 204.

¹⁸ Ibid. Intellectual apoliticism was also attributed to the unusual autonomy of the German university, the tradition of political decentralization, the lack of a cultural capital and respect for military authority. While the above reasons were significant in shaping German intellectual life, they cannot absolve the university professors of their duty as intellectuals guarding moral and human values irrespective of political events.

¹⁹ See Karl Jaspers's quote in Chapter Three, p. 68.

²⁰ Benda, 2004.

[T]he humanity of Europe in the Middle Ages, with the values imposed upon it by the “clerks”, acted ill but honoured the good. It may be said that modern Europe with teachers who inform it that its realist instincts are beautiful, acts ill and honours what is ill. ... [Today] humanity is national. ... The man of science, the artist, the philosopher are attached to their nations as much as the day-labourer and the merchant. Those who make the world’s values, [now] make them for a nation ... All humanity including the “clerks” have become laymen.²¹

In the case of the German mandarin tradition, it was evident that despite its hallowed origins emphasizing universality and humanity, it had allied itself with nationalist and realist aspirations. The mandarins had allowed political views to dominate their understanding of the intellectual vocation. Many were perfect examples of Benda’s theory that intellectuals had been seduced by the appeal of power and by the possibility that men of ideas could have a crucial role in shaping world events.²² The forays of Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, Ernst Jünger and numerous others into the world of fascism can be seen in that light.

It is instructive to contrast mandarin inaction and apoliticism, seen most starkly during the Third Reich, with the perspective offered by contemporary commentators. Noam Chomsky’s defines the role and task of the modern intellectuals as follows:

Intellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyse actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions. In the Western

²¹ Ibid.

²² Roger Kimball, *The treason of the intellectuals and the “undoing of thought”*, <http://www.newcriterion.com/archive/11/dec92/treason.htm>, 28 June 2004.

world, at least, they have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression. For a privileged minority, Western democracy provides the leisure, the facilities, and the training to seek the truth lying hidden behind the veil of distortion and misrepresentation, ideology and class interest, through which the events of current history are presented to us.²³

Most likely, German university professors would not really perceive of themselves as possessing the freedom in the manner Chomsky puts it. They would consider the civil servant status as the prime reason for their inability to oppose the establishment. In the eyes of the professors, their ability to represent the critical, free intelligentsia would inevitably mean compromising their official status and, more significantly, facing the risk of losing the hard-earned position of *Ordinarius*. It is interesting that Benda saw definite limitations in the intellectuals' role when they are part of the "establishment".

As soon as the "clerk" claims that he does not disregard the interests of the nation or of the established classes, he is inevitably beaten, for the very good reason that it is impossible to reach the spiritual and the universal without undermining the institutions whose foundations are the possession of the material and the desire to feel distinct from others.²⁴

The fact that the German mandarins did not have the courage to face the professional risk that accompanies the role of critical intellectuals is a major drawback of the mandarin school of thought. As we have seen, the passive support of the status quo coupled with a strong pro-

²³ Chomsky's views are a criticism of American intellectuals who endorsed the irresponsible use of American power during the 1960s. Noam Chomsky, *A Special Supplement: The Responsibility of Intellectuals*, Feb 23, 1967, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/12172>.

²⁴ Benda, 2004.

establishment tendency caused the greatest harm when it manifest itself in professorial inaction during the Nazi era. The professors' helplessness and lack of protest at the dismissal of their Jewish colleagues as well as in the face of Nazi barbarism created the most pathetic picture of the "aristocrats of the mind". More recently, the unwillingness of professors in the periods of university reform (in the post-War reconstruction period after 1945, in the 1970s and in the late 1990s) to engage actively on the subject of university reform further demonstrates their conservative, risk-averse attitude.

5. Continuation of the Tradition

This section recalls in an abbreviated manner the key lines of argument which have been set out systematically in Chapters Three to Five. Overall, the thesis shows that Ringer's conclusion that the mandarin tradition ended in 1933 was precipitate. Both intellectual and structural elements of the tradition survived the National Socialist regime. Chapter Three shows that the intellectual characteristics of the mandarin tradition were only temporarily concealed during the Third Reich and were later clearly evident in West Germany. These typical mandarin characteristics included apolitical conservatism, nationalistic and anti-Semitic attitudes, a strong sense of superiority vis-à-vis other European countries as well as individual intellectual arrogance which co-existed with belief in the time-honoured concepts of *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung*. Further intellectual characteristics of the mandarins which survived the Nazi regime included the durability of their educational philosophy and their elitist views on higher education.

These characteristics existed in West Germany and in reunified Germany because of the continued deep influence of the mandarins within and outside the university (on the subject of

higher education policies for example). As Chapter Five demonstrates, the age-old problem of coping with mass higher education can be attributed to a great extent to the immobilism and self-preservation characterizing the German mandarins. In the GDR mandarin attitude and culture were evident in the initial years of the regime. Chapter Four details the large-scale, concerted attempts by the socialist state to transform the “so-called” bourgeois universities. Despite these attempts mandarin educational philosophy did not die out in the GDR. Indeed university reform and policy was, until the end, discussed in the light of the traditional Humboldtian principles. Furthermore, the GDR, as the “embodiment of the truer Germany” attempted throughout to uphold the Humboldtian educational traditions, if only in theory.

The structural elements of the mandarin tradition were just as explicit as the intellectual aspects after the end of the Second World War. Even during the Third Reich, the Nazis confined themselves to adopting the *Führerprinzip*, which essentially shifted power from one apex body to another. After the end of the War it was easy to revert to the old governance and academic structure of the university. In the GDR, for example, the mandarins enjoyed a superior position in society, as intellectual life was feted and encouraged. Academic freedom and self-governance were naturally a thing of the past in the regime but East German society continued to hold its best minds in high regard. The academic hierarchy did change though in reality only after the replacement of the institute system in the late 1960s.

There were a variety of political and social factors which resulted in the survival of the mandarin tradition. Chapters Three, Four and Five have analysed the phenomenon in detail. In the Third Reich it was the brevity of the regime as well as the fact that after the initial years most of the efforts were concentrated on the war which played a significant role in the survival of the mandarins. Moreover, the Nazis had no clear cut reform policies, suffered from

inadequacies in organisation and planning, and seemed to prefer imposing decrees from above as opposed to reforming at grass root level. In the wider society too the Nazi era did not permanently change perceptions. Ringer misjudges the temporary nature of the atmosphere engulfing the country at the onset of the Nazi era when citing Ernst Robert Curtius's observations that the universities and learning were viewed with hatred and disdain by a major section of the population.²⁵ It is probable that the feelings unleashed in the wake of the "national revolution" in 1933 were not indicative of the real emotions of the people at large over the entire period of the Third Reich. In any case, as Chapter Three of this thesis demonstrates, the mandarins rapidly regained their status and authority within and outside the universities after the end of the Nazi era.

In West Germany the phenomenon of restoration in the immediate post-War period, the slow pace of reform, the complicated bureaucratic and legal aspects of reform and the lack of political will were some of the factors that contributed to the persistence of mandarin culture. Socially, the position attained by *Wissenschaft* in the early nineteenth century and the resounding success of German universities in the past had created an eminent social position and a certain aura around the professors. This applied just as much to East German society. Politically, though, in the GDR it was the technological race against West Germany that halted the decline of the mandarins: universities and academics, especially in the science departments, continued to be important to the regime.

The mandarins' position and status saw little change in the post-reunification period in Germany. Since the period after 1989 saw the extension of political, administrative, legal and educational systems and structures of Federal Republic into the GDR, there was naturally further entrenchment rather than erosion of the existing institutional culture in West German

²⁵ Ringer, 1990, p. 437.

universities.²⁶ With regard to the mandarin tradition, the restructuring of East German universities to resemble the West German model only served to prolong the existence of the mandarins' superior position and status.²⁷ It is only in the context of recent reform efforts, begun in the late 1990s, that real changes to academic structures, functions and job profiles have been conceptualized and introduced.

Overall, this thesis seeks to contribute to the rich tradition of inquiry initiated by Ringer's path-breaking work. It has sought to show that filling out the received, "reduced-form" picture of the mandarin tradition, through fuller cognizance of the rather more complex history of mandarin apoliticism and through due recognition of the more subtle yet enduring elements of the tradition, yields a keener appreciation of history, role and relevance of the professorial tradition in Germany.

In the present context, the critical situation facing German universities arguably requires fundamental reform that goes beyond politically initiated changes. It is the attitudes, patterns of thinking, values and beliefs of the academic community that need to evolve to imbibe modern, forward-looking notions of learning and higher education. In traversing this challenging reform terrain, some aspects of Humboldt's original ideas of university are likely to continue to be relevant. The fundamental unity of teaching and research, accepted as a positive feature of higher educational institutions all over the world, is likely to continue to be

²⁶ Indeed, although reunification was widely regarded as presenting a historic opportunity to restructure and renew West German universities along with those in East Germany, in fact initiation of urgent reforms to the beleaguered West German university system was postponed as efforts to reconstruct East German universities took centre-stage. Marlis Dürkop, 'German reunification and opportunities for reform: an epilogue', www.hochschuldebatten.de/text/Epilogue.pdf 20 July 2004.

²⁷ A significant number of East German professors had been dismissed or stripped of their titles for reasons pertaining to political associations in the former GDR or on grounds of low academic standards. The professorial positions in East German universities were soon filled with candidates from the West whose views and work ethos reflected the existing mandarin culture. Helmut de Rudder, 'Transforming Higher Education in East Germany', *Review of Higher Education*, vol. 16, no. 4, (1993), pp. 391-417.

a guiding norm for universities in Germany.²⁸ Also, Humboldt's vision of a university as an institution which, through its unique intellectual "culture" and pre-eminent pedagogic role, both protects and propogates scholarly activity, is likely to remain equally important in the architecture of German higher education system.

²⁸ The universities in the *Neue Länder*, after undergoing years of socialist motivated reduction in research functions need further inputs - in the form of funds and infrastructure of support services - to bring them to the level of teaching and research institutions. Ibid.

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