

Green Nazis? Reassessing the Environmental History of Nazi Germany

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The ideological lines between the conservation movement and the Nazi regime have received much attention. This article explores a new perspective by focusing on the level of practical politics. After several setbacks and disappointments since 1933, the passage of the national conservation law in 1935 became the crucial turning point. The law instilled a secular boom of conservation work, which lasted until about 1940, nourishing an atmosphere of almost unlimited enthusiasm for the Nazi regime in conservation circles. At the same time, conservationists were crossing sensitive thresholds in their desire to use the law to the greatest extent possible.

Few fields have undergone such a dramatic transition in recent years as the history of the conservation movement in Nazi Germany. Monographs by Thomas Zeller, Thomas Lekan, Willi Oberkrome, and Friedemann Schmoll, as well as two edited collections, have provided a whole host of new perspectives and information on the relationship between the conservation community and the Nazi regime, transforming a field that had been somewhat underdeveloped into a key topic of German environmental history.¹ Yet it has remained surprisingly difficult to make generalizations on the environmental history of the Nazi era: none of the four monographs is a synthesis of the entire topic, and the edited collections, for all their merits, have likewise failed to present a coherent narrative. Quite the contrary, they have produced a very complex, and in some respects contradictory, picture. It is therefore time to refocus on the large questions facing the field: what was the relationship between the Nazis and the contemporary conservation movement in general terms? To what extent did the two camps cooperate, and what was this cooperation based upon? In short, why does the story deserve particular attention—or is it a special story at all?²

For a time, it was popular to stress the ideological proximity between conservationists and the Nazi regime. The argument was that the German conservation movement had embraced racist, antisemitic, and antidemocratic ideas long before 1933 and conservationists recognized the Nazis as like-minded spirits, opening the doors for a cordial relationship. Research of recent years has raised significant doubts about such a narrative and essentially disproved its validity. Earlier readings were based on a highly selective reading of the sources. In reality the conservation movement never stood out as an especially racist or antisemitic group. There were not just affinities but also significant

divergences between conservation sentiments and Nazi ideology, both in their conceptions of nature and in their political styles. The conservation movement had traditionally shown a strong distaste of the hustle and bustle of party politics, and had in fact never sided with any one political party before 1933. At the same time, any discussion of the topic needs to take account of the fact that Nazi Germany was by no means the only totalitarian society with a conservation movement. Over the course of the twentieth century, conservation has demonstrated that it can coexist not only with fascist, but also with socialist and third-world dictatorships of all kinds. We must clearly look more closely at the rationale for further research on the Nazi era lest it become a mere exercise in political correctness—based on a hopelessly naïve assumption that environmental activists are necessarily good people.

Two Camps at a Distance: Nazi Ideology and the Ethos of Conservation

Since 1900 the German conservation community had evolved as a network of activists clustered around state agencies at the national, regional, and district level. It included civic associations like the *Bund für Vogelschutz*, the national *Bund Heimatschutz* and its regional branch organizations, as well as other associations focusing on the protection of nature's treasures.³ There has never been a uniform or even dominant ethos of German conservation. A highly heterogeneous group of activists dominated the German conservation movement during the first decades of the twentieth century. It was a haven for individualists, where ideas and organizations intermingled in a highly complex way. To some extent this mirrored German geographical diversity, where nature protection could mean something very different depending on one's location between the North German lowlands and the Alps. Characteristically, the German conservation movement was always a strong defender of regionalism. There was never a single dominant association that could speak for all German conservationists, or even most of them. The strongest organizations were frequently regional associations, like the *Bund Naturschutz in Bayern*, which claimed to be "the largest conservation organization of Europe" in 1939.⁴

Some researchers have avoided dealing with this diversity of opinion by focusing only on those voices that displayed racist, antisemitic, or otherwise unwholesome sentiments.⁵ At first glance, the result of their search sounded impressive; but their argument collapsed when other researchers examined the contemporary literature more systematically. The myth of a close ideological proximity of the conservation movement to the Nazis was based, as Friedemann Schmoll has noted, on "a diligent collection of xenophobic keywords." Given the huge diversity of voices, Schmoll argued that one could find evidence for almost any kind of argument if only one took the "right" quotations.⁶ Before 1914, racist and antisemitic statements were notably rare in the conservation literature; and even after the First World War, which generally was a catalyst

for extreme voices in German politics, the dominant sentiment was clearly far from the hate-filled rhetoric of extremists on the left and the right. The movement was, as Celia Applegate has written, on “a search for security in a society ridden by crisis.”⁷

John Alexander Williams has recently revived the debate on the ideological relationship between conservation and the Nazi regime when he argued that the proximity lay not so much in explicitly racist or antisemitic statements but in trends towards an idealized “clean nature.”⁸ However, such a reading again presents the German conservation movement as far more homogeneous than it actually was. To mention just one example, Walther Schoenichen, the influential head of the *Staatliche Stelle für Naturdenkmalpflege in Preußen*, continued to nourish wilderness sentiments during the 1930s with publications such as *Zauber der Wildnis in deutscher Heimat* and *Urwaldwildnis in deutschen Landen*.⁹ In fact, Williams underestimates the degree of internal differentiation in the 1920s when he assumes a general shift of conservation ideas within a few years towards the end of the Weimar Republic. By that time the German conservation community had evolved into a complex network of groups and organizations, with state and civic actors intermingling in a complex way.¹⁰ It seems highly unlikely that a large, disparate, and structurally conservative group like the conservationists could uniformly change their perception of nature within a few years. The publications Williams cites could scarcely have produced such a dramatic shift, and it seems doubtful that any kind of treatise could have led to such a fundamental change of mind. For most conservationists, reverence for nature was not something based on certain pamphlets or programmatic declarations but rooted deeply in sentiment and experience.

Any interpretation that assumes an ideological proximity of conservation and Nazism will be hard pressed to explain why contacts between the two camps were almost nonexistent before 1933. There was no equivalent in the NSDAP's empire to the Social Democrats' *Naturfreunde*; nor was there anything in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* that conservationists could read as an encouragement to their cause. Membership in both the conservation and the Nazi movement was rare before 1933. The only conservationist of some prominence in both circles was Paul Schultze-Naumburg, a cofounder of the influential *Bund Heimatschutz*, but characteristically, he had mostly abandoned conservation work by the late 1920s, focusing instead on cultural politics.¹¹ More than 10 years ago, Raymond Dominick published the results of a highly revealing check of membership in the Nazi Party among prominent conservationists: of 18 people only one, presumably Schultze-Naumburg, had joined the NSDAP before 1933.¹² Nine more conservationists joined the party during the first five years of Nazi rule, and membership was refused in a tenth case, but these “latecomers” to the Nazi cause were a butt of frequent mockery from the Party's old guard, who saw them (in many cases correctly) as mere opportunists. Reports that

Walther Schoenichen had joined the party in 1932 are mistaken. According to the NSDAP's membership records, he joined the party on March 1, 1933, but later falsely declared in a questionnaire for another Nazi organization that he entered in December 1932 in order to camouflage his opportunistic motives, and this version has unfortunately gone unchecked into narratives.¹³ Usually radicals quickly isolated themselves, as in the case of Manfred Fuhrmann, a conservationist from the miniature state of Lippe: his *Lippische Naturschutzvereinigung*, set up outside the traditional *Lippischer Bund für Heimatschutz und Heimatpflege*, remained essentially a one-man crusade. Fuhrmann turned to politics and became district party leader in 1930.¹⁴

Even after 1933, the distance between conservation and Nazi ideology remained significant. To be sure, conservationists were eager to present themselves in a Nazi cast, and the proximity was probably authentic to some extent: there is good evidence to suggest that key conservationists like Schoenichen and Hans Schwenkel did harbor racist and antisemitic sentiments. But the rapprochement clearly included a good dose of opportunism. Claims about the common ground of Nazism and conservation were often contradictory, even when they came from the same person.¹⁵ Many pledges of allegiance to Nazism served a double purpose because they also implied a call for continuity in conservation work. The *Sauerländischer Gebirgsverein* provided an almost exemplary demonstration of this kind of "doublespeak" when, in 1933, it passed a resolution "that there is no need for a change of mind"—on the surface an emphatic political statement, but a call for an environmental "business as usual" in its practical consequences.¹⁶ It is no coincidence that articles in a Nazi spirit were never more frequent in the conservation literature than in 1933 and 1934. Yet most publications from the Nazi era could be republished today without arousing suspicions. Ideological statements continued but they were far from permeating all facets of conservation work.

The lack of a clear ideological profile was by no means coincidental. There were, after all, a number of obstacles to a seamless intellectual merger that the conservationists of the Nazi era were never able to remove. One of them was Darwinism, an issue that is giving advocates of nature protection headaches to this day.¹⁷ Since Social Darwinism was a major pillar of Nazi ideology, this divergence was by no means insignificant. For example, it meant that conservationists generally ignored the invocations of "Nature" that Adolf Hitler made in *Mein Kampf* because those statements ran directly counter to their concerns: "Nature knows no political boundaries. First, she puts living creatures on this globe and watches the free play of forces. She then confers the master's right on her favorite child, the strongest in courage and industry."¹⁸ Obviously, intervening in this Darwinian struggle with protected areas, as the conservationists argued, was anathema to Hitler's thinking. A second stumbling block was the issue of *Heimat*, the love of the regional homeland that conservationists tra-

ditionally held in high esteem.¹⁹ With the Nazis abolishing the German state governments and generally pursuing a centralist policy, the tension with the conservationists' regionalist preferences was obvious. *Heimat* was not a popular term in Nazi propaganda, a remarkable fact for a regime with demonstrated skills in rhetorical appropriation, and if it was used, the precise content was notably vague: as Celia Applegate has written, "*Heimat* ceased to mean much of anything" during the Nazi era.²⁰

The divergence between conservation ideas and Nazi ideology was even more pronounced when it came to antisemitism. There is no indication that antisemitism was weaker in conservation circles than in the rest of society, but to conceive a conservation policy based on antisemitic principles was difficult, if not impossible. Since their beginning, conservationists had blamed industrialization and urbanization for the peril to nature, and there was no way to shift the blame to a small band of Jews. As a result, antisemitic statements remained notably rare in the conservation literature, and anti-Jewish sentiments are almost completely absent in administrative files. The vain attempt of the Franconian conservationist Hans Stadler to inaugurate a campaign against "*Holzjuden*"—Jewish timber merchants who had, according to Stadler, already bought and processed "the last of the strong oaks and the last of the beautiful walnut trees" in the region and were now seeking to exterminate the pear trees—provides a fitting reminder that antisemitic conservation campaigns were easily bordering on the lunatic.²¹ Finally, the conservation movement was on a collision course with the Nazis' concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*, the community of all Germans of Aryan origin. While the *Volksgemeinschaft* was supposed to move beyond class and other divisions by unifying all Germans of Aryan origin, the conservationists had traditionally favored an exclusive self-definition that saw the movement's core groups among university-trained intellectuals. Many statements from conservationists smacked of intellectual arrogance and condescension: "in all parts of society, the majority is banal, and will remain so," Ernst Rudorff, the spiritual father of the *Bund Heimatschutz*, had noted as early as 1880.²² Half a century later, Walther Schoenichen published an article that lashed out against those naïve citizens who came to conservation with "a certain superficial, amateurish, and unprofessional idea of the concept of nature protection."²³ During the Nazi era, exclusive self-definitions of this kind remained somewhat muted, but they did not disappear. In a 1949 publication, Hans Klose, head of the *Reichsstelle für Naturschutz* since 1938, declared, "Winning the apathetic and adversarial masses will always remain an elusive wish. There will always be but few of them turning to the circles of nature and *Heimat* friends in town and countryside, forming an incorruptible unit for long."²⁴

To be sure, none of these points of disagreements led to a major controversy during the Nazi era. Conservationists were eager to play down potentially controversial issues; after all, it was perfectly clear that they would never win

an open dispute with Nazi ideologists. Nonetheless these disagreements demonstrate that the cooperation between conservationists and the Nazis evolved not on the basis of ideological affinities, as an earlier generation of researchers has assumed, but in spite of significant intellectual divergences. The spiritual gap between the two camps was and remained significant: characteristically interventions from Nazi leaders for the cause of conservation remained sporadic. However, the conservation movement did profit to a surprising extent from these sporadic initiatives, most prominently through the passage of the national conservation law of 1935, justly called “one of the industrialized world’s most wide-ranging conservation laws” by Charles Closmann.²⁵ Apparently, the two camps met on a different level, that of practical politics. The merger of conservation and National Socialism was not about thinking but about doing. The road to this merger was anything but straight.

***Gleichschaltung* and Other Disappointments: The First Two Years of Nazi Rule**

Historians of the Nazi era routinely distinguish between three periods: the revolutionary first months, the stabilization during the peacetime years 1934 to 1939, and the war period. In contrast, environmental historians have usually refrained from detailed periodization. In fact, the relationship between the conservation movement and the Nazis changed significantly during the Hitler years, with turning points generally equivalent, though not synchronized, with the Nazi historiography. The first two years were marked by disappointments and conflicts, causing significant distrust on both sides, until the situation changed dramatically with the passage of the national conservation law, which inaugurated a general boom of administrative conservation work that many conservationists liked to remember long after 1945. A third period of wartime conservation did not begin as suddenly as one might expect; for conservation work continued with a surprising degree of normalcy to the middle of 1943, after which it gradually ceased due to war conditions.²⁶

Several factors contributed to the disappointments during the first two years after Hitler’s rise to power. The most significant were the Nazis’ efforts at *Gleichschaltung*, the general streamlining of organizational activity and the merger of a wide array of groups into uniform national organizations. All conservation and *Heimat* associations were forced to join a nationwide *Reichsbund Volkstum und Heimat*, incorporated formally on July 27, 1933. However, this did not happen “rapidly and for the most part voluntarily,” as some environmental historians have suggested.²⁷ Quite the contrary, it was a process that many conservationists deeply resented. Given the highly fragmented German conservation community, *Gleichschaltung* implied the abolition of an organizational autonomy that was held in high esteem. Worse, it quickly became clear that the 23-year-old *Reichsbund* leader, Werner Haverbeck, sought a centralist organization with workers and

youth as its primary audience, while the *Reichsbund's* rank and file comprised mostly middle class people, many of them intellectuals, with a penchant for regionalism.²⁸ Of course, the conservationists refrained from an open rebellion because there was little prospect in a public challenge to *Gleichschaltung*, but the lack of enthusiasm, if not skepticism, is apparent in numerous documents. Only weeks after the *Reichsbund's* formation, the *Bund Naturschutz in Bayern* approached the *Reichsbund's* president, Karl Alexander von Müller, a historian at the University of Munich, who happened to be a member of the league, and induced him to promise that there would be “no change in the league’s organization or its internal life”—a promise that the association’s leadership found so important that it sent out a circular to its officials, informing them that “any intervention of whatever kind in the league’s internal affairs shall be prevented” and asking them to report any such attempts.²⁹ Obviously, there was an enormous amount of distrust among the leaders of the *Bund Naturschutz*, and there is little reason to assume that this distrust disappeared until the collapse of the *Reichsbund* in the fall of 1934. The conservation community ended up as one of the few parts of Nazi society that was not permanently pressed into a single national organization. Only the bird protection group had to accept mandatory membership in the *Reichsbund für Vogelschutz* in 1938.³⁰

The shock of the *Gleichschaltung* efforts was amplified in some regions by the rise of conservationists who sought to work through the party. In Münster, *Gaukulturwart* Hermann Bartels tried to set up a conservation network within the northern Westphalian NSDAP.³¹ In the Nuremberg area, Karl Hoepfel even created a new post of *Gauheimatpfleger*.³² Yet these party-based conservationists did not pursue an agenda significantly different from the traditional one. There was never an attempt to develop a quintessential Nazi theory of conservation—yet another argument against the traditional emphasis on ideology. When Hans Stadler, a Franconian conservationist and favorite of the local *Gauleiter*, was asked whether the members of his party-based conservation network had to join the NSDAP, Stadler vigorously denied any relevance of party membership: “there has not been any talk about party membership in Franconian conservation, for a tree or a quarry cannot stand right or left politically, but will always remain neutral.”³³ Yet even though agendas were basically identical, conservation work on a party ticket was clearly a threat to the traditional conservation community, which had clustered around state agencies almost from its inception. Not every region had a party official who moved into conservation aggressively, but the development was certainly irritating, especially considering that the Nazi party did not enjoy a great deal of prestige in the general population.

A third disturbing experience was the expulsion of conservationists who were Jewish or deemed Jewish according to the Nazis’ race-based definition. In the absence of public protests or discussions, it is difficult to know what it

meant for the remaining conservationists that some of their former comrades were ostracized; yet one should not underestimate the impact these Nazi interventions had on a movement with a strong *esprit de corps*. When the local party called on the *Landrat* of Freiburg to discharge the county conservation advisor because he had Jewish relatives, the *Landrat* reacted with a eulogy of his accomplishments: "I could only comment on the dismissal of Professor Lais with the greatest sense of regret."³⁴ Such a blunt statement is all the more remarkable since there was little chance of keeping Lais in his post, and he was indeed replaced with a party-backed candidate despite doubts whether the latter would pursue his vocation "with the same love and dedication as Professor Lais."³⁵ Yet one should not overestimate the importance of this incident, let alone glorify those who were ostracized as representatives of a different, more democratic approach to conservation.³⁶ After all, the conservationists lost no Thomas Mann as a result of Nazi rule.

The Nazi labor service projects were probably the greatest cause of concern. A labor service, or *Arbeitsdienst*, had been created in 1931 to fight mass unemployment, but only on a limited scale of some 177,000 people working on outdoor projects in January 1933. However, the Nazis raised this number to 797,000 in just one year, and the service became mandatory in 1935.³⁷ Many projects aimed at the reclamation of previously unused land or channeling rivers to increase farm acreage. After the severe World-War-I food shortages, it was a prime goal of agricultural policy to achieve autarky, and the Nazis pursued this goal with special vigor in view of their own war plans. Conservationists quickly realized that many of these projects meant the destruction of scenic areas and valuable wastelands. Thus, critical statements were published as early as 1932, and the topic became subject of prolonged discussions at the annual conference of Prussian conservation representatives in December 1932.³⁸ However, the conservationists' concern was matched by a near-total lack of any formal authority. Efforts to protect the landscape as a whole, rather than just isolated nature reserves or natural monuments, had gained increasing support during the late Weimar years, but very little had as yet been put into law. As a result, the "Appeal of the German Landscape to the Labor Service," which Schoenichen published shortly after the 1932 conference, was in fact little more than that: a petition without any binding force.³⁹

The conservationists' early worries turned out to be justified, for the environmental impact of the labor service projects was indeed profound. According to its own report from 1941, the labor service had drained some 1,811,000 acres of arable land and protected 657,000 acres from flooding.⁴⁰ Nobody monitored systematically what these changes in the land meant from an environmental standpoint, but it is not unreasonable to assume that many of them led to losses in biodiversity and aesthetic quality. Conservationists were unable to intervene effectively in these projects, which must have been frustrating for many of them.

To be sure, they did not remain inactive. Schoenichen asked the conservation representatives to prepare so-called “noli-tangere maps” on an ad-hoc basis, which showed the areas of special environmental value, but the results were not impressive. Standing against the momentum of a labor service born out of the perils of the depression, the conservationists’ information was easily brushed aside. A reclamation official in the north German town of Neumünster bluntly declared that heeding all the conservationists’ recommendations would mean “sabotaging the work program created by the Führer.”⁴¹ In theory, the national conservation law of 1935 provided some ground for more effective intervention, but the conservation administration does not ever seem to have used these means aggressively.

It is difficult to generalize on what these experiences during the first two years of Nazi rule meant for the conservation community. Of course, there was no public discussion about these concerns, and conservationists were strongly disinclined to recount these experiences after 1945, leaving us with little documentation. It is clear that conservationists had not abandoned all hopes on the Nazis, as persistent rumors on a wide array of allegedly pending laws demonstrate—from a decree for bird protection to one against outdoor advertising. Moreover, the conservation community was anything but unfamiliar with frustrating experiences after the limited advances during the Weimar years. These frustrations had left conservationists indifferent at the demise of the Weimar Republic, and it is probable that they would have developed a similar stance towards the Nazis if the story had continued in a similar fashion—neither enthusiasm nor resistance but simply accepting the Nazis as legitimate rulers. In all likelihood, it would have been a stance that mirrored what Martin Broszat has called *Resistenz*—a distance from Nazi goals that implied limits to the Nazis’ rule without necessarily leading to open resistance. In such a scenario, the conservationists would have tried to continue doing their business while accepting that the Nazis did theirs.⁴² However, speculations of this kind remain elusive, for the general climate changed dramatically with the passage of the national conservation law in June 1935. From then on, conservationists celebrated the Nazi regime as the one German government that had finally taken their cause seriously—completely unlike the republic of Weimar.

“... has taken conservation into his strong hand.” The Conservation Community after the Passage of the 1935 National Conservation Law

The story of the creation of the national conservation law has been told many times. Suffice it here to summarize that Hermann Göring, the semi-official “second man” in the Nazi state, was the crucial figure who pushed aggressively for the law and assured its passage at a cabinet meeting on June 26, 1935; on the same day, Hitler signed a decree that transferred authority for conservation to Göring’s *Reichsforstamt*.⁴³ The more interesting question is why this law induced

such an enthusiastic response from the conservation community. Perhaps no law in the legal history of German conservation was celebrated so passionately, and used so prolifically within a matter of months, as this act. Several factors came together in this reaction. First, the law stood out internationally as one of the few important advances of conservation in the 1930s. In fact, it seems that no other European country, with the possible exception of Bulgaria, experienced a boom of conservation work in the 1930s comparable to that of German conservation after 1935.⁴⁴ Second, the law was an event of historical proportions on the background of the meager accomplishments of the Weimar years. To be sure, laws had been passed during that time as well: the state of Lippe passed a *Heimat* protection law in 1920, followed by conservation laws in the state of Anhalt in 1923 and Hesse in 1931.⁴⁵ However, none of these laws received major attention because of the small size of these states, and the same held true for the *Heimat* protection laws of Brunswick and Saxony in 1934.⁴⁶ In fact, the passage of these laws made it all the more painful that Prussia, as Germany's largest state, failed to pass a similar law during the Weimar years.⁴⁷ Thus, it was altogether fitting from a conservation standpoint that the environmental history of the Weimar Republic ended with a decree of the Prussian minister of science and education in March 1932 that curtailed the conservationists' options in the designation of nature reserves.⁴⁸

Third, conservationists saw the passage of this law as a pledge of the Nazi leadership to the cause of conservation. By 1935, it had become clear to every careful observer that making headway for conservation required not only certain legal provisions but also the support of prominent Nazi authorities. As a result, conservationists often stressed the display of intentions that the law implied: "Now Göring has taken conservation into his strong hand; he lent the legislative backbone to our concerns," the *Bund Naturschutz in Bayern* declared in a circular of August 1935.⁴⁹ Similarly, Westphalia's provincial conservation representative noted in a letter of December 1935: "Last summer, we received the gift of the conservation law from the German government, a law to which we had been aspiring for long."⁵⁰ Some statements even claimed that conservation was following "the commands of the Führer," a view that greatly exaggerated Hitler's role in conservation affairs.⁵¹ Claiming support from Hitler and Göring was clearly a way to give weight to one's claims, and it was helpful in negotiations with other parties if one could claim support from the highest levels of government. The statements mirrored a hope that the national conservation law would only be the first of numerous interventions by Hitler and Göring for the cause of conservation, but that prospect turned out to be deceiving. Forceful initiatives from Nazi leaders remained rare after 1935.

Finally, the national conservation law was also an impressive legal document in its own right. It provided the conservationists with almost everything that they had been hoping for. It allowed for the designation of nature reserves

and natural monuments as well as large-scale “landscape protection reserves” (*Landschaftsschutzgebiete*), realizing the broadening of the conservation agenda raised in the 1920s. In fact, Article 20 made it mandatory to consult the conservation administration on any project that had an impact on the landscape.⁵² Moreover, Article 24 ruled out indemnity for measures taken in the law’s implementation. The law also provided for the creation of “National Nature Reserves” (*Reichsnaturschutzgebiete*) of special importance, a clause that was used to designate four areas with rich game populations where Hermann Göring, as Germany’s *Reichsjägermeister*, liked to go hunting. The Prussian state agency was transformed into a national institution, the *Reichsstelle für Naturschutz*. All in all, it was an impressive legislative package that left few of the conservationists’ wishes unfulfilled.⁵³ In the contemporary context, the only omission of any significance was the lack of provisions for national parks—the National Nature Reserves had taken their place—but even that omission was on the way to being corrected when Lutz Heck, the person in charge of conservation in Göring’s *Reichsförstamt*, devised a plan for the creation of national parks a few years later.⁵⁴ World War II prevented the execution of this plan; the first German national park had to wait until 1969.⁵⁵

The law opened unprecedented opportunities for conservation work, and officials and conservation representatives went to work swiftly. Hans Klose later spoke of a “high time” for conservation between 1936 and 1939. While this interpretation is open to debate concerning the material gains, it clearly mirrored the general atmosphere of conservation work in Nazi Germany. It was a time of intensive, almost feverish activity, when nature reserves were designated by the dozen, conservationists forged cooperative agreements with a whole host of partners, and letters and decrees were sent out in unprecedented numbers—in short, a time of euphoria and hope. To give only a few figures, authorities in Württemberg in southern Germany created no fewer than 46 nature reserves with a total area of 32,111 acres between 1937 and 1943, and the neighboring region of Baden saw even 58 designations with 17,653 acres. The extent of the boom becomes clear when one compares these figures with those of the postwar years from 1945 to 1959, when only 25 additional nature reserves were created in the combined states of Baden and Württemberg, with a total of 3,152 acres—only six percent of the acreage placed under protection during the Nazi era.⁵⁶ Never in German history have so many nature reserves been designated within such a brief period of time.

Of course, one may wonder what these accomplishments meant on the background of other Nazi actions. There are no national figures on the increase of protected areas since 1935, but it is highly unlikely that it was more than a small fraction of the acreage transformed by the labor service. If one adds other projects to this general balance, like the Autobahn scheme, numerous military reservations, the hasty rearmament and its environmental repercus-

sions, and the destruction during the war, it is evident that the general environmental balance sheet of Nazi conservation was bleak. However, that was not how conservationists thought during the Nazi era. For them the key issue was the designation of natural monuments and nature reserves. Since the early twentieth century, the German conservation movement had evolved in close proximity to state agencies that provided them with support, encouragement, and money, resulting in a gradual adoption of an administrative mindset among conservationists.⁵⁷ Nature reserves and long lists of natural monuments were frequently tantamount to an end in itself for them. There had been some interest in the landscape as a whole since the movement's inception, but any doubts about land reclamation or other Nazi projects with a deleterious impact on the environment never jeopardized the general confidence that conservationists had in the Nazi regime. Focusing narrowly on the legal options of the national conservation law, the conservationists accepted the environmental damage of Nazi policies of rearmament and warfare without much ado. The conservationists also accepted something else: the blatant violations of civil rights that their activities implied.

Conservation Work, the Easy Way: The Other Side of the Conservation Boom

One of the myths surrounding the national conservation law is that it could have passed during the Republic of Weimar as well.⁵⁸ Such an interpretation ignores a number of aspects, most prominently Article 24 of the law, which specified the general exclusion of indemnity for conservation measures. While the rule of law obviously called for some kind of compensation if conservation decrees significantly constrained or even prohibited land use, Article 24 abolished any corresponding obligation pursuant to the Nazis' rule of *Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz*, or "the common good above the individual good." Enshrined in point 24 of the Nazi Party's platform of 1920, the clause mirrored the supremacy of collective interests in Nazi Germany, and the tendency to play down individual rights.⁵⁹ Ultimately, *Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz* implied a rejection of the individual property rights tradition that went back to Roman law, replacing it with a *völkisch* theory that saw property owners as merely holders of a title that the collective *Völksgemeinschaft* had bestowed upon them. In other words, all property belonged not to individuals but to the mystical Aryan *Volk*. The national community could thus require individuals to surrender their possessions whenever it felt necessary.⁶⁰

It does not seem that conservationists generally understood this rationale, or even recognized it to any significant degree. What they did recognize was that this concept, and the ensuing Article 24 of the national conservation law, opened unprecedented opportunities in everyday conservation work. After all, negotiations with property owners had traditionally been one of the most excruciating tasks conservationists confronted in their daily work. Undoubtedly

some property owners were sympathetic with their work, but if that was not the case, prolonged negotiations over compensation payments were inevitable. On that background, the almost revolutionary implications of Article 24 should be clear, and it is by no means coincidental that the designation of nature reserves proceeded much more quickly after 1935. It is indeed remarkable how administrative proceedings that had been lagging for years suddenly shifted into high gear after the passage of the national conservation law. For example, a nature reserve in the Wutach Gorge, a tributary of the Rhine in southwest Germany, that had been in the making since the late 1920s, suddenly proceeded much more swiftly after the mid-1930s, and papers for the reserve were filed in August 1938.⁶¹ Typically, a memorandum of the forest administration of January 1936 mentioned Article 24 in a discussion of restrictions on forest use.⁶²

It is difficult to estimate the precise monetary impact of Article 24 because conservation officials, obviously aware that they were crossing a sensitive threshold, were careful not to record the exact meaning of Article 24 in writing. However, the implications are apparent in some cases, such as the Westrup Heath on the northern fringe of the Ruhr region. The heath attracted the interest of local waterworks, which sought an area for dumping sand and offered to buy some 165 acres of farmland for 60,000 Reichsmark, when the conservation administration intervened and designated the Westrup Heath as a nature reserve, rendering the agreement between the farmer and the waterworks void. To their credit, the conservation administration saw a need for financial compensation, though it is unclear whether the reasons were ethical or judicial since the designation clearly entailed confiscation of property, and cases of this kind could be brought to trial, where the ultimate decision remained with the *Preußisches Oberverwaltungsgericht*, a court that resisted Nazification to a remarkable extent.⁶³ The conservation administration offered a much lower amount than the waterworks' bid, 21,000 Reichsmark; the farmer managed to get 32,000 Reichsmark after two tough rounds of negotiations.⁶⁴ The conservation advisor's annual report did not mention Article 24 in his discussion of the case, instead recording "difficult negotiations," even though there can be no doubt the Article had played a key role in the talks.⁶⁵

On this background, the boom of conservation work after 1935 appears in a new light. It was not simply the result of new legal provisions, or the symbolic support by Hermann Göring and Adolf Hitler. The boom would have been unthinkable without the particular provisions of Article 24, which "took off the brakes" in conservation work. Conservationists had been asking for just such a law for more than 20 years. Shortly before World War I, a number of prominent conservationists including Ernst Rudorff, Fritz Koch, and Carl Fuchs sent out a circular to the German state governments urging them to provide for indemnity for conservation measures.⁶⁶ The petition, designated "confidential" by its authors, failed to receive any attention, but the dream of

such a clause remained alive. When Walther Schoenichen published an article in the Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* in 1933, he invoked the concept of *Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz*, noting that the issue of property conflicts “will need to find its solution sooner or later in a national spirit.”⁶⁷

It is telling that Rudorff and his colleagues asked for secrecy on this matter. Obviously, they were aware that a provision of this kind was a delicate thing. Walther Schoenichen and Werner Weber called for “a considerate treatment of the individuals concerned” in their commentary on the national conservation law, noting that “the idea of conservation should not triumph on the basis of the destroyed or badly damaged lives of National Comrades.”⁶⁸ However, the realities of everyday conservation work gradually weakened such doubts; the clause was just too helpful in the routine negotiations with wayward property owners. It took a high-profile case, where a government decree closed a large quarry and thus rendered an investment of more than one million Reichsmark worthless, to instill doubts in Hans Klose, who felt that this decree was going too far. In an internal memorandum, he spoke explicitly of “expropriation,” but to no avail; the quarry’s owner and operator did not receive any compensation, and the only concession was that they were allowed to conclude quarrying over the course of a year.⁶⁹ It is revealing that there was never any discussion about Article 24 in the conservation literature. In fact, the clause was used by the conservation administration as late as 1948.⁷⁰ The conservationists never bothered to annul the provision, or discuss its pervasive use, after the Nazis were gone. It was the West German constitution of 1949 that, through its general ban on confiscation of property without proper compensation, incidentally ended this chapter of conservation history.

Learning from the Nazi experience

On March 9, 1943, Southwest German conservationists suffered a major defeat. On that day, the *Reichsforstamt* approved a dam in the scenic Wutach nature reserve, a concession to a local utility which sought to divert the greater part of the Wutach’s water to generate electricity.⁷¹ In hindsight, the decision of the *Reichsforstamt* appears anything but surprising: five weeks earlier, the German Sixth Army had surrendered at Stalingrad, and Joseph Goebbels had held his infamous *Sportpalast* speech, with its call for “total war,” some three weeks earlier. Nonetheless, the conservationists were unwilling to accept what they saw as the destruction of the scenic Wutach, and they sought to find a way to revert the decision. Unfortunately, there was little prospect in a legal challenge: the *Reichsforstamt* was the highest authority on conservation issues in Nazi Germany, and starting a lawsuit offered dire prospects at best under war conditions. There was, however, an indirect approach. A few years earlier, an intervention by Heinrich Himmler had stopped quarrying operations on the Hohenstoffeln, a mountain in the Wutach’s vicinity.⁷² This offered a promising

precedent. The local conservation advisor, Hermann Schurhammer, activated a backchannel to Heinrich Himmler to gain his attention and support, and he did so with the full approval of Hans Klose, the head of the *Reichsstelle für Naturschutz*. “If there is any way to success, it leads through the SS,” Klose declared. He even hoped for a personal decision of the Führer in the Wutach conflict.⁷³ However, the effort, shrouded in secrecy as to not alert the utility, remained ineffective, and Himmler declined to intervene. After all, Himmler was, in the discomfiting formulation of a SS general, “currently mastering extremely important and urgent tasks.”⁷⁴ In the event, war conditions prevented the start of construction, and the utility’s attempt to invoke the license after the war was foiled by a broad civic movement that, after a decade of fierce conflict, saved the Wutach Gorge from destruction.⁷⁵ Today, the Wutach is one of the best-known nature reserves in Southwest Germany.

Yet noble goals do not justify all means, and few people will dispute nowadays that Klose and Schurhammer acted unethically. Even if they did not know about Himmler’s role in the Holocaust, they must have been aware that they were dealing with the leader of a network of terror. Since 1936, Heinrich Himmler had been the head of the German police, and he was the chief of the SS, the embodiment of Nazi racial ideology. But reprehensible as Klose’s and Schurhammer’s dealings may appear in hindsight, it is equally clear that they provided a fitting closure for the conservationists’ rapprochement to the Nazi regime. Klose and Schurhammer were following the same rationale other conservationists had used in invoking Article 24 of the national conservation law: to make gains in conservation, it was necessary to use every lever for the protection of nature that one could find. It was not that Klose or Schurhammer liked to contact Himmler (their ideological profile remained much weaker than Schoenichen’s or Schwenkel’s) or that other conservationists liked to confiscate property without compensation (as the attempts to compensate with nominal payments attest), but they did so because it allowed them to make headway in the protection of nature. It was a dubious morality at best, but nonetheless a popular one.

It is important to recognize this rationale, for it offers new lessons from the Nazi experience. The emphasis on ideological links between Nazis and conservationists has led environmental historians to depict conservationists of the Nazi era as fundamentally different from the environmentalists of later times. Conservationists appeared as people with a totally different mindset who, owing to their intellectual disorientation, ended up as accomplices to a genocidal regime. On that background, it becomes clear why there is not only a historical rationale for looking more closely at the everyday practices of Nazi-era conservation, but also a political one: focusing on the practical side will make the protagonists appear more similar to environmentalists of later times. The conservationists of the Nazi era were not ideological bloodhounds who acted

out inhuman ambitions that they had been harboring for decades—quite the contrary, they were, in a way, “perfectly ordinary conservationists” who, to their own surprise, were handed unprecedented opportunities during the Nazi era, and they tried to use these opportunities to the greatest extent possible. But there was a price to be paid, a price that conservationists of the Nazi era were willing to pay only too readily. It is only now that environmental historians are discovering its full extent.

¹ Thomas Zeller, *Straße, Bahn, Panorama. Verkehrswege und Landschaftsveränderung in Deutschland von 1930 bis 1990* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002); Thomas Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature. Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, Joachim Radkau and Frank Uekötter, eds. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003); Willi Oberkrome, “*Deutsche Heimat.*” *Nationale Konzeption und regionale Praxis von Naturschutz, Landschaftsgestaltung und Kulturpolitik in Westfalen-Lippe und Thüringen (1900–1960)* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004); Friedemann Schmoll, *Erinnerung an die Natur. Die Geschichte des Naturschutzes im deutschen Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2004); *How Green Were the Nazis? Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich*, Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, Mark Cioc, and Thomas Zeller, eds. (Athens, 2005).

² The present author has recently published a monograph on the topic. (Frank Uekoetter, *The Green and the Brown. A History of Conservation in Nazi Germany* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006]). This article seeks to explicate the monograph’s underlying assumptions and discuss perspectives for further research. At the same time, it demonstrates how the topic sheds new light on the contested history of intellectuals in Nazi Germany.

³ Little will be said here about the landscape-planning community, mostly because their contribution to the infamous *Generalplan Ost* has been covered thoroughly elsewhere: Walter Mrass, *Die Organisation des staatlichen Naturschutzes und der Landschaftspflege im Deutschen Reich und in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland seit 1935, gemessen an der Aufgabenstellung in einer modernen Industriegesellschaft* (Stuttgart: Ulmer, 1970). Cf. most recently, David Blackbourn’s offered a state-of-the-art account, *The Conquest of Nature. Water, Landscape and the Making of Modern Germany*, New York: Norton, 2006. See also Klaus Fehn, “‘Lebensgemeinschaft von Volk und Raum.’ Zur nationalsozialistischen Raum- und Landschaftsplanung in den eroberten Ostgebieten,” in: *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 207–24; Klaus Fehn, “‘Artgemäße deutsche Kulturlandschaft.’ Das nationalsozialistische Projekt einer Neugestaltung Ostmitteleuropas,” *Erde, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. (Cologne: Wienand, 2002), 559–75; Klaus Fehn, “Rückblick auf die ‘nationalsozialistische Kulturlandschaft.’ Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des völkisch-rassistischen Mißbrauchs von Kulturlandschaftspflege,” *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung* no. 5/6 (1999): 279–90; Michael A. Hartenstein, *Neue Dorflandschaften. Nationalsozialistische Siedlungsplanung in den “eingegliederten Ostgebieten” 1939 bis 1944* (Berlin: Köster, 1998); Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn. *Die Liebe zur Landschaft. Teil III: Der Drang nach Osten. Zur Entwicklung der Landespflege im Nationalsozialismus und während des Zweiten Weltkrieges in den “eingegliederten Ostgebieten”* (Munich: Minerva-Publikation, 1987). For all the

attention that landscape planners like Heinrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann and Konrad Meyer deserve, the emphasis on landscape planning in Eastern Europe has had the unwelcome side effect of distracting attention from work in the German mainland and suggesting that their work was morally unambiguous.

⁴ Staatsarchiv Nürnberg Rep. 212/19^{VII} No. 2542, Bund Naturschutz in Bayern to the Gruppenführer and Vertrauensmänner, January 10, 1939.

⁵ This line of reasoning has been followed most prominently by Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn. For some of their more recent publications, see Gert Gröning, "Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus," *Grüner Weg* 31a 10 (December, 1996): 4–25; Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, "Violence as the Basis of National Socialist Landscape Planning in the 'Annexed Eastern Areas'," in: *How Green*, 243–56; Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, "Landschafts- und Naturschutz," in: *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880–1933*, Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke, eds. (Wuppertal: P. Hammer, 1998), 23–34.

⁶ Friedemann Schmoll, "Die Verteidigung organischer Ordnungen. Naturschutz und Antisemitismus zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus," in: *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 169n.

⁷ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 151.

⁸ John Alexander Williams, "Protecting Nature between Democracy and Dictatorship. The Changing Ideology of the Bourgeois Conservationist Movement, 1925–1935," *Germany's Nature. Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History*, Thomas Lekan and Thomas Zeller, eds. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 183–206.

⁹ Walther Schoenichen, *Zauber der Wildnis in deutscher Heimat. Urkunden vom Wirken der Naturgewalten im Bilde der deutschen Landschaft* (Neudamm: Neumann, 1935), and *Urwaldwildnis in deutschen Landen. Bilder vom Kampf des deutschen Menschen mit der Urlandschaft* (Neudamm: Neumann, 1934).

¹⁰ In an international study of conservation institutions, the Netherlands Committee for International Nature Protection argued that Germany had the most extensive nature protection organization in Europe during the 1920s. (G. A. Brouwer, *The Organisation of Nature Protection in the Various Countries* [Cambridge: American Committee for International Wild Life Protection, 1938], 31.)

¹¹ Cf. Andreas Knaut, *Zurück zur Natur! Die Wurzeln der Ökologiebewegung* (Supplement 1 [1993] of *Jahrbuch für Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege*, Greven [1993]): 54–60, and Norbert Borrmann, *Paul Schultze-Naumburg 1869–1949. Maler, Publizist, Architekt. Vom Kultur reformer der Jahrhundertwende zum Kulturpolitiker im Dritten Reich* (Essen: Richard Bacht, 1989).

¹² Raymond H. Dominick III, *The Environmental Movement in Germany. Prophets and Pioneers 1871–1971* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 112n.

¹³ Cf. NSDAP Membership No. 1510121, from March 1, 1933, and Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde Berlin Document Center RSK I B 201 p. 444. For narratives that use this false information, see Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Liebe zur Landschaft. Teil 1: Natur in Bewegung. Zur Bedeutung natur- und freiraumorientierter Bewegungen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts für die Entwicklung der Freiraumplanung* (Munich: Minerva-Publikation, 1995), 149, and Hans-Werner Frohn, "Naturschutz macht Staat - Staat macht Naturschutz. Von der Staatlichen Stelle für Naturdenkmal-

pflüge in Preußen bis zum Bundesamt für Naturschutz 1906 bis 2006—eine Institutionengeschichte,” in: *Natur und Staat. Staatlicher Naturschutz in Deutschland 1906-2006* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Bundesamt für Naturschutz, 2006), 158.

¹⁴ Cf. Oberkrome, “*Deutsche Heimat*,” 73–75, and Roland Siekmann, *Eigenartige Senne. Zur Kulturgeschichte der Wahrnehmung einer peripheren Landschaft* (Lemgo: Landesverband Lippe, Institut für Lippische Landeskunde, 2004), 344.

¹⁵ E.g., compare Walther Schoenichen, “Der Naturschutz im nationalen Deutschland,” *Völkischer Beobachter, Norddeutsche Ausgabe* 46, 84 (March 23, 1933): 6; Walther Schoenichen, “‘Das deutsche Volk muß gereinigt werden.’—Und die deutsche Landschaft?” *Naturschutz* 14 (1933): 205–9; and Walther Schoenichen, “Der Naturschutz—ein Menetekel für die Zivilisation!” *Naturschutz* 15 (1933/34): 1–3. The contradictory nature of conservation statements in Nazi Germany has been laid out in a masterful fashion by Ludwig Fischer, “Die ‘Urlandschaft’ und ihr Schutz,” in: *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 183–205.

¹⁶ Cf. Susanne Falk, “‘Eine Notwendigkeit, uns innerlich umzustellen, liege nicht vor.’ Kontinuität und Diskontinuität in der Auseinandersetzung des Sauerländischen Gebirgsvereins mit Heimat und Moderne 1918–1960,” in: *Politische Zäsuren und gesellschaftlicher Wandel im 20. Jahrhundert. Regionale und vergleichende Perspektiven*, Matthias Frese and Michael Prinz, eds. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996), 401–17.

¹⁷ Cf. Thomas Potthast, *Die Evolution und der Naturschutz. Zum Verhältnis von Evolutionsbiologie, Ökologie und Naturethik* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1999).

¹⁸ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 134.

¹⁹ Numerous authors have pointed out that the word *Heimat* has no equivalent in other languages and that its precise meaning is almost impossible to put into words. For some English attempts at clarification, see Applegate, *Nation*; Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat: A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Peter Blickle, *Heimat. A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester: Camden House, 2002).

²⁰ Applegate, *Nation*, 18.

²¹ Cf. Staatsarchiv Würzburg, Landratsamt Ebern No. 1336, Der Regierungsbeauftragte für Naturschutz in Unterfranken to the Bezirksbeauftragten für Naturschutz in Mainfranken, March 12, 1937.

²² Ernst Rudorff, “Ueber das Verhältniß des modernen Lebens zur Natur,” *Preußische Jahrbücher* 45 (1880): 266.

²³ Walther Schoenichen, “‘Wir wollen einen Naturschutzpark gründen und...’,” *Naturschutz* 15 (1934): 137.

²⁴ Hans Klose, *Der Weg des deutschen Naturschutzes* (Egestorf, 1949), 3.

²⁵ Charles Cloosmann, “Legalizing a *Völksgemeinschaft*. Nazi Germany’s Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935,” in: *How Green*, 18.

²⁶ This chronology does not apply to all aspects of conservation work—specifically, Alwin Seifert’s work as an Advocate for Landscape Planning in the Autobahn construction project followed a different trajectory: cf. Zeller, *Straße*, and Thomas Zeller, “Molding the Landscape of Nazi Environmentalism. Alwin Seifert and the Third Reich,” in: *How Green*, 147–70.

- ²⁷ Williams, "Protecting Nature," 196. Similarly: Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn, "Landschafts- und Naturschutz," 30.
- ²⁸ Cf. Karl Ditt, *Raum und Volkstum. Die Kulturpolitik des Provinzialverbandes Westfalen 1923–1945* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1988), 214, and Thomas Scheck, *Denkmalpflege und Diktatur. Eine Untersuchung über die Erhaltung von Bau- und Kulturdenkmälern im Deutschen Reich zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der preußischen Provinz Schleswig-Holstein* (Ph.D. dissertation, Kiel University, 1993), 88–90.
- ²⁹ Staatsarchiv Würzburg Landratsamt Bad Kissingen No. 1237, Bund Naturschutz in Bayern to the Gruppenvorstände and Vertrauensmänner, October 10, 1933.
- ³⁰ Cf. Anna-Katharina Wöbse, "Lina Hähnle und der Reichsbund für Vogelschutz. Soziale Bewegung im Gleichschritt," in: *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 309–28.
- ³¹ Westfälisches Archivamt Münster Best. 717 file "Reichsstelle (Bundesstelle) für Naturschutz (und Landschaftspflege)," Gaukulturwart Bartels, Aufruf an die Mitarbeiter des Naturschutzes, November 9, 1933.
- ³² Staatsarchiv Nürnberg Rep. 212/19^{VII} No. 2535, Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, Kreisleitung Weißenburg to the Bezirksamt Weißenburg, November 16, 1936.
- ³³ Staatsarchiv Würzburg Landratsamt Ebern No. 1336, Der Regierungs-Beauftragte der NSDAP für Naturschutz in Unterfranken to Hauptlehrer Hoch in Ebern, March 11, 1935.
- ³⁴ Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe Abt. 235 No. 6550, Der Landrat als Vorsitzender der Bezirksnaturschutzstelle Freiburg-Land to the Minister des Kultus und Unterrichts, July 3, 1936.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, Der Landrat als Vorsitzender der Bezirksnaturschutzstelle Freiburg-Land to the Minister des Kultus und Unterrichts, October 7, 1936, p. 2.
- ³⁶ This point is all the more important since attempts have been made in recent years to identify a "Jewish conservation," obviously unmindful of the fact that such designations are uncomfortably reminiscent of Nazi phantasms like "Jewish physics." (Cf. Gert Gröning, "Siegfried Lichtenstaedter, 'Naturschutz und Judentum, ein vernachlässigtes Kapitel jüdischer Sittenlehre'—ein Kommentar," in: *Arbeitsmaterialien zum Workshop "Naturschutz und Demokratie!?"* Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, eds. [Hannover, 2004], 41–44.)
- ³⁷ Kiran Klaus Patel, "Soldaten der Arbeit." *Arbeitsdienste in Deutschland und den USA 1933–1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 55, 149.
- ³⁸ Max Kästner, "Die Gefahr der Naturschändung durch den Freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst," *Mitteilungen des Landesvereins Sächsischer Heimatschutz* 21 (1932): 254–63; Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf BR 1011 No. 43, letter of the Direktor der Staatlichen Stelle für Naturdenkmalpflege in Preußen, May 8, 1933.
- ³⁹ Cf. Walther Schoenichen, "Appell der deutschen Landschaft an den Arbeitsdienst," *Naturschutz* 14 (1933): 145–49.
- ⁴⁰ Will Decker, *Der deutsche Arbeitsdienst. Ziele, Leistungen und Organisation des Reichsarbeitsdienstes*, 3rd edition (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1941), 16.
- ⁴¹ Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein Abt. 734.4 No. 3348, Der Kulturbaubeamte in Neumünster to the Landrat in Pinneberg, December 8, 1933.
- ⁴² Cf. Martin Broszat, "Resistenz und Widerstand. Eine Zwischenbilanz des Forschungsprojekts," in: *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, vol. 4, Martin Broszat, Elke Fröhlich, and Anton Grossmann, eds. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1981), 697.

⁴³ Still the best overview on the institutional history of conservation is Michael Wetengel, "Staat und Naturschutz 1906–1945. Zur Geschichte der Staatlichen Stelle für Naturdenkmalpflege in Preußen und der Reichsstelle für Naturschutz," *Historische Zeitschrift* 257 (1993): 355–99.

⁴⁴ Cf. Barbara A. Cellarius, *In the Land of Orpheus. Rural Livelihoods and Nature Conservation in Post-Socialist Bulgaria* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

⁴⁵ Siekmann, *Eigenartige Senne*, 343; Walther Schoenichen and Werner Weber, *Das Reichsnaturschutzgesetz vom 26. Juni 1935 und die Verordnung zur Durchführung des Reichsnaturschutzgesetzes vom 31. Oktober 1935 nebst ergänzenden Bestimmungen und ausführlichen Erläuterungen* (Berlin-Lichterfelde: Bermühler-Verlag, 1936), 125; Ludwig Spilger, "Das neue Naturschutzgesetz," *Volk und Scholle* 10/2 (1932): 43.

⁴⁶ Gustav Mitzschke, *Das Reichsnaturschutzgesetz vom 26. Juni 1935 nebst Durchführungsverordnung vom 31. Oktober 1935 und Naturschutzverordnung vom 18. März 1936 sowie ergänzenden Bestimmungen* (Berlin: Pavey, 1936), xiv; Hans Jungmann, *Gesetz zum Schutze von Kunst-, Kultur- und Naturdenkmälern (Heimatschutzgesetz)* (Radebeul-Dresden: Kupky & Dietze, 1934),

⁴⁷ Cf. the proceedings in Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin HA I Rep. 90 A No. 1798.

⁴⁸ Cf. Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein Abt. 301 No. 4065, Der Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung to the Regierungspräsidenten, March 21, 1932.

⁴⁹ Staatsarchiv Würzburg Landratsamt Bad Kissingen No. 1237, Bund Naturschutz in Bayern to the Gruppenführer and Vertrauensmänner, August 28, 1935.

⁵⁰ Westfälisches Archivamt Münster Best. 717 file "Reichsstelle (Bundesstelle) für Naturschutz (und Landschaftspflege)," Der Provinzialkonservator von Westfalen to the Reichs- und Preußischer Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, December 31, 1935, p. 7.

⁵¹ Hans Schwenkel, "Vom Wesen des deutschen Naturschutzes," *Blätter für Naturschutz* 21 (1938): 75.

⁵² Historians have repeatedly played down the importance of this clause. Most recently, Thomas Lekan provided a highly skeptical description of the clause's practical meaning. (Lekan, *Imagining*, 205.)

⁵³ For a more extensive discussion of the law's provisions, see Schoenichen and Weber, *Das Reichsnaturschutzgesetz*; Mitzschke, *Das Reichsnaturschutzgesetz*; Karl Cornelius, *Das Reichsnaturschutzgesetz* (Bochum-Langendreer, 1936).

⁵⁴ Cf. Staatsarchiv Darmstadt G 15 Friedberg B 101, Niederschrift über die Arbeitsbesprechung und Bereisung am 19. und 20. Juni 1939 in Frankfurt am Main und Umgebung, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Hans-Dietmar Koepfel and Walter Mrass, "Natur- und Nationalparke," in: *Natur- und Umweltschutz in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Gerhard Olschowy, ed. (Berlin: Parey, 1978), 810.

⁵⁶ Bärbel Häcker, *50 Jahre Naturschutzgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg. Zeitzeugen berichten* (Stuttgart: Ulmer, 2004), 28, 58.

⁵⁷ For a criticism of this tradition, see Frank Uekötter, "Naturschutz und Demokratie. Plädoyer für eine reflexive Naturschutzbewegung," *Natur und Landschaft* 80 (2005): 137–40.

⁵⁸ See, for instance, Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Liebe zur Landschaft Teil 1*, 200.

⁵⁹ Walther Hofer, *Der Nationalsozialismus: Dokumente 1933–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1957), 31.

⁶⁰ Cf. Michael Stolleis, *Gemeinwohlformen im nationalsozialistischen Recht* (Berlin: J. Schweitzer Verlag, 1974), 30, 118n.

⁶¹ Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe Abt. 235 No. 48295, Minister des Kultus und Unterrichts to the Reichsforstmeister, August 25, 1938.

⁶² Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe Abt. 237 No. 49495, Badischer Finanz- und Wirtschaftsminister, Forstabteilung to the Finanz- und Wirtschaftsminister, January 28, 1936, p. 2.

⁶³ Cf. Stolleis, *Gemeinwohlformen*, 126.

⁶⁴ See Westfälisches Archivamt Münster LWL Best. 702 No. 185 for the proceedings.

⁶⁵ Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf RW 24 No. 961, Naturdenkmalpflege und Naturschutz im Gebiete des Siedlungsverbandes Ruhrkohlenbezirk. Tätigkeitsbericht des Bezirksbeauftragten für Naturschutz in Essen für die Geschäftsjahre 1935/36 und 1936/37, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe Abt. 235 No. 48254, Eingabe an die deutschen Regierungen, undated (ca. 1913).

⁶⁷ Schoenichen, “Der Naturschutz im nationalen Deutschland,” 6.

⁶⁸ Schoenichen and Weber, *Reichsnaturschutzgesetz*, 114.

⁶⁹ Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe Abt. 235 No. 48275, Der Direktor der Reichsstelle für Naturschutz to Ministerialrat Asal of the Ministerium des Kultus und Unterrichts, May 7, 1940.

⁷⁰ Cf. Frank Uekötter, “Einleitung,” in: *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 27–29.

⁷¹ Staatsarchiv Freiburg C 30/1 No. 1268, Der Reichsforstmeister als Oberste Naturschutzbehörde to the Generalinspektor für Wasser und Energie, March 9, 1943.

⁷² For a narrative of the Hohenstoffeln conflict, see Volker Ludwig, “Die Entstehung des Naturschutzgebietes ‘Hohenstoffeln’,” *Hegau* 42 (1997/98): 153–90, and Kurt Oesterle, “Doktor Faust besiegt Shylock. Wie Ludwig Finckh den Hohenstoffel rettete und wie der Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler als sein Mephisto ihm dabei half,” *Hegau* 42 (1997/98): 191–208.

⁷³ Bundesarchiv Koblenz B 245/6 p. 182.

⁷⁴ Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe Abt. 235 No. 48275, Der höhere SS- und Polizeiführer bei den Reichsstatthaltern in Württemberg und Baden im Landkreis V und beim Chef der Zivilverwaltung im Elsaß to Ludwig Finckh, August 25, 1943.

⁷⁵ On the postwar-conflict, see Sandra Lynn Chaney, *Visions and Revisions of Nature. From the Protection of Nature to the Invention of the Environment in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945–1975* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1996), 189–228.