

more than brief mention in the literature before. Also, unlike the previous two instances, there were no military or industrial considerations.<sup>86</sup>

On April 7, 1933, the famous Nazi "Law for the Reorganization of the Civil Service" was promulgated. German academics were civil servants, and under this law, Jews (except those who had been appointed prior to 1914, or had served in the front lines during World War I), political unreliaables "who did not at all times unreservedly promote the national state," and those whose positions were judged supernumerary were to be dismissed.<sup>87</sup> On April 25, 1933, the education ministry sent a telegram<sup>88</sup> to the Göttingen curator relieving six faculty members of their duties, placing them on leave but with full pay. Three of these were mathematicians: Richard Courant, Emmy Noether, and Felix Bernstein. None of them was directly dismissed, as none of them fell at the time under the April 7 law: Bernstein had been a civil-service appointee since 1911,<sup>89</sup> Courant had been a front-line soldier in the war, and Emmy Noether was a *nichtbeamtete* faculty member (i.e., without civil-service status). On May 6, however, such personnel were also included. On April 28, 1933, the Dekan of the Faculty of Mathematics and Science (the engineer Max Reich), apparently on his own initiative, advised Edmund Landau to "temporarily put off his lectures"; by agreement, these were given in summer semester 1933 after a week's delay, by his long-time Assistant Werner Weber.<sup>90</sup> At the same time, Reich advised the mathematicians Paul Bernays, Paul Hertz, Kurt Hohenemser, Hans Lewy, and Otto Neugebauer that "until the final decision as to their rights, they should not make use of their right to teach (*venia legendi*)." These were all *Privatdozenten* at the time. Bernays, Hertz, Lewy, and Hohenemser were Jewish; Neugebauer was (falsely) suspected of being a communist. The unexpectedness of the law of April 7 is shown by the fact that Hohenemser had taken the civil-service oath in order to be a qualified teacher at the Institute for Applied Mechanics in Göttingen just six days before.<sup>91</sup> The warning to Neugebauer again indicates Nazi bureaucratic confusion. Shortly before Reich's advisory of April 28, the university Kurator, Justus Valentiner, had asked Neugebauer to become the oper-

<sup>86</sup> For previously published discussions of aspects of this complicated incident, see Reid 1976; S. L. Segal, "Helmut Hasse in 1934," *Historia Mathematica* 7 (1980): 46–56; Schappacher n.d. All material about the incident not otherwise footnoted can be found in the published version of Schappacher's article, Becker et al. 1987: 344–373.

<sup>87</sup> For example, see the "Einleitung" by Hans-Joachim Dahms, in Becker et al. 1987: 26.

<sup>88</sup> A copy is reproduced in *ibid.*, between pp. 28 and 29.

<sup>89</sup> Felix Bernstein was appointed to the Göttingen faculty in 1907 and since 1911 had a regular *Extraordinariat*. In 1919, he was denied promotion to full professor, but finally in 1921 was given a "personal full professorship" against the will of the faculty (only Courant, Hilbert, and Runge spoke for him). See Schappacher n.d., and M. Frewer, "Das Wissenschaftliche Werk Felix Bernsteins," thesis, Göttingen, 1979. A published paper drawn from this last appeared in *JDMV* 83 (1985): 84–94.

<sup>90</sup> See Schappacher n.d., and Kluge 1983: 94.

<sup>91</sup> H.-J. Dahms, "Einleitung," in Becker et al. 1987: 25; also, see an article by Cordula Tollmien on the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Strömungsforschung in *ibid.*: 472.

ational head of the Göttingen Mathematical Institute,<sup>92</sup> since Courant was on leave. On April 29, Neugebauer wrote to Valentiner, resigning his new office as institute director because of the letter from Reich, as well as to Reich, in both cases with biting sarcasm.<sup>93</sup> Hermann Weyl was named acting institute director. However, he lasted only until October 9.<sup>94</sup>

But it is not the oft-described dismissals at Göttingen that are of concern here, though there will be occasion to treat aspects thereof at a later point, but rather what happened afterward. As prelude occurred the infamous boycott of Landau's classes. Landau had taken Reich's advice in April: on May 5, 1933, he wrote Weyl (addressing him as the "acting operational director of the Mathematical Institute" instead of by name) that his lectures would begin May 8 (the semester had already begun late on May 1), but "in case I do not learn soon enough that the situation is clarified, I will ask our colleague Herr Weber as my Assistant . . . to begin in my place."<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, Weber gave Landau's summer-semester lectures. On May 9, Landau had been told by the Dekan that "clarification of his legal situation" could not occur before a few weeks had passed, and nothing happened during the summer semester. The new catalog of lectures for the winter semester contained Landau's announcement of what he intended to lecture on. No word from either the Kurator or the Dekan had come to him. What happened next is best described in Landau's own sober words.<sup>96</sup>

I had therefore to assume as self-evident that from the point of view of those in charge (*von zuständiger Seite*), even if actually a little care was still necessary, all precautions had been taken in order for me to take up again my usual lecturing as was my duty.

On Nov. 2, about 11:15, as I wished to leave my office and go to the large auditorium to begin my lecture, the entry hall was filled with about 80 to 100 students who let me through unhindered. In the lecture hall was *one* person. Plainly therefore a boycott in that sentries at the doors had prevented (without force) the students willing to work from setting foot in the lecture hall.

What happened—and it happened with the collaboration of many who should be my pupils—leads me to the opinion that the sole consequence is my application for emeritization or pensioning.

<sup>92</sup> MI, Kurator to Neugebauer, Apr. 25, 1933. Neugebauer in fact generally substituted for Courant as operational director in the latter's absence: e.g., MI, Kurator to Courant, Mar. 6, 1933. Reich's letter must have been received on April 28 or 29, to judge from Neugebauer to Valentiner on Saturday, April 29 (where April 27 is mistakenly indicated for April 25).

<sup>93</sup> MI, Neugebauer to Valentiner, Apr. 29, 1933; Neugebauer to Reich, Apr. 29, 1933.

<sup>94</sup> On that date, Weyl wrote the Göttingen Kurator asking for his release as of January 1, 1934. He wrote from Zürich and did not return to Göttingen. See his letter in Archiv der Universität Göttingen (hereafter UAG) 3206b.

<sup>95</sup> Handwritten note in MI.

<sup>96</sup> UAG 3206b, Landau to Valentiner, Nov. 5, 1933. The whole letter is reproduced in Kluge 1983: 95a–95c, and the cited portion also published in Schappacher 1987.

## THREE CASE STUDIES

Landau goes on to ask for this change in status and, at the same time, leave, and adds a postscript:<sup>97</sup>

I only send this letter today because soon after this occurrence a student appeared in my office (by chance Professor Prandtl and Dr. Heesch were present at the time) in order to substantiate this happening, which according to him was the work of no organized group. I advised him to give me this substantiation in writing by Nov. 4, and in a form suitable for transmission to the Kurator and the ministry (which he did), so that I had a foundation which was based not only on memory for the preparation of my further steps. I enclose (without comment, however, with the deletion of his signature) a copy of his letter,<sup>98</sup> which naturally only strengthens my wish [for retirement].

According to Heinrich Kleinsorge, at that time the head of the organization of mathematics students, the boycott was actually put together through student channels by those who were members of the SA (*Sturmabteilung*, the original "stormtroopers," significantly less important after June 30, 1934, though still an avenue for demonstrating Nazi sympathies).<sup>99</sup> Kleinsorge himself was in hospital on the day of the boycott,<sup>100</sup> and the student who appeared in Landau's office was his deputy at the time, the brilliant young mathematician Oswald Teichmüller, who was also a convinced Nazi.<sup>101</sup> The Kurator replied in agreement with Landau's request on November 19; Landau received leave to work at Groningen (in the Netherlands) that was later extended until the end of the winter semester. On February 7, he was retired according to paragraph 6 of the April 7 law (which provided for the elimination of supernumerary professors). Landau received his regular pay until July 1, 1934, and thereafter the appropriate retirement pay until his death of a heart attack in 1938—this sort of Nazi legalism was characteristic not only of Landau's, but of other similar cases as well at this time.<sup>102</sup>

Since Weyl (who had been in Switzerland since mid-August) had resigned on October 9, with the enforced retirement of Landau, Gustav Herglotz was the only regular unretired professor left. Göttingen had been the leading light of German mathematics; now there was danger that it might become a mathematical backwater.<sup>103</sup> Since July 29, 1933, Weyl had been negotiating with F. K.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> A copy of this letter has recently been discovered in the *Nachlass* of Erich Kamke and published by N. Schappacher and E. Scholz (with assistance of others): "Oswald Teichmüller—Leben und Werk," *JDMV* 94 (1992): 28–30. For a partial translation, see chapter 7.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.: 5, citing an interview with Kleinsorge on Mar. 2, 1985.

<sup>100</sup> According to the manuscript version of Schappacher and Scholz 1992.

<sup>101</sup> Schappacher and Scholz 1992: n. 14. However, Constance Reid (1976: 156), apparently following a suggestion of Kurt Friedrichs, while agreeing that Teichmüller was the student in Landau's office, states that Werner Weber was the "commander" of the boycott. This seems dubious.

<sup>102</sup> In March 1939, the decision was taken that if Landau's widow decided to emigrate to the United States, then she would no longer be paid the appropriate pension money. See UAG 3206b letter of Mar. 11, 1939, from the education ministry to the Göttingen Kurator.

<sup>103</sup> The mathematics faculty, from *Assistenten* to *Ordinarien*, lost eleven members in 1933–34; cf. also MI, Weyl to Artin, June 9, 1933.