



Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times

Steven E. Aschheim

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The way three prominent German-Jewish intellectuals confronted Nazism, as revealed by their intimate writings.

Through an examination of the remarkable diaries and letters of three extraordinary and distinctive German-Jewish thinkers—Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and Victor Klemperer—Steven E. Aschheim illuminates what these intimate writings reveal about their evolving identities and world views as they wrestled with the meaning of being both German and Jewish in Hitler's Third Reich. In recounting how their personal and private selves responded to the public experiences these writers faced, their letters and diaries provide a striking composite portrait. Scholem, a scholar of Jewish mysticism and the spiritual traditions of Judaism; Arendt, a political and social philosopher; and Klemperer, a professor of literature and philology, were all highly articulate German-Jewish intellectuals, shrewd observers, and acute analysts of the pathologies and special contours of their times. From their intimate writings Aschheim constructs a revealing "history from within" that sheds new light on the complexity and drama of the 20th-century European and Jewish experience.

Steven E. Aschheim holds the Vigevani Chair of European Studies and teaches in the Department of History at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He is author of *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923*; *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890–1990*; and *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises*.

Published in association with Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati

May 2001

120 pages, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, index

cloth 0-253-33891-3 \$19.95 s / £15.50

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