

Appendix viii



Dissertation Preface (2005)

There are some advantages to longevity. I can clearly remember the latter years of the period covered in this paper, and the war years that followed. We were geographically remote from the unfolding European tragedy, but, emotionally, closely linked to it. The major part of our extended family was in Lithuania, where they were all later murdered. There was, in our family circle, a small number of German Jewish refugees. I overheard many of their stories. A brother would soon join the army and leave for distant battlegrounds. My country was itself infected with the Nazi virus, and many of its people were strongly and openly pro-Nazi and anti-semitic. Nazi-style youth movements and uniformed groups proliferated. There was also a strong communist influence among trade-union leaders and the intelligentsia of the left. In our environment, I was becoming aware of all this.

The path that I have followed, and that has led to this dissertation, is academically unorthodox. I wish therefore to record my thanks to my supervisor, by whom I have been guided on a rapid journey from the innocence of a dilettante in history to the portals of academic acceptance, with much patience, but with no lack of professional rigour.