BEFORE AUSCHWITZ: JEWISH PRISONERS IN THE PREWAR CONCENTRATION CAMPS. By KIM WÜNSCHMANN (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), £33.95.

For the April 2016 issue of *Harper's*, an interview with former United States' domestic policy advisor John Ehrlichman, conducted in 1994, revealed that President Nixon's "war on drugs" was devised as a means to target hippies and African-Americans. The president—who had no shortage of imagined demons—saw these minority groups as opponents who could not be confronted directly through existing political means.

> "The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people . . . You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin. And then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities," Ehrlichman said. "We could arrest their leaders. raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did." (from Tom LoBianco, CNN politics, March 24, 2016)

Some social programs and political crusades have been (are, and can be) used to conceal attempts to exert unusual control over, and explicitly harm those who otherwise might enjoy legal safeguards. Where there is both the will and expenditure of effort on the part of leaders to turn prejudices into policy, the result is institutions that foster "abnormal" manifestations of state-sponsored criminality. (59)

Richard Nixon was obviously not a Nazi. But he was smart, creative, and nasty: some of the methods he employed had been well-rehearsed by right-wing and authoritarian regimes in diverse settings. When Nixon was a teen, across the Atlantic in Germany--under the guise of preserving law and order--the Nazis established a system

of concentration camps, which served to terrorize and vilify their enemies, almost immediately upon assuming power in 1933. Until recently, strange as it may seem, the Nazis have been given the benefit of the doubt (by many scholars) who tended to see the pre-World War II concentration camps mainly as a device for combating their political enemies, especially the Communists and other social outsiders (164)—while admitting that these institutions occasionally overstepped such bounds. It would be an exaggeration to claim that the pre-Holocaust Nazi camps have been ignored. But to the extent that they have been scrutinized, a point often made is passing is that they had no great importance as far as Jews were concerned. Especially in the Third Reich's first years, "[t]he notion that only Jews with political affiliations were imprisoned in concentration camps [such as Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Oranienburg] of 1933-1934, however, is invalid." (44) To be sure, despite being the worst that could be imagined at the time, these were not yet sites of genocide as would emerge at Auschwitz, Majdanek, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka on Polish soil during wartime.

Kim Wünschmann has made an extraordinary contribution to our understanding of German history and Jewish history in the interwar period through her meticulously detailed and penetrating study of Jewish prisoners in Nazi concentration camps before the outbreak of the Second World War. For all too understandable reasons, most attention has been paid by historians to the war years and the devastating role the concentration camps played in the Holocaust. Wünschmann alerts us to the significance of exploring the camps from their inception and transformations under National Socialism, in the context of the period from 1933 to 1939—as opposed to primarily viewing them as a prelude to, or in relation to the Holocaust. Contrary to the characterization of the early camps in several scholarly fields, Wünschmann argues that "Jewish inmates . . . were at all times conspicuously overrepresented in relation to their share of the population as a whole", and

> although before 1938 their absolute numbers were low in comparison both with other groups of prisoners and with the wartime figures, their significance was high . . . "the Jew" from the beginning was an essential entity firmly established in the camps' ecology of violence. Jewish prisoners' constant presence, both physically and discursively, as well as their exposed status as outcasts among the outcasts, structured the "order of terror" and influenced both perpetrators and prisoners' perceptions and behaviors. . . . Nowhere was their exclusion as a discriminated minority, their degradation from "German citizens of the Jewish faith" to outlawed "Jews in Germany" enacted more radically and brutally than in the concentration camps. (8-9)

Even (by relatively objective standards) 'Jewish criminals' had a raw deal: "Jewish former lawbreakers were judged according to much stricter criminological standards: they could be taken into preventive custody on the basis of few convictions and shorter periods behind bars, no matter how far back they dated." (187) A large share of Wünschmann's analysis concerns "the process by which the institution of 'protective custody' gradually became antisemitically charged." (22)

This book should be of particular interest to criminologists, as the phenomenae described and analyzed here reveal the degree to which discourses, laws, and institutions were modified and created not as a response to lawbreaking in any conventional sense—but as a way to promote discrimination and racism, and especially as a means persecute citizens deemed enemies of the state, in this case, Jews. "For many Jews in Nazi Germany," Wünschmann writes,"the day-to-day reality prior to 1938-39 presented a peculiar blend of unparalleled discrimination and ongoing normal life." (4) One of its most bizarre and unsettling aspects was the way that one might be subject to the rule of law.

In addition to her superb discussion of the transformation of 'protective justice' into an assault on Germany's Jews, Wünschmann's study delves deeply into what actually happened to Jews in the camps' earliest incarnations, which included 'abuse, isolation, and murder' to a shocking degree. "Once captured after Hitler's seizure of power, [Werner] Scholem, [Werner] Hirsch, [Erich] Mühsam, and [Hans] Litten were trophies whose maltreatment satisfied a long-held lust for vengeance on the part of the Nazi movment's paramilitary units, first and foremost the SA." (29) She also deals explicitly with the fate of Jewish women the camp system, and how they as so-called "emigrants" (those who returned to Germany after supposedly leaving the country permanently) were the avant-garde of a new variety of criminalization. (117) Wünschmann explains how camp policies evolved, overall, from 1935 to 1938 in order to make the tiny minority of Jews to appear as the greatest threat to the Third Reich. Following the lead of scholars such as Alan Steinweis and Peter Longerich, Wünschmann deftly explores how the year 1938, especially the Anschluss (annexation) of Austria (March) and the events of 9 and 10 November provided pretexts for instensifying both the importance of the camps in the greater scheme of National Socialism and the camps' fixation on the Jews as the chief enemy of the state. Given that periods of apparent "calm" can be just as important as disruptions and aberrations, Wünschmann also pays keen attention to the sense that Nazi enthusiasm for singling out and terrorizing Jews may have abated somewhat in 1939, before the outbreak of the Second World War. It is crucial to recall that "[m]ost Jewish prisoners of the prewar concentration camps eventually were set free; generally, release was still the rule rather than the exception" (122)—but under the condition that they were to leave the country and never return (124), which became increasingly difficult in the 30s, and nearly impossible once the war broke out.

Among the few problematic aspects of this fine book is the author's uncritical use of the term "November Pogrom" to designate the events retrospectively referred to as Kristallnacht (the night of the broken glass). Although it is often advisable to follow

common usage in order to avoid confusion, because the event is so important in the context of Wünschmann's discussion it would have been helpful to underscore the extent to which the destruction of property and the massive, coordinated assault on German Jewry did not, in fact, conform to the pattern of 'pogroms' in Russia—but were, in fact, more lethal, planned, and pervasive than the progrom 'waves' in Poland, Romania, and the Ukraine. I also would have appreciated some mention of the camps that existed elsewhere in Europe at the time. Even if the result were to show how different the Nazi concentration camps were from, say, those under the French before Vichy, it would have been a useful insight. In *On the Eve: The Jews of Europe before the Second World War* (2012), Bernard Wasserstein notes that by January, 1939, "all over the continent," Jews were forced into "places of internment designated for refugees, illegal immigrants, or political undesirables. What these countries shared was the notion that the camp dwellers did not belong in normal society." But these are minor quibbles about a supremely well-argued and important study. Above all the author is to be commended for transcending the dichotomy between perpetrators and the persecuted, giving Nazi victims a pronounced voice in this supremely important study.

Michael Berkowitz

University College London