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CRITIQUE OF THE GERMAN INTELLIGENTSIA

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CRITIQUE OF THE
GERMAN INTELLIGENTSIA



HUGO BALL

TRANSLATED BY BRIAN L. HARRIS



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INTRODUCTION



THE INVERTED NATIONALISM
OF HUGO BALL'S *CRITIQUE*
OF THE GERMAN INTELLIGENTSIA

ANSON RABINBACH

I

HUGO BALL'S *Critique of the German Intelligentsia* is simultaneously a historical document and a provocation. A passionate indictment of the German intelligentsia for its chauvinism in the First World War, the *Critique* is also an extraordinary instance of the messianic politics that inaugurated our epoch. Above all, it is the consummate performance of an extraordinary career that, in only a few years, took Ball from Munich's expressionist avant-garde to the founding of Dada in Zurich, to theological anarchism and antiwar politics in Bern, and, only a year and a half later, to the spiritual refuge of the Catholic faith.

First published in January 1919, the *Critique* is on one level a historical account of how German religion and philosophy conspired with dynastic absolutism and militarism to produce the disastrous betrayal of August 1914. But in esoteric counterpoint to this prosaic and critical dimension is Ball's theological politics. On this level the book culminates in an apocalyptic vision in which Bakuninist anarchism, French romantic poetry, and chiliastic revolt all combine to restore the originary ideal of Christian justice sacrificed to throne and altar. Catastrophe and anticipation thus fuel the *Critique's* mood of rhetorical urgency and its ultimate desire for a final conflagration of the German "spirit" that would usher in a new order of things.

Reading it from the perspective of German unification and the

anti-utopian revolutions of our own time, we are provoked to reexamine the *Critique's* messianism as well as the arguments Ball assembled against what he regarded as a singularly negative heritage of intellectual authoritarianism. Ball's astonishingly accurate prediction that the failure of German intellectuals to grasp the reasons for the defeat of 1918 would have disastrous consequences for the postwar era is prescient enough to warrant taking his indictment seriously. Nor have the *Critique's* central themes—the cultural and political distinctiveness of the German intelligentsia, the corrupting influence of Germany's intellectual isolation from Western Europe and America, its lack of a democratic ethos—lost any of their relevance. Considered obsolete only a few years ago, the question of whether Germany will gradually return to its traditional role as a Central European “land of the middle” and perhaps eventually abandon its identification with Anglo-Saxon democratic culture is once again a constant journalistic theme. The postwar era (1945–89) is increasingly described as a closed chapter, and four decades of political division are now often retroactively judged as having had a corrosive and mutually inhibiting influence on Germany's political culture, East and West. Even the much praised democratic stability and lack of a strong nationalist or xenophobic fringe, characteristic at least of the Federal Republic since the 1960s, can no longer be taken for granted.

Certainly the *Critique's* single-mindedly theocentric approach to German history has not withstood the decades of historical debate. Ball's assertion that Lutheranism and classical idealist philosophy conspired to sanction subservience to autocratic politics by splitting conscience from blind obedience may have been an original insight in 1919. But it has long since become a dubious historiographical cliché. Nor is Ball's revolutionary insurrectionism, the essence of which is a radical revival of romantic and Catholic spirituality, entirely consistent with his political enthusiasms for the Entente and Wilsonian democracy. The political arguments on behalf of the Anglo-American and Anglo-French achievement of human rights are often betrayed by the “fin du fin” rhetoric, querulousness, and anti-Semitism of the *Critique*. Throughout the text the catastrophe of the war is identified with a German spiritual apocalypse, and this spiritual apocalypse—from Luther to Marx—with the catastrophe of thought that led to the war. Ball's insistence on equivalence here is highly ambiguous. We might apply Jacques Derrida's ironic comment that the apocalyptic tone does not easily

allow us to disentangle “who, or what, is directed to whom” since it is precisely this uncertainty about who is speaking or to whom that makes it apocalyptic. The presumed linkage of anarchism, democracy, antidynastic politics, the language of redemption, and the metaphysics or “onto-theology” of a historical catastrophe bears witness to the confusions and fissures in the mentality of the revolutionary antiwar opposition in Swiss exile. Finally, though the *Critique* has much in common with other Jewish and Protestant esoteric and metaphysical doctrines of catastrophe and redemption typical of that historical moment, Ball’s curious brew of Catholic messianism is marred by a degree of anti-Semitism that, for reasons that will become clear shortly, was either ignored or unacknowledged in the considerable scholarly writing on Ball that has appeared since his death in 1927.¹

Ball himself repudiated much of the *Critique* after his reconversion to Catholicism in 1920 and in 1924 published a heavily revised version reflecting his unpolitical Catholicism under the title *Die Folgen der Reformation*. In 1970 an expurgated and sanitized edition of the *Critique* appeared in Munich, and this adulterated version of the book continues to be the only one available in the German language today. Thus this first English language translation has considerable scholarly significance insofar as it contains the excised passages, making it the first authentic version of the *Critique* since it appeared under the imprimatur of the *Freie Verlag* in Bern in 1919. The restored passages reveal that the anti-Semitism of the original text was not merely an embarrassment, but that Ball’s Judeophobia was integral to his rejection of the war, the German revolution, and the nationalist intelligentsia of the late Wilhelminian era. With these passages reinstated, what emerges is not merely a complete text, but also the highly problematic and ambiguous relationship of the *Critique* to the political culture of the democratic West and the very German ideology that it purports to criticize.

II

Hugo Ball wrote *The Critique of the German Intelligentsia* when he was thirty-three years old. Completed with a rapidity that astonished even its author, the book was conceived in the fall of 1917 and published in January 1919. The circumstances of the *Critique*’s genesis are not inconsistent with a life full of quixotic reversals,

sudden leaps, and steep emotional ascents and descents. Of Ball's intellectual biography, it might be said that the only thing that is predictable is its disjointedness. By 1919 Ball had distinguished himself as a leading Expressionist poet and playwright, as a theoretician of the Munich avant-garde, as the founder of Zurich Dada, and as an indefatigable antiwar publicist. The *Critique* was his first venture into sustained intellectual activity, an attempt to harmonize his political opposition to the war with his odd philosophical blend of radical anarchism and Catholic gnosticism. The *Critique* can thus be viewed as a point on the strange artistic and political itinerary that finally ended in August 1920 in the village chapel of Agnuzzo, where Ball found what he called the "solution to the question of guilt," returning thereafter to the religious orthodoxy that he sustained until his premature death in 1927.²

Born in the town of Pirmasens in the Rhineland Palatinate in 1886, Ball grew up in a large and devoutly religious Catholic family. His lifelong companion Emmy Hennings, whom he met in 1913, recalled that Ball's mother taught him only "to stand, to walk, and to pray."³ As a student in Heidelberg and later in Munich, Ball was scornful of the strictures and dogmas of his childhood, as is evident in his enthusiastic embrace of Nietzsche, the subject of his never completed dissertation written at the University of Munich in 1910.⁴ Somewhat mistitled "Nietzsche in Basel: A Polemic," it presents the view of the philosopher then prevalent among the Munich avant-garde. Nietzsche stood for the "emancipation of the passions, of the drives, of nature, including a correspondingly magnificent subjugation through art."⁵ However much Ball sought to subordinate conventional morality to what he called Nietzsche's aesthetic "cosmodicy," he nonetheless remained, psychologically speaking, a moralist, not least in his assertion that a new type of "philosopher-artist" was to be the harbinger of the regeneration of German culture.⁶

The work on Nietzsche was casually abandoned in Ball's abrupt departure from Munich in the summer of 1910, a move apparently occasioned by the seductions of the theater and Berlin society. Such abrupt exits would become a distinctive character trait from that point on: bolting the scene, for whatever reason, was Ball's trademark. During the fall of 1910 he studied briefly in Berlin with Max Reinhardt who noted his gifts as a director and dramaturge. In 1912, after a short stint as director of the State Theater in Plauen, Ball returned to Munich, where he frequented Expressionist circles and

wrote poems and prose for Franz Pfemfert's *Die Aktion*, *Der Sturm*, and other radical journals. In October 1913, together with the playwright and poet Hans Leybold, Ball founded *Die Revolution*, which carried on its masthead Erich Mühsam's slogan "*Lasst uns chaotisch sein*" (Let us be chaotic). *Die Revolution* proclaimed its opposition to everything in the German cultural scene, and, predictably, its first number was confiscated by the authorities because of Ball's irreverent poem, "The Hangman." Not untypically, the short-lived journal extolled Dionysian destructivity and the negation of all values, but in contrast to the other journals of the expressionist avant-garde, Ball's writings also emphasized spiritual regeneration through the "inner necessity" of the works of the ascetic artist. Of his discovery of Kandinsky in 1912 he wrote enthusiastically: "If we speak of Kandinsky and Picasso, we don't refer to painters but to priests; not craftsmen but to the creators of new worlds, new paradises."⁷

Ball's 1910 characterization of Nietzsche could also serve as an accurate self-description: art was Ball's "undertaking, his calling, his muse, and the determining factor in his life."⁸ He was a ferocious autodidact, a compulsive talker, and a chain-smoker who frequently eschewed food and abjured alcohol. This combination of hedonism and asceticism is not insignificant. Ball's attraction to asceticism and spiritual quietude was a constant accompaniment to the exhaustions of Dionysian revolt. In 1915, during his first year of exile in Zurich, he wrote of his fascination with yogis and Jesuits: "I have seen enough. To sit in a cell and say, here is closure, no one may enter."⁹ Certainly before 1914 Ball showed little interest in the supremacy of the deed or in any sort of political action, unless one counts his rather frivolous proposal to boycott bookstores carrying works that diluted Nietzsche's radicalism. After 1914 his somewhat contradictory embrace of both revolt and spiritual quietude allowed him to equate the libertarian anarchism of Bakunin with Kandinsky's "purity of color and grandeur of intuition" and to see both as the "Last Ramparts" of Russian romanticism. For all his gesture and Nietzschean hyperbole, Ball consistently maintained that asceticism was the true sign of creative genius: Kandinsky was the modern monk who gave the age "its strongest artistic expression."¹⁰

In August 1914, not unlike many other young artists and intellectuals caught up in the electric atmosphere of Berlin in the *avant guerre*, Ball enthusiastically volunteered for military service. Art

now appeared to him ridiculous since, as he wrote, "War is the only thing that excites me."¹¹ After three successive rejections on obscure medical grounds he abandoned his military aspirations, but he continued to despair about his artistic ones, rejecting first the "pathos of the theater" and subsequently repudiating the Expressionist milieu. Ball's 1914 diary entries trumpet his new conviction that action was preferable to art. In November 1914, after a brief unauthorized visit to the Belgian front, he formulated the war's impact on his thoughts: "It is the total mass of machinery and the devil himself that has broken loose now. Ideals are only labels that have been stuck on. Everything has been shaken to its foundations."¹²

Ball's return to Berlin was marked by still greater estrangement from the literary avant-garde and, at the same time, a new interest in the Russian anarchists Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Merzhkovsky. His "Proto-Dadaist" diatribes against the bohème, against "beauty, culture poetry, all spirit, taste, socialism, altruism, synonym," took on an increasingly cynical and nihilistic tone.¹³ Ball quickly turned against the war, claiming that his patriotism "does not go as far as sanctioning an unjust war," a view that owed much to his affiliation with Franz Pfemfert and Kurt Hiller, whom he greatly admired as opponents of the war and antipatriots.¹⁴ Above all, the death of his closest friend, Leybold, in a hospital at the Belgian front in October 1914 helped to confirm Ball's decision to emigrate to Switzerland in May of the following year. The first eight months of exile in Zurich were a time of severe economic privation, in part in self-conscious emulation of his anarchist idols, in part also the result of a psychological crisis culminating in what was probably a suicide attempt in October.¹⁵ In exile Ball's attraction to anarchism mellowed, despite his continued enthusiasm for its antistatist and theocratic doctrines. His biographer Philip Mann points out that Ball frequently expressed doubts about anarchist ideas of natural goodness and that he was ambivalent about the expressionists' idealization of the proletariat, which he once called "a godless barbarity."¹⁶ Though he admired Bakunin, he rejected his atheism and was appalled to discover that the anarchist had enthusiastically supported Bismarck's campaign against German Catholicism. Finally, Ball's idiosyncratic brand of theocratic anarchism came into focus along with a profoundly republican belief that the Declaration of the Rights of Man was sacrosanct. For Ball, "supplementing human rights with divine rights" was integral to any notion of revolution

as the extension but never as the abolition of the legacy of the French Revolution.¹⁷

These philosophical and political convictions did not diminish when Ball, toward the end of 1915, began to conceive of the Cabaret Voltaire, which opened early the next year and where the first Dada *Soiree* was held on July 14, 1916.¹⁸ In its Zurich phase Dada adopted the now famous public posture of chaotic abandon. The studied nihilism or frivolity of Dada fiercely competed with Ball's wartime gravity and pessimism, a tension that appears often in the same diary passages. Zurich, he wrote, was a respite from Germany where he could enjoy the "life that pulsates here, fresher and less bound up, because one knows no inhibitions." Yet, at the same time he cautioned that "one should take care not to call time and society by their real names. One should simply pass through, as through an evil dream, without glancing left or right, with lips pressed together."¹⁹ This paradoxical stance, which might be described as at once uninhibited and stoical, is an underlying motif of Dada, often explained by Ball as a mirror of the pathological release of the instincts in the face of a bankrupt civilization.

Ball's hopes for the Cabaret were expressly political since its main purpose was to become a gathering point for the artistic and intellectual émigrés in Zurich, "a delirious playground of crazy emotions" in which "all of the styles of the last twenty years came together." Dada's main poetic innovations were the famous "sound" or simultaneous poems that intentionally break up and release language from syntax and meaning. In these poems the clamor intentionally overpowers the human voice or the soul. "The noises represent the background—the inarticulate, demonic companions. The poem tries to elucidate the fact that man is swallowed up in the mechanistic process. In a typically compressed way it shows the conflict of the *vox humana* with a world that threatens, ensnares, and destroys it."²⁰

Pushing expressionism to its breaking point, the sound poems abandoned the language of signs for an "Adamic language" of innocence, resurrecting a speech that is utterly beyond all war and catastrophe.²¹ It is perhaps not a coincidence that at almost the same moment Walter Benjamin formulated his own highly esoteric and theologically inspired theory of a primal language, preserved in his 1916 essay "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man." For Benjamin human language was only a faint echo of a "Paradisical" language, yet it still retained something of its earliest mimetic

purpose. In 1916 he wrote that those who had permitted words to sink to the level of propaganda could only be opposed by recalling the earliest “naming” of things, in which language evinced its ordinary messianic intensity. Benjamin, it might be mentioned, became Ball’s next-door neighbor in Bern several years later. It is not too far-fetched to see in Ball’s sound poems and in Benjamin’s reflections on language and catastrophe the same impulse to retrieve the primal mimetic purpose of all language in the face of the political debacle.

During the Dada period Ball refined his philosophical reflections on anarchism and intensified his search for certain “secret” strands in the history of Catholic theology, even if the atheist Bakunin remained for him something of an exception in this regard. What attracted Ball to the Russian thinkers, however, was not merely that some anarchists considered the New Testament a “revolutionary book,” or even their exemplary spirit of sacrifice and the “imitatio Christi” of their poverty. Rather, the chaotic and childlike naiveté of the Russian writers evoked a sense of freedom and “right of negation” that seemed to affirm Ball’s definition of the Dadaist as a “childlike, Don-Quixote-like person.”²² Ball once compared Dada’s infantilism to the practices of certain medieval gnostic sectarians, who as adults placed themselves in the cradle and, trembling, allowed themselves to be suckled and swaddled like the Christ-child: “Dadaists,” he concluded, “are similar infants of the new epoch.”²³

To this admittedly overintellectualized image of Dada as a pre-oedipal theology, we should add the caveat that the Cabaret Voltaire was first and foremost a performance troupe. Ball played piano, Hennings sang ditties, and Richard Huelsenbeck bellowed poems to an often unappreciative and sometimes barely conscious clientele. This world of Dada is described in Ball’s 1916 *Flametti*, an autobiographical novella that depicts the frustrations of the Cabaret, but also its “true circus nature.”²⁴ Ball’s disappointment with Dada, which he characteristically punctuated with a flight from Zurich, was registered shortly after the first Dada *Soiree* of July 14, 1916, and had many motives: personal quarrels, political ineffectiveness, and, lastly, celebrity. Dada failed because it had become yet another art movement.

Returning to Zurich in November 1916, Ball rejoined the Dadaists—Huelsenbeck, Marcel Janco, Hans Arp, Tristan Tzara—and on March 17, 1917, the new Galerie Dada opened. In this second phase

of Zurich Dada, Ball began to exhibit a more reverent attitude toward "the Russian Ramparts," an attitude that would become even more pronounced in the months leading up to the writing of the *Critique*. Once again, radical nihilism is set off against deeply Catholic asceticism. In a lecture on Kandinsky (whose art he then called "liberation, solace, redemption and becalming") Ball asked rhetorically if "Russian Christianity is not the strongest and final bulwark of Romanticism in Europe today?"²⁵ In his novel *Tenderenda der Phantast*, it might also be noted, Ball depicted Dada as "Satanopolis," a demonic and nihilistic mirror of the war's own chaotic destruction, while the author seems to identify most with what he calls "peace, stillness, and Latin absence."

Perhaps Ball's most astonishing *aperçu* in the Zurich phase concerns the well-known coincidence that in the same street, directly opposite the Cabaret Voltaire, a certain Russian exile called Mr. Ulyanov-Lenin had taken up residence. "He must have heard our music and tirades every evening; I am not sure with what pleasure and profit. And, as we opened the Galerie in the Bahnhofstrasse, the Russians traveled to Petersburg to set the revolution on its feet. As both sign and gesture is Dada the counterpoint to Bolshevism? Does it oppose the completely quixotic, pointless, and incomprehensible side of the world to destruction and consummate calculation? It will be interesting to observe what happens here and there."²⁶ Did Ball, we might also ask, whose own aesthetic and political avant-gardism were constantly at odds with each other, recognize in Lenin and Dada two sides of his own avant-gardism: its political destructiveness and its quixotic purposelessness? Nonetheless, less than a year later Ball's antipathy to Bolshevism had solidified while Dada was cast off to the reliquaries of the bohème. Skepticism once again took the form of a flight to the Tessin, culminating in his final break with Dada in May 1917 and in his move to Bern, the center of political antiwar activity.

In stark contrast to the carnivalesque cosmopolitanism of Zurich, Bern was the headquarters of espionage, Entente propaganda, and organized resistance to the German war effort. A remarkable group of émigré intellectuals had gathered around the central organ of the "anti-Kaiser Germans," *Die Freie Zeitung*, founded in April 1917. Its prestigious list of contributors included Annette Kolb, Alfred Fried, Karl von Ossietzky, René Schickele, and Hermann Hesse. Ernst Bloch, who would become one of Ball's closest friends and admirers, wrote more than one hundred articles for the paper

between October 1917 and August 1919.²⁷ Politically, *Die Freie Zeitung* supported the Entente and Wilson's Four Points while consistently denouncing German militarism, nationalism, and the corrupt Prussian autocracy. The *Freie Zeitung* also rejected the socialist antiwar position taken at the Zimmerwald Conference of 1915, which maintained that since the war only served the interests of international capital, all and none of the belligerents were responsible. For Ball, Bloch, and the other contributors to *Die Freie Zeitung* the fact of German war guilt was paramount, as was their support for the democracies since, despite the Russian anomaly, only an Entente victory could guarantee the collapse of the dynasty and the triumph of democracy in Germany.

Die Freie Zeitung has often been accused of being in the pay of the Entente though the evidence is largely circumstantial. It was, of course, an instrument of Entente propaganda to the extent that it accepted, as did Ball, the principle that autocracy and absolutism were responsible for the war, and that democracy and the moral imperative were on the side of the anti-German coalition.²⁸ For Ball the war represented "the final phase of a permanent, commensurate with its nature, barbaric protest of Germany against the Western Spirit."²⁹ Paramount in this regard was Ball's distinction between the "humanitarian liberalism of the Western democracies" (Britain, America, and France) and the "dreamy humanism" of the later German Enlightenment philosophers Johann Gottfried Herder, Alexander von Humboldt, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. In a notation of June 1917 Ball compared the German constitution of 1848 with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and found the inadequacies of the former "striking."³⁰ As the *Critique* expressed it, 1914 was the apotheosis of the accumulated complicity of decree and idea by which Potsdam sought to excuse Weimar and Weimar Potsdam (*Critique*, p. 5).

If the politics of the *Freie Zeitung* were pro-Entente, its philosophical atmosphere was entirely chiliastic and apocalyptic. In 1918 Bloch explained the emergence of this apocalyptic-messianic mood as a self-conscious response to the official religiosity of the Prussian state. "Thus," wrote Bloch, "a new mystical imperium (Reich) emerges, an imperium of fighting Christianity, an *ecclesia militans* opposed to this infernal system of power."³¹ In this messianic and expressionist worldview all contingency, progress, and power were simultaneously subject to contempt.

Soon after his arrival Ball—whom Bloch then called a "Christian

Bakunist"—became the paper's most charismatic figure.³² When Ball visited Bern in early September 1917, he felt himself "abandoned" in an "alien city," which he immediately recognized as the "political half" that corresponded to Zurich, his "aesthetic half." Ball's dilemma was acutely registered: "I feel so divided in my interests that I am actually at the point of sacrificing the aesthete to politics."³³ A few days later, however, he resolved to remain and engage in antiwar resistance, a decision he called "not only just, but highest duty."³⁴ "I don't want to make cabaret any longer," he wrote in November 1918, "I prefer to write, that was always my goal."³⁵

Despite his resolve, Ball frequently complained of Bern's "dry milieu with all its rationalists." Yet he admitted that the city's overall intellectual quality was remarkably high: "Today it is the best political library to be found in Europe, and it becomes more so, from day to day."³⁶ Overnight Ball became a political journalist, regularly writing for *Die Freie Zeitung* as well as for other émigré journals. Mann divides Ball's prodigious writing into four subject areas: (1) criticism of the Prussian state and its intellectual epigones from Luther to Hegel; (2) satirical articles and parodies of prowar mentality; (3) articles exposing German war aims and underscoring the absence of a liberal or democratic tradition; (4) articles defending the Entente, attacking pacifists, and documenting German war guilt.³⁷ If this were not enough, Ball was also hard at work on his "Bakunin-breviary," a planned two-volume work he envisaged as a vindication of the Russian thinker against Marx and his Marxist critics.

By 1917 Ball's political thinking was increasingly preoccupied with theological-metaphysical reflections. He was convinced that the isolation of Germany from the rest of Europe (both from Russia and the West) required a new European church of the intelligentsia, as opposed to the parochial Prussian spirit. True communism, he believed, had to be grounded in a new gospel, the "this-worldly realization of all that which comprises the godly essence of Christianity."³⁸ Perhaps this conviction and his disappointment with Bakunin's atheism led him to finally forsake the Bakunin project, which, like the long-abandoned Nietzsche thesis, remained unfinished.

Instead, in early November 1917, a different idea began to germinate, quickly assuming first place in his crowded writing schedule: a book that would synthesize his religious and political philosophy

with his antiwar politics. According to Ball, the inspiration for the *Critique* came from René Schickele, editor of the exile literary journal, *Die Weißen Blätter*, who proposed that Ball write a book on "German intellectuals" for Schickele's press. When he finished the exposé on November 14, 1917, Ball registered his enthusiasm for the new project: "The ideas were whirling around in my pen. It was supposed to be a book about the modern intellectuals, especially about the authors of *Die Weißen Blätter*, and it has become a sketch of German development and more like a draft against the 'Manifesto of the 93 Intellectuals.'" ³⁹ But Ball also saw the *Critique* in more personal terms as "a hygiene for myself. A certain lightness and enthusiasm give me a wholly peculiar intense and energetic style." ⁴⁰

The basic themes the *Critique* were already outlined in many of Ball's articles for *Die Freie Zeitung* and Ball needed only this "encouragement" for his "entire inner self to draw itself together." ⁴¹ The *Critique*, he said, had to be written in simple and clear prose, and be "productively effective." ⁴² Above all, it was directed at a German audience, with Ball refusing to even permit a French translation. The *Critique* would explain why Germany had become insular, unreachable, and above all, universally despised. His comment on the day of the German revolution, November 9, 1918, makes this point:

When I consider that Germany has been cut off from the great currents of life, that we here in Switzerland register new convulsions daily, while over there every free gasp of breath is suppressed, then I ask myself how a reconciliation can still be possible when the borders suddenly come down. The West communicates its experiences, plans and arrangements, the world association [League of Nations, A. R.] has actually come into being, but Germany plays the role of the despised, with all the terrible consequences. ⁴³

Only after the *Critique* was finished, he promised, would he then compose a very different kind of "manifesto for freedom," one without any knowledge or science, "entirely subjective and personal." ⁴⁴

III

Ball's *Critique* documents the momentary confluence of two extraordinary political and intellectual currents among German-

speaking exiles in Switzerland at the end of the First World War. First, it repudiates the German autocratic and nationalist tradition while proclaiming an unequivocal support for the political ideals of the "Western" powers: republicanism, democracy, and liberalism. Its implicit polemic against the intellectual legacy of writers like Heinrich von Treitschke, Houston St. Chamberlain, Max Scheler, Werner Sombart and, even more importantly, Thomas Mann, is carried out by historically situating them at the end of a long line of German philosophers and writers who slavishly fitted their ideas to the dictates of the Prussian monarchy and its politics.

The other key idea of the *Critique* stems from Bakunin's remark, "the source of all evil lies in the Reformation."⁴⁵ This emphasis on the missing dimension of "Godly" as well as of "human rights" in Germany links the theocratic politics of the *Critique* to the broad current of theological anarchism that flourished in the Swiss emigration during World War I. The central texts of this tradition are Ernst Bloch's *Spirit of Utopia* (1918), Walter Benjamin's anarcho-theological writings of 1918/19, and Gershom Scholem's early efforts at reconstructing an authentic Jewish esoteric tradition from the Kabbalah.⁴⁶ The *Critique* promotes a chiliastic and messianic politics of spiritual regeneration and divine justice by invoking such figures as Thomas Münzer, who represents the antipode to Luther and Protestantism, or Wilhelm Weitling, who is contraposed to Marx and Lassalle.

However, the elective affinity of these soon to diverge currents in German intellectual history can be explained by the encounter of these intellectuals with the catastrophic experience of the war, which was, not surprisingly, interpreted in theologically inspired apocalyptic terms. The bitter and ironic tone of the first pages of the *Critique* reminds us that the intellectual "betrayal" that provoked Ball was not merely the chauvinism of the nationalist ideologues, but the prowar stance of some of the most respected thinkers in Wilhelmine Germany. It is not surprising, therefore, that among those young German intellectuals who fled to Switzerland many were shocked to discover that some of the figures they most idealized had signed on to the war: Bloch, for example, saw Max Weber and Georg Simmel in this light; Walter Benjamin broke decisively with his formerly revered teacher Gustav Wyneken; for Gershom Scholem the negative exemplars were Martin Buber and Hermann Cohen; and for Ball the philosopher Max Scheler and his former teacher Max Reinhardt certainly played this role.

The war's darkest year was 1916, a time when mass death and mechanized killing seemed to triumph over all the spiritual and intellectual achievements of the Occident. The next year, 1917, however, marked the beginning of the end of the German war effort: the February Revolution, the Bolshevik revolution, the entry of the USA into the war. And in 1918 there followed the rapid collapse of the German military effort and the dynasty. From the perspective of the German antiwar exiles the choice between Wilson and Lenin was unproblematic: the traditions of the Prussian military and the dynasty fell together; Germany was forced to choose between West and East, democracy or revolutionary dictatorship, Marxism or liberalism. For Ball, as for Bloch (Bloch's democratic phase is often obscured by his autobiographical revisionism), the victory of Bolshevism in Russia and the stirring of revolution in Germany added communism to the list of political disasters the war had produced. It was the obligation of intellectuals to choose liberal democracy over Marxism. But if Marxism, especially in the first flush of the Soviet experiment, represented the triumph of "Red Czarism" (Bloch's phrase) liberalism was judged inadequate to inspire the zeal required to realize its political destiny. It lacked precisely the kind of spiritual energy that theology had long invested in its conservative enterprises.

For this reason, Ball decided to place perhaps even greater emphasis on the *Critique's* theological politics than on exposing the conspiracy of spirit and sword, Weimar and Potsdam. A critique of the intelligentsia had to "mobilize the secret forces of the nation" and be dedicated to removing "valuable fictive forces and instincts from profane heroic history and regaining them for one with religious overtones."⁴⁷ The peculiar German agony that "paralyzes the spirits," he once noted, is either "fruitless aestheticism" or a "fatal belief in progress," both of which, he claimed, "succumb to an overwhelming system of profanation."⁴⁸ In Germany the Enlightenment and its critics, Kant as well as Nietzsche, each represented a version of the political testament of the Wittenberg theology professor and his "superstitious text-fetishism." To combat this profane system it was not sufficient to merely embrace republican or liberal ideals. Liberalism's emphasis on natural rights was not up to a world irredeemably divided into Good and Evil, Christ and anti-Christ. A fallen, catastrophic world required a reservoir of Catholic spirituality, "the church of the intelligentsia, that society of the select who carry freedom and consecration within them-

selves" (*Critique*, p. 7). Only such a spiritual elite initiated in the "secret teachings of Christianity" could participate in the difficult inner struggle required to be an "authentic Catholic," a struggle Ball saw most strongly personified in the Catholic romanticism of de Maistre, Bonald, and Châteaubriand. These French writers, he believed, contrasted fundamentally with the "furor teutonicus" by reconciling and balancing "Dionysian exuberance with law and logic."⁴⁹

Ball did not deny the close connection between romanticism and conservative political traditions in Germany. But he also did not associate romanticism with irrationalist or nationalist politics, as was common after the Second World War. Rather he defended French or Russian romanticism for its Catholicizing and cultist impulses while arguing that the characteristically German repudiation of the Catholic core of romanticism—in Hegel, Goethe, and Nietzsche—was marked by a fatal loss of its universalism. The collapse of the Prussian monarchy in 1918, he hoped, would not only weaken the spiritual authority of the Reformation, but would also "redeem romantic longings" by ushering in a return to the "ecclesiastical ideal of discipline."⁵⁰

Ball proudly referred to the engraving of the sixteenth century theologian and radical Thomas Münzer he had hung over his writing desk. He wrote Hennings enthusiastically of his discovery of the South German theologian Franz von Baader (1765–1841), a contemporary of Kant and Schelling who tried, by means of critical philosophy, to provide German Catholicism with a sound metaphysical foundation. Ball found in Baader a kindred spirit in whom he saw "many great things that are in harmony with my opposition to the things I am against."⁵¹ Baader's universalism, he believed, grounded in love, goodness, and humility, is at once the spiritual basis for the struggle for intellectual and social freedom and for the struggle against the anti-Christ. Consequently, Ball could assert, the cult of Reason and the terror notwithstanding, that the ideals of 1789 remained "profoundly Christian and divine" (*Critique*, p. 124). Although Ball had apparently not yet read Thomas Mann's *Reflections of A Nonpolitical Man* (1918), the *Critique* can be read as a counterstatement to Mann's famous ennobling of German culture and its opposition to Western *zivilisation*.⁵² Like Mann, Ball too considered Germany's estrangement from the West decisive, but for Mann it justified the war on cultural grounds, while Ball saw the war as the direct result of the complete absence of a German politi-

cal culture.⁵³ For Ball the estrangement of Germany from the West was an estrangement from liberalism as well as from the church—French and Russian. The much acclaimed antithesis of culture and civilization, he claimed, was only possible in Germany because its overtheologized concept of culture completely rejected the “godless, mechanistic industrial world.” In the *Critique* Ball excoriates Mann’s prowar essays, and in April 1918 he ironically commented that the “smartest people today are plagued with decorously separating these two words,” that is, culture and civilization, adding that the German cultivation of the concept of culture “crassly contradicts the facts as they now stand.”⁵⁴

Ball seemed to refer to his own Dada phase when he said that the style of the *Critique* had to be sober and rigorous: “In Germany,” he wrote, “there is no use gesticulating. The Germans require arguments.”⁵⁵ Before turning to politics in 1917, Ball could still be moved by Nietzsche’s image of the artist as an “ascetic priest” who stood in opposition to society like the heretics of the middle ages. But the prophet of a cultural renaissance praised in the dissertation gives way in the *Critique* to the “Pastor-Son” who sows moral confusion by conflating goodness with its misuse by the omnipotent state. In the *Critique*, Nietzsche appears as a late-blooming idealist and as the court philosopher of the post-Napoleonic glorification of violence and force. Already in October 1917 Ball accused Nietzsche of trying by means of his doctrine of genius to destroy the cult of reason, the state cult of the Reformation. “But,” he added, “genius itself is a classical concept” that ultimately leads to paganism, to “antique nature-mysteries, to the unleashing of drives.”⁵⁶ In a Catholicizing gesture, Ball inverts Nietzsche’s contempt for ascetic priests, praising the ascetic will to sacrifice in Münzer, in Mazzini’s campaign against the papacy, and in the authentic mystics from Jakob Böhme to Tolstoy.⁵⁷

Despite Ball’s emphasis on the “invisible” as opposed to the “visible church,” it seems misplaced to assert, as does Philip Mann in his critical study, that the *Critique* “can be seen as relinquishing both the radical modernist critique of culture and the revolutionary remedies and espousing a conservative ideology which, rejecting the present age as fallen and decadent, looks backwards to an idealized Golden Age and forwards to a future Utopia when the Golden Age will be reestablished.”⁵⁸ Certainly Ball’s Catholic mysticism and his apocalyptic radicalism appear to clash with his political support for the Entente. Yet, there is little evidence of antidemo-

cratic conservatism in the *Critique*, which is the work of a republican radical for whom "Rights of Man" and democracy are not incompatible with Christian anarchism and revolutionary gnosticism. As late as July 1920 Ball delivered a speech where he clearly rejected all rightist "stab-in-the-back legends" and laid blame for the German defeat squarely on the "moral superiority of the opponents."⁵⁹ Ball's vision is that of a holy Christian revolution and the *unio mystica* of a democratically liberated world: "The new democracy that we believe in and whose principles are being fought for by the world today has not drawn the conclusion that 'freedom in God' can coexist with an absence of freedom in the law, with the use of force in the state . . . nor has it concluded that a German parliamentary system modeled after Western democracies will resolve all conflicts currently separating Germany from the rest of the world" (*Critique*, p. 111).

In a note on Rousseau, Ball once called Switzerland a land "where aesthetic and political enthusiasm meet."⁶⁰ The *Critique* is no exception, and it is as misplaced to regard it as the encapsulation of Ball's expressionist and Dadaist avantgardism in political form as it is to see it as a work of conservative Catholicism. Reading Ball either forward from the standpoint of the wartime anarchist, Dadaist, revolutionist or backward from the endpoint of his Catholic quietude is to miss precisely the extraordinary artistic, philosophical, and political synthesis that the *Critique* represents. The event—the end of the dynasty, the German Republic, the revolution, and its (for Ball) betrayal—can be read in the text itself. Nor is it incidental that the publication of the *Critique* coincided with the breakup of the exile community around *Die Freie Zeitung*. From that world, Ball once said, "my *Critique* is a break, a flight toward the imprecise designation of the causes of this flight." Writing the *Critique* seemed to have exhausted him completely, "as if he had used up and expended all his force" on it.⁶¹

Ball's sudden reconversion to Catholicism in the church of Agnuzzo was not, at least not primarily, motivated by political disappointment though it bears comparison to the equally precipitous embrace of communism by any number of radical avantgardists at the same time. This time the decision proved not to be another impetuous flight. The Church, he noted in 1917, was the only place where romantic individuals could still "find the inner space that they miss in modern life."⁶² His conversion was once explained by Emmy Hennings as a turn from "critique of conscience to the

fathoming of conscience."⁶³ Political conservatism, it seems, played little role in Ball's decision, nor does it surface later, even in his apparent admiration for the philosopher Carl Schmitt, the prophet of decisionistic politics on the German right, whose *Political Theology* Ball critically reviewed in 1924. Ball's praise is reserved for Schmitt's repudiation of both left- and right-wing versions of political romanticism, but not for his irrationalism. After 1920 politics remained distant for Ball, whose works after the *Critique* are primarily taken up with the psychology of religious conversion and the exemplary asceticism of the saints, a theme that preoccupied him up to his premature death from cancer on September 14, 1927.

IV

When the *Critique* appeared on January 15, 1919—Ball notes it arrived on the day the Spartacist Karl Liebknecht was assassinated—it was attacked, as Ball had predicted, by patriotic writers who regarded it as the work of a traitor or worse. But even within the intimate circle of *Die Freie Zeitung* its initial reception was cool, the reviewer judiciously noting that one does not have "to subscribe to all its conclusions" to recognize the "fullness of its premises."⁶⁴ Several contemporary judgments demonstrate that contrary to Ball's later recollection, the *Critique* was neither ignored nor universally praised, not even by his more sympathetic critics. Fritz Brupbacher, the anarchist and historian, called it "a devout book in a nicely irreligious style," underlining the point in a personal note to the effect that he hoped the style would kill Ball's religion.⁶⁵ Bloch's laudatory review in *Die Weltbühne* proclaimed that "like no German ever before him, [Ball] had comprehended the secret causes of the blasphemous state as they are in themselves."⁶⁶ But Bloch also warned elsewhere that the *Critique's* exaggerated denunciation of idealist metaphysics failed to recognize its own esoteric claim that precisely an "incomparable" need for metaphysics and transcendence could alone usher in the age of true freedom, "transsocialist anarchy, the multiversum of liberated humanity."⁶⁷ Gershom Scholem recalled that he and Walter Benjamin were initially "impressed with the acuity of its [the *Critique's*] hatred," but that its "immoderate attacks on Kant only made us shake our heads."⁶⁸ When the Viennese critic and pacifist Hermann Bahr playfully mocked the *Critique* by listing Ball's philosophical and theological excesses—a new romanticism in the spirit of Franz von

Baader, a mystical union of Germany and liberated Europe, republicanism and social *civitas dei*, the reunification of the Eastern and Western Church, and so on—Ball conceded that “I can see from this compilation that I tried to link the different European slogans of yesterday and today and thus committed the patriotic mistake of wishing to see them all realized in Germany in a single attempt.”⁶⁹

Finally, Ball’s anti-Semitism cannot be disentangled from these excesses, nor can he be posthumously exonerated by indefensible scholarly practices, as has been attempted since the 1970s. The restoration of the deleted material in this edition makes clear that from its opening passages the *Critique* intends to document “a conspiracy of Protestant and Jewish theology (since Luther) and a conspiracy of both with the Prussian powers (since Hegel) seeking to subjugate Europe and the world, and bent on the universal destruction of religion and morals.” Ball concludes that “this conspiracy is more firmly and deeply rooted than is commonly believed. To underestimate it is not in the best interest of humanity or the German people” (*Critique*, pp. 1–2).

Ball leaves no doubt that he believes the great intellectual betrayal of 1914 can ultimately be traced back to the principles of the Old Testament venerated by Luther and that the Protestant conception of the state as an instrument of power is ultimately derived from Jewish theology. It is this doctrine of power and the sword that Luther used to suppress the authentic revolt of the poor and the disenfranchised whose voice was Münzer, and it is this same doctrine that led Germany to its disastrous defeat in 1918, and finally, it is this doctrine that continues to triumph after 1918 in the form of social democracy. German social democracy is the product of “two German spirits,” that is, Marx’s influence on the Internationals (“Jewish Messianism at the head of both”) and Lassalle’s statism led ultimately to a “Prussianized Europe operating under a Jewish directive” (*Critique*, p. 144). Ball approvingly cites Bakunin’s remark that “the Jewish sect today represents a much more ominous power in Europe than do the Catholic and Protestant Jesuits” (*Critique*, p. 145). These attitudes, along with Ball’s contempt for the Jewish industrialist Walter Rathenau, whom he saw as a tacit ally of Marx and Lassalle, and his diatribes against the philosopher Hermann Cohen, make it evident that for him the Jews represent a secret diabolical force in German history. Though Ball disavows the charge of anti-Semitism, there is little doubt that he believes that there is a “Jewish-Germanic conception of the state,”

and as a bizarre diary entry makes clear, that the Jewish belief that race and religion are identical “should serve as an undying example for the racial theorists.”⁷⁰ Ultimately, the *Critique* places the blame for “the most horrible of all wars,” the deaths of twenty million people, and “Germany’s ruin” on the “advances gained by Judaism” (*Critique*, p. 144).

Despite his disclaimers, Ball’s anti-Semitism was already apparent before the *Critique* appeared and was in fact the cause of strains in his relationship with Bloch, who, not surprisingly, reacted strongly to Ball’s editorial in *Die Freie Zeitung* on November 16, 1918. The offending passage contains the following statement about the dissolution of the monarchy and the role of social democracy in the founding of the German Republic:

They send anational Israelites forward, in order to achieve the most advantageous liquidation. This too is wrong. The soil of the Israelite Republic is the promised land, not Germany. We gladly work alongside these people as long as they unambiguously dedicate themselves to the moral deed. The legend of the chosen people is triumphant. Berlin is not Sinai. We want a German nation, a German Republic, we want a German National Assembly, which disavows the business makers and the opportunist, and declares itself for the resurrection of a great, truly purified nation. Only thus can we win back the trust of the world.⁷¹

Bloch’s shocked reaction to Ball’s assertion that, once again, alien Jews are holding Germany hostage is evident from a letter written to his patron, the businessman Wilhelm Muehlon, only eight days later: “I have something else to say that is important for me. It concerns the astonishing concluding sentence of Ball’s editorial. I wrote Ball immediately that this sort of anti-Semitism is scandalous, no matter how he means it.”⁷² If Bloch and Ball were “completely at one in the explicit denunciation of the Ludendorff war,” by November 1918, their friendship was shaken, though not entirely ruptured.⁷³ Bloch added that he planned to write the editor of *Die Freie Zeitung*, Hans Schlieben, about the affair so that he would not appear as a buffoon when his own article appeared in the next issue: “Ball knows full well, and Schlieben has never been in doubt, that I am a completely racially conscious Jew, and that I am proud of my old, secretive people, and that I am, in my best aspects, at home in Jewish blood and the great religious tradition of my people.”⁷⁴ Bloch also planned to write Ball and Schlieben that he would

not write another single line for the *Freie Zeitung* if "such a simple-mindedness" is repeated. It should be added that Bloch did not consider Ball to be an anti-Semite, at least not before the incident ("otherwise he could not be my friend"), but he now saw that the complexities and inconsistencies of Ball's attitude toward the Jews could hardly be seen in the "short telegram sentences" of the editorial.⁷⁵ No doubt Ball's editorial was the "not very pretty reason" for Bloch's decision to part from the *Freie Zeitung* in December of that year.

Certainly it is possible to attribute the anti-Semitism of the *Critique* to Ball's anti-Protestantism and lingering anti-Catholic resentments. It is more plausible, however, that by the end of 1918 Ball's anti-Protestantism was fuelled by his belief that statism, amorality, and authoritarianism were essentially Jewish theological inventions, and that a "Jewish-Junker conspiracy" linked the German revolution to the Bolshevik revolution. The November 1918 reference to "Israelites" whose interests are with the universalism of a "stateless people" and who are thus dedicated to obstructing a Catholic community of Christian renewal—as are the Protestant militarists and national chauvinists—takes the theme of a Prussian and Social Democratic conspiracy to an absurd conclusion. Ball's desire to "mobilize the secret powers of the nation" against this conspiracy turns him into yet another protagonist of the German "special path" between East and West. Against his best intentions, Ball ultimately shares with his opponents—for example, Treitschke and Thomas Mann—the conviction that neither Western liberalism nor Russian Bolshevism could end the spiritual malaise of Germany. By this route, Ball's anti-Semitic and radical vision of the apocalypse and his monochromatically theological standpoint make him the best example of the system he set out to expose.

Ball's strange odyssey through gnostic revolt and anti-Semitism raises yet another question. Did Ball's remark about his "patriotism" in his comment after Bahr's review or his 1914 avowal of a "patriotism" that did not extend to sanctioning an unjust war remain an unacknowledged motif in the *Critique*? Did not Ball see himself as the spokesman for that very same "secret Germany" that had been suppressed and hounded by the conspiracy of crown and altar, Junker and Jew? Was *Die Freie Zeitung* the equivalent of Weitling's League of the Just? And is the *Critique* not, as one critic recognized, a book that remains after all "stuck in nationalism, even if in a negative one"?⁷⁶ How else can we interpret the remarks

about the “chimeric nationality of the Jews” or the “internationalism of the money men and businessmen?” It is precisely the idea that the Jews represent a barrier to national self-identity that gives the *Critique*, for all its hostility to militarism and national chauvinism, its own peculiar, inverted nationalism. The inverted nationalism of the *Critique* is confirmed by a letter Ball sent Hennings as he worked on the book: “I am nevertheless completely German, German in my essence. Can I adopt a standpoint, that does not somewhere coincide with things against which I have turned?”⁷⁷ Hennings, too, acknowledged that the *Critique* was the “outburst of a desperate German, an unhappy patriot, who had to exit from nationalism, even if he himself resisted it.”⁷⁸ Several years earlier Ball had written in his diary: “I tend to compare my private experiences with those of the nation. I attribute to my conscience the need to perceive a certain parallel there. It may be capricious, but I cannot live without the conviction that my personal destiny represents an abbreviation of that of the people as a whole.”⁷⁹

Reviewing the *Critique* in 1920, Bahr rightly underscored this parallel as the essence of Ball’s book: “He believes in a Germanness that can fulfill the meaning of the war: ‘the integration of a nation rebelling against society.’”⁸⁰ The redemption of Germany’s authentic Christian spirit as a restitution of the secret tradition of Münzer, Böhme, von Baader, and Weitling is the resurrection of that “other” Germany and simultaneously the end of the abyss separating it from the rest of Europe. The inverted nationalism of the *Critique* was encapsulated by Ball in his Hamburg lecture in 1920: “In this way we want to restore Germany—Religion. And this is the most important German task of the present and future, which contains the meaning of all other national tasks.”⁸¹ The *Critique* offers a striking reminder that nationalism comes in many forms, not the least, in the form of hostility to militarism, materialism, and, above all, “Jewish” cosmopolitanism.

V

In light of these excesses, to what extent can Ball’s thesis that classical German philosophy and criticism were compromised by their historic collusion with absolutism be affirmed? First, the relationship between German critical philosophy (Kant, Hegel, Fichte) and Prussian absolutism is neither as simple nor as one-sided as Ball claims. To be sure, the German philosophers of the Enlighten-

ment were equivocal in their political allegiances. But his judgments about the inherently cynical marriage of dynastic and philosophical Machiavellianism have not withstood the scrutiny of modern scholarship. Before the French Revolution, for example, Kant's commitment to constitutionalism was tempered by his belief that enlightened absolutism seemed to offer more freedom of public debate than revolutionary democracy; obedience to rational law permitted the development of universal principles. If in 1784 Kant still supported the monarchy, he would soon judge the French Revolution to be that singular "event of our time" through which the enlightened public could enthusiastically bring about and extend the principles of morality and natural law. Ball's wholly negative portrayal of Kant, the "archenemy" who "raises Prussian reason of state to Reason," cannot do justice to the philosopher's paradoxical refusal to sanction the right of rebellion while giving his wholehearted support to the French revolution. It should also be noted that much of Ball's interpretation and polemic rests heavily on popularizations of Kant in the German academic philosophy of the later nineteenth century.⁸² By contrast, the German philosophers themselves understood full well that, as Kant himself put it, though they might well live in an age of enlightenment, they did not yet live in an "enlightened age."

It is more plausible, as the historian Reinhart Koselleck argued, that the emphasis of German idealism on subjective reason could hardly keep pace with the historical events and political exigencies of the age. As a result, the burden of demonstrating the rationality of human freedom was increasingly placed on history and its secular plan of salvation. Paradoxically, the attempt to ground freedom in political action and the need to give politics a higher purpose placed the morally self-conscious individual in a void and made a virtue of necessity.⁸³ This separation of morality and history did at some moments sacrifice justice to the state, but at others it easily placed the state in the docket of the "court of world justice."

Ball's assertion that Prussia was the omnipotent master of Germany's intellectual legions ignores the constant tension between the domain of politics and the domain of thought, a tension that is often summed up by the classical antinomy between "Potsdam and Weimar," power and spirit. Ernst Bloch recalled in the 1960s that the *Critique* "claimed or tried to prove that Potsdam and Weimar actually conspired with each other apologetically, to the extent that an unknown, non-Potsdam Germany existed, but that it was consis-

tently suppressed in coordination with Weimar. This good Germany, the good spirit, [Ball] views as opposed to the triumphant Potsdam. [. . .] Now, this is highly exaggerated, Potsdam and Weimar were not to that extent apologetically linked."⁸⁴ The paradoxes, contradictions, and deep inner conflicts in the German idealist tradition are entirely invisible in Ball's optic.

Nowhere is the *Critique* more infuriatingly inconsistent than in its political loyalties. Ball's commitment to the Entente and to republicanism coexists uneasily with his emotional and critical allegiance to French romanticism and Russian mysticism. If he praises the Rights of Man and Wilson's "Four Points," he simultaneously insists that the French revolution was an essentially Catholic event. Moreover, his assertion that German romanticism was divided between "pagans" like Goethe, Kleist, Wagner, and Nietzsche and anti-autocratic authentic Catholics like Baader, Novalis, and Beethoven is at best confused, especially in light of Baader's support for the post-Napoleonic German restoration and in light of Novalis's poetic exaltation of the mystical essence of death and warfare. Finally, Ball's defense of the democratic and republican ideals of the West carries far less weight than his defense of Russian and French mysticism. Ball's intemperate fusion of Potsdam and Weimar is only the reverse side of the well-known argument of prowar German liberals like Friedrich Meinecke, Max Weber, and Ernst Troeltsch that the unity of Potsdam and Weimar (e.g., of sword and spirit) would protect Germany from becoming a ruthlessly imperialist power.

These observations reveal some of the limits of the *Critique*, but they also enable us to appreciate Ball's unacknowledged affinity with the very traditions he disparages. His antipathy to classical German philosophy and to the Enlightenment as systems of values is not fundamentally different from the arguments made by many of the conservative nationalists and liberals who supported the war. As the historian Fritz Stern pointed out several decades ago, it is not the myopic racists and hard-core reactionaries who explain the allure of Germany's cultural remove from the traditions of the West. Rather, this stance was the achievement of an elite and educated mandarin class, which considered itself unpolitical and was dogmatically opposed to utilitarianism, liberalism, and materialism.⁸⁵ Finally, Ball's own theologico-criticism continues the very link between religion and politics that he ostensibly rejects, vitiating his own argument that theology, not politics nor culture per se,

lies behind German rationalism's nihilistic and Machiavellian impulses. The *Critique* recapitulates the theologization of politics that, according to Ball, is Luther's first sin. Ball's attempt to offer an account of Germany's solipsism and isolation from the West does not—especially in its own inverted nationalism and anti-Semitism—escape from that very solipsism and intellectual isolation.

VI

After World War II, German intellectuals like Karl Jaspers, Theodor Adorno, and Günter Grass reframed and restated many of the arguments of the *Critique* in their own rejection of Germany's militarist and nationalist past (without, of course, Ball's eccentricities and excesses). For this later generation the critique of the German intelligentsia is motivated far less by an apocalyptic vision of political redemption than by a deeply ethical sense of trauma and by what Primo Levi once called "remembrances of emergencies, of suffered or inflicted offenses."⁸⁶ Above all, for the postwar intellectuals there was an unequivocal recognition that the fact that democracy came to Germany late, that it was not the product of a strong tradition of bourgeois liberalism, and finally, that it was introduced by the allied victors deprived it of strong emotional connections.

To be sure, the broad thesis of German exceptionalism, to which Ball subscribes, has frequently been challenged by comparative analysis of other European societies (above all Britain and France) that remained strongly conservative in outlook and stratified in social structure until well into the twentieth century. If the simplistic view that National Socialism was "preprogrammed" by social, economic, or intellectual preconditions has been largely corrected, the fact remains, however, that the repudiation of modernity and the liberal political culture of the West were considered respectable hallmarks of the educated *Bildungsbürger* in Germany until (and to a large extent even after) 1933. Nor, as the *Critique* itself demonstrates, was this kind of criticism limited to conservatives and the antidemocratic thinkers of the political right. Rather, the inverted nationalism of the *Critique* leaves little doubt that there were currents of political irrationalism and anti-Semitism on the left of the political spectrum as well. Thus, it may not be far-fetched to conclude that the most disturbing element of the *Critique* may be its most instructive lesson. At least among intellectuals, the conservative ideologies of German nationalism and militarism have

been discredited, and if the culture of obedience and loyalty that prompted Ball to excoriate German intellectuals during the first world War has all but disappeared, currents of both nationalism and inverted nationalism may indeed have resurfaced as a consequence of German unification.

VII

The dissolution of communism in Central Europe was accompanied by popular revolts not merely opposed to a totalitarian system but also implicitly opposed to the principle immanent in all prior twentieth century social revolutions including the anticommunist uprisings of 1956 and 1968: the promise of a higher order of democracy and a morally superior socialism. From the anti-utopian perspective of this century's end, Hugo Ball's theological anarchism, like the messianic vision of his "utopian friend," Ernst Bloch, appears as an anachronistic alternative to the Machiavellian politics of Prussian and Bolshevik power. What remains of the utopian potential of 1918/19 is not so much the messianic intensity of those thinkers but the "weak" messianic power of a normative or regulative idea of democratic rights and the expansion of personal freedom. Unlike the anticommunist revolutions in Hungary, Poland, or Czechoslovakia, which did not disturb the largely intact national political cultures, German unification has provoked the fear that a greater assertion of Germany's political role in European politics could strengthen the desire for positive identification with a cultural and historical past that up to now has been regarded with suspicion.

Since the 1960s responsible German public opinion has accepted the judgment that an end of the German nation-state tradition was a welcome liberation from the burdens of a discredited past. The division of Germany was sanctioned not merely as a postwar *fait accompli*, but also in some sense as a just and legitimate dismantling of a largely negative national identity. Unification has therefore raised the question of whether the minimal and nonnationalist "constitutional patriotism" identified by Dolf Sternberger as the basic premise of postwar German political culture is sufficient to bind Germans to a more powerful sovereign state. Germany's commitment to the intellectual and democratic traditions of the West, many observers point out, has been hegemonic only since 1945, and only in the western half. The question thus remains: is this com-

mitment part and parcel of Germany's limited postwar sovereignty or will it extend to the era of a unified Germany?

Could the democratic and benign Western orientation of the Federal Republic and the Marxist-Leninist dogmas of the East both be regarded as political imperatives unjustly imposed by the cold war and demanded by the political coercion of the respective blocs? Will a united Germany continue to assume responsibility for the suffering of the Nazi epoch while healing the more recent wounds that forty years of division and communist rule have inflicted? Will racism and xenophobia prove to be a permanent feature of Germany's postunification landscape? Since unification these perplexing questions have aroused much debate and provoked a "far-reaching crisis in the self-understanding of public intellectuals."⁸⁷ The collapse of Soviet and East European Communism, the often apocalyptic rhetoric that accompanied the Gulf war controversy, and revelations about the penetration of the GDR state security apparatus into public and private life have contributed to an uncertainty that in some ways recalls the situation Ball confronted in 1918/19.

Yet unlike the intellectual atmosphere that surrounded the genesis of the *Critique*, the crisis faced by the German intelligentsia today is in no small degree also a product of the antinationalist spirit that Ball's work first attempted to articulate. At least since the early 1960s, the liberal left in the Federal Republic has been able to mobilize political and cultural resistance to the authoritarian and patriotic traditions of the German mandarin. Today, however, it is precisely that antinationalist consensus, embodied in figures like Jaspers, Adorno, Habermas, and Grass, that has become the source of controversy. The fierce debate on the Gulf war, which in Germany was a public controversy over a national unification manqué, the apocalyptic rhetoric of the antiwar protesters reminded many intellectuals of what Thomas Mann once called the German "nonrelationship" to politics. Moreover, those intellectuals most closely identified with the opening to the West and the democratic culture of the Federal Republic (as well as the leading intellectuals of the German Democratic Republic) were also early opponents of unification and advocates of a "two-state solution." From the perspective of the intellectuals the unification process was too rapid, too much controlled by executive fiat, lacking in adequate constitutional legitimacy, and, above all, too forgetful of the heritage of nationalism in German history. As Grass warned, "a reunified Germany would be a complex laden colossus."⁸⁸

Since the "Turn" of 1989/90 these judgments have come under fire from critics who point to the self-righteousness and myopia of the left intelligentsia for imposing a strict taboo on the idea of unity in the face of an irrepressible reality. The novelist Peter Schneider, for example, in an article aptly entitled "Some People Can Even Sleep Through an Earthquake," included himself in the charge that Germany's left political culture was complacent and oblivious of the harsh dictatorship in the Eastern half and kept faith in the dogma that anticommunism was merely a mask of West German capitalism.⁸⁹ To be sure, what for some critics like Schneider serves as a critical reassessment has, for others, become a new myth that accuses left intellectuals of lacking a "positive basic decision for unity."⁹⁰ The "anti-Fascist" intelligentsia of the former GDR is likewise condemned for participating in and tacitly sanctioning the system of surveillance and control while decades of "Ostpolitik" are now being assaulted for appeasing and legitimizing the leaders of the communist state. In this highly charged atmosphere German intellectuals are once again accused of betrayal and are increasingly placed on the defensive.

The *Critique* is of course a reminder of the perils of nationalism and national self-assertion for German intellectuals caught up in the euphoric mood that followed unification. But Ball's own case underscores the opposite risk: that German intellectuals today have to be as aware of the dangers of an inverted nationalism of the left as they need fear a resurgence of the malevolent right-wing nationalism of 1914 and 1933. Any account of the *Critique* today must also consider this dilemma since Ball exemplifies the paradox of an intellectual who repudiated the nationalism of the right, while seeing Germany's salvation in an apocalyptic and inverted nationalism that believed German politics was held hostage by a mysterious "Jewish" power. The obvious parallels to contemporary arguments against German involvement in global politics and to the perverse idealization of Germany as the nation of a higher morality as well as the recognition that this mentality has its historical antecedents in the antiwar politics of 1918 may in fact be the *Critique's* most important legacy. In this sense, the dilemmas German intellectuals have encountered in the aftermath of the epoch ushered in by the revolutions of 1918/19 continue to resonate from the *Critique* to the present.

NOTES

1. Lack of attention to Ball's anti-Semitism can to no small degree be attributed to the strange history of the publication of the *Critique* in the Federal Republic of Germany during the 1970s and 1980s. The second edition of *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz*, published by Rogner & Bernhard in Munich in 1970, was heavily censored, apparently by the editor, Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner. Although neither the deletions nor the reasons for removing the offensive material are acknowledged in Kaltenbrunner's lengthy introduction, twenty-four passages, including sections of several pages in length, were removed. The majority of the excised passages consist of those revealing Ball's anti-Semitism—for example, allusions to the "conspiracy of Protestant and Jewish theology," or to "Jewish-Junker world domination." Several others soften his anti-Catholicism and antitheism. Without mentioning the deletions in his introduction, Kaltenbrunner explicitly denied that the *Critique* is anti-Semitic: "That Ball was no anti-Semite is demonstrated by his repeated polemic against Treitschke, H. St. Chamberlain and other anti-Jewish ideologues, as well as by his sympathy for Heine or Karl Kraus, those Jewish spirits who most relentlessly criticized the German misery." (Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner, Introduction, *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* [Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1970], p. 25). Kaltenbrunner's comments are all the more duplicitous since if the *Critique* was not anti-Semitic, then why was it necessary to excise the relevant passages and offer no explanation or indication? Nor do Ball's negative references to anti-Semitic ideologues or positive ones to "Jewish" opponents of German patriotism add up to a convincing argument on behalf of Ball's lack of anti-Semitism. The main point is that the practice

of "editing" a historical work in order to make its author more publicly acceptable is scandalous no matter how noble the motives. Even more scandalous in this case is the deceptive commentary, which neglects to mention that many egregious passages were removed while defending Ball against a hypothetical charge of anti-Semitism. In the (third) German edition published by Suhrkamp Verlag in Frankfurt in 1980, the offensive introduction no longer appears though—perhaps unwittingly—the expurgated version reappears with only the misleading notation that "the first edition appeared in 1919 in *The Freie Verlag*, Bern." At best the sad publication history of the *Critique* reveals the disingenuous side of the public taboo against anti-Semitism in the German Federal Republic. It is regrettable that such duplicitous practices might have been thought justified by the fear that Ball could be accused of anti-Semitism and that his posthumous reputation had to be managed accordingly. Brian L. Harris, who first uncovered this editorial practice in his 1979 dissertation, was right to note that "nothing is to be gained by editing the *Critique* to soften its original anti-Semitism" (See Brian L. Harris, "Hugo Ball's *Critique of the German Mind: A Translation with Introduction and Notes to Hugo Ball's Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz*," Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1979, pp. 151–52.)

2. The most important studies of Ball are: Gerhardt Edward Steinke, *The Life and Work of Hugo Ball: Founder of Dadaism* (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1967); Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Hugo Ball," in Wolfgang Rothe, ed., *Expressionismus als Literatur: Gesammelte Studien* (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1969); Brian Harris, "Hugo Ball's *Critique of the German Mind*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1979); Philip Mann, *Hugo Ball: An Intellectual Biography* (Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1987); Seth Taylor, *Left-Wing Nietzscheans: The Politics of German Expressionism 1910–1920* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1990).

3. Emmy Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo: Mein Leben mit Hugo Ball* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), p. 15.

4. Hugo Ball, "Nietzsche in Basel: Eine Streitschrift," in Hans Burkhard Schlichting, ed., *Hugo Ball—Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit: Ausgewählte Schriften*, pp. 61–102 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

6. Hohendahl, "Hugo Ball," p. 740.

7. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 33.

8. Ball, "Nietzsche in Basel," p. 66.

9. Hugo Ball, *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* (Munich and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1927), November 20, 1915, p. 71. Translations are my own, though I have profitably consulted the English translation of Ball's diaries, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, ed. John Elderfield and trans. Ann Raimés (New York: Viking, 1974).

10. Hugo Ball, "Kandinsky," *Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit*, p. 45.

11. Letter of August 7, 1914, *Hugo Ball: Briefe, 1911–1927*, ed. Anne-

marie Schütt-Hennings (Zurich, Cologne: Benziger, 1957). Cited in Jindrich Toman, "Im Krieg regt sich das Urgewässer: Hugo Ball und der Kriegsausbruch 1914," *Hugo Ball Almanach* 5 (1981): 8.

12. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, November 1914, p. 16. See also Taylor, *Left-Wing Nietzscheans*, p. 173.

13. Mann, *Hugo Ball*, p. 53.

14. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, November 1914, p. 16.

15. See John Elderfield, introduction to *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, p. xix, and Taylor, *Left-Wing Nietzscheans*, p. 174.

16. Mann, *Hugo Ball*, p. 61; Taylor, *Left-Wing Nietzscheans*, p. 174.

17. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, August 7, 1919, p. 235.

18. Mann, *Hugo Ball*, p. 79.

19. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, December 13, 1915, p. 49.

20. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, March 30, 1916, p. 86.

21. Mann, *Hugo Ball*, pp. 85–94; Hohendahl, "Hugo Ball," p. 746.

22. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, April 11, 1917, p. 158.

23. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, June 13, 1916, p. 99.

24. Hugo Ball, *Flametti oder vom Dandysmus der Armen* (Berlin: Reiss, 1918), p. 161. See Mann, *Hugo Ball*, pp. 62–66.

25. Ball, "Kandinsky," *Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit*, p. 47.

26. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, June 7, 1917, p. 172, and Mann, *Hugo Ball*, p. 109.

27. See Martin Korol, "Einleitung," Ernst Bloch, *Kampf, nicht Krieg: Politische Schriften 1917–1919* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).

28. Bloch, who also repeated the charge, exempted Ball from culpability. See Martin Korol, "Hugo Ball—Korrespondenz mit Johann Wilhelm Muehlon," *Hugo Ball Almanach* 4 (1980): 59. The evidence for this charge remains inconclusive. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 115; Mann, *Hugo Ball*, pp. 111–12. See for example, Hugo Ball, "Propaganda hier und dort" (August 31, 1918), *Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit*, p. 226.

29. Hohendahl, "Hugo Ball," p. 750.

30. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, October 6, 1917, p. 205.

31. Ernst Bloch, "Über einige politische Programme und Utopien in der Schweiz," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 46, no. 1 (1918): 161.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, September 7, 1917, p. 198.

34. *Ibid.*, September 26, 1917, p. 203.

35. Mann, *Hugo Ball*, p. 81.

36. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, November 11, 1917, p. 213.

37. Mann, *Hugo Ball*, pp. 114–15.

38. Hugo Ball, "Bakunin Brevier, Part I," unpublished ms., cited in Manfred Steinbrenner, "Theoretischer Anarchismus und 'Imitatio Christi': Zur Bedeutung der Einflußnahme Michail Bakunins auf das Werk Hugo Balls," *Hugo Ball Almanach* 7 (1983): 75. Bakunin-Breviary," pt. I, p. 40.

39. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, November 14, 1917, p. 212.
40. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 121.
41. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, November 14, 1917 p. 213.
42. Mann, *Hugo Ball*, p. 116.
43. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, November 18, 1917, p. 213.
44. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 124.
45. The citation stems from Bakunin's preface to his translation of Hegel's "Gymnasialrede." Ball, "Bakunin Brevier," pt. 1, cited in Steinbrenner, "Theoretischer Anarchismus," p. 73.
46. See Anson Rabinbach, "Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse: Benjamin, Bloch, and Modern German Jewish Messianism," *New German Critique* 34 (Winter, 1985): 78–124; Michel Löwy, "Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia in Central Europe (1900–1933)," *New German Critique* 20 (Spring/Summer 1980): 105–15.
47. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, December 5, 1917, p. 217; May 5, 1918, p. 231.
48. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1918, p. 228.
49. *Ibid.*, April 15, 1918, p. 222.
50. *Ibid.*, August 11, 1917, p. 184.
51. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 120.
52. Hohendahl, "Hugo Ball," p. 750.
53. Hugo Ball, "Die deutsche 'Demokratie' und Rußland," *Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit*, p. 205.
54. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, April 19, 1918, p. 223.
55. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 124.
56. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, October 29, 1917, p. 211.
57. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, July 17, 1918, p. 233.
58. Mann, *Hugo Ball*, pp. 109–10.
59. Hugo Ball, "Abbruch und Wiederaufbau," *Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit*, p. 273.
60. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 114.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 153–54.
62. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, August 11, 1917, pp. 184–85.
63. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 158.
64. Review of the *Critique*, Paul von Mathies [PM], *Die Freie Zeitung* 3, no. 15 (February 19, 1919): 59.
65. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, February 17, 1919, p. 238.
66. Review of the *Critique*, Ernst Bloch, *Die Weltbühne* 15:29 (1919): 53.
67. Ernst Bloch, "Über einige politische Programme und Utopien in der Schweiz," p. 162.
68. Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship*, trans. Harry Zohn (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981), p. 79.

69. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, June 5, 1919, p. 247.

70. *Ibid.*, July 31, 1918, p. 234.

71. Hugo Ball, "Die Umgehung der Instanzen," (November 16, 1918), *Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit*, p. 233.

72. Ernst Bloch, *Briefe 1903–1975*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 232–233. The affair is discussed in Martin Korol, "Einleitung," in Martin Korol, ed., *Kampf nicht Krieg: Politische Schriften 1917–1919*, pp. 51, 52 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984). For an apologetic account that attributes Ball's anti-Semitism to Bloch's plagiarism of his ideas, see Volker Knüfermann, "Hugo Ball und Ernst Bloch als Beiträger der *Freien Zeitung*, Bern 1917–1919," *Hugo Ball Almanach* 12 (1988): 31–33.

73. Korol notes that no documentary evidence for a rupture exists in Ball's published writings. However, Knüfermann points out that Ball's letters indicate that tensions existed as early as early 1918, when Ball charged that Bloch had used his "ideas without attribution." Knüfermann "risks the hypothesis that Ball, irritated by the earlier history of Bloch's plagiarism, saw in this publication [of Bloch's *Schadet oder nützt Deutschland eine Niederlage seines Militärs?* Bern, 1918] a new and heavier burden on their friendship and that from this perspective the sharp utterance about 'anational Israelites' of November 16, 1918, might be explained." (Knüfermann, "Hugo Ball und Ernst Bloch," p. 38). See also Korol, *Kampf nicht Krieg*, p. 52, and *Hugo Ball Briefe 1911–1927*, ed. Annemarie Schütt-Hennings (Zürich: Benziger, 1957), p. 119. An attempted visit to the Blochs in Thun that did not take place, since the Blochs had already returned to Germany, was "a great disappointment for Ball." (Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 133.)

74. Bloch, *Briefe*, 1: 232–33.

75. Bloch had apparently even agreed to write a preface to Ball's proposed critique of nineteenth century Jewry, so that Ball could not be suspected of vulgar anti-Semitism ("Schmutzverdacht des gemeinen Antisemitismus"). *Ibid.*

76. H. Herrigel, "Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz," *Frankfurter Zeitung* 752 (October 9, 1925), cited in *Hugo Ball (1886–1986): Leben und Werk* (Berlin 1986), p. 269.

77. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 121.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

79. Ball, *Flucht aus der Zeit*, October 4, 1915, p. 46.

80. Hermann Bahr, "Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz," 1919 (Leipzig, Vienna, and Zurich, 1920), pp. 73–76.

81. Ball, "Abbruch und Wiederaufbau," p. 293.

82. See for example Kuno Fischer, *Immanuel Kant* (Mannheim, 1860). See also Hauke Brunkhorst, *Die Intellektuellen im Land der Mandarine* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), p. 88.

83. Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the*

Pathogenesis of Modern Society (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 1988), p. 11.

84. Ernst Bloch, "Anfragen," in *Politische Messungen, Pestzeit, Vormärz*, vol. 11 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, p. 383

85. Fritz Stern, *The Failure of Illiberalism: Essays on the Political Culture of Modern Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 18–19.

86. Primo Levi, "The Memory of Offense," in Geoffrey Hartman, ed., *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, p. 131 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

87. Andreas Huyssen, "After the Wall: The Failure of German Intellectuals," *New German Critique* 52 (Winter, 1991): 109.

88. Günter Grass, *Deutscher Lastenausgleich: Wider das dumpfe Einheitsgebot. Reden und Gespräche* (Frankfurt am Main: Luchterhand, 1990), p. 11.

89. Peter Schneider, *The German Comedy: Scenes of Life after the Wall*, trans. Philip Boehm and Leigh Hafrey (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1991), p. 76.

90. See for example Brigitte Seebacher-Brandt, *Die Linke und die Einheit* (Berlin: Corso bei Siedler, 1991), p. 22.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

THIS TRANSLATION OF HUGO BALL'S *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* is a revised version of a translation I completed as part of my doctoral dissertation (University of Texas at Austin, 1979). I have used the original 1919 edition of *Zur Kritik* as the source text. Matter enclosed within pointed brackets in the translation was omitted from the two subsequent German editions of Ball's book published by Rogner and Bernhard (Munich 1970) and Suhrkamp (Frankfurt am Main 1980). No critical edition of *Zur Kritik* yet exists in German.

Though it bears many of the trappings of scholarship, *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* is not a scholarly work. In fact, Ball's book at times is as intractable on textual levels as it is unruly in matters of content and argumentation. The text swirls with names and with quotations that Ball has wrested from primary, secondary, even tertiary sources and then manipulated to fit his own contexts and polemic. Where it seemed advisable I have supplied footnotes to clarify matters of content, shed light on problems of translation, or provide editorial comment. Ball's numbered endnotes constitute a second problematic text. Bibliographic references are often incomplete, unclear, or missing. Entries range from cryptic citations of a name, a title, or a page number, to lengthy extracts or argumentative digressions that often labor in counterpoint to the main text. Where possible I have edited Ball's citations to conform to current

bibliographic practices. However, in many instances I have been able only to record the ambiguities and uncertainties as Ball has given them. Even so, his editorial practices provide a stylistic complement, revealing the grain and focus of his thinking. Where feasible, given the nature of Ball's sources and citations and his manipulation of these sources, I have sought also to incorporate available English translations of the material he quotes. Unless it is noted otherwise, I am responsible for all translations.

I am most indebted to Christopher Middleton, who first introduced me to Ball's life and works and who later directed my work on Ball and my initial translation of *Zur Kritik*. That translation profited greatly from his help and editorial guidance, and I welcome the opportunity to acknowledge his continued presence in this revised version. I owe thanks to colleagues who served as informants in this translation of Ball's text. Richard Hattendorf assisted with passages in French, and Frédéric Fladenmuller gave additional advice concerning them. Luis Acévez and Steven Cerutti helped with material in Greek and Latin. East Carolina University provided a summer research grant in support of this project. Finally, to Jerri Harris, my wife and friend, I express my gratitude for her counsel and support.

To the leaders of the moral revolution

CRITIQUE OF THE GERMAN INTELLIGENTSIA

You must pay close attention to the new movement of the contemporary world. The old onslaughts will no longer do, for it is all idle froth, as the prophet would say.

—Thomas Münzer (1525)

P R E F A C E

DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS, the governments of the central European powers have been held responsible for the war. It is the purpose of this book, if you will, to systematically extend the question of responsibility to include the ideology of the classes and castes that have supported these governments and made them possible. The German concept of the state has annihilated German thought. The German concept of the state is my target. In order to expose the full scope of its influence and its traditional hostility toward the people at large, I have been compelled to treat its development historically and to set forth points of reference in the critique of its most prominent representatives.

The question of our isolation has occupied me since 1914. I have sought to trace the principles that have put the German character at odds with the rest of the world. It may well be that my attempts to uncover the ultimate, most secret hiding place of this isolation are harsh and bitter, but it was not my intention to write a mere lampooning pamphlet. (These are the discoveries I have attempted to document: a conspiracy of Protestant and Jewish theology (since Luther) and a conspiracy of both with the Prussian powers (since Hegel) seeking to subjugate Europe and the world, and bent on the universal destruction of religion and morals. This conspiracy is more firmly and deeply rooted than is commonly believed. To un-

derestimate it is not in the best interest of humanity or the German people.*

It is my firm conviction that the fall of Prusso-German despotism as postulated by President Wilson in his Mount Vernon address† will not be sufficient to protect the world from further German assault; indeed such attacks need not be limited to acts of war. If salvation and reconciliation are actually to succeed and endure, it is of utmost urgency and importance that the proposed League of Nations keep constantly in view the powerful historical antecedents of this thwarted German intrigue, this moral bankruptcy of a nation that has suffered for a thousand years at the hands of the most dreadful theocracy.

To put the German way of thinking into boldest relief, I have sought to present its opposite. And this counterpart and ideal can be none other than the coherent Christian attitude that for centuries has been persisting in the minds of leading European thinkers and that has been striving toward a universal rebirth. Since I am convinced that religious despotism is the grave of German thought, I have attempted to establish the new ideal wholly outside the state and historical church in a new international organization of the religious intelligentsia. It is characteristic of freedom that it can be realized only as God is to be realized. Without freedom there is no God, and without God there is no freedom.

Hugo Ball
Bern, December 24, 1918

* Throughout, pointed brackets indicate material appearing in the original edition of 1919 that was deleted from the 1970 edition published by Rogner & Bernhard in Munich and is missing also from the 1980 Suhrkamp edition.

† In his Four-Point Speech (Mount Vernon, July 4, 1918) Wilson outlined four conditions necessary to ensure world peace: (1) the dissolution of all arbitrary political power; (2) the acceptance of the will of the people in matters of territorial dispute, sovereignty, politics, and economics; (3) the regeneration of a sense of morality in political affairs; and (4) the establishment of an international organization of world peace.



THE PRINCIPLES OF AN
INTELLECTUAL PARTY:
FREEDOM AND SANCTIFICATION

I

SOMEONE HAS CALLED THE GERMANS the protesting people, without it being clear what they were protesting against. Dostoevsky, although a Russian, certainly did not believe in some mystical German mission that would reveal itself in the course of the centuries. One man who did work throughout his entire life to give depth, an authentic tragic sense, and meaning to the Germans was Friedrich Nietzsche. Finally he lost patience and proclaimed in *Ecce Homo*: "Every great crime against culture for the last four centuries lies on their conscience!"* And he attempted to show how the Germans at every crucial turning point of European history could have deprived Europe of the fruits of its labor and inspiration out of cowardliness before reality, out of a mendacity that had become instinct, out of "idealism."

They protested, they invented that "moral world order" they claimed they had to protect and save. They called themselves the elect, the people of God, without being able to say why they were. They twisted values, took pride in contradiction, and played out a

* "The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem," *Ecce Homo*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche: The First Complete and Authorized English Translation*, ed. Oscar Levy, 18 vols. (1909-11; reissue, New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), 17: sec. 2, p. 124. *Ecce Homo*, written 1888-89, published 1908, the same year Ball began writing his doctoral dissertation on Nietzsche at the University of Munich.

heroism before whose high-stepping, bombastic postures the rest of the world burst out laughing. They extolled all their own weaknesses, even their vices and crimes, as excellence and virtue, making a travesty of the morality of everyone they felt superior to. They never did discover that amiable, polite attitude toward things; they did not identify themselves with their own thoughts. They took the slightest tug at their contorted rigidity as a direct challenge, as personal insult. They never understood being prevailed upon or how to respond to courting. They remained ominous and impenetrable, like some threatening construction. They answered enthusiasm and love with police action and the fever of mobilization. The *memento mori* of the Middle Ages and the pathology of conscience that came with it had made them that way. They went forth as the born prophets of doom and despair, and they have produced the most dismal monks of all: Berthold Schwarz, the discoverer of gunpowder, and Martin, that vassal of God who introduced blithe submission and the pedantry of a conscience that could never really be at peace with that submission.* They never became enamored of other nations, but always considered themselves to be judge, jury, and executioner. They mistrusted on principle, for one never knows what might happen. The world is a wicked, dissolute place, full of thieves. Instead of wrinkling your brow, it is better to parade about with a loaded revolver, chest stuck out, jaw jutting, teeth clenched, flexing your muscles and throwing scathing looks in all directions. A baroque folk *kat exochen*, † head and body a cramp of brains and muscle; threatening spectral puppets in fancy wigs, but no humanity. There were never any defining periods of relaxation.

II

What is called the German mentality has earned itself a bad reputation and is a sad sign—of the lack of principle and heart, of a deficiency in logic, precision, and, above all, in the instinct for morality. Nineteen hundred fourteen: Hardly a single person in officialdom did not compromise himself. Pastors and poets, states-

* Berthold Schwarz (fl. first half of the fourteenth century) is credited with the invention of gunpowder in the Western world. Martin Luther, 1483–1546. Ball's phrase *die schwärzesten Mönche* (the blackest monks) employs the superlative degree of the adjective *schwarz* (dark, black; gloomy, dismal). I have inserted Schwarz's surname, not present in the original text, in the hope of creating, for readers who may know the German word, an equivalent to Ball's wordplay.

† In every respect.

men and scholars vied to spread the basest possible conception of the nation. A hodgepodge of interests and values, of commands and ideas, cropped up trying with sentimental hysteria to excuse Potsdam with Weimar, Weimar with Potsdam. Eternal paperwork became the order of the day. In a bombastic manifesto ninety-three intellectuals gave notice that they no longer could be counted as intellectuals.* The Hannele poets† were in their heyday and appearing in demagogic rags. "And as the German bird, the eagle, soars above all animals of this earth, so, too, should each German feel exalted above all surrounding peoples, wherever they are visible in the boundless depths below."¹ Small-minded busybodies in every district were sizing up the world situation. Unfortunately, the world situation suited them so poorly. They arose from their procrustean beds with dislocated joints and rolling eyes. Philistines and paper beings by the dozen went up in smoke and grotesque spirals. I do not intend here to serve up the quotations that everyone is carrying around in notebooks. It is no longer the time to excerpt the times.‡ We now know what is what. And it is time to draw conclusions. Who is surprised any more that pastors fell under the spell of the frenzy of blood? Haven't they always danced around some Golgotha where mankind was being offered up? Who is the least bit surprised that our German scholars in their self-conceit and megalomania felt compelled to cast votes where they understood nothing at all? If you are clever enough to say of the Balkan states that there, once upon a time, Poseidon paraded as a jackass and Bacchus as a goat, is that any solution to the Serbian question?²

* A reference to the manifesto signed by ninety-three of the most distinguished German intellectuals, scientists, and artists—Catholics, Protestants, and Jews represented among them—in which German violation of Belgian neutrality was rejected as the cause of war; the unity of the German army and the people was proclaimed; and all charges of atrocities and violations of international law were denied. Signatories included Richard Dehmel, Max Planck, Ernst Haeckel, and Wilhelm Wundt, to mention only a few.

† Die "*Hannele-Dichter*," a pejorative designation of mystical or quasi-mystical poets or writers whose works intentionally disregarded or ignored social realities in favor of mystical or religious motifs, events, or resolutions of conflict. The term is derived from Gerhart Hauptmann's drama *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* (The Ascension of Hannele, 1894).

‡ Ball's sentence, "Es ist nicht die Zeit mehr, die Zeit auszuschneiden," plays on the motto of Franz Pfemfert's radical Berlin journal *Die Aktion*: "Ich schneide die Zeit aus" (I excerpt the times). Under the editorship of Pfemfert (1879–1954) *Die Aktion* became one of the most important social revolutionary journals in Germany and a major organ of the Expressionist movement.

My book deals with the German intelligentsia, not with the stupidity of the bourgeoisie.* It cannot be my concern here to enumerate all the blundering, arrogance, and absurdity of my compatriots. A study of their character would indeed be a welcome subject. There is an intellectual counterpoint even to the common, to the ordinary. Karl Kraus,† that apocalyptic enemy of the popular press, has taken care of that.³ Whether you are Austrian or German, read his works, laugh, cry, or be ashamed. In my subject I find no cause for fun-making. The irony of events demands more penetrating and productive methods than lampoon. The task before us is to investigate whether the German spirit was pressing for liberation or its opposite and to show the methods used and the results that followed.

III

The German mind, the German intelligentsia ‡—there will be some smiles among the French and even among the Germans. Does it exist? Is it not a contradiction in terms? Yet it is important to remain serious. What is the intelligentsia of a country? The intellectual-spiritual elite, those rare human beings who communicate their experiences and the consequences of them on behalf of a higher rationality. That intellectual community or faction whose higher rationality impels it to bestow its knowledge, thoughts, and experiences upon the whole nation from which it has come; that reaching out of intellect that lives and acts in its most conscious and lofty representatives according to hidden comprehensive designs, manifesting itself openly in the press, the street, or in parliament, setting goals for humanity, showing paths, clearing away obstacles in anticipation of the day when all rational beings, according to the words of Origen, will be united under a *single* law.

What distinguishes the vast majority of a nation from its intelli-

* Ball here contrasts *Intelligenz* with *Schildbürgerei*.

† Karl Kraus (1874–1936), Viennese writer and satirist who fought for purity in language and public office.

‡ *Der deutsche Geist, die deutsche Intelligenz*. *Geist* means both "spirit" (the subtle, invisible, vital essence of a thing) and "mind" (the powers of sentient beings apart from bodily faculties and activities, nearly synonymous in its limited sense with "intellect"). *Intelligenz* refers both to the power of, and the capacity for, knowing (intellect, intelligence, understanding) and the manifestation of that power or capacity in corporate social terms (intelligentsia, intellectuals). Ball's words equate the mind and spirit of a nation with its intelligentsia and intellectuals.

gentsia? The lack of conviction, objectivity, historically conditioned goals, certainly the lack of responsibility. But above all, exclusion from that benevolent conspiracy of minds that I would like to call the church of the intelligentsia, that society of the select who carry freedom and consecration within themselves, who hold upright the canons of humanity and humaneness, and who, over the centuries, although constantly beset by chimeras, apparitions of animality, ghastly visages, and infernal phantoms, strive to safeguard the original image of the creator.

The mentality of the masses is the sum of aimlessness, restlessness, of despair and faint courage, of opportunism and indolence, of masked sentimentality and inflated arrogance. The mentality of the crowd: there is its bad conscience, there are its liars and word-twisters, its "rampant scribbling year-in-year-out" and its denouncers, its undercover enforcers and hairsplitters, its bigmouths, demagogues, and scatterbrains. What a wicked concert! What an orgy of extraordinary distortions! Woe to the country where that mentality outstrips intelligence, but three times woe to the country where that mentality alone is in power and regards itself as intellect. Obduracy, inner conflict, corruption obstruct the sense of proportion, the norm. Delirium and rage hold the upper hand. That country is lost and does not know it.

IV

It is one of the most important tasks of the intelligentsia to direct the attention of its nation toward the sources of great ideas, to clear the way for these ideas, and to follow closely at history's heels with all senses alert. The geniuses who gave promise of educating Germany, those musicians of criteria and standards who could read philosophies and orchestral scores with equal facility, are not plentiful. They found their task made more difficult. From the beginning they found themselves in surroundings that did not support their task, that contradicted them crassly and derisively, and that even made their work impossible. The idea of the *Imperium Romanum* that filled the Middle Ages, the alliance and conflict between emperor and pope, gave Germany the appearance of world supremacy. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and the heraldry of Gothic kaisers stamped the people with a consciousness that believed service to God and its mission consisted in clanging weapons, judgships, hangings, smashing things to pieces, and in

brute force. No decisive national experience has foiled this belief, neither the Reformation nor the French Revolution. Even today Germany still feels that it is both the "Genius of War" and the "moral heart" of the world.⁴ And yet Germany was and has been for so long the rawboned hangman, drunken vassal, hardmouthed mercenary of the popes. Priests kept telling Germany that a small brain is a soldier's virtue. The egocentric delirium full of arrogance and swaggering that rose from the dead in the writings of Treitschke and Chamberlain* first reached symbolic proportions during the time of the medieval emperors.

The minds who showed promise of civilizing Germany came very late. Italy, Spain, and France had long had rich cultures. Germany had always been home to a crude barbarian people given to drunkenness, brutalized and stupefied by crusades and endless military service, enslaved and hardened by Junkers and clerics. Shakespeare's comedies portray Germans as louts and bragging drunks. Léon Bloy† even cites Luther as historical evidence of Germany's corruption and brutality.⁵ The major impulse of the Enlightenment did not break through here. The *vox humana*‡ of neighboring lands found only the faintest echo. Even now we still lack a conscience toward humanity at large. Even now the leading thinkers and the nation itself still oscillate in contradictions between cultural concepts. Religious, moral, esthetic, and political spokesmen came to the fore; but no one succeeded in creating unity, and all of them fought among themselves. Even in our time the universal kingdom of emperor and pope tried to be reborn. Only the guilt of war, toward which the majority of a despotically brutalized caste would direct us, holds any promise of clearing away such dangerous atavism. Incorporating Germany into a league of European nations is

* Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–96), German historian and editor of the *Preussische Jahrbuch* (Berlin), who sanctioned attacks on the Jews in 1878, and whose extreme nationalism was instrumental in shaping German nationalist tendencies during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927), British-born political philosopher and ardent admirer of Richard Wagner. Chamberlain's theories of "Germanism" (*Foundations of the 19th Century* [1899]) and of the superiority of the so-called Aryan element in European culture greatly influenced the development of National Socialism in Germany.

† Léon Henri Marie Bloy (1846–1917), French apocalyptic Catholic writer who preached the virtues of poverty and suffering and whose style and personality made him instrumental in the conversion to Catholicism of many French thinkers.

‡ Originally organ stops imitative of the human voice, but used by Ball to mean the voice of the human spirit or of humane consciousness.

an inescapable demand. It must be promoted with passionate energy. The task for which the nation itself has been too indolent and its leading minds too weak, namely, to demolish the isolation in which Germany has so menacingly and stubbornly placed itself, this task now falls to neighboring countries, which must see to it that the archaic nonsense of spectacles of weaponry will be set aside once and for all.

The alignment of Germany! Here at last is the idea of unity that guarantees recovery, greatness, and humility. The German people must open their eyes. It would be to their benefit to be struck with pain, suffering, sacrifice. The nation would find the strength within itself to fall, yet rise again. We are demanding democracy. The political spirit is the shaping energy. Empty phrases and digressions can no longer matter. Germany is responsible and must acknowledge this if the reconstruction of Europe is to be completed. The proclamation of new human and national rights concludes the war. No more metaphysics—at issue is the world and how we are to put it in order so that we can live together. Even if statesmen do not have the final word, there is present in their minds the ground plan from which the new edifice of humanity is to rise up. What heretofore was only fragmentary and found expression in a few utopian-minded individuals will be drawn together and will unfold organically. Death, bankruptcy, destruction mark the approach for Germany of the first political experience of freedom in the broader sense since the loss of the Christian concept of a corporate Europe. But once those walls that still keep the German people in their ghetto have fallen, once the nation, in an elemental outburst of enthusiasm, has broken the chains paralyzing its humanity, those thinkers will emerge who will show the way to the great human deeds so bragged about in Germany today and so thoroughly misunderstood. Then that knowledge will be measured, and we will truly know what we can take pride in and what we must be ashamed of.

V

It is apparent: I am denying that there ever was or could be a German intelligentsia. There were fragments, beginnings, attempts, but nothing that permeated and enlightened the country. Even Germany had its great men. But the majority's opposition to them and that discontented self-satisfaction generally characterizing the na-

tion transformed love to hate in these men, changing their joy to despair. Ringed by philistinism, intrigues, and pedantry, they watched their best efforts wither away. No inspiring wave carried them onward, and their work became their torture; their lives, a constant suffering. And when they recognized the hopelessness of the situation, it was too late.

Thomas Münzer, * arch-fanatic, carried within him a complete hierarchy of suffering. He has long been forgotten by this people; his name is hardly known. *Hölderlin* † laments: "Barbarians from the remotest past, whom industry and science and even religion have made yet more barbarous, profoundly incapable of any divine emotion, spoiled to the core for the delights of the sacred Graces, offensive to every well-conditioned soul through the whole range from pretense to pettiness, hollow and tuneless, like the shards of a discarded pot—such, my Bellarmin! were my comforters."⁶ From *Goethe* came these resigned words: "We Germans are behind the times. We have been cultivating ourselves diligently for a century; but at least a few centuries could come and go before enough intelligence and higher culture penetrate the people of our country to enable us to say that it has been a long time since they were barbarians."⁷ And *Goethe's* despairing words, the *sauve qui peut* ‡ that he called out, with a shrug of his shoulders, to the intellectual faction of his time:

What suits one, may not suit all,
Let each one see how to do it,
Let each one see where to be,
And if you stand, see you do not fall.§

* *Thomas Münzer* (1490–1525), German radical reformer and leader of the Thuringian peasants' revolt. His forces were defeated in April 1525; Münzer was captured, recanted under torture, and was executed. As early as 1915 Ball was envisioning a monograph on Münzer. *Critique* is one of the earliest twentieth-century reassessments of Münzer and influenced Ernst Bloch's *Thomas Münzer als Theologe der Revolution* (1921). See chapter 1 below.

† *Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin* (1770–1843), translator, dramatist, and prophetic poet who opened new horizons for the German language and celebrated the humanity of Greek inspiration meeting with Christianity in some of the finest hymns and odes in German literature.

‡ Every man for himself.

§ "Eines schickt sich nicht für alle, / Jeder sehe, wie er's treibe, / Jeder sehe, wo er bleibe, / Und wer steht, daß er nicht falle."

Goethe has held his own, braced against this people. Schoolmasters dissected him; philologists latched on to him like leeches. He is not popular yet. In his most significant and sublime judgments he came up against deaf ears, remaining both a miracle and a misapprehension.⁸ *Heinrich Heine** fled to Paris, appalled. The Goncourt brothers† claimed that he, along with two other non-Parisians, represented the quintessence of the Parisian spirit; in Germany he is still being abused.⁹ *Friedrich Nietzsche* has said the worst things about Germany that anyone can say about a nation: "In the history of knowledge, Germans are represented only by doubtful names, they have been able to produce only 'unconscious' swindlers."¹⁰ And he goes on:

But psychology is almost the standard of measurement for the cleanliness or uncleanness of a race. . . . For if a man is not even clean, how can he be deep? The Germans are like women, you can scarcely ever fathom their depths—they haven't any, and that's the end of it. Thus, they cannot even be called shallow. That which is called "deep" in Germany, is precisely this instinctive uncleanness toward one's self, of which I have just spoken: people refuse to be clear in regard to their own natures.‡

And yet, even he had started out filled with the hope of an intellectual unity, of a heroic German ideal that could become the treasure of all higher Europeanism.¹¹ The nation forced him to resentment, to Germanophobia. At the end of his career he regretted not having written in French, and he claimed to be Polish when he died. Read *Ecce Homo*, his disturbing closing of accounts with the German mentality, which he wrote shortly before his collapse—read and

* Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), lyric poet and father of the German *feuilleton* style. Heine was associated with the Young Germans (*Junges Deutschland*), who aggressively sought to reform social and political conditions and were a major force in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Heine's *Zur Kritik der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (Paris, 1834–35) was a major influence on Ball's *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz*.

† Edmond Louis Antoine (1822–96) and Jules Alfred Huot de Goncourt (1830–70), French novelists, historians, art critics, and diarists, founders of the Prix Goncourt, and teachers of Émile Zola.

‡ "'The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem,'" *Ecce Homo*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy (1909–1911; reissue, New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), 17: sec. 3, pp. 126 and 127 (for this and the preceding quotation).

judge how a precious and taut will felt stranded on the historical paucity, the hollow commercialism of thought, and the indolent conviviality and *Gemütlichkeit* of his nation. Examine closely *Schopenhauer's* testimony, which reads: "If I should die unexpectedly, and the question of my political testament is raised, let me say here and now that I am ashamed to be a German and know I share this shame with all truly great persons who have been knocked about by this people."*

I have cited the best names in the nation, and you can practically measure the loftiness of their original intentions by the vehemence of their ultimate despair. They were fighting for a lost cause, and the longer it took them to realize it, the more brutally they rejected any sense of community interaction. One could be tempted to agree with Heinrich Mann,† who wrote these dejected words as the motto of his novel *The Patrioteer* (1918), a book interrupted by the war: "This nation is hopeless." When the strongest and most humane minds declare their opposition to their own people, what is left to be done? In Boeotia you grow potatoes, in Athens you write tragedies.

Where in Germany was to be found that idolizing enthusiasm, that tenderness with which the French named France *Notre Dame* and *La douce France*?¹² Charles Maurras‡ proposed that France be honored like a goddess. Even Léon Bloy, one of the most scathing pamphleteers France has ever seen, felt justified in writing this: "France is so clearly first among all other nations that any one of them should consider itself fortunate to be invited in to eat with her dogs."¹³ In no other people has the *esprit religieux* reached such heights and such profundity as in the French in the last fifty years. The church of the intelligentsia: its cornerstone was laid here. Thinkers such as Renan, Baudelaire, Ernest Hello, Barbey d'Aureville, Léon Bloy, Charles Péguy,§ as if in anticipation of frightful and

* Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), German philosophical pessimist, incisive critic of Kantianism and Hegelian idealism and optimism, and author of the 1819 work *The World as Will and Idea*. Ball cites no source for this passage.

† Heinrich Mann (1871–1950), novelist, essayist, elder brother of Thomas Mann and critic of Wilhelmine Germany.

‡ Charles Maurras (1868–1952), French writer and political theorist, one of the major intellectual influences in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century.

§ Joseph Ernest Renan (1823–92), French historian and philosopher who stressed the role of intellectuals in resisting tyranny and leading the masses toward enlightenment. Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1821–67), one of the greatest nineteenth-century poets (*Les Fleurs du mal*) and the source of a new sensibility in thinking and writ-

confused centuries to come, have fashioned the *limbus patrum** that sits in judgment of the irreligious animalism of our time, ridiculing the bleak, rationalistic superficiality of an age of journalists and diplomats. As church fathers of the new Europe to come, they drew the ultimate most sublime sacramental consequences from the Middle Ages and Christianity, and they became the fulcrum and the measure of a new world. More than the conscience of France was speaking through their writings, which are a constant apology of the same theme: *pietas et paupertas sancta*. "Our enemies at that time," wrote Charles Péguy, "conversed in the language of state's reason, the language of the temporal well-being of a people and a race. Borne on by a deeply Christian movement, by revolutionary thinking about Christianization that was nonetheless still traditional in its totality, we French reached the heights of passion in our concern for the eternal salvation of our people. We did not want France to be left in the state of mortal sin." And Romain Rolland,† who would have done better to remain the implacable guardian of these words instead of playing the Good Samaritan in his attempts to reconcile his martyred nation with an infernal Germany, added these words of warning: "Listen to the heroes of the French conscience, you writers who have watch over the conscience of Germany."¹⁴

Where in Germany was to be found that spirit of freedom that has racked the conscience of the Russian people with such birth pangs since 1825? That surging consciousness of future greatness that in less than a hundred years is claiming it sees at the head of a confused and gaping Europe a people deeply separated by language and custom from European life—and this in spite of Bolshevism and vengeful Jewish terrorism? Where in Germany was that fantastic courage of sacrifice that has made great deeds bloom like stars in the history of the Russian Revolution these last hundred years, only to die out in ardent silence in the prisons, fortresses, and under fusillades in Siberia? Where was the hand-to-hand courage of the

ing. Ernest Hello (1828–85), Roman Catholic mystic, influential in the late nineteenth-century Catholic revival. Jules Amedee Barbey d'Aureville (1808–89), French Catholic writer. Charles Péguy (1873–1914), French poet and philosopher, member of the generation of 1890 (Claudé, Gide, Proust, Valéry), founder of the influential *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*.

* "The limbo of the fathers," i.e., of the just who died before Christ's coming.

† Romain Rolland (1866–1944), French novelist, dramatist, Nobel prize winner (1915), who, during the First World War, published articles urging France and Germany to retain humane values in their conflict.

Fronde, the fanaticism of spiritual passion and communion, the applied earnestness and versatility of political method that elevate Russia to a major power of freedom? From the Decembrists Pestel, Muraviev, and Ryleyev* to Europeans such as Herzen, Bakunin, and Ogaryov,† from conspirators like Chernyshevski, Serno-Solovievitch, and Nechaev,‡ to Kropotkin, Tolstoy, and Lenin—what an immense sum of political energy, of national conscience, and of an almost insane devotion to the ideal of the most humble and forlorn among people. Have the Germans lost all their senses? Do they really still feel called upon to destroy and contest all greatness, instead of throwing down their weapons in awe and humility and reaching out their hands?

VI

Freedom and sanctification are the two ideas moving the world today. Not the striving for freedom by Prussian princes and Hungarian magnates that consists in demanding every license for oneself without being checked. Not the sanctification that claims itself to be freed from the most simple human duty through the swallowing of a wafer, the citing of a few passages from the Bible, and the belief in a dead God. And not that "consecration" asserting that "it is the most dazzling originality of our German thinking that we complete the union with the deity here on this earth," and that then reaches the conclusion: "We are a people of warriors. Militarism is the heroic spirit elevated to the level of the warlike spirit. It is Potsdam and Weimar in the highest state of integration. It is *Faust* and *Zarathustra* and full scores of Beethoven in the trenches."¹⁵ All

* The Decembrists, named after the failed uprising of December 1825 that followed the death of Alexander I, became an inspiration to future generations of rebels. Decembrist leaders: Nikita Muraviev, head of the Northern Society of the Union of Welfare; Pavel Pestel, leader of the Southern Society of the Union of Welfare; Kondrati Ryleyev, a poet who died on the gallows with Pestel following the Decembrist defeat.

† Alexander Herzen (1812–70), editor of the free Russian newspaper *The Bell*, and his friend Nikolai Ogaryov (1813–77) had taken a vow to uphold the principles of the Decembrists. Michael Bakunin (1814–76), Russian revolutionary, the leading spirit of nineteenth-century anarchism and a bitter opponent of Marxism.

‡ Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevski (1828–89), Russian radical journalist and author of *What Is To Be Done* (1863), which greatly influenced the young Russian intelligentsia of the 1860s. S. G. Nechaev (1847–82), assassin who murdered a fellow Bakunin follower for betraying their cause.

those Sombarts! How little they really know of union with the deity! *

Freedom and sanctification mean sacrifice and sacrifice over again, sacrifice of goods, and, if it must be, of blood, but in a different sphere, on a different stage than offered by today's faltering theater of war. When Michael Bakunin appeared as a fifty-year-old man at the peace and freedom conference in Bern, toothless, his back bent, sick at heart, and deathly pale after ten years of imprisonment and exile, his friends of 1848 crowded around, begging him to write the memoirs of his conspiracies and street-fighting, his death sentence, and his banishment and escape. "Is it really necessary to speak about myself!" he replied. In his view there were more important things to do than to talk about oneself. And from Léon Bloy issues this profoundly forlorn, and perhaps most religious, message of our times: "Who knows, after all, whether the most active form of adoration is not the blasphemy caused by love, but the prayer of someone abandoned?" Do these words help us understand the meaning of freedom and sanctification?

* Werner Sombart (1863–1941), German economist. Sombart argued in his book *Der moderne Kapitalismus* (1902) that capitalism and capitalist organization were created by a spirit generated in the late Middle Ages, an economic rationality that sought to maximize money profits. Sombart designated the Jews as the chief creators of capitalism.



THOMAS MÜNZER
CONTRA MARTIN LUTHER

I

WE MUST GO BACK into the depths of the Middle Ages if we wish to understand how those tendencies that have become united under the contemporary catchword "Pan-Germanism" achieved the awesome power the entire world knows and feels today. The initial, decisive crises in European history occurred in the medieval struggle for supremacy between spiritual and worldly powers, between spiritual governance by the pope and the raving savagery of barbaric kings. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation came into being when Otto I forced the emperor's crown from the pope in 962. Under Otto III there was a German pope even before there was a German nation. Then came the Crusades, by means of which the popes provided a fanciful diversion for the excesses of barbaric power and the devastating attacks of German kings on Italy. Then followed the subjugation of the weakened state by the Church under Gregory VII.*

The medieval universal state of pope and kaiser initiated an intimate connection between the German populace and Italy, the most civilized country of the world. In receiving that blessing the powerful German kings had become merely the avenging sword and executioner of the Roman will. That ordination also bestowed on them the "cultural mission" of being the extenders of Church ter-

* Henry IV was compelled to recognize the sovereignty of Pope Gregory VII at Canossa in 1077.

ritory and the disseminators of the gospel. Hence, that heraldic attitude of a theological majesty accompanied by imperial fanfare that still captivates the motley peasant imagination of the German people. For centuries the sword of the emperor expanded the boundaries of the Christian faith, as a sword in Mohammed's hand has spread Islam. Even in Gutenberg's time there was that optimistic conviction in the press that the German nation is favored by God and chosen by Providence.¹ But Germany was merely chosen by cardinals and favored by the pope. German kings had extorted their rank by means of bloody deeds and force. Their cultural accomplishments lagged far behind what Arabia, Spain, and Italy were achieving at the same time in art, literature, and science.

Even today our German educators, historians, and pedagogues do not see that there is no reason to be especially proud of this tradition. By no means was Germany the "moral heart of the world," as Max Scheler* would have us believe. Morality in Germany, aside from the influence of an occasional mystic or poet, remained undeveloped, eccentric, and crass. The country was an armory and an arsenal for the worldly goals of the papacy. There is little room in such a nation for the development of refined customs. The Barbarossas, the Ottos, the Fredericks brought both provosts and fear to the popes. As a result, the person anointed by the pope as kaiser was also given the charge that such an "Apostolic Majesty"—the emperor of Austria still bears the title—was obliged to enlarge and defend the powerful European church-state in whatever way might be necessary.

This Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was destroyed by Luther. Luther's robust, violent personality can be understood historically only if the conflict between emperor and pope is borne in mind. Luther separated Germany from Rome, laying the groundwork for the autonomy of contemporary German feudalism. He handed over to German princes and imperial heralds like Treitschke and Chamberlain the ideology underlying that egocentric presumption that has broken out deliriously in the minds of Pan-German generals and lackey propagandists. Beginning with the Reformation, the popes were no longer successful in deflecting German power to

* Max Scheler (1874–1928), German philosopher, whose *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (Formalism in Ethics and the Ethics of Material Value, 1913–16) criticized Kant's formalistic ethics and pleaded for a teleological ethics of value.

the service of spiritual guardianship. Luther became a pivot of history.

From Luther onward a new universal state was in the making, at whose center was not clerical power, but purely profane power. At issue in the great Peasants' War of 1524–25 was whether or not the ancient feudal traditions of Germany could be broken. That German revolution, which is more important today than the reforms that smothered it then, was a failure. Feudalism arose again, strengthened. It was rejuvenated with the rise of the Hohenzollerns. The rise of the Hohenzollerns brought competition with the Hapsburgs, the last remnant of the medieval system. At that point the spiritual and worldly methods of the politics and diplomacy of the universal state shifted from Vienna to the Prussian cabinet. And now we are experiencing how the same universal state of the Middle Ages, this time founded on the unpropertied class, the proletariat, is trying to rise again and spread from Berlin.²

This time, things are reversed. The imperial regime is attempting to use the pope (and the ideology of freedom and spiritual power) in much the same way that the pope in the Middle Ages tried to use the kaiser. Hapsburg contributed the diplomatic methods; Robespierre, the political; Napoleon, the military. A satanic power rules Germany today and is attempting to conquer the world from that home base. Means have become the end. Profanity triumphs; a devaluation of all values is underway the likes of which has never been seen before.

When Dante wrote his *De monarchia*,* he did not dream that he was promoting hell itself. God has become a tool of monarchy. Morals and religion have been subordinated to the omnipotence of state power. And as a consequence of this perversion of moral concepts the most devilish deeds are being exalted in the name of God, without the slightest sensitivity and moral awareness of the inferiority of this gospel of pure power and force.

Every kind of mysticism, every kind of religion, every impulse of spiritual life and human longing, everything that is sacred to humanity is being used by this system in the most subtle fashion to restrain people and bring them into line. Bloodletting has replaced

* *De monarchia*, written between 1308 and 1313, asserts that imperial authority proceeds directly from God and concludes by affirming that God has ordained the whole of humanity to serve in two realms: the temporal, under the emperor; and the eternal, under the pope.

indulgence. The third degree has replaced confession. The great moral values of humanity—soul, peace, trust, respect, freedom, and faith—are judged according to success and are exploited as means to reach goals that contradict the traditional meanings of these words. The clerical *collegium de propaganda fide* has been replaced by a journalistic one *de propagando bello*, and the joy and the pride with which this despicable system is being served illuminate an infernal dance of death in which what is left of the German nature is rotting away before our eyes.

II

Those of us who oppose this system are compelled to review its heroes carefully. National as well as individual prejudices must be cleared away. It will not do that a socialist of the stature of Camille Huysmans* speaks even today of Germany as the "généreuse Allemagne de Luther."³ Luther's Germany was anything but "liberal." August Bebel in his book *Bauernkrieg* (Peasants' War) has sketched a picture of the Germany of that time; his book cannot be recommended strongly enough.⁴ In 1517 Europe and Christian cultural unity were ripped apart by the action of a politically and spiritually immature monk. Luther is looked upon today as the first European exponent of the *divide et impera* of the greater German feudal politic.⁵ Now, four centuries later, there is talk of hastily piecing Europe together again if we want to salvage belief in official heroes and prophets.

The battle of ideas regarding a new humanity has begun. Resolving the question of humanity will also resolve the political issue.

The problems of the Middle Ages have not yet been settled. Europe still lacks a new hierarchy, a hierarchical structure of thinkers able and strong enough to supplant the medieval spiritual hierarchy; a governing structure of ranked accomplishments and abilities among peoples as well as individuals; a spiritual and moral society with invisible graduations capable once again of gaining the upper hand over the satanism of a profanity composed of vestigial fabrications and formulae, a profanity that at this moment celebrates its hideous orgy of death. Only in this way will the Middle Ages be overcome.

Commitment to this task, a task that preoccupied an elite group

* Camille Huysmans (1871–1968), Belgian journalist and politician; Secretary of the Socialist International, 1905–22.

of exemplary individuals during the last century, leads us Germans far back into the Middle Ages and the time of Luther. Revising our intellectual history will give us new impulses, and much that we believed and have been made to believe will have to fall.

A new good and evil. * New battles of conscience. The divine and the satanic are no longer to be clerical conventions, but not scorn and contempt either. The task of this hierarchy of all well-disposed minds and works is this: to create a syntax of new divine and human rights. There can be no *civitas dei* without a *civitas hominum!* The new community is to serve the expansion of a kingdom of all human beings who are of a single good will.

If all the talk of German universality is true, then let the Germans emerge from their political ghetto to show what they have to say, not with the lethargy of flailing weapons, but with the energy of clear thinking. It is not a matter of the sense of responsibility *in opposition to* humanity, as Prince Max von Baden seems to believe,† but of responsibility *with* and *within* humanity.⁶ The Overman must yield to the Compassionate Man.‡ Not creating suffering but eliminating it. Only if this happens is there hope that the automated fate of an automatized world will give way to the self-determination of the individual and, consequently, to freedom.

III

The official imperial history of the consistorial council has hampered clear thinking about Luther, a fact that shows just how urgent it is to think about him. During Luther's time the German bourgeoisie sided with feudalism, and that alliance has survived all European revolutions and is determined now to gag and suppress Europe. Luther was the prophet and the herald of this alliance. By means of his position in the matter of indulgences, he bound provincial diets, princes, and magistrates into a brotherhood. By putting conscience in the custody of secular princes, he helped shape that pharisaism of the state for which God's grace, God-willed

* "Ein neues Gut und Böse." Ball is rejecting Nietzschean amorality, human life "jenseits von Gut und Böse" ("beyond good and evil").

† On October 1, 1918, Emperor Wilhelm II appointed Prince Max von Baden Chancellor of Germany, a position he held until November 9, 1918.

‡ "Der Übermensch muß dem Mitmenschen weichen." *Übermensch*, sometimes translated as "superman," is the Nietzschean term for the heroic, aloof individual. *Mitmensch* signifies a compassionate individual, one who is sensitive to relations with others.

dependence, and the phrase "practical Christianity" have all become conventional signs. But through his despotic behavior in the Peasants' War Luther betrayed the interests of the people to the bureaucratic state.

This is not to minimize or discredit Luther's achievements, for from the Pan-German standpoint they have to be idolized—that much is certain. However, from the standpoint of democracy they have to be condemned. Whoever protests tyranny now, as Luther did as a monk four hundred years ago, has the right to invoke him. Even the Protestants should not be deprived of their saint, although this particular saint wanted nothing to do with saints. "The little child Jesus was born to please Doctor Luther," claims Naumann, "the pope had only an inkling of him."⁷ So be it! We can let such devotion be! The Luther who wrote heartfelt little letters to his son John, who translated the Bible, and who burned the Papal Bull, may he be remembered forever as a model of the good family father for Protestant workmen and peasants, as Joseph of Nazareth is for the Catholics. But it is a different Luther who is dealt out for demagogic ends by driveling Pan-German speechmakers and scribblers. It is a different Luther who is supposed to have "smoothed out from that polyphony the harmonious path for a nation that will give birth to geniuses."⁸

We do not stand now exactly on the same ground as Novalis,* who wrote: "Once there were fine, resplendent times when Europe was a Christian land, when *one* Christendom occupied this humanly constituted continent."⁹ We are not Catholic Romantics singing praises of the past at the expense of the future and the present. We are not anti-Lutherans merely because we share Theodor Lessing's belief that "only as long as the universal idea of Catholicism gave breath to all of Europe was simple beauty blossoming out of plain everyday life."¹⁰ Unlike Herr Scheler, we are not advocating a Catholic renaissance whose obscure propaganda expresses the hope of reestablishing the "beautiful work of the Middle Ages," or that despairs of "a victory of the united German and Christian European spirit over the decadent world surrounding it."¹¹ If we oppose the Reformation, Luther, and Protestantism, it is because we see in them the bulwark of a national isolation that

* Pseudonym for Georg Friedrich Philipp von Hardenberg (1772–1801), one of the greatest lyric poets among the early German Romantics. In his treatise *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, Novalis praised the unified European spiritual and religious life of the Christian Middle Ages.

must be dismantled if a united humanity is to arise. Nor do we believe that it is necessary to introduce "cures for European degeneracy from the world of the Upanishads and Buddha."¹² The way things are done in Germany right now, that would only increase scholarship and further deplete our energies. There has been more than enough thinking and writing. We need only to extract the essence from what we have before us. What Bakunin wrote to Herzen from Berlin in 1840 is still true of the Germans today: "If only one-tenth of their rich intellectual awareness had been transformed into life, what a magnificent people they would be."¹³

Let us root out the libraries! Burn what is useless instead of looking for new "cures." May a new deluge of conscience inundate Germany! Reassessment, not only of political issues, but of the achievements and results attained by the heroes of the German spirit, as measured against the demands of contemporary Europe!

IV

Luther has been called the first major figure to break out of the medieval system, and that is certainly true if you mean by that the religious system. The Ninety-Five Theses Luther nailed to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg dealt with "free grace," and the ensuing conflict over indulgences rapidly developed into a battle over the authority of the pope. "If the grace of God operates without restrictions," says Naumann, "all central stewardship of what is holy is at an end."¹⁴ And in fact it was at an end. Free grace was tantamount to free conscience, to being permitted to think for yourself about salvation, justice, and injustice, about worldly and otherworldly matters. The freedom of a Christian being meant that the individual citizen was determined henceforth to take decisions about the ultimate questions of existence as a matter of personal conscience. In this respect we would wish that we were all Lutherans today.

The system of religion that Luther broke out of supposed a collective in matters of faith. It was the central administration of questions of conscience, not just the management of sacred sanctuaries and relics; it was religious militarism, the structure of discipline. The individual dared to reject obedience for reasons of personal, spiritual salvation. There is no mention of this at all in Naumann's mild-mannered writing. The democratic certitude with which Luther emerged becomes evident if one notes the frenzied

self-confidence with which he then places squarely on the shoulder of the individual all spiritual battles, all metaphysical quandaries for better or for worse, and the entire load of the complex hairsplitting religious problems of his time. The individual shouldered the burden of the sins of the century, but the bliss of all souls also flashed from his ecstatic eyes. In his Schmalkalden articles, Luther claims "the pope does not want to allow faith, but says you should be obedient to him; we do not want to do that, or die for it in the name of God." Where has anybody dared to voice such words against the censorship and the prisonlike conditions of *today's* disciplinarian system? Is the propaganda for war loans that much different from the medieval business with indulgences? Is there such a great difference between the priests of the old and the professors of the new system, between a Tetzels* and a Sombart? Let our Herr Naumann answer that one! The distinction between civil law and gospel, between external and internal authority that Luther set forth in 1517—where is it now? It was reborn in Russia, but in Germany it is nowhere to be found.

Luther himself proudly claimed that he had established the necessary distinction between law and the gospel. As late as 1534 he wrote these words: "I have to keep pounding in that distinction between the two laws, pouring it on, driving it home, plugging away at it, although it has been said and written so often that it becomes disagreeable and annoying. For the confounded Devil never stops stewing and brewing these two realms together. Worldly rulers are always wanting to teach and tutor Christ how to lead his church and his spiritual regiment. Just as false priests are always claiming to teach and explain how earthly regimes are to be run."¹⁵ The division between church and state could not be more clearly formulated, and yet we do not have it even now.

But Luther also proudly boasted of himself that "since the days of the Apostles, no doctor, no writer, no theologian, or jurist has so splendidly and clearly affirmed the conscience of worldly stations."¹⁶ Before he entered the scene, supposedly no one knew anything of worldly authority, where it came from, what its office and function were, and how it was to serve God. This last comment

* John Tetzels, a Dominican, appeared in Wittenberg in 1517 preaching an indulgence proclaimed by Pope Leo X to collect money to build the new church of St. Peter in Rome. Contributors to the fund, if repentant for their sins, were promised remission of temporal punishment. Luther responded to this abuse on October 31 by posting his Ninety-Five Theses.

shows what awesome power unknown to the Middle Ages he did in fact grant to the state. Marsilius of Padua and Machiavelli* had long before assigned specific tasks to the state. However, scholars had held that authority was something pagan, something unholy, and had marked it as a condition that endangered salvation. Luther was the first person to advance the claim, based on the Bible, that state authority too has a divine origin. Thus, even as secular powers were beginning to grow rich on the spoils of the Church, state omnipotence had been guaranteed. According to his own words, Luther revealed himself to be a "false priest" who was teaching "how earthly regimes are to be run." He granted the state an undreamed of "freedom of conscience" and power, and at the same time he extolled the disinterest of the religiously inspired individual in the running of affairs of state. All animosity toward the world to be found in German poets, scholars, and philosophers has its origin here. The disdain with which the feudal German statesman still looks down on the intellectuals in his country, who nevertheless must watch over him, that scorn, too, can be traced to Luther. The naivety of a double-tongued doctor of theology delivered the people over to ceaseless disciplinary manipulation in faith and loyalty at the hands of their Junkers, officials, and princes. And the political and social barrenness of all acts of German thought, lasting up until the present, became the highest duty.

The Weimar chancellor Müller records what Napoleon said while riding to Eckardsberg in 1813: "Charles V would have done well to put himself at the head of the Reformation; with sentiment as it was then, it would have been easy for him from that vantage point to gain unlimited control over Germany."¹⁷ Obviously so. But we cannot conclude from this statement that during Luther's lifetime the House of Hapsburg neglected to follow his career closely and was not at least considering taking advantage of it. Emperor Maximilian, the predecessor of Charles V, jovially asked the Saxon minister Degenhardt-Pfeffinger: "That monk of yours at Wittenberg, what is he doing? His statements cannot be dismissed just like that, now can they?" And the emperor gave this advice: "That monk should be watched with care, for it could come to pass that there would be need of him."¹⁸ Luther became the propagandist of inde-

* Marsilius of Padua (1275?-1342?), Italian political philosopher whose treatise *Defensor pacis* (1324) asserts that the Church is really part of the state. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) laid the foundation for modern secular authority and the politics of power in his *Il Principe* (1513).

pendent sovereign power, and if, according to Bahr's words, the kaiser "scorned his great deed," then certainly no one scorned it in 1871 when the times were ripe. Protestantism became the agency for diplomatic relations between the Prussian kaiser and God himself. However, the polyphony from which Luther "smoothed . . . the harmonious path for a nation that will give birth to geniuses" turned instead into a cacophony of moral ambiguity and confusion. He had not merely affirmed authority: "If the authorities say that two and five are eight, you must believe that it is so, contrary to your own knowledge and sentiments."¹⁹ He also sanctioned war. In an inquiry "Whether soldiers can be in a state of grace" we find these malevolent words: "It is all very true, what people say and write about war being a monstrous plague. . . . But as gruesome and hideous as it sometimes is, we must look at the employment of waging war and using force with manly eyes. Then it becomes self-evident that it is a realm of endeavor *divine in itself*, as necessary and useful to the world as eating and drinking or any other activity."²⁰

V

A monk's revolt against the doctrine of penitence—that was Luther's achievement. Nietzsche called him the "impossible monk." In desperate battles against the devil's spiritual attacks and assaults on the flesh, Luther's impetuous, hot-blooded nature stumbled upon a way out: to doubt the necessity of an unrealizable monastic discipline. Useless rage against his own temperament and the rules of the order compelled him to cast off the monk's cowl and to forgo the cure promised by mortification. He broke the vows of the order and from then on stood for the idea that you do not need to be a monk or a nun to achieve a state of blessedness. For him the cubicle was a prison, the doctrine of penitence a torture.

Having discarded the cowl, he vehemently undertook to find justification for his actions, and he found it, or so he thought, in the belief that belief was justification. The Bible alone is the word of God, and it does not say a thing about being a monk. Christ on the cross died for the sins of the world and of each individual. The admission of sin suffices. It effects human grace. Anyone who confesses his sins could be, and would be, absolved, whether he was an initiate or a layman. Christ's crucifixion and His infinite sacrifice contains the propitiation of a God wronged by humanity.

Luther's doctrine of justification had for him the special significance of justifying his own behavior when he broke his monastic vows. This attempt to justify himself included also an attempt to take revenge on an institution he fled because he could not measure up to its demands.

"You do not need to be a monk or nun to achieve a state of blessedness." This is certainly the case, otherwise the laity would not have been able to achieve a state of blessedness. However, the ideal of the cloister and of celibacy that fell victim to Luther's disdain signified more than mere exercises in penitence for the attainment of bliss, boundless humility, and divine forgiveness. The monastic order embodied the esoteric teachings of Christianity. The spiritual practices of the monks were designed to liberate all the spiritual and miraculous powers of human nature. Monks were guardians of the great seals of the mysteries of self-sacrifice, of the *unio mystica* with the Godhead, of the Western ideology of sensuous and moral life. Physical discipline was not only a preparation for the state of grace and redemption, it was also the threshold of a spiritual discipline, an *ars magna* of the sensations of the soul that sought the triumph of the inner life over the confines of the body and all forces of causality. The example of Christ changed the monks into founders of a higher institution *in spiritualibus* whose sublime significance still burns brightly for all of us today.

In his penetrating essay on Loyola, René Schickele* has outlined the features that link Spanish monastic discipline with the contemporary intelligentsia.²¹ Consider the heroic ideal of humility embodied in a Saint Francis, or a Saint Dominic, that led so tortuously through trials and humiliations to personal proximity to God and thus to the conquest of doctrinaire Catholicism! How different that ideal is from the shallow, materialistic, worldly joys of Luther! "For us," Schickele writes, "their works are documents of their own discipline, examples of how to be receptive, sentient, and yet controlled, and even when their egoism erupted in the aggressive action of a moral mission, we see only their own inner conflict. Our feeling transforms battles of faith into battles for the external liberation of humanity, and in as far as we are subjecting ourselves to a discipline, religious meditation comes to be the cultivation of inner, eternal beauty."

* René Schickele (1883–1940), Alsatian poet, novelist, journalist, and editor of *Die Weißen Blätter*, a vehemently antiwar, anti-Marxist publication that supported Christian socialism and was one of the most significant organs of Expressionism.

The mental and speculative power of the papacy was not banished when an unruly German Augustinian monk called the pope "the Devil's saw." Hierarchy was not abolished as an intellectual-spiritual category. What did a diabolical monk know of the *divine* adventures of life, of that passive fanaticism that was the culmination of stringent Catholic mysticism? What did he know of sovereignty such as was reached in consuming asceticism by, say, Saint Teresa, or by Ortiz,* who, in divine rapture, dared tell his female friend Hernandez that she had arrived at such a state of perfection she no longer needed to pay attention to such trivial matters as chastity? Such divine possession in the Middle Ages also had broken through the structure of official Catholicism, but in a way that remained alien to truehearted Brother Martin as long as he lived. In endless battles of the soul those ascetics experienced the dissolution of religion into its primordial elements, into tears and sorrow; they experienced the senselessness of existence, the crazed cry of human suffering and annihilation. In Francis of Assisi, the purest spirit of the Western world, a divine sign grew into total spirituality and a regained ardor for life.

Luther's protest was the protest of "sound common sense"—that so questionable philosophical argument. An intellectual animosity stamps his betrayal of the monastery. I am not familiar with the rules of the Augustinian order of that time, but the church father in whose name the order is consecrated was more strict than anyone in his service to the Church. He was no advocate of mercy. He established a system of the most intolerant orthodoxy. The subtlety of Persian metaphysics, the vertiginous questions about the origin of good and evil, and the essence of the soul, which he sought to fathom without success, were issues that gave him, according to Lecky, "a sense for the darkness surrounding us, a darkness that colored every aspect of his teachings." As an enemy of doubt, he did not retreat from even the most ruthless conclusions. "He seemed to rejoice in trampling human drives into the dust and in accustoming people to submissive acceptance of the most shocking principles."²² Something of this spirit surely must have survived even in the Augustinian order in Germany, regardless of how degenerate monastic life might have become. However, Luther retreated from the path of strenuous observance that had brought Spanish and

* Perhaps a reference to Pedro Ortiz de Zárate (1622–83), Argentine martyr who became a Jesuit in 1659, did missionary work among the Indians, and led a life of mortification.

Italian monks to unrivaled heights of spirituality. He threw aside what he could not fathom. He did not rise above the category from within himself. The discipline repelled him because he did not measure up to it.²³

The religion of the humdrum middle class, the religion of "busy assiduity," Luther's own cheap personal substitute shaped with profane impetuosity, was rooted in opportunism, in the justification of his own natural failings. His attitude of reasonableness that tended toward complacency and pleasure could not divert an occasional malicious glance back at unattainable spiritual ideals. But he was also denied that benign acceptance of the senses that prevailed in the Italian Renaissance, the good conscience of a feeling of physical and spiritual well-being. Hence, the mistrust of Hutten,* a man of unfurled banners, and of Erasmus,† the ironic, enlightened humanist. Hence, that intellectual uncertainty and the superstitious anxiety with which Luther clung to the Bible as a compass in all the traffic and troubles of the time. Hence, too, Luther's pogrom-minded bias against any outside spirit of the Renaissance gaining the upper hand in Germany, even though he might simultaneously pay homage to it.²⁴

Luther became the prophet of a middle class that was not at all inclined to allow its duly appointed land of milk and honey to wither away or be encroached upon, a middle class that, in its feigned anxiety in the face of judgment day and final reckoning, gave all the signs of deep depravity and a sin-ridden deficiency. All the pharisaism of the Protestants and a definite narrow-minded mendacity of instinct point back directly to the monk of Wittenberg. The success of his dubious doctrine shaped that insecure covetousness whose political expression has reached its zenith in official Germany today, that dishonesty of conscience that values no clear principles but manifests an habitual oscillation between morals and appetites, between what is forbidden and what is allowed, between truth and hypocrisy. This attitude was brilliantly portrayed by Wilhelm Raabe in his novel *Der Hungerpastor*, ‡ even though Raabe's treatment involves an unwarranted glint of humor:

* Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523), one of the humanists who supported Luther's cause.

† Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), the greatest humanist and most prominent figure in the Northern Renaissance.

‡ Wilhelm Raabe (1831–1910), German novelist. *Der Hungerpastor* was published in 1864.

"People are born hungry for infinity; they sense it early on, but when they have reached the age of reason, they usually stifle it swiftly and easily. There are so many comfortable and nourishing things on earth, so much that you would like to slip into your mouth, or into your pocket."

VI

Provided that the Bible is a book like any other book, the most venerable book, but one book among many other books, do not philologists ultimately have more reason to be grateful to Luther than those radical thinkers who took emancipation to heart? Is freedom for a Christian perhaps identical with being permitted to read the Bible and to interpret it according to personal opinion? Is the Protestant religion of the Bible a misapprehension of religion by philologists? Luther as the *rector magnificentissimus* of the philological faculty of his nation, Protestantism as a philological movement. Will anyone be inclined to accept this view? Herr Professor Naumann, good weather vane that he is, has nearly reached this conclusion when he speaks of "Professor Luther." The republic of learning looks to this monk as its founder. He was the patriarch of the educated class, these national philologists.²⁵

Luther had boundless faith in the written word. He rejected the pope because the pope did not appear in the Bible; he condemned monks and nuns for the same reason. But the emperor, authority, and war were in the Book. Can you imagine a more superstitious idolatry of a text, or, if you prefer, a more affectionate devotion? Since Luther's time no book has been as widely read as the Bible. From the very beginning it belonged to the people. Out of a flood of theological hairsplitting, dissertations, commentaries, and treatises there emerged the fact—deeply reprehensible as it is from more than one point of view—that the nation was (embarking on a philological maneuver steered by priests and) determined from then on to keep to its books even at the expense of life. In Germany, when anything creates a sensation they say that it makes you "look up."* Can't you just see them all sitting about, sweating anxiously, sticking their noses in their books? The most tangled problems seized the common man, and he could only give in with a wrinkling of his

* "Sie [die Sensation] macht 'Aufsehen.'" The verb *aufsehen* means "to look up or upon," while the noun phrase *ein Aufsehen* is "a stir" or "sensation," lit. a "looking up(on)." Thus: "It causes a stir, a sensation."

brow and some bitterness of heart! And since Luther at the same time threw open the whole theological tradition of the cloisters, the entire nation was deluged with indigestible confusion and rubbish, a single nation of divines. "It is taught," "it is taught," begin the individual Schmalkalden articles as edited by Melanchthon.*²⁶ And there was teaching; the entire country, every individual, was taught. "The German concept of freedom, almost a creation of scholarship," admits even Rathenau.†²⁷

When will categorical affairs finally be put in order? Protestantism is a philology, not a religion. Luther's revolt told the pope: We don't believe you any more. We want to look at the documents. We believe only in the documents.²⁸ Does that attitude hold something creatively new, a new religion? If so, then by the same token a new religion today would demand from the pope in Berlin the documents concerning the World War and would insist on having all relevant foreign documents translated. Where are our Protestants now? Where is the question of conscience? Even the Bible is a pile of paper, if you will. International treaties have become much more significant. If you tear these pacts to pieces, it costs more blood than twenty Lord Gods can forgive. You should stand your ground with the question of responsibility. You do not need to fret about paper morals. A new Europe *is* morality.

At that time in Europe the conflict concerned cultural foundations. Once again it was a pedagogical issue. Arabic, Greek, and Jewish elements were vying for superiority. The Italian and French Renaissance opted for Hellenism and brought a dazzling high tide of elucidation and enlightenment over Europe. Luther and the Germans decided in favor of the Bible and, thus, the Jewish tradition. This choice signaled endless obscurity. An entire nation was poisoned with a theology worse than it had been under the popes, for in fact each person became a theologian. The result was a secret Jewish-German alliance bound by a common theology; its current manifestation is to be found in the war profiteering going on right now.²⁹ The Reformation is supposed to have instituted on the entire

* Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560), Protestant reformer, friend of Luther, and formulator of the Protestant Creed (Augsburg Confession, 1530). He wrote many textbooks and worked for educational reform and thus is known as the *praeceptor Germaniae*. The League of Schmalkalden (1531) was the Protestant alliance formed in response to the Diet of Augsburg (1530).

† Walter Rathenau (1867–1922), son and heir of the industrialist Emil Rathenau, chosen by Chancellor Josef Wirth in 1921 to be minister of reconstruction, later foreign minister.

continent a new gravity in questions of religion. Instead, it imposed a new inertia in reading books, and a cruder priesthood.

What does the Bible mean today? Zimmermann still calls it the "holiest constitutional charter of mankind."³⁰ But do we not have to make a distinction here? The Old Testament is despotic, the New Testament is republican. The elucidation of human rights brought on by the French Revolution has helped lead us to that discovery. God is no longer self-disclosing. Humanity is self-revealing. Naumann, who felt so much at home in Germany in 1918 that he proposed introducing a "common German mode of freedom,"³¹ even refers to the Bible as the "*Magna Carta* of freedom."³² How is that possible? He is suffering from the same confusion of despotism and evangelism, of the Old and the New Testament, that has been plaguing Germany since the time of Luther. One could just as easily furnish proof that the diabolical brainstorm of some Jewish theologian in putting the Old Testament and the New Testament together in a single book has made the Bible a *Magna Carta* of negative freedoms and ambiguities that has brought a thousand years of darkened suns upon Europe. The Old Testament *and* the doctrine of salvation have grown foreign to us. If we do not deliver ourselves, we will perish. Grace has become meaningless. There can be no mercy for the crimes we have committed and are committing daily unless God has simply ceased to exist. The soothing legend of a guiding spirit of humility and love who has been crucified—who really comprehends that story now? The more or less overweight citizenry, do they believe, do they even want to believe, that they can be saved? Who is to be the savior? Salvation from what evil? Why are we carrying around our Bibles? The current reformation focuses on the responsibility for war and the causes of that war.³³

One of the worst causes of the World War was the Reformation of the sixteenth century. But embracing Pauline Christianity was the worst of all. Paul said of authority that each and every person must be subject to it "with trembling and quaking." Paul, the "journalist of Christ," as Hatvany calls him, was the first to embellish the Jewish legend of the saving genius of humility with theological accessories and to change that legend. Paul also appears to have introduced that sanguine reconciliation between the Old and the New Testaments, between a judging God and his rebellious Son, by uniting what cannot be reconciled and subjugating the Christian rebel (crucified by oppressors) to the ancient god of the

Jews. It would be going too far afield to offer proof here. But read the psychological analysis of Rabbi Paul that Nietzsche has provided in *The Dawn*.³⁴ Luther derived from Paul the Jewish *défaitisme* of morals, "Christian justice is not to struggle against what is unjust, but to yield to it life and limb, plunder who may. Suffer, suffer, the cross, the cross is the justice of Christians."

And the doctrine of the divine individual? Do we still believe that any one person is capable of redeeming us? Are we not on the verge of breaking with a placating cult of genius that saps the strength of the people and abandons all those who are not geniuses to their own inertia, because someone else, the original genius, will do the work for them, or has done it? Is not the idolatrous veneration that consumes the mind of the nation, whether the demigod be called Wagner, Bismarck, or Hindenburg, the aftereffect of the concept of the redeemer? Each individual member of society must be able to judge what is at issue here. We must break away from any systematized redemption wherever it may be concealed, in secret philosophy, music, poetry, or diplomacy. They are all vestiges of a mystifying concept of redemption and the superstition of a redeemer that has become a fiasco, more so in Germany than anywhere else.³⁵ If and when something truly mysterious happens, does that mean it has to be divine? Let us redeem ourselves from our redeemers!

"Your deeds are worth nothing," Luther said to a lost, mediievally mystical people and sold himself to the oriental mentality in the Bible. Where was that "Teutonic nation" that is usually so anti-Semitic? Where are the Zionists who would reclaim their Mosaic Law? The basis of culture today is the *New Testament* from its beginnings, the Sermon on the Mount. All Europe is at stake.³⁶

In this regard, here are some maxims derived from Luther's philological activity:

- To be a German prophet you have to raise your voice and speak clearly. The people are hard of hearing. Endless repetition of a few choice thoughts will not fail to have the desired effect.
- Publish translations of important books and make certain the people get them. (Esoteric literature is a thing of the past.)
- Read closely and little! A single book that appeals to you. Guard it like a holy relic.

- Always remember, there can never be enough written, preached, disputed, or discussed about an important book.
- Hold fast to the redeeming word, and see to it that redeeming deeds follow from it.
- Tutelage, as opposed to books, which after all are documents, is to be done away with. Centralizing these sacred objects under the control of a devious propaganda machine is to be fostered.

VII

Both at home and abroad no one has ever paid enough attention to the fact that there was once a German revolution. The brutal quelling of the great peasant uprisings of 1524–25 is a painful chapter of official history in general and of Lutheran history in particular; these uprisings were the outbreak of a political *and* religious movement that extended from Normandy to Jutland, Thuringia, Franconia, and as far as Hungary.

You will find little about these events in German schoolbooks; yet these peasant revolts constituted one of the most violent and bloody rebellions against nobility and the Church that Europe has ever experienced.³⁷ Lutheran historians have twofold reason to gloss over this epoch. Luther's stance toward the popular insurrection was so despotically reactionary and stood in such contradiction to any gospel, any Sermon on the Mount, that his reputation as reformer would be severely damaged if these events were put into their true perspective. In which case the founder and the religious value of Protestantism itself would be put in jeopardy, particularly if it turned out that the period had indeed promoted freedom of the Christian individual in the ecclesiastical sense, but had rejected with equal brutality freedom in a political sense. Zimmermann, the classic historian of the Peasants' War, writes that "even those spokesmen for the individual factions who represented a more liberal attitude handled their subject almost timidly, without laying bare the core issue, the great sins of the rulers, and a desperate nation whose heart was bleeding from a thousand wounds."

There thus evolved the ploy of always talking about the Reformation, but never about the *revolution* that gave the period its salient character. There is the even more artful dodge of presenting Luther's attitude toward the Peasants' War as a dark spot on his life, to be sure, but as generally only a minor episode although, in

fact, his position in 1525 did scuttle the revolution, abandoning a political rebellion he himself had encouraged.³⁸ It cannot be stressed strongly enough that at that time the entire German nation was being driven by rage and indignation against priests, intellectuals, and Junkers and was determined to shake off not only the clergy, but also the ruthless exploitation at the hands of theocracy. It cannot be stated loudly enough: it was Luther who kept Germany from taking the lead in liberal civilization and, as a Protestant republic, from becoming the forerunner of France. A superstitious monk with no sense of the deeper need of his people, raging, dogmatic, and a despot when events demanded that his teaching produce results, this monk brought it about that contemporary Germany represents a centralized feudal military state instead of a free federation of Protestant families and cities in keeping with the Christian concept of corporation.

The peasant uprisings extended over almost all of Europe. They did not erupt spontaneously; their preparation was well laid. Historians of the conflict have shown the terrible oppression and spoliation with which the dual regime of pope and emperor systematically devastated the peasants in ways whose infamy and corruption is paralleled only in the current dual regime of Hohenzollern-Hapsburg. Astrologers and prophets had long held out the prospect of the fall of earthly and spiritual authorities and had been attesting to it. The Renaissance furnished the impulse.

Arnold of Brescia* was burned at the stake because he had proclaimed the inner decay of the Church and had advocated the doctrine of freedom and sovereignty of the people. In France, Abelard† was teaching that "you can believe nothing that you have not yet rationally understood, and it is ludicrous to preach to others what neither you nor they have been able to reason out." In England the Franciscan monk John Ball‡ spoke these words: "Now or never, something has to happen, together we must all demand freedom from the young king. If he does not grant it, we will help ourselves." This was also the time when Flemish tax collectors were lifting the skirts of maturing girls to see if they were nubile and hence taxable.

* Arnaldo da Brescia, a priest and monk, who believed that spiritual power was incompatible with material possessions, was executed for heresy in 1155.

† Peter Abelard (1079–1142), theologian who believed in the power of human reason to fathom natural and supernatural mysteries.

‡ John Ball, the "Mad Priest of Kent." One of the leaders of the Peasants' Revolt in England, he was tried and hanged in 1381 after the uprising failed.

Robber bands of Jews and Junkers were crisscrossing the country. A Swiss chronicler writes: "Tyranny is so powerful that even prophets and clergymen either comply or simply remain silent." Folly and omnipotent misery were the rule. The people were just as stupefied then by incense as they are stupefied now by smoke from guns.

However, a genius of thought and action appeared in Germany who was to eclipse Luther's fame. This man was no monk, but a *magister artium* who sought to organize his nation's essential conflicts in the spirit of mysticism. He towered so far above his fearful times that he shattered the heavens, sending forth new interpretations of God, Christianity, the Bible, and theology, and greeting heathens and Turks like brothers. How he suffered from the spirit of the times and from his nation!

VIII

Thomas Münzer is one of those thinkers who, according to René Schickele, "cherish equally their mystical and rationalistic impulses in the hope that together they will bring forth a more elevated and passionately composed integrity of emotional life, the diverse beauty and the restrained harmony of inner existence. Pain impels these ideologists toward action; without fulfillment they run the danger of disintegrating, of being torn to shreds like Orpheus. Deeds justify their existence, for they are volatile by nature."³⁹

Thomas Münzer Stolbergensis became the leader of the German Peasant Revolution of 1525. Never has a more sublime or purer spirit led a revolution. Let us no longer permit centuries of Lutheran propaganda to cloud our view! At the head of a nation stand those who express its best strengths. With Germany's first appearance in modern history, a man came forth who was both prophet and saint, philosopher and revolutionary—a man with a Franciscan nature who threw himself into worldly affairs when official representatives of the people refused to do so, and not before then, but then with relentless energy.

All great Catholics were mystics. They secularized the transcendence of the Church in order to turn it toward life: Pascal and Baader.* What is intellect? Conscience applied to culture. What is

* Blaise Pascal (1623–62), French mathematician, writer, and Catholic convert, a probing essayist of the religious frontiers of the modern human mind. Franz Xaver von Baader (1765–1841), German Catholic theologian who taught that the human spirit is to be realized in the recognition of the divine law within each individual,

culture? Interceding for the poorest and most humble among the people as if from them the noblest beings and the rich plenitude of heaven are to be born. The spirit of music and its order translated into the terrestrial sphere—that defines the activity of such men. The Gothic order of things breaks the ranks of worldly things, overturns them, brings into being a new causality that smiles over the present and bids welcome to distant centuries—the Gothic order of things that attacks its travesty in political affairs and its pseudotravesty in police affairs. What do qualities such as boldness, childlikeness, and imaginativeness say about such individuals? Their profound symmetry, what Walther von der Vogelweide calls *die maasze*,* perceives itself in contradiction to existing fantasies—that is their suffering, their wit and wisdom, their tragic element. They step forth, and all pseudology is judged. Franz von Baader and Schopenhauer were of this ilk. Entire generations of obscure men† are needed to confront the panicked terror taking possession of everyday life. There is nothing tragic in the personal fate of those who embody this experience, but there is tragedy in the sudden illumination of an intellect that is convulsed most profoundly by itself. The cathedral order of things demands recognition. Pessimism is but a word for the schism between what is possible and what is beheld. To be a prophet means to perceive the ground plan future peoples will complete to cathedral proportions.

Münzer was a prophet. In his activities he anticipated developments and attitudes in Russia, and he sanctified the Enlightenment well before it arose. He has had no successful biographer. Melanchthon, Luther's friend, the sinister editor of the Augsburg Confession, who took two, then seven, then nine sacraments—Melanchthon was not gifted enough to comprehend‡ the life of this man in whom an incandescently searing imagination was coupled with forging energy, unrestrainable desire for freedom was linked

not in obedience to a moral law. Baader was the first to point out the nihilism inherent in German idealistic philosophy. See chapter 3 below.

* For Walther von der Vogelweide (c. 1170–c. 1230), the medieval German love lyricist, *die maasze* denotes the ideal of human character in a state of spiritual-material equilibrium.

† "Dunkelmänner." A reference to the critical spirit to be found in the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, the *Dunkelmänner Briefe* (Letters of Obscure Men, 1517), a cleverly conceived and executed satire perpetrated by liberal thinkers to support Johannes Reuchlin in the bitter anti-Semitic struggle in which scholastic universities sought to discredit Reuchlin in particular and humanism in general.

‡ The 1919 ed. reads *zu erfassen*, "to grasp, to comprehend," while the 1980 ed. reads *zu deuten*, "to explain, to interpret."

with the most humble love of suffering creatures. There was no one around without bias to collect his comments, letters, and writings in the archives and records of his time. Yet we do have enough to form a picture of his personality.

He got his education from studying the Bible and mystical and apocalyptic literature. With the exception of Luther's writings, he is said to have read no secular literature. Münzer names the Calabrian abbot Joachim * as his teacher, a prophet of the twelfth century who taught this:

There will come an age of the Spirit and with it love and joy and freedom. All learning from written words will perish and the Spirit will come forth from the husks of the letters themselves. The gospel of the written word is a temporal thing, its form, something perishable, passing; the gospel of the Spirit is the eternal gospel. And a community of brothers will appear on earth, spiritual beings, *virī spirituales*, sons of the Spirit. According to their doctrine, the living fluid, the flux and flow of life itself, is that text that has not been written down but that is recorded with the power of the Holy Spirit in the book of the human heart. And when the sublime nature of heavenly things reveals itself, all earthly grandeur will fade to nothingness.⁴⁰

Certainly the libertarian tradition of the *Dombauhütten* † also influenced Münzer's development. And the political visionaries of Zwickau, particularly Nicholas Storch, ‡ nourished his enthusiasm. Storch perceived the establishment of the thousand year kingdom

* Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–c. 1202), an apocalyptic priest who taught that history was composed of three ages, with the third and last to be introduced by the *virī spirituales* and to be the culmination of world history. *Das dritte Reich* is a Joachite term.

† Literally, cathedral construction workroom, area, or enclosure (lodge), referring to the cooperatives or alliances formed by medieval stonemasons working on cathedrals or churches. These craftsmen were sworn to secrecy regarding their craft and, unlike members of other craft guilds, were not subject to regulations governing the general community. Emerging in Germany in the thirteenth century, these groups grew widely but fell into decline with the advent of the Reformation and were disbanded in 1731, after which their practices and ritual were taken up, in part, by Freemasonry.

‡ Nicholas Storch[k], a Zwickau weaver and leader of the Abecedarians, a German Anabaptist sect whose members rejected all learning, even the alphabet, as a hinderance to religion and who claimed possession of mystically revealed truth superceding the Bible. The date of his death is uncertain, variously given as 1525 or after 1536.

as a task that Heaven had assigned directly to him. He preached the imminent devastation of the world and a judgment that would wipe out all irreligiosity and godlessness, purifying the world with blood, leaving only goodness.⁴¹ "It almost seems," notes Ranke, "that they themselves were about to begin this task of a violent conversion."

Münzer rejected theology. "What Bible, babble, Babel," he proclaimed, "you must crawl into a corner and speak with God."⁴² He stressed immediate community with God, who manifests himself in visions, dreams, and revelations. Church and state were to be absorbed wholly by the kingdom of the free and the holy and were to raise aloft the true priesthood, the entire human race.

Münzer outlined a spiritual methodology that is modern even today. The goal of all action, following the renunciation of all desires and pleasures through solitude, contrition, and fervent meditation, is to account personally for the foundation of one's faith. God gives signs to tormented and tortured human beings. God will grant these signs to anyone who demands them with boldness, vehemence, and earnestness. The Christian church originates in Christ, not in Paul. You must insist upon the inward Christ. Luther completed only half of a reformation: a totally pure church composed of authentic children of God must be assembled, children gifted with the spirit of God and ruled solely by him, a kingdom of the saints on earth. Being without God is not wanting to become like Christ through suffering. All evil, everything hindering the free development of each individual, is to be abolished. "The son of God said: the text bears witness. But these scriptural authorities say that the text provides faith." Any human being, even a heathen without a Bible, could have faith.⁴³

Münzer attacked Luther's doctrine of justification: a dead doctrine of faith does more harm to the gospel than the doctrine of the popes. "Preaching that faith, and not works, justifies, hits far off the mark." Heaven, where mankind is to be transported, is still to be sought in this life, and to be found here. Each human being possesses the Holy Spirit, for it is nothing but our powers of reasoning and our understanding. There is no hell or damnation, and only that person can sin who has the Holy Spirit, that is, the power to reason. It is nature's will that we do unto others as we would have others do unto us. Such volition is faith.⁴⁴

Münzer discarded the "pleasure principle" that Christ has done enough for all sins; he discarded the cult of saints, the concept of purgatory, and intercession for the dead. Christ is not God, but

merely a prophet and a teacher. Münzer ate unconsecrated "Good Lords," as he called the Hosts, and aroused even Karlstadt's * horror, who wrote to him "*ut autem cesses hostiam sustollere, et hortor et obsecro, quod blasphemia est in Christum cruzifixum.*" †⁴⁵

An act of blasphemy against the crucified Christ? Münzer may well have smiled when he read that letter. To him, Christ was a "model of deepest suffering, wherein each person recognizes that he is a son of God." For Münzer, Christ is the "most elevated of the sons of God," and "once we enter into awareness of the divine will, it is no longer possible that we in truth believe again in the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit."⁴⁶

I know of no pronouncements about Christianity, suffering, and divine faith more profound and liberated than these. Münzer's words hold more than a philosophy of agony and despair; they comprise a hierarchical order of spirits arranged according to their capacity to experience suffering. His words signify the conquest of the Middle Ages and are allied with the most sublime spirituality of Europe. Münzer's religious anarchy connects him to Tolstoy, the *dio e popolo* with Mazzini, ‡ the federation of suffering with Jules Vallès, § the doctrine of sainthood with Ernest Hello.

What stance did Luther take toward the statements of his contemporary? To him they seemed to be "vain, petulant articles of sacrilege," "an extraordinary apparition of the Devil." He wrote to Spalatin ** that Münzer makes use of "such unusual phrases and utterances contradicting the Holy Writ that you could easily mistake him for a senseless drunk."⁴⁷

On July 13, 1523, Münzer found himself compelled to write Duke John: "If it is your wish I am to be examined before those people from Wittenberg, then I have nothing to confess or say. I want to have Romans, Turks, heathens on hand. For I claim that I am rebuking a foolish Christianity. I am capable of answering for my beliefs. Thereupon, if you wish to make my books public, I am willing. But if not, then I will leave it to God's will. In good faith I

* Andreas Rudolf Bodenstein von Karlstadt (?1477–1541), German reformer, pioneer of radical Puritanism, and friend of Münzer.

† "I beg and beseech you to stop holding the Host, for it is blasphemy against Christ crucified."

‡ Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–72), Italian patriot and prophet of European nationalism.

§ Jules Vallès (1832–85), French author and founder of *Le Cri du Peuple*, took part in the Paris Commune (1870).

** Georg Spalatin (1484–1545), humanist, reformer, and partisan of Luther.

wish to give you all my books to be read out."⁴⁸ In an open letter to the Saxon princes Luther had requested that they "should respond earnestly to such attacks and ravings, so that only the word of God in the matter at hand is dealt with and the cause of the uproar is avoided," for "they are not Christians who would be willing to come to blows over the word and are not prepared to suffer the consequences, even if they have been bragging to high heaven like scores of holy spirits."⁴⁹ Münzer escaped arrest only by fleeing.

IX

We must now discuss the Peasants' War. If the revolutionary impulse to realize the kingdom of God is, according to Friedrich Schlegel * "the expanding focus of progressive education and the beginning of modern history," while religious enthusiasm is "the luminous chaos of divine thoughts and emotions,"⁵⁰ then Thomas Münzer stands at the beginning of a development that has not yet run its course. On the contrary, we have merely lost the threads of that development. To whom are we responsible? To a despotic regimentation or to humanity? To a murderous ruling authority or to the fraternity, solidarity, magnitude, and dignity of existence?

In Thomas Münzer the revolutionary concept espoused by abbot Joachim grew into a revolutionary act. Luther's denunciation of religious fanatics and civil dissidents was a rejection of religious enthusiasm. He acknowledged their compelling spiritual energy, but he did not see divine forces at work in them. He saw satanic powers.

"We suffer from not being able to suffer fully. We are capable of experiencing too little suffering." We have the full cause of German barbarity in this observation by a contemporary German.⁵¹ For what does the word "barbarism" describe if not the inability to suffer and suffer with others? And what does the word "satanic" depict if not the volition to increase torment instead of relieving it? Satanic forces are at work wherever natural human constraints are multiplied by external impositions. Satanic forces are at work where the torment with which everyone is born is doubled by existence instead of being relieved. The false ideologies of law and dogma, inventions of rulers and theologians, have conspired in applying the

* Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), writer, critic, and philosopher of the early Romantic movement in Germany. A Catholic convert in 1808, Schlegel combined Romanticism with the ideas of medieval Christendom.

term "satanic" to whatever contradicts their own acts of tyranny. Life has no other meaning than freedom. And external freedom is but the logical consequence of inner freedom; but both together are indispensable, for they alone fulfill that most essential condition of immortality as formulated by Goethe, "that the whole person emerge from within himself." Morality is libertarianism held in check by poverty and suffering.

Seeing reason at work alone in darkened times provides a comforting spectacle. After 1523 Münzer became increasingly prominent, and after 1524 he directed strong attacks against Luther. He considered the "pope of Wittenberg," who masked his political indulgences with religion, a far greater threat than the pope in Rome. Early in 1524 he sent Melanchthon a letter saying that because of their loyalty to the written word they were misapprehending the newly developing church: "You clever scriptural authorities, do not be indignant, I have no other course."⁵² With their hate he buys the freedom to dare to act; he speaks of "the great fools who laughably have made God into a painted puppet." His style becomes inflammatory and emotional. He wants to fill the bright trumpets "with a new sound." "The whole world will have to survive a tremendous cataclysm; such a spectacle will be set in motion that those who are without God will be thrown from their seats and the downtrodden will be raised up."⁵³ "You must pay close attention to the new movement of the contemporary world. The old onslaughts will no longer do, for it is all idle froth, as the prophet would say. Whoever is determined to do battle with the Turk need not go far, he has already crossed the border. Yet you who wish to be a stone of the new church, be prepared to risk life and limb, or you will be cast down by the builders."

He appeals to Luke 19:27: "Seize my enemies and slay them in my presence." He rejects the words of Christ, "Grant unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and relies upon the Old Testament: princes murdered at the behest of prophets, cast down in the name of God, their children and followers slaughtered to the last accursed offspring.

Give the people what is theirs, that is the solution. For Christ has essentially taught that all people are children of a single father, brothers and sisters, equal among themselves. There was nothing in the Bible legitimizing the spiritual power of princes and nothing either of their worldly power. "In his fury God has given the world rulers and princes, and out of exasperation he wants to cast them

aside. In that human beings have descended to the level of the creature, it is all out of proportion that they are compelled to fear fellow creatures more than God." "Princes exist only to instill the fear of the executioner. They are hangmen and jailers, that is their sole office." "If ruthless tyrants (of bureaucracy) * would assert that you should be obedient to your princes and rulers, this is your answer: a prince and sovereign rules over earthly affairs, and this power does not extend beyond that sphere."⁵⁴

Here, clearly, is the division between church and state, but, moreover, the subordination of the princes to spiritual authority. Münzer turned to the reigning princes: "You most esteemed and beloved regents, learn your judgment straight from the mouth of God and do not permit yourselves to be deceived by your heretical priests, but be sustained by unflinching patience and goodness."⁵⁵ But to Luther he wrote: "Why do you call the princes 'Serene Highness'? Are they not their title, and does it not honor Christ as well? Why do you call them 'High-Born' and 'Right and Honorable'? I believed you were a Christian, you are an arch-heathen."⁵⁶ "Take note, our princes and rulers are the broth of usury, of thievery, and of robbery. Taking possession of all creatures: the fish in the water, the birds in the air, the growing things of the earth—all must be theirs. But then they send God's commandment among the poor, saying: God has commanded, you shall not steal. But it will do them no good. They have given all people, the poor farmer and worker, and everyone who lives, ample cause to cheat and covet. Whoever lays violent hands on the most lowly among us must also hang."⁵⁷

The Peasants' War broke out in southern Germany in 1524. Münzer called for self-defense. "The power of the princes is at an end; in a short time it will be given to the common people." How differently these words ring from those of Luther that teach the Christianness of servitude!

MÜNZER: "Faltering or empty show will not help. The truth must come forth. The people are hungry, they must eat: they will eat!"⁵⁸

LUTHER: "They are to be crushed, taken by the throat, cut down in secret and openly, whoever is able to do so, as you must kill a mad dog."⁵⁹

* Enclosed in parentheses in the original, could this phrase be Ball's editorial insertion?

MÜNZER: "Dear God, the peasants are poor people. They have given their lives for the food that has stuffed tyrants' bellies."⁶⁰

And Luther, whom Ricarda Huch,* his Scheherazade, has described as talking poetry whenever he opened his mouth:⁶¹ "*Cibus, onus et virga asino*. † The common man has to be loaded down with burdens, otherwise he becomes too unruly."⁶²

Following repeated denunciation, Münzer fled to Nürnberg. The Nürnberg magistrate confiscated his pamphlet "Wider das sanftlebende Fleisch zu Wittenberg" (In Opposition to the Meek Life in Wittenberg), in which Münzer took up the battle in full view of the century and of humanity itself:

You are still blinded, and yet you want to lead the blind people of the world? You have confused the Christianity of your Augustine with a false faith and cannot set it right as the need dictates. That is why you are mimicking the prince. But you think all has gone well since you became famous. You have strengthened the authority of godless villains that keeps them on their old paths. Therefore, you will be like a captured fox. The people will become free and God alone will rule.⁶³

The Anabaptists and the fanatics became his conspirators and emissaries. As a fifteen-year-old youth, Münzer had taken part in a conspiracy plot against Archbishop Ernst of Magdeburg. Then he founded the Altstedt Alliance, the Mansfeld miners' alliance: renunciation of taxes and rebellion. On July 15, 1525, he reported "more than thirty bands and groups of the elect." "I am determined to make the same move in all countries; in short, we have to pay the penalty, we are settled on it. Do not let your heart sink away, as has happened to all of the tyrants. It is the proper judgment of God that they have grown so deplorably hardened and impenitent; for God wants to tear them out, roots and all." He named himself "Thomas Münzer with the hammer." He had large caliber weapons forged in the Barfüsser cloister. He carried a white banner into battle, a white flag that bore a rainbow. Yet, according to Luther, people threw stones at him when he showed himself in Orlamünde.

The scurvy-mouthed, starved peasant-proletarians were cut down in wild bloodbaths. The Sermon on the Mount, the gospel of the

* Ricarda Huch (1864–1947), German poet and novelist.

† "Food, the burden and goad of the ass."

poor, was carted off in blood. " 'Omnia sunt communia' * has been their motto," reports Melanchthon.⁶⁴ Under torture Münzer confessed that he initiated the rebellion "so that Christendom would become the same for all."

In 1525 the people bled in Germany; in 1790 the aristocracy bled in France. When will Germany ally itself with France? Münzer died when he was twenty-seven years old:

THOMAS MUNZER
 stolbergensis pastor alstedt
 archifanaticus patronus et capitaneus
 seditiosorum rusticorum
 decollatus. †

When will Germany, when will Europe, erect a monument in his honor?

X

Luther's action freed the nation from the tutelage of European dogma. But if historical consequences are any proof, he delivered the nation over to self-reliance when the nation was not ready for it. Luther's willfulness in choosing to interpret the Bible himself brought miserable results. His arrogance in deciding by himself the European crisis of conscience for his nation, disregarding traditional wisdom and an illustrious group of Church fathers, councilors, popes, and philosophers, aided and abetted common authority and established the primacy of this authority over his original conception; it led to a fitful servitude, to a far worse and more corrupt tyranny than had existed in the dogmatic Church even during its most intolerant periods.⁶⁵ Luther removed the shackles from the feudal rulers, shackles that Charlemagne had been only too happy to put on the Saxon princes. The German Reformation became a backslide into heathendom. Listen to these words of a Frenchman: "Without a doubt there were abuses in the Church: simony, the selling of indulgences. But they also exist in civil government: scandals and the selling of titles. A single skillful pope could have done enough to get rid of these regrettable improprieties. Luther and Calvin, a monk and a minister, terrible people, brought on the Reformation

* "Everything is communal."

† Thomas Münzer / Altstedt pastor from Stolberg / most fanatic supporter and leader / of rebellious peasants / decapitated.

by protesting against the Church itself, not against its abuses, and that in turn produced the Jesuits, an intensification of dogma, and a long period of Catholic intolerance fully rivaling that of the reformers."⁶⁶

Calvin may have introduced reform into government, but Luther played the nation into the hands of despotism, and it was a nation that had not even begun to share the blessings and ordinations the Church had to offer.⁶⁷ The rest of Europe divined too late what was really at stake in Luther's stance toward the conflict between pope and emperor. Luther saved feudalism by smuggling spiritual weapons to it, weapons it is using even now to conduct one of the most shameless battles the world has ever seen. Luther blocked a great and authentic manifestation of freedom of the type to be found in the English and the French Revolutions; thus, he bears the responsibility for the fact that in Germany now there is still no effective political conscience in matters of foreign policy. Luther's real creation is "the God of regulation who has instituted authorities"; what he produced is the consecration of the state by means of the Christianity of servitude. In this way he hired out a good conscience to regents and chief gunner's mates, making Germany a diligently reactionary nation, a theocratic protectorate of the "moral order of the world," an enemy of any impulse of freedom, seeking justification in a vile, envious "command of God." *Res publica* turned into a police state, a state of surveillance whose mission is to punish, judge, and execute from North Cape to Baghdad, from Finland to Spain, under authority of the Bible, Jehovah, and Jesus. The moral liberalism that Luther fashioned turned into a farce of freedom and a prod to self-interest under a national protectorate.

Yet the state for the sake of the state endures only because of corruption, whether it is the corrupting or the corruption of its citizens. A deified monk threw his nation back into darkest times, delayed and tore down the striving of all nations toward liberation within a single democracy, and laid the cornerstone of an immorality that led to England's declaration of war in 1914 and, then, to world war.⁶⁸

This is the charge we level against Luther: by means of a new severity in matters of faith he destroyed the beauty of the Renaissance and impeded its decorum. But ideas will not let themselves be destroyed, they return; the word *renaissance* is proof of that. Luther committed worse crimes. He betrayed God to authority. He created a religion for the use of rulers. He encouraged war for the sake of war, on the basis of "faith and piety." A surfeit of individual

"conscience" that found no appropriate deflection in the state itself gave the entire nation fits of melancholy and hypochondria. With great pomp and circumstance the nation grew capricious, ill-tempered, and dissatisfied. That "self-satisfied complacency of being dissatisfied with oneself," which Bakunin speaks of, that carping and grumbling and spiritual impotence became the mark of the individual citizen, producing a sinister meanness that makes a German impossible. Goethe observes even in the instance of Klopstock* that great individuals who lack wide and appreciative audiences simply explode into eccentricities. "But then," as Nietzsche adds, "our entire nation is eaten up with eccentricities." The rebellious spirit of the rest of Europe moved in opposite directions to German institutions, away from that feudal ethos of rulership, that diplomacy of special priorities, that militarism of conscience.

As if through some miracle of human sensibility, one person rose up to judge Luther in his own time. The nation's honor can be rescued if the nation decides now to rechristen that age in the name of the great revolution of 1525, thus expressing the desire to establish the superiority of religious thinking over secular modes of thought, the justice of civil authority over military authority, of red blood over blue.

Zimmermann has described the effect the mere mention of Münzer's name had on Luther and that admirable *organon Lutheri*, † Melancthon: "Whenever they had occasion to write his name, they behaved as if he were in fact about to walk into the room, to appear before them even as they were (naming him or) writing about him. On almost every line and spoken word about Münzer there rests this palpable weight, like a burden, like a nightmare, like some inner horror—if we speak or write of him will that ghastly figure come before us." Something of this horror, of this nightmare appears to be stirring again in Germany. The spirits are appearing, the dead are waking up. An idea is announcing itself like Banquo's ghost: *civitas pauperrimi et sanctissimi hominis*. ‡ (Will the Banquos or the Macbeths be victorious?)

* Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803), a German poet who freed German poetry from French neoclassicist restraints. He was a forerunner of the German Storm and Stress.

† Organ or instrument of Luther.

‡ A city of the poorest and holiest people.

■

PROTESTANT PHILOSOPHY AND
THE CONCEPTS OF FREEDOM
IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

I

A mighty fortress is our Protestantism: that is henceforth the national slogan thwarting our intellectuals. A pseudological doctrine of penitence is raging like an epidemic. A self-deception that regards as profound depravity what is demanded for the good health of the senses perverts instincts, spoils the unobstructed view, the spontaneous recognition of good and evil, the insight into the equilibrium of inborn moral powers.¹ The nation long ago lost its ability to laugh. Burial odes and necrologies, repentance tunes, chorales, and cantatas battle the nasty devil of "sins" and the senses; the melancholy lives of German musicians portrayed in Mattheson's *Ehrenpforte** (Triumphal Arch) bear witness to the wretchedness and painful aftermath of the Thirty Years' War. Lichtenberg† said, "You will be interested in knowing that nobody in the entire country has died of joy in over five hundred years."²

Pietism reigns supreme—the pulpit orator, floods of quackery. Pietism carries Protestant orthodoxy over into the Protestant enlightenment. As a matter of educational principle, Philipp Jacob

* Johann Mattheson (1681–1764), German composer and musical theorist. His *Foundations of a Triumphal Arch*, published in 1740, contains the biographies of 148 composers.

† Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742–1799), a noted physician and a writer of trenchant criticisms and aphorisms, who was opposed to the Storm and Stress movement.

Spener,* the grandfather of Pietism, has an aversion to rigorous scientific thinking. By contrast August Hermann Francke† is a “man of mastery and action,” a relentless agitator, as a colleague intolerant, as an enemy implacable, as an organizer power hungry—a pietistic *Übermensch* as his biographer portrays him. These are the times of little Bible clubs and Orders of the Mustard Seed, of the spirit of the Philadelphian convention.‡ The Bible is looked upon as a closed structure of prophecy, and the world will end in 1836. What could be better? And no one is making fun of these people. There is no one like Scarron§ to write their novels, and no Voltaire to rescue for Germany even an echo of the laughter flowing from French courts. In scholarly spheres the theological mentality is being disputed with all the acumen of a rabbi’s intellect.³

The commercial classes had brought the Enlightenment into the great harbors and business centers of Europe and tolerance along with it. Itinerant Jews were tolerated, as were refugees from the religious wars, because they brought money and connections. Bayle** as well as Montaigne and Descartes were put up with because they were rationalists, and they were rationalists because they doubted. That is the philosophy of early France. Descartes in particular battled against scholasticism and derived all knowledge from consciousness. His *cogito ergo sum* became the egoistic principle of philosophical individualism, which eventually led to scholarly absolutism in Germany, even though such a brilliant and rational thinker as Lichtenberg parried: “It thinks, it lightnings.”††⁴ But that could not stop individualism, buttressed as it was by Luther’s hardheaded insubordination, from continuing to draw ideas only from the ego long after the French Revolution had written the word *fraternité* in gigantic letters across the European heavens. (Note Fichte, the great “I” of Osmannstedt, as Schiller called him. §§)

* Philipp Jacob Spener (1635–1705), German theologian, and author of *Theologische Bedenken*, published 1700–2.

† August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), pietistic preacher, philanthropist, and educator.

‡ Literary, philosophical, and religious orders and societies flourished during the period.

§ Paul Scarron (1610–60), French burlesque poet, dramatist, and author of stinging political pamphlets.

** Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), French rationalist philosopher and critic considered to be the progenitor of eighteenth-century rationalistic philosophy.

†† *Es denkt, es blitzt*, literally, “it thinks (is thinking), it lightnings (is lightninging),” or “there is thinking, there is lightning / thinking exists, lightning exists.”

§§ Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), German post-Kantian philosopher, who took the conscious ego as the starting point of all knowledge. His *Reden an die*

If skepticism came from France, then the new morals came from England. Professor Borgese * quite correctly observes that one could easily change “the concept of Germany in the world” espoused by the Pan-Germanist Paul Rohrbach into “the English idea in Germany.”⁵ And Professor Nicolai recently has shown in his widely acclaimed book *Die Biologie des Krieges* (The Biology of War) in what major ways Kant and the Germans were influenced by English ethics and in what ways, unfortunately, they were not.⁶ You could go even further. Locke and Hume were not the only philosophers who had a direct influence on Kant. It was through Rousseau, who is indebted to England for his concept of the social contract, that Kant also came in touch with the ideas of Sidney.† And the next greatest German philosophers of that period after Kant went to English schools: Franz von Baader, the blazing pyramid of German philosophy, and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, its sole humorist. Both of them spent the most important years of their intellectual development in England.⁷ But the two thinkers who first sought to build a new reality in the wake of the moral chaos left to the world by Louis XIV—they were both French: Rousseau and Voltaire.

In Germany theological metaphysics was still being squabbled over at a time when English philosophers were already deriving morals from the achievements and events accelerating society.⁸ In France, Rousseau was attempting to liberate charitable instincts, and Voltaire was trying to subdue religious fanaticism. In a fictitious dialogue between the English emissary Goschen and the German Chancellor, Bethmann Hollweg, Nicolai showed how in 1914 English “utilitarianism” and the “categorical imperative” were being put to the test.⁹ The German General Staff violated Belgian neutrality, but England felt compelled to honor a pact guaranteeing Belgian neutrality. The baroque constructions of German university professors who were preoccupied with otherworldly affairs did not hold up. Such fabrications had not reached a people crushed by clergy and princes. The moral law athrob in the breast and feeling itself so

deutsche Nation (Addresses to the German Nation, 1807–8) established his reputation as a patriot and nationalist. Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805), next to Goethe, one of the giants of German literature.

* Giuseppe Antonio Borgese (1882–1952), Italian scholar and author.

† Algernon Sidney, English politician, who rejected Cromwell’s rule and championed constitutional liberty and whose *Discourses Concerning Government* (1698) became an important textbook for the revolutions in America, France, and England. It seems less likely that Ball is referring to Philip Sydney (1554–86), the English poet whose chivalric romance and idyllic, politically programmatic novel *Acadia* (1590) was translated into German by Martin Opitz in 1642.

near the starry heavens above had lost sight of its immediate surroundings, and the "moral world order," the pride of our Teutonic professor, was existing solely for him.

Kant's accomplishment is great and everlasting. He did not behead God, as Heine too quickly claimed.¹⁰ But certainly he decapitated Pietism. He banished mystification from the realm of reason. One of Kant's first biographers¹¹ is in error, too, when he claims that Kant, in undertaking to distinguish in metaphysics the division between Otherworldliness (*Jenseits*) and This-worldliness (*Diesseits*), taught a new breed of theologians to shun the "false, vaporous, swaggering, sterile Enlightenment."¹² For all that, Kant was not the executioner whom Heine felt at his elbow. Kant's rigor struck more the method than its subject. He distilled God into a sublime idea, and atheists like Hegel,* Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche could just as easily appeal to him as to theology, which Kant first dethroned in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, only to reinstall it in *The Critique of Practical Reason* after its demotion and divorce from rational knowledge.

Borowsky was one of the earliest academic disciples of Kant. Nevertheless, his interpretation reveals the ambiguity of even our most illustrious philosophy. And we would be doing an injustice to both the strengths and the weaknesses of German philosophy if we did not give some attention to the political circumstances out of which it was born. In 1799 Fichte wrote this: "The department of science at Dresden has announced that no one who specializes in modern philosophy will be promoted or, if already promoted, will not be allowed to advance further. In the Free School at Leipzig even Rosenmüller's enlightened views were thought suspicious. Luther's Catechism has recently been reintroduced there, and the teachers have once more been confirmed according to the symbolical books. This sort of thing will keep on and will spread.'"¹³ How, then, might academic freedom have fared in Prussia under the soldier kings? In Prussia, about which Winckelmann† wrote these words in 1763: "I shiver from head to toe whenever I think of Prussian despotism and butchery; do they not make a land already despised by nature into an abomination of mankind and cast an

* Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). Hegel succeeded Fichte in philosophy in Berlin in 1818.

† Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–98), critic, author, and founder of scientific archaeology and the history of classic art. He converted to Catholicism in 1754.

eternal curse upon it?"¹⁴ In Prussia, where Christian Wolff* was forced to leave the University of Halle under threat of flogging because he was supposed to have meddled in Friedrich's desertion scandals. Compliance with Luther's Minor Catechism was the first commandment, in particular those articles of the Augsburg Confession that clothed the reigning prince in highest spiritual honor and stated that university professors were directly commissioned as instruments and servants of the sovereign, to confirm his authority and promote his glorious omnipotence. Judge from that what humanity had to expect from Protestant universities after 1530! Only the most fundamental reform of the entire German educational system can eradicate the duplicitic pharisaism that for centuries has been bred *ex officio*.¹⁵ Every impulse toward freedom had to be smuggled in on the tortuous paths of dialectic, with caution dictating the use of methods that always left some escape route open—provided, of course, that the professor seriously intended to break his pledge for the sake of the truth and did not simply prefer to twist the innovations of the times into compliance with the dogma of absolutism.

What does it mean, then, when Borowsky asserts that Kant's "moral philosophy in particular does not contradict Christian ethics"? We have yet to consider the relationship of Kant's "categorical imperative" and his concept of personality to the military training program of Friedrich I. Does not that famous Kantian social principle "act as if the maxim of your will could be valid as a universal principle" only thinly disguise the Lutheran concept of the state? Isn't it a categorical warning to all subjects? Isn't it a maxim of forced education? What does Prussian lawmaking have in common with the Sermon on the Mount? Isn't there concealed behind the Kantian moral maxim Friedrich Wilhelm's regimental flogging, to the same degree that the categorical imperative contains Friedrich's idea of duty? Even now our legislation contradicts original Christian ethics. How were things then? What did Christian ethics signify in Prussia if not the most stringent Lutheranism of the state? The Immanuel Kant who showed so little human warmth that he tried to find a different place to live when his neighbor's rooster could not be stopped from crowing too loudly,¹⁶ who coldly went to the police to put a stop to singing in prison because it disturbed his

* Christian von Wolff (1679–1754), philosopher and mathematician whose defense of philosophic reason placed him in opposition to the dogmatism of the Pietists.

work on the moral law¹⁷—this same person wanted to see his maxims elevated not merely to the status of universal law, but to the status of a general law of nature.¹⁸ In his personality Kant displays the traits of despotism. When coming from such a crotchety old bachelor, the excogitation of universally binding propositions could hardly lead to anything else.¹⁹

It is not necessary to go further into the perilous separation that Kant decreed between intellect and morals, between spiritual personality and societal efficacy, where he fragments unified human conscience and seeks to derive reason and emotion, those two inseparable powers of conscience, as separate functions. A prominent person like Cardinal Mercier* has fought for years to reveal Kantianism for what it is, namely, a doctrine that compromises the foundations of moral order. His most recent book in particular is truly exceptional and leads the sublime religious teachings of Thomas Aquinas to new triumphs.²⁰ In the spirit of our great Franz von Baader, he documents the essential anti-Christianity of Kantian philosophy. "Satan separates things, Christ joins them together," says Baader. And in turning its back on morals and society, the cult of the experimental sciences does just that: it separates and analyzes, its idolized ritual being the methodical analysis of understanding, the consequence of which is total disintegration. The "objective sciences" were more rampant in Germany than anywhere else. Ultimate causes, morality, and society were left pretty much to themselves. The abstract doctrine of knowledge was right at home there, and the country having the most highly developed theories of knowledge and the most advanced technology broke the record for *immorality* when the times were ripe. Nowhere else was there displayed as drastically as in Germany such a lack of harmony between the intellect and social sensitivity, between human and theoretical critique. The professional intellectual, satanic by training, this *non plus ultra* of a German culture that made itself notorious without the faintest inkling of the profound roots of its loathsomeness, sprang from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Kant stirred up the faculty of understanding, and it became the secret police against God, genius, and simple events. Philosophy set out to know and possess things that will always be beyond its grasp.

* Désiré Joseph Mercier (1851–1926), Belgian prelate, patriot, and Thomist philosopher, Cardinal of Belgium (1907 et seq.). Following German occupation in 1914, Mercier issued a pastoral letter *Patriotism and Endurance*, and he frequently protested German violations of international law.

“Philosophy is only a method,” says Barbey d’Aurevilly.²¹ The rostrum became a Mount Sinai where God conversed with the Herr Professors. Canonical booklearning spread the prejudice that only educated people, not peasants, can philosophize. Just put Kant out into the open with a Russian muschik, and you will see who comes out on top and who is closer to the ethical law and the firmament.

Rationalism already had a tradition when Kant appeared. Locke, Hume, and Spinoza had undertaken fundamental investigations of human understanding without managing to found morality on principles of reason. The titles of Kant’s major works led to the confusion between understanding and reason, or as Baader put it, the confusion between Logos and logic.* The culture of understanding, not reason, celebrates its triumph in Kant’s works. When Kant, in polished officialese, deduced the thing-in-itself from the perceptible world and when he emphasized for all time the distinction between internal and external effect, thereby passing sentence on all contemporary German barbarity—those were acts of understanding in *The Critique of Pure Reason*. It was an act of understanding, that so-called philologically pure morality, which became both the rigorous ideal and the tyranny of a nation of school masters. Nonetheless, even this ossified rationalist, who was descending so cautiously from astronomy and the stars that he called reality the “world of appearances” and, from a vindictive distance, proclaimed it illusory, even he is really a mystic, is he not? Are the twelve categories he surrounded himself with so very different from the twelve apostles of Christ and of Nicholas Storch? And do not the three a priori functions of pure reason inadvertently proclaim the scholastic trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Kant’s Protestantism cannot be denied. Evidence has been provided that while he was writing his treatise *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der reinen Vernunft* (Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason) a catechism lay upon his desk, and he was working out a proof for the Lutheran catechism.²² When his book appeared in print, however, the author came into conflict with the Prussian cabinet. The first part of this book, the treatise *Vom radikalen*

* Ball here draws attention to the distinction between *Verstand* (understanding) and *Vernunft* (reason, intellect). *Verstand* is “the faculty of clear and logical thinking on sensuous material”; *Vernunft* is “the faculty of perceiving the relationships in non sensuous materials and of integrating them into a whole.” See R. B. Farrell, *A Dictionary of German Synonyms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 225.

Bösen (On Radical Evil, 1792), which one could link directly to the ultrarevolutionary French Hébertists* was reluctantly given the *imprimatur*, and then only "because only learned scholars will read Kant's writings."²³ But the second section, *Vom Kampf des guten Prinzips mit dem Bösen um die Herrschaft über den Menschen* (On the Conflict of the Principle of Good with the Principle of Evil for Mastery Over Humanity) was rejected by two censors. By cabinet order of October 1794 Kant was reprimanded for his "misrepresentation and debasement of numerous central and basic doctrines of the Holy Scriptures and Christianity," and teachers of theology and philosophy at the University of Königsberg were prohibited from lecturing on his works.

Intelligible freedom had come into conflict with the times to which all of us are subject. A gap was opening up between idea and experience. What was Kant's position? He gave Friedrich Wilhelm II the written promise "to refrain from publishing anything having to do with the Christian religion, in lectures and writings, as His Majesty's most faithful subject." In his literary remains this note was found: "To recant and to disavow one's inner conviction is base. But to remain silent in a situation like the present one is the duty of any subject." This view was doubtlessly practical reason functioning as the bridge between the idea and the world of experience. Intelligible freedom remained in tact. In Prussia, however, practical reason of this sort was being taught by the king.

Moses Mendelssohn † has called Kant "the universal pulverizer." Richard Wagner said the same about Beethoven. And that is what Hindenburg is called today. Yet do we not see that strengths are revealed not in fragmenting, but in releasing and setting something free, in equilibrium? Any force that is incapable of offering equilibrium to its surroundings is a destructive force, however noble and humane the intention behind it may be. Satiation with epistemology since Kant has entangled the entire nation in abstract speculation that is extremely detrimental to the healthy digestive function of the mind. Just listen to a German lecture on logic, thumb through any epistemological clutter produced by any one of our duly patented and commissioned officials of philosophy, or try to read a

* Hébertists, the *enragés*, followers of Jacques René Hébert (1755–guillotined 1794), French revolutionist and journalist who secured the downfall of Desmoulins and Danton.

† Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), German-Jewish philosopher who gave Jewish religious thought a turn toward rationalism.

book such as the one written by the corporate evangelist Rathenau, *Mechanik des Geistes* (Mechanics of the Spirit), not to mention *Ethik der Seele* (Ethics of the Soul), or *Pragmatik der Seele* (Pragmatics of the Soul). These books will give you some idea of what herculean efforts are being exerted even now to shift hairsplitting ballast around, to simulate thinking where little or nothing is to be said, and to mask sentiments behind sickly sweet verbosity.

Someone like Bayle would be of much more benefit to the nation. A miraculous *jongleur* and equilibrist *in moralibus*, a spirit in whom the pros and cons of his own nation and of the rest of Europe could have been displayed; a dictionary, a syntax of possibilities, a dialectician of universal talent, and a polished mirror of the errors of his time—instead of the boiled-down moral views and anonymous obligations of some remote despot. I agree with Rudolf Kassner* when he observes this: "In the West it looks as if a few minds, philosophers, or historical personalities had thought themselves up, and as if in India the soul had done the same . . . as if their thoughts were too pretentious, always too sparse or too abundant, anarchic or tyrannical, 'mental reservations,' a detour, *parvenu*; as if they were thinking because they did not love."²⁴

II

The claim that our classical literature is more versatile, bolder, and more humanly free than the writing of neighboring nations originates with Treitschke.²⁵ But Treitschke knows full well that even during the Thirty Years' War "outcasts from all lands were living on German soil." He admits that in the Thirty Years' War Germany "intentionally left the orbit of the great powers," that this war "snatched away two-thirds of the nation," and that the "barbarized race that still led repressed lives in filth and poverty" showed "nothing of the old magnitude of the German character and that open, serene heroism of their fathers."²⁶ He speaks of "the heroic resonances of Lutheran song," of an "impoverished language dressed up with foreign spangles," and of the "hopeless decadence of the Holy Empire." How is it possible to create in such a land within a span of only 150 years the most versatile, the boldest, and humanly freest literature? You will recognize the terminology Treitschke uses to explain this miracle: the freedom of belief and the Prussian

* Rudolf Kassner (1873–1959), German cultural philosopher and critic, defender of the older order of European culture.

state brought all this about. The former in that it restored, to use Treitschke's own words, self-confidence to a "barbarized nation" (!); the latter in that Prussia "compelled the Germans to believe once more in the miracle of heroism."

In defense of my nation I am forced to assume that Treitschke has exaggerated its barbarism in order to cast a brighter light on his Prussian majesties, particularly Friedrich II. Someone could trace the effects of the Thirty Years' War on our literature more thoroughly than has been done to this point; then the superiority claimed by Treitschke might well suffer an all too telling blow.²⁷ The crude monstrosity of *The Robbers*, the strong-arm tactics and the emphasis on the diction of force in *Götz*, the wild chase after life's pleasures in *Faust*, and the exaggerated cult of education in Fichte's writings—all echo only too clearly a moral, as well as a spiritual, catastrophe.* Even if that epoch achieved great things to repair the damages, it can be called immortal only for its virtuosity in deceitfully glossing over actual misery and circumstances through classicalist decoration, premature and foreign harmonization, through optimism and flight to courtly life. This much is evident: one of the chief causes of the overestimation the Germans have accorded to their Herder,† Schiller, Fichte, and Hegel was a national pride in having been capable of emerging out of nothing to new beginnings, beginnings that became the wheezing bases of education and culture in the nineteenth century. But the twentieth century has become the century of casting aside exaggerated nationalism, the century of a new political morality. Antiquated beginnings are no longer enough for reconstruction.

One of the earliest scholastics, Rabanus Maurus,‡ claims in his work *De nihilo et tenebris* that nonexistence is a state so pitiful, barren, and hideous that not enough tears could be shed over such a lamentable condition. That may have been the experience of our great-grandfathers following the misfortune of the Thirty Years'

* Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1781) is a Rousseauistic rejection of corrupt and corrupting society; Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1771–73) is a Rousseauistic rejection of ignoble and degenerate society. Both dramas find heroism in the lawlessness of the period of the Thirty Years' War. The two dramas were major contributions to the German Storm and Stress movement.

† Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), German writer and student of Hamann, generally regarded as the theoretician of the Storm and Stress.

‡ Rabanus Maurus (776–856), German theologian, abbot of Fulda and later the Archbishop of Mainz and one of the clerics responsible for the ninth-century revival of learning.

War, as they were laboriously picking up the pieces that would make regeneration possible. Those might have been their thoughts when they did not reject Prussia's despotically Machiavellian help in constructing a new Germany. But what of us, after our nation was built on such a makeshift and immoral foundation? Are we that way too, if and when we are not with the others? Yet is there anything more pitiful, barren, and hideous than an irreligious and immoral nationalism? Luther shaped that nationalism; Fichte's "idealism," that egocentric philosophy, sanctioned and strengthened it.²⁸ But in 1914 the German General Staff tried to elevate it to the stature of world rule as the crowning glory of its own wisdom. This attitude of "Home, Sweet Home Land" * that so amused Goethe is now destroying Europe in Germany's name and is even making threats about the next war: "This war, however it may turn out, will not silence the ultimate yearnings of any of the powers, nor even substitute for a single one of their sacrifices. New feelings of hatred will be sharpened by questions of war guilt and will be grafted to older hates. Nationalism is awakening anew in political and in commercial arenas."²⁹

If this statement is accurate, then we should feel nothing but despair for the future of humanity. The symbolism of the question of responsibility and its exhaustive examination may yet remove forever the causes of war from the world. Certainly not the least of the causes was a politically and pseudoreligiously motivated nationalism that is to be cast out in the name of the original Christian concept and a free Europe. Individuals and nations may well enjoy the most extreme right to self-determination, but they can only do so in community with others, because that is the only way they can achieve the highest potential that has been born within them. In no fashion do they have the right to violate or to deceive other individuals and nations, thus disregarding the emergence of a totality that alone makes possible the highest attainments and that stands as the measure of those attainments.

If only German educators, school administrators, and consistorial councilors would read what I say: Belief in the superiority of our classic artists is a Protestant prejudice. By "Protestant" I mean irreligious, and in the preceding chapter I have explained why I believe this is so.³⁰

You cannot dispute that Protestantism is the origin of idealistic

* *Vaterländerei*.

philosophy. "The most influential literature in recent history," admits Treitschke, "is Protestant through and through."³¹ Heinrich Heine, in the study he directed against Metternich and Mme. de Staël,* *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* ("Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany"), asserts pointblank that "German philosophy arose out of Protestantism."³² Klopstock and Lessing,† Wieland‡ and Herder, Goethe and Schiller, Kant and Fichte, all of whom exalt the German name, have their roots in educational institutions fashioned by, and filled with, the sentiments of Lutherdom. In fact, Gustav Freytag§ claims that rarely since the Reformation has a significant figure emerged in Germany who did not count a clergyman in his ancestry. Lessing and Schelling, Fechner and Wundt, Mommsen and Lamprecht, Harnack and Nietzsche are all sons of pastors.** There are eighteen thousand Protestant parsonages in Germany today. They have furnished half an army corps, if not a full one, and nobody has been ashamed to admit it.³³

Oh, there were valiant and capable men among the Protestant and Lutheran pastors. If only they had remained evangelical! To be sure the German pastorate promoted the rise of the sciences and the arts. The German pastorate, however, was founded on the six-children system and relaxation on the front porch; †† the blessed state of affairs in chains and in the stocks; a this-worldliness blessed with cabbage and rabbit that stemmed the flow of ideas. Consider Luther's interpretation of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer.

* Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859), Austrian statesman, principal mover of the Holy Alliance. Madame de Staël (1766–1817), author of the important and influential book *De l'Allemagne* (1810).

† Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81), German writer, critic, and influential theoretician of the German drama.

‡ Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), German poet and novelist, one of the famous Weimar group (with Goethe, Schiller, and Herder).

§ Gustav Freytag (1816–95), German realist writer. His *Soll und Haben* (Debit and Credit, 1855) offers a picture of the bourgeoisie and the culture of the early nineteenth century; *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit* (Pictures from the German Past, 1862) is a collection of historical and literary monuments from the German past.

** Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854) was known as the philosopher of the Romantic School. Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–87), physician, philosopher, and psychologist whose work opened the area of psychophysics. Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920), known as "the father of experimental psychology." Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), German historian of ancient Rome. Karl Lamprecht (1856–1915), German historian, founder of the "cultural-historical method" of historiography. Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), influential German Protestant theologian.

†† *Bequemlichkeit auf halber Treppe.*

For him daily bread meant not only food and drink, but house and lot, garden, livestock, money and goods, devout husband, devout children, devout servants, devout and true sovereigns, good management, etc.³⁴ His interpretation is the apologia for German assiduity, and this smug servility of a petition to God, this sense of coarse materialistic expectancy, became the measure of the nation and the basis of its intellects.

"An agricultural existence capitalizes its yearly yield into a religio-political point of view," chides Rathenau, and rightly so. If by this he means that interests create beliefs, that is no worse than belief creating interests. For it was left to Marx, also the offspring of theological lineage and a Hegelian to boot, to coin the phraseology of the "idea that constantly degrades itself in as far as it is divorced from interests." The idea does not degrade itself. It is irreligious philosophy and Hegelizing* that make fools of themselves, as confirmed by other statements of Herr Rathenau, whom I have cited earlier:

Duty-bound and yet distressed, German philosophy is always setting out anew to gather disappearing threads, to excogitate eternal aims, laws, imperatives. To no avail! It has posed every critical question, learned to doubt concepts and the world, God and existence. Yet, blinded by pure reason, it had passed by the simplest preliminary question: whether the thinking, measuring, comparing intellect, the craft of the one-times-one and the asking-why is and remains the single power granted to the eternal *Geist* for bringing about human divinity. German philosophy remained intellectual philosophy.³⁵

The *pseudologia phantastica*, christened with the name critical philosophy, was so ruthlessly led around by the nose by Lutheran orthodoxy that at the time of the most important stage of Europe's intellectual development before the outbreak of the French Revolution it had lost all sensitivity to any authentically productive critique and ideological commitment. "Herr Pastor," exclaimed a provoked Lessing, "if you are able to bring it about that our Lutheran pastors become our popes—that they prescribe where we should stop investigating the Scripture, that they set limits on our research—then I will be the first to trade again the little popes for the big one."³⁶

And that is the point. The pope had been exchanged for little popes; the large view, the all-encompassing tradition, and the uni-

* *Die Hegelei*.

versality of the Middle Ages had been lost. People became Protestant—that is, national-minded and limited. It did not occur to the criticizers to analyze Luther instead of scuffling with the pastors, to follow affairs instead of concepts. The intractable wisdom * of scholasticism was a dim memory. Good works and a lofty philosophical tradition were discarded by Luther, and his abusive authority with its petty crusading spirit come to life again is something we all have to fear today. Intellectuals consumed themselves in unproductive conflict between faith and knowledge, between Catholic and Protestant. Even Goethe was repulsed by a “new German religious-patriotic art” and the “whole insane Protestant-Catholic, poetic-Christian obscurantism.”³⁷ Though himself solemn with protests, he embraced Cellini † and the Italian Renaissance. Yet even Goethe could not muster the optimism to believe that anything could be changed here in the foreseeable future.³⁸ It was left to France and Belgium, with the sacramental works of Barbey d’Aurevilly, Ernest Hello, Léon Bloy, and Cardinal Mercier, to bring the renaissance of scholasticism to fruition and to dig the grave of the Protestant epoch.³⁹

III

A certain Herr Hoffmann (Berlin-Friedenau, February 1915) talks of a “heroic-tragic significance of the German ideal of humanitarianism.” He has written the foreword to a booklet I have already cited. It is entitled *Der deutsche Mensch: Bekenntnisse und Forderungen unserer Klassiker* (The German Person: The Testimonies and Challenges of Our Classical Writers) and is intended for use by the military.⁴⁰ “Moral freedom,” claims Hoffmann, “signifies a mastery of what is met with and what is at hand, mastery of material existence.”

We know what pastors’ sons understand by mastery of physical being, so there is no need of any additional “idealistic” philosophy. Yet the heroic-tragic sense of the German ideal of humanitarianism that has been used to befog the brains of our soldiers does have its political motives. These motives are even clearer in a second little volume in the same series, *Der deutsche Glaube: Religiöse Bekenntnisse aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (German Faith: Re-

* The 1919 edition reads *wilde Weisheit*, i.e., “intractable wisdom,” while the 1980 edition reads *milde Weisheit*, “gentle wisdom.”

† Benvenuto Cellini (1500–71), Italian goldsmith and sculptor whose important autobiography Goethe translated into German.

ligious Testimonies Past and Present), also previously cited, and further, in a third and fourth volume, *Deutsches Volkstum* (German Nationality) and *Deutsche Politik* (German Politics). The latter is devoted exclusively to Herr von Treitschke. Consequently, it is worth our effort to look more closely into this heroic-tragic meaning.

This series does little honor to the publisher, Eugen Diederichs. Quite apart from the fact that it amounts to forgery to print statements made by Kant and Herder in 1790 about the French and English for the use of the military, one cannot use German idealism to cover up an amply compromised politics without also compromising this idealism and the religious ideal of the nation. Moreover, the rhetoricizing ambiguity of our "classical" philosophy both supports and denounces what this book is supposed to preach. Thus, a reputable publishing house such as Diederichs, which a while ago reflected the finest pedagogical trends in Germany, should have avoided such cheap and topical heroism.

The German ideal of humanitarianism is neither heroic nor tragic. These attributes are supplied by a policy, domestic or foreign, that makes the individual's resistance appear anything but ridiculous. Yet look at the configuration of German history at the time: thousands of little rulers in thought and action, parochial narrow-mindedness in society and imagination, inner strife at every turn. How is tragedy and heroism supposed to arise from all that? Very few minds lived in a state of heroism and tragedy, and they spoke even less of their ideal of humanitarianism the more clearly they saw, the more deeply they suffered, the more their gleefully destructive and deplorable times backed them into corners. We could mention Lessing and Lichtenberg, Friedrich August Wolf* and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

The Enlightenment asserted itself with some difficulty against theological tyranny. The Enlightenment won out, but Kant's critical philosophy spoiled literature; Schiller and Kleist† became its victims.⁴¹ The polarity between instinct and invention, between ends and emotions, and the mistrust of any gifted utterance crippled enthusiasm and reprimanded sensibility. The backward ideas of

* Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824), German classical scholar, regarded as the founder of scientific classical philology.

† Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811), German dramatist and writer. A misunderstanding of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* convinced Kleist that all human knowledge was based on delusion, that truth could never be known, and that there was an inextricable confusion of appearance and reality.

love that flourished in the parsonages and the well-drilled pedantry of a supervisory republic of scholars turned a "good fellow with something special flashing in his eyes"⁴² into a scribbler of petty treatises who spat out poison and gall whenever he became agitated, who, dressed in felt slippers, tended to his hemorrhoids and stitched up artfully contrived world orders with tickling trickery.

Is it heroism if Schiller changes the draft of an essay that he had privately considered dedicating to the "Bashfulness of the Poets" into a treatise for the highly educated and pastoral public, giving it the stilted title "On the Esthetic Education of the Human Race"? Is the ideal of humanitarianism tragic because Goethe and Schiller agreed between themselves to write tragical dramas? Goethe refused to write comedies only because, as he says, "we have no social existence."⁴³ The baroque pathos that Schiller provided to his heroes and his verse⁴⁴ was less courageous than the rebellious naturalness that Goethe proclaimed from behind his privy councilor's title.⁴⁵

The fate of intellectuals at that time was to be compelled to have character along the lines laid down by theologically tutored conventions. It is our fate now to be forced to have character along the lines dictated by national propaganda and the flawless tough-it-out mentality.* What is the misfortune of Werther† and the Romantics if it is not spiritual refraction, the inability to supply the expected character because of sensitivity, weakness, and exuberance? In 1795 Herder wrote the Countess Baudissin about Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*: "I cannot bear in art or in life that actual moral existence be sacrificed to what is called talent. The Mariannes and the Philines, this whole business is hateful to me."⁴⁶ In 1776 Klopstock wrote directly to Goethe, who was taking great pleasure in social activities, that "he was offending the Duke, his friends, his wife, his mother, the entire country, and the educated class because no prince in the future would ever again keep company with a poet."⁴⁷ And Schiller wrote this to Körner‡ on August 12, 1787: "Goethe's intellect . . . a proud philosophical disdain for all speculation and investigation, with an attachment to nature

* *Durchhaltensystem*.

† The hero of Goethe's sentimental, epistolary novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774).

‡ Christian Gottfried Körner (1756–1831), German lawyer and public official, confidant and correspondent of Schiller. Körner published the first edition of Schiller's works after the poet had died.

elevated nearly to affectation and a resignation to the five senses; in short, a certain *contrived* naivety of reason. These qualities can be quite healthy and good, but they can be overdone."⁴⁸ Goethe vehemently disliked "mysticism, affectation, confusion," and any orientation toward ends, any bombast. Körner pointed out to no avail that Goethe's major literary characters are "interesting because of their human nature, not because of their conventional heroics" (1788).⁴⁹ The entire nobility and half of Germany is agitated because Goethe has wounded "dignity."

And that is precisely the point: there is a faction supporting dignity. Its exponents are Lessing and Kant. They are set in motion by important matters, for example, Goethe venturing to say sarcastically in his *Xenien* that the cross is as disagreeable to him as "lice, garlic, and tobacco." The foreign correspondents of this faction are Lavater and Pestalozzi.* Its habitués are Klopstock, Herder, Fichte, and Schelling.⁵⁰

An intellectual faction or party, so to speak. People fell in line simply and honestly behind the ideal of humanitarianism. Herder was brought to Weimar by Goethe as "General Superintendent and Chaplain to the High Court"; Herder said "religiosity is the highest humanitarianism of mankind and do not wonder that I count it so."⁵¹ But even in order to wonder you have to know what religiosity and humanitarianism meant at that time. In Germany the words do not mean the same as they do elsewhere. The religiosity of the Saxon High Court Chaplain Herder was, naturally enough, that of state Lutheranism; his humanitarianism was a kind of intimately connected tolerance and enlightenment that you could quickly shunt aside in serious issues without much hesitation as a kind of esthetic pose. Listen to Fichte on this point: "The philosophy of the times had grown . . . quite flat, sickly, and despicable, offering as its highest good a particular humanitarianism, liberality, and popularity. . . . Since the French Revolution the doctrines of human rights and the freedom and original equality of all have, in the heat of conflict, been given too much emphasis even by some people within our own country."⁵² It was only the abstract diction of German conceptual philosophy that kept people outside of Germany from seeing through the rhetoric of classical humanitarianism much earlier. This ideal was highly theoretical, and it is evident from Fichte's

* Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741–1801), Swiss poet and theologian, founder of the so-called science of physiognomy. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), Swiss educator and writer.

words what twists and turns the exalted concepts of freedom, humanity, and justice were given when the revolution began translating them from theory into practice.⁵³

Mastery of what is met with and what is at hand, of immediate and sentient existence! Compare this to the way French moralists from Montaigne and Vauvenargues to La Rochefoucauld and Chamfort penetrated and sublimated immediate inclinations and interests! * In France, humanitarianism becomes knowing of body and soul; in Germany imported humanism debuts in bookish circles. In Germany, "life as deed," but in France, "deed as life." That "sweet, mystical opium dream of uncomprehended [!] ideas and emotions" that Herder writes about to Hamann †⁵⁴ capitulated posthaste when rulers, interests, and affairs made demands.

It is appropriate here to speak of German universality. At the time of the faction supporting dignity, universality also consisted in the mastery of immediate and sentient existence. The fields of knowledge expanded and swelled with thousands of polyp's arms, but only because more was received than could be converted into life and blood. Due to a lack of standpoint and conviction, of unity and filiation, universality became versatility. To no avail thinkers sought a way back to the Church. The law and conscience of the people, Europe's universal pledge to the ideal of humility and mutual help was destroyed by Luther, and no substitute was available. How touching are the attempts by youth to bridge this gap. Because religion and morals were in opposition to each other, people tried a poetic solution—in beautiful illusion. "The infamous German quest to imitate," writes Friedrich Schlegel, "may really deserve here and there the ridicule that one heaps upon it. But in general, versatility is an authentic advancement of esthetic development. The so-called lack of character of the Germans, thus, is to be preferred to the affected character of other nations."⁵⁵ Wilhelm von Humboldt ‡ expressed similar views. But is not this type of universality an attempt to deceive, is it not an evasion, a glittering example of misery and desperation?⁵⁶ The leaders of the nation prove it to be

* The Marquis Vauvenargues (1715–47), French writer and moralist. François La Rochefoucauld (1617–80), French moralist, participant in the Fronde wars. Sébastien Chamfort (1741–94), French essayist and moralist.

† Johann Georg Hamann (1730–88), German man of letters and philosophical writer.

‡ Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), German philologist, educator, and linguist.

so. Goethe, Kant, and Nietzsche suffered from not being able to find a clear form of conscience for their virtues; even the geniuses remained *déracinés*. All their monstrousness, their dialectic, and their multiplicity was no substitute for the austere effect they would have had on the nation and the Christian foundations.

The lack of a perspective upon the amassed material, a lack to which teachers and students alike succumbed, and the hunger for constantly new material led to indigestion in thinking and in literature. Yet even now no one can see that sublimation promotes not so much "urphenomena" as giddy, Faustian staggering from desire to gratification. Power, or demonism, became the Germans' substitute for greatness, a nihilistic credo—in point of fact the source of all evil. Our German has to have ridden between Heaven and Hell over the Blocksberg* in order to perceive that it is more rational to construct dams† than to throw oneself full tilt into love and war, metaphysics and commerce. Faust is indeed a persiflage, a persiflage of the university professor. Faust has studied it all—he has earned Ph.D.s in four disciplines. He knows everything from books, secondhand. Faust makes a young girl pregnant, acts out Greek tragedies, and goes to Heaven, but not without having first tricked the Devil—all of this with a sense of profundity and trust in God.

In the end is German humanitarianism ultimately identical with "the moral order of the world"? And is the moral world order identical with Lutheran orthodoxy? How strange! The Germans believe in a world order only if they originate it. If President Wilson proposes one, they reject it out of hand. But if there is such a thing as a moral order of the world, is not the presupposition of any heroic morality precisely an immoral world order? "Without any doubt," says Fichte. "In fact it is the most certain thing of all, indeed the ground of all certainty itself, the single absolutely valid objective reality, that a moral world order does exist."⁵⁷ And Schelling explains why and how this is so: "The entire world is my own moral possession," and further, "various experiences in the moral world have taught me that I exist in a realm of moral beings."⁵⁸ That is truly admirable, what else could we wish for? A world of moral worthies who have not the slightest doubt that their conspiracy

* Blocksberg (Brocken), the chief summit of the Harz Mountains and highest point in northern Germany, the traditional meeting place of witches on Walpurgis Night.

† A reference to Faust's plan (in Goethe's *Faust*, pt. 2, act 5) to reclaim land from the sea to provide people with the opportunity to build a new paradise for themselves.

with absolutism yields a moral world order. Their only worry is in what expedient way they could bring "radical evil," which naturally stems from others, the rebellious subjects, into line with the moral scheme.⁵⁹ Can you imagine a more desolate arrogance, a more negligent and inhumane abandonment of a critical attitude toward morality? Or is one moral if one has the rule book in hand? Fichte's moral world order is a Germanico-professorial universal rule book of the "universe" with metaphysical walls. Once you have discovered it, then morals (which come from above) are ready-made. "Freedom is the goal of all coercion." Now you see it, now you don't—a dialectical swindle. Those Sansculottes and Bolsheviks, Robespierres, Marats, and Lenins are disruptive and must be kept at bay.

As one of the most zealous exponents of the exaltation of "German thought," Fichte became Chamberlain's grandparent. Alas that he should have confused freedom with allowable, intelligible freedom subject to countermand and proclamation! "All who either live what is new, creatively and productively, or those, who, in case this is not their lot, at least shed what is base and remain alert, receptive to contact with the stream of original life, or those, perhaps even further behind, who at least sense freedom and do not despise it or cower before it, but rather love it—all these people are primordial human beings, and, when observed as a single people, they are the ur-people, the absolute people, Germans."⁶⁰ What a neat formula of intellectual annexation! And yet, Fichte had occasion in 1799 to write words that have become true once more: "[N]othing is more certain than the absolute certainty that unless the French gain the most tremendous ascendancy and unless they accomplish a change in Germany, at least in a considerable portion of it, in a few years no one in Germany who is known to have thought a free thought in the course of his life will any longer find a resting-place."⁶¹ What did Fichte understand by freedom? In spite of his experience in 1799 he urged the young people, following the defeat at Jena, to cleave to the state, and he urged the state to follow Pestalozzi's methods to produce Pestalozzian teachers for the education of these youth. A purely Fichtean formula for freedom, dictated by poor memory and inexhaustible optimism. How fortunate that the Prussian state did not understand him. The consequence would have been a kind of pietistic Jesuitical school under the protectorate of secular authority. No, Fichte was not an overpowering intellect, but he was a prophet.⁶² "In the end," he said,

"and where will it end? In the end all things must converge into the safe harbor of eternal tranquility and bliss; ultimately the divine kingdom and its power and its strength and its glory must come forth."⁶³ And it has done just that.

IV

The Revolution broke out in France on June 17, 1789. *Assez de la métaphysique!** France was determined to find out how things were going in the human world. Europe's philosophy came to light. The French nation wanted to know what could be hoped for, even if blood, much blood, would have to flow. Atheism and unreason were exposed, horror and delight were everywhere.

Nous voulons la Bastille!† Medieval walls burst and collapsed with a crash. Justice was seized in the name of human rights. "Do you want green, the color of hope, or red, the color of the Order of Cincinnatus?" called out Camille Desmoulins,‡ pistol in hand, from atop a table in the street. "Green, green," chanted the mob. He leaped from the table, stuck a leaf in his hat. Every chestnut tree in the Palais was stripped bare, and the mob moved in a procession, dancing, hats waving, to the sculptor Curtius.

If you had something to say, you went out into the streets. You were a silly fool if you did not. Philosophers were handled *sub specie temporis*. Eternity was everywhere because no one gave it a thought. "As for the word 'majesty,'" says Guadet,§ "use it henceforth only when speaking of God and the people."

The words self-determination, freedom, equality, brotherhood—these divine words formed a single sound. Enthusiasm and joy elevated Paris on gigantic shoulders to the capital of the world. Pope, hangman, and the throne sank back into the shadows. For behold, the fellow-creature was born unto you. *La vertu est un enthousiasme.*** No more talk of a faith that suffers, no more dogmas. Dogma is dead; dead, too, a pedantic God working out dogma above Sinai. Being human means being able to dance and to celebrate, all spiritual energies flowing as one from the body.

* So much for metaphysics!

† We want the Bastille!

‡ Lucie Simplice Camille Benoît Desmoulins (1760–guillotined 1794), French revolutionist, prominent as a pamphleteer and journalist.

§ Marguerite Élie Guadet (1758–guillotined 1794), French Girondist leader.

** Virtue is an ecstasy.

The Carmagnole * howls and the Marseillaise peals forth. Seething heads, foaming lips. "Our country is in danger," says Brisson, †

not because it lacks troops. No. Because its strengths have been crippled. And who has done this? A single man whom the system has made its head and whom deceitful councilors have made their enemy. You are told, fear the kings of Prussia and Hungary. And I say the main power of these kings is in the palace, and we have to conquer it there first of all. They tell you, strike against the rebellious priests in the entire kingdom. And I say, strike against the court of the Tuileries and you will crush those priests with the same blow. You are told, scourge all schemers, all mutineers, all plotters. I say, all of them will disappear if you strike against the cabinet of the Tuileries. The cabinet is the loom of all converging threads, where all assaults are being plotted, from whence every initial impulse originates. The nation is the toy ball of this cabinet. That is the key to our situation. That is the source of our malady. That is the place where remedies must be applied.⁶⁴

Aha, said the people, the cabinet, the royal cabinet; and we thought the central party! Aha, said the people, the obscurantists who hand out the commands, the ministers, and Junkers! Out with them, into the light! Put the red cap on the king, drag him before the assembly! He is to answer for it! His advisers, who are they? Not the civil cabinet, we owe allegiance only to ourselves. A new system of governance, new justice! We seek reprisals, we have been betrayed! No people, even the most good-natured, will play the fool for long!

They were drunk with rage, as we Germans would be if we were to discover that we have been deceived and made fools of. The brave French soul strives to free itself, for the times are godless, no Savior will help. "Let us tell Europe," shouts Isnard ‡ from the speaker's platform, "that all battles the people fight because of a despot's commands will be like blows delivered in darkness between two friends who have been set against each other by some pernicious instigator. When the light of day breaks, they throw away their weapons, embrace one another, and turn on their deceiver; in the

* A popular French revolutionary song and dance.

† A reference to Mathurin Jacques Brisson (1723–1806), French physicist and ornithologist.

‡ Maximin Isnard (1755–1830), French Girondist, member of the Council of the Five Hundred.

same way the people will embrace at the sight of dethroned tyrants, of the comforted earth, and of the joyous heavens, when, as enemy forces join with our own, their eyes are struck by the light of philosophy."⁶⁵

Yes, the French Revolution was practical philosophy. Two powerful writers prepared the way: Voltaire and Rousseau. Voltaire, the greatest example of the *écrivain*; introducing questions with *éclat* was the secret of his success. The public and the various factions took sides in wild debates even before the work was published. The essay itself was an argument with all objections, threats, hopes; the public—anxious, delighted. Something of this sort is possible only in France. Intrigues, wagers, duels preceded publication. The book's appearance was merely affirmation, verdict, sentence. Rousseau, the lawgiver of the new morality. Goethe lived his life according to his maxims; the literature of half of Europe lived from his fame. The *Contrat social* became the Sermon on the Mount for rejuvenated peoples. Corsicans and Poles asked him for constitutions. But the Revolution tested the example: the Revolution, this focus of a nation's whole presence of mind. Where is character to be found? Where you say what you think and where the instant passes judgment on what is said.

The French people's insurrection shows a tremendous consumption of philosophies. Critique of the system and of all systems, this was said to be the solution. The ideologies Napoleon spoke of when he came to Germany and the "Gothic prejudices" he spoke about as he stood broken before Metternich in the Marcolini palace have been destroyed by the French Revolution. From that point on, pretension was of no interest, only the heart beating behind it. Illusory grandeurs disappeared.

The constitution of 1793 established the rule of the multitude. The masses become the source of power and the source of its application. "The more the body of state sweats," announces Collot d'Herbois,* "the healthier it becomes." But the body of state sweated blood, not lemonade. Men such as Danton†—their factions exceeded all discretion, law, humanity for the sake of human con-

* Jean Marie Collot d'Herbois (1750–96), French actor and revolutionist, who was initially a supporter of Robespierre, but then joined the successful conspiracy against him.

† Georges Jacques Danton (1759–guillotined 1794), French politician, one of the foremost leaders of the Revolution and minister of justice in the republican government.

cerns. Thinking became confused, and heads no longer sat securely on people's shoulders. Desmoulins sneered that Saint-Just * carried his head "on his shoulders with reverence like the holy sacrament." The work of the guillotine has been condemned, but along with it has been forgotten the celebration of genius and virtue and these enraptured words of Robespierre: "People, let us give ourselves to the ecstasy of pure joy! Tomorrow we will battle depravity and the tyrants anew."

"A revolution is the outcome of the various systems that have set in motion the century in which it has originated," says Mignet.†⁶⁶ Well, it was the century of the Enlightenment and humanitarianism, and the guillotine was the test of the example. What would be left in Germany if the rhetoric were to disappear? The Revolution was an elemental outburst of disgust for dogma and tutelage, against doctrine and scholasticism.⁶⁷ Its blasphemous slaughter was a form of life being lived to the fullest long before Nietzsche.

But it was a turning point as well. A deed was done that had universal significance; a new beginning could be made. France had spoken with earnestness. England, Italy, and Russia took up the message. Reason was idolized and put into action, and room was made for the human heart. It did happen once upon a time. And, moreover, sanctification could begin again. Europe witnessed freedom, vibrant freedom, ultimate issues directed outward, the heavenly and the infamous. The challenge went out to all nations of the world to strive for democracy. An apostolic fabric of pure and impure creatures: that was how the tricolor advanced to the attack.

How have the Germans done justice to these momentous events? Our little Bible clubs and teachers' associations? The superintendent and the privy councilor, the professor and the assessor? Will the Germans always want to be something special, to keep themselves forever closed off from the world?

The event seems to have taken everybody by surprise. Philosophers were used to traveling to England, artists to Italy. No one went to Paris. Only Humboldt was present at a few meetings of the National Assembly, *à titre d'espion*, ‡ you have to admit, since he went on to serve Prussia and even sat in the Vienna Congress.

* Louis Antoine Saint-Just (1767–guillotined 1794), French revolutionary, intimate associate of Robespierre, and one of the promoters of the Reign of Terror.

† François Auguste Marie Mignet (1796–1884), French historian and liberal, author of *Histoire de la révolution française de 1789 à 1814*.

‡ Officially to spy.

The chiefs of the intellectual party knew the great revolution only by hearsay. Voltaire had occupied the men of intellect; Rousseau, the men of feeling. But when Friedrich II summoned the Encyclopedists, who else met with them? Prussia's secret negotiations for the establishment of the League of Princes began in 1785 (its goal: security and esteem for the crowned heads).

Even Karl August of Weimar found himself drawn in, and since he showed himself ambitious to play a role in major politics, Goethe had to stand by and watch his own artistic hopes frustrated. Johann Wolfgang appears in Mainz in 1789 in a cinnamon brown dress coat, chapeau bas, dagger at his side, throwing out compliments like the most experienced courtly Junker. "I no longer believe Goethe capable of enthusiasm for a lofty ideal," Huber writes to Körner. And when the same Goethe was traveling to the confederate army in France in 1792—he was having his own house remodeled in high class fashion—he was described as "thickset, broad of shoulder. Full of face, with rather drooping cheeks."⁶⁸

Kant wrote a treatise entitled "Radical Evil" (1792) evidently against the Hébertists, and published his draft "Zum ewigen Frieden" (On Eternal Peace) in 1796 when the Revolution was threatening Europe. In 1790 he had still called the war a "sublime" occurrence.⁶⁹ According to Kant's cautious terminology this was supposed to mean a phenomenon that stood "beyond human comprehension," but what else do we expect? Even such a clever thinker as Herr Scheler has misunderstood the word.⁷⁰

In his treatise on peace Kant designated the republican constitution as the precondition of "eternal peace." And at other points in his writing he even spoke of a parliamentary system, as the *Frankfurter Zeitung* beamingly discovered a hundred and thirty years later. Thus, one could not say that Kant had been deaf to events were it not for Fichte's insight into what the educated class of that period understood by the word "republic."⁷¹ Even long after newspapers reported the successful conclusion of Bonaparte's landing in Egypt, Kant was disputing the possibility of such a campaign a priori—that is right, a priori.⁷² And he wrote the following about the French in general: "The other side of the coin is a vivacity that is not sufficiently held in check by carefully weighed principles, and a frivolity coupled with clear-sighted rationality, which does not permit certain things to exist for any length of time, simply because they are old or have been inordinately praised, regardless of how well they have worked out; and, too, there is a certain infectious spirit of freedom."⁷³

Fichte, too, took an interest in the young French republic, but he emphasized matters of security. "The major premise of any responsible doctrine of state is contained in Machiavelli's statement: Whoever establishes a republic (for that matter any kind of state) and prescribes laws for it, must suppose that all human beings are wicked, and that, without exception, they will reveal their intrinsic malignity as soon as they have an opportunity to do so."⁷⁴ (And professors, too?) With respect to freedom, Fichte finds that it is best guaranteed "by law" and "only by the Germans, who have existed for thousands of years just for this great purpose and have been maturing slowly toward its fulfillment; . . . no other agent of this evolution exists anywhere else within all humanity."⁷⁵

Wilhelm von Humboldt, born in Potsdam, rushed to Paris after receiving word of the French Revolution. In his essay "Über die Grenze der Wirksamkeit des Staates" (On the Limits of State Power) he provides a Prussian reworking of Rousseau's principle that the democratic rights of the majority "could force the individual to be free."⁷⁶ As Moeller van den Bruck * reports, he did so by educating "ethical freedom," a concept he brought with him as a Kantian, a concept that Rousseau had said was not within the scope of his own work.⁷⁷

German adaptations of Rousseau are most interesting. They reveal philosophical mystification in action. At the beginning of his *Contrat social* Rousseau set down this carefully conceived, revolutionary sentence: "A human being is born free and yet is in chains everywhere." Schiller, following Kant's model of "intelligible" reality, made this out of it: "A human being is created free, *is* free, even if born in chains." And Moeller van den Bruck says that "it was this freedom [born in chains!] that Humboldt sought to *make secure* against the state." Only later at the Vienna Congress, "where Hardenberg, Metternich, and Talleyrand were no match for him, either in understanding or in importance," when Prussia "was compelled to drastically shift primary emphasis from the demands of the individual and freedom to those of the state and power," only then did Humboldt admit that the "security of the totality is more important than the freedom of the individual." In response to Talleyrand's proposal that the congress be convened in the name of public justice, Humboldt answered: "What does public justice have to do with it?"⁷⁸ There you have it, the entire development from Königsberg through Jena to Vienna!

* Arthur Moeller van den Bruck (1876–1925), German nationalist and conservative author of the influential book *Das dritte Reich* (1923).

Lichtenberg was unique and seems to have understood France better than most of his contemporaries. There are statements in his *Politische Bemerkungen* (Political Commentaries) that are equally valid today and that cannot conceal the attention and the sympathy he gave to the Revolution, nor, in addition, his concern. "The airing of the nation seems to me to be necessary to its enlightenment. I do not see anything as serious as their denial of Christian religion in France. What if the people return to the bosom of the Church without any external coercion? Perhaps it was necessary to completely break the religion up in order to reinstitute it in a purified form."⁷⁹ And this: "Without doubt, the most lamentable thing of all the French Revolution has brought about is that every rational demand invoking God and justice will be viewed as the seed of rebellion."⁸⁰ And in 1796 Lichtenberg wrote this: "We shall see what becomes of the French Republic after the laws have had a good night's sleep."⁸¹ That is dear, intelligent Lichtenberg, who was smarter than all the minds of the party of dignity put together.

For, what happened next? In accord with the maxim "Fear your neighbor as you fear yourself," the German government, with the help of its royal, national, and hedonistic humanists, took the ideas of freedom spawned by the Revolution and diverted them into something optional.⁸² When the Herr philosophers and scholars could produce no practical consequences from it, the government permitted the "intelligible freedom" that it had not troubled about for so long to take to the lecture stand as a national specialty *summa cum laude*. And the so-called war of independence (those sniper attacks, those Franc-tireur rebellions patronized by Prussia) permitted the duped nation to christen as heroism its hatred of progress and its anger over missed opportunities. It was a conspiracy against progress that aligned Germany with Prussia.

V

The debasement postulated by the Prussian ideal of duty and the corruption that it necessarily leads to cannot be properly understood if we do not understand the development of that ideal. There still exists today a kind of silent pact between sovereign and subject that lies at the root of this ideal. The subject pledges to "serve," and in turn the sovereign is to look after and to protect. A similar compact has always existed wherever there have been patriarchs and sovereigns. But in Prussia additional factors were also at work. The Thirty Years' War had left behind from the scum of all nations

marauding bands of soldiers who swept across the country, leaderless and unfit for service, robbing, even murdering. Out of desperate need, perhaps it was out of piety—we all know that poor people and the police go hand in hand in Protestant states—Friedrich Wilhelm, the Great Elector, created the *miles perpetuus*, the standing army. These hordes of stragglers now had jobs. And duty became “accursed duty and obligation,” out of a cheap acknowledgment of princely kindness.

The *miles perpetuus* is a profoundly vile creature; he can thank his lucky stars that the Elector elevated him to lifelong service instead of putting a noose around his neck. The Elector is certainly no lenient master. He is strictest in matters of insubordination and disorderly conduct among his officers; he punishes duelers and their seconds with death. Meanwhile, he binds officers and troops to him with adequate and “regularly paid” wages—and with the power of his “Christian” personality.

Prussian militarism in its fundamentals is an institution of “practical Christianity,” that is abundantly evident. God-blessed authority pardons sinners. It is religious militarism. A Prussian militaristic Catholicism could indeed be abstracted from the exaltation of the concept of penitence. We have not come that far yet because of the shortage of productive minds. But if Herr Scheler wanted to busy himself sometime with this project, we can easily imagine that Catholicism could be united with Prussianism precisely at this juncture. Volunteers would then enlist out of dandyism.

The “accursed” duty and obligation reveals that here was a hell without escape. The drills of the *miles perpetuus* and of the devotees of the Jesuits coincide on the issues of human misery, nullity, and contrition. Barracks, convent, and penitentiary compete in terms of enforced poverty, bad food, and contempt for human pride. The militaristic “Generales Observations” of that soldiering fool Friedrich Wilhelm I and the “Spiritual Exercises of Penitence” of Ignatius Loyola parallel one another paragraph by paragraph. Article One: “It is of primary importance that whenever a soldier is armed, and particularly on the drill field, he is to comport himself appropriately, holding head, body, and feet properly and naturally, and keeping his stomach in.” Article Seven reads: “The first step in drill must be to properly break in a recruit, giving him the demeanor of a soldier that will drive out any civilian qualities.” Or Article Two for officers: “Clearly, a soldier who does not fear *God* will not serve

his masters, will not be obedient to his superiors; hence, all officers are to take particular care to impress upon the soldiers the Christian and honorable way of life. Thus, officers are to give personal warnings if a soldier's godless ways come to their attention; and if the situation does not improve, the officer is required to send the offender to a priest."

So reads the *Reglement, Vor die Königl. Preussische Infanterie* (Regulations for the Imperial Prussian Infantry, Potsdam, 1 Martii 1726).⁸³ These codes have been influenced by the war regulations of the Spaniard Della Sala ed Abarca (1681), which were translated into German by order of the king and were also passed on with few changes to Friedrich the Great. But from the latter come words that show even more clearly the origins of the Prussian soldier: "Can a sovereign who dresses his troops in blue and gives them caps with white braid, who has them doing left turns and right turns, send them into the field for the sake of honor without deserving the honorary title of a ringleader of good-for-nothings, who only become hired hangmen under pressure in order to carry on the honest trade of street robbers?"⁸⁴

This much is evident: the Prussian army gives cause to philosophize, and I am not joking when I say that Prussian militarism rests on "philosophy of religion." It is Spanish by origin, in its punishment, in its use of the whip, and will only be overcome by a spiritual discipline fashioned on Jesuitical patterns.⁸⁵ By origin the Prussian army is an institution of lawbreakers sanctioned by a prince. And today the strict discipline of officers and their subordinates, the gunnery and barrack drills that presuppose the absolute inferiority of any "human materiel" delivered into their hands, show close parallels to prison existence, parallels that could well be the topic of theological dissertations.

Revenge is the starting point of local Brandenburgian philosophy, which even Kant's rigor was unable to escape. Even someone of a more austere nature would not be able to keep from showing a certain speculative interest in it. Subordination of the individual as demanded by the Prussian system even began to interest the Roman Church, and the most pampered minds among us will fall by the wayside if we do not show ourselves equal to this school of Satan. Is it anything but mathematics when Friedrich I gets fits of giddiness from the thundering, measured march step of those "tall men," from the remarkably precise movements of bodies and lines in formation? "Enfin, a regiment is the bride one dances around."⁸⁶

Service was for life. The rod ruled relentlessly.⁸⁷ It is no accident that Kant wrote the following: "We are subject to the discipline of reason. Duty and obligation are the designations we all must give to our relationships to the moral law."⁸⁸ Was not even he fascinated? Did he not describe Friedrich Wilhelm's regiment like a good little student? "Duty, you sublime great name, you who will have nothing to do even with the thing dearest to you if it brings anything ingratiating, but who demands only subjugation!" And does not this devout Byzantinianism contain the fundamentals that lead Catholics, Poles, and Spaniards to Kant and to Prussia?

Kant seeks the root of a "noble origin" of this "duty." As both Prussian and human being he felt obligated to find a divine foundation for this devilish reality. And he found this root, "dignity," in the free assent to command and mandate, in the mere anticipation of mandate, and he called it the "categorical imperative" in the name of "personality." Can the following statement be understood without these premises? Kant writes: "Is not an honest man in the greatest misfortune of life (in military service), which he could avoid if only he could lay duty aside, sustained by the awareness that he has upheld and honored the dignity of humanity through his person, that he does not need to *be ashamed of himself* and has no cause to turn his inward gaze away from self-scrutiny?"⁸⁹ Can we still consider Kant to be an armchair philosopher cut off from the world? Was not he, more accurately, half victim, half aider and abettor? Was not Friedrich Wilhelm's knout system the substratum underlying Kant's anonymously abstract propositions? Do we still think there was no reason for his being "the bride one dances around" for the chamberlains and consorts? Kant gave Prussian subjects, even if he did so with scruples and foresight, the good conscience to permit themselves to be flogged and gagged. After Luther he was the second German who betrayed conscience, and he did it so sublimely and so obscurely that you will need a keen mind indeed just to read his writings in the original language. Kant elevated Prussian knouting to the realm of metaphysics.⁹⁰

Tied to the ideal of humiliation, which was destined to lead to cynicism and in fact did so, was the Brandenburgian tradition of "making oneself formidable." The Great Elector wrote: "Our ancestors have been formidable to the entire world; their slightest movement caused everything to tremble."⁹¹ The principle became a common tradition. Friedrich Wilhelm I gave this advice to his successor: "My successor must see to it that the nobility from all his

provinces and Prussia in particular is drawn to the army and that their children are enrolled in the cadet corps; it will be *formidable* for his service and army, and much quieter in his nation. Blessedness is for God, but everything else has to be mine."⁹² And Friedrich the Great wrote in his "Military Testament" (1768): "War is good if it is undertaken to maintain the *prestige* of the nation. No art is more beautiful, none more useful than the art of war."⁹³

But another tradition was in the making, namely, that of the Prussian General Staff. Even under the Great Elector there was still rowdiness and brawling in the army. "Above all else, our higher officers, as well as the others—workmen and menials, in fact whoever serves us in the army—are to be loyal, propitious, obedient, and attentive to us as its head."⁹⁴ Under Friedrich Wilhelm I the officers' regulations required that regimental records contain entries as to "whether an officer drinks, whether he shows good sense and an open, receptive mind, or whether he is stupid."⁹⁵ Friedrich II rebuffed officers of middle-class origin, and among officers from the nobility there arose an aristocratic sense, which, according to Treitschke, "became even more intolerable to the people than the uncouth crudeness of earlier periods." The *point d'honneur* was introduced. A general was expected "to be extraordinary, yet to appear natural at the same time, both gentle and strict, constantly distrustful and tranquil, showing human concern for his soldiers, but capable upon occasion of being extravagant with their blood."⁹⁶

Following the collapse of the army at Jena and Auerstädt, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Grolmann, and Boyen took charge of its reorganization. * Herewith begins the "idealistic" tradition of the General Staff. "This group of four," claims the author of the document I am citing, "was so superior that history since the Reformation has nothing similar to show."⁹⁷ And that is clearly the conviction of

* The battles of Jena and Auerstädt were fought on the same day, October 14, 1806. Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst (1755–1813), German general and military writer. He was president of the commission to reorganize the army and director of the department of war (1807–10) as well as author of the *Handbuch für Offiziere* (1781–90). Count August Gneisenau (1760–1831), Prussian general. His efforts with Scharnhorst in the period between the Peace of Tilsit and the beginning of the wars of liberation (1807–13) helped immensely in the reorganization of the Prussian army. Karl von Grolman (1777–1843), Prussian general who reorganized the general staff (after 1815). Hermann von Boyen (1771–1848), Prussian general who supported Scharnhorst's reorganization; went to Russia in 1812 and was Brulow's chief of staff. As Minister of War (1814–19), Boyen proposed universal conscription (1814) and the Territorial Reserve (1815).

the instructors in the cadet academies. If we replace the names Grolmann and Boyen with the names Blücher and Clausewitz,* names that are familiar to everyone today, we see that the four major heroes of the Prussian forces were raised in poor circumstances without any formal schooling. That might not be typical of "idealistic" officers, but it is certainly characteristic.

The same is true of Scharnhorst. "His father was a dragoon sergeant from Hannover. He grew up poor and without schooling."⁹⁸ His *idée fixe* was the national militia, for which he envied the French Revolution. His reforms were all made with the "fight for freedom" in mind. Arming the people was his dream. How formidable you could be then! He hated the French. The probable reason? Scharnhorst wrote this: "If Providence has directly inspired mankind with any new institution at all, it is the discipline of the standing army."⁹⁹ And since Scharnhorst was agitating at the same time for universal conscription, his ideal turns out to be this: the traditional Prussian *miles perpetuus*, the convict, on a national scale.

Gneisenau had the benefit of "spiritually deficient, superstitious training at the hands of Jesuits and Franciscans."¹⁰⁰ He thrilled at the "release of the previously confined powers of the people," which he saw revealed in the French Revolution. He was convinced that universal conscription and the participation by the common people in political affairs "would follow as a matter of course," and even contrary to the position taken by Freiherr von Stein he spoke out for the abolition of punishment by flogging, calling his proposal poetically the "liberation of the back." †¹⁰¹ "Religion, prayer, love of the regent," he wrote, commemorating the king, "are poetic expressions. The security of the throne is based on poetry."¹⁰²

And the stereotype holds true for Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher: "The boy grew up without any formal education."¹⁰³ A loose life of hunting, drinking, womanizing, gambling, and brawling—so reads his certificate of conduct. He writes to Gneisenau: "Give my greetings to my friend Scharnhorst and tell him that I back him all the way on this national army" (1807). And he writes to Scharnhorst:

* Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher (1742–1819), Prussian field marshal who defeated Napoleon at Leon (March 9, 1814) and occupied Paris (March 31, 1814). Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), Prussian officer and military writer, named to head the German war school in 1818. His book *Vom Kriege* (On War) became the basis for the science of war.

† "Freiheit des Rückens."

"I just can't sit around all the time grinding my teeth when it is a question of doing something for the Fatherland and freedom. To hell with that sh--- stuff of the diplomats; why not throw everything against the French, go after them like holy hell . . . that's what I say, march, attack, give them the knife where it will do us some good."¹⁰⁴

Clausewitz, like Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, and Blücher, was poorly educated.¹⁰⁵ His *Confessions*, written in 1812 and published in 1867, verify the fact that his grandfather had been a professor of theology. In general his *Confessions* are as boring as they are pretentious. They certainly have not made his name a household word. He earned his reputation with his *Vom Kriege* (On War), for which General Field Marshal Count Schlieffen,* Chief of the General Staff, wrote the introduction. I cannot resist citing at least one sentence from this introduction: "The lasting value of this work, next to its high ethical and psychological content, is to be found in its energetic emphasis on the idea of destruction."¹⁰⁶

Ethical value and the idea of destruction? Clausewitz meditated much on that instant when a soldier's conscience contradicts his bloody acts. He turns out to be the Jesuit among the pastors' sons who were sanctifying war and still attempting to cover up their hideous cynicism with argumentation. In stilted gibberish that shows Kantian aspirations he reaches the conclusion that determination, the counterweight to scruple, "is nothing but the feeling of human dignity; this most noble pride, this most inward necessity of the soul to act in general as a being gifted with insight and rationality. We would conclude that a strong heart is one that never loses equilibrium in spite of the most violent impulses."¹⁰⁷

Today all the world knows that it was the urging of Chief of the General Staff Moltke† at that crucial assembly in Potsdam that induced world war. Bismarck still had the power to defy the General Staff, which was represented by that first Moltke.‡¹⁰⁸ But there are no Bismarcks now. Diplomacy gave way in 1914 to military force. The General Staff, the cause of the war, has been trying for

* Alfred von Schlieffen (1833–1913), Prussian general, chief of the German general staff (1891–1905) who developed the Schlieffen plan (1911) for a war on two fronts, which called for the annihilation of France before Russia could mobilize.

† Helmuth Johannes Ludwig von Moltke (1848–1916), chief of the general staff (1906 et seq.) who was blamed for the German retreat of 1914 and replaced by Falkenhayn.

‡ Helmuth K. B. von Moltke (1800–91), Prussian field marshal, chief strategist of the Franco-Prussian War.

four years without success to win it. As a consequence of its initiative the General Staff is determined to come home victorious. And it needs soldiers, growing numbers of soldiers, and continues to annex territory. That is the secret of Prussian politics.

Since Clausewitz even German morality is made by the General Staff. Will the nation put up with that any longer? Have we sunk so low that we have no sensitivity left for dialectic monstrosities? Are there no officers left whose sense of honor makes them cringe in the face of this horror? The state is a practical, hence inferior, institution. The General Staff, however, has reached the stature of an unsolicited, nihilistic philosophy.

Will any of you blush with shame when I say that what I write will be read in foreign countries? The sovereignty of the state over humanity and the citizenry has gone so far now that any position, even insolence, can lecture to the nation's good manners and sense of morality.¹⁰⁹ Is this really true? Has it come so far that officials who do their duty because their subordinated abilities find justification in obedience rush off to write tracts about religion and philosophy? Has it come down to this, that priests, artists, and philosophers have to quake in their shoes before each subaltern thug or official recordkeeper who fancies himself to be a pillar as formidable and majestic as the edifice it upholds? And a nation where this goes on day after day and has become law calls itself a nation of philosophers and poets!

VI

The inner depravity of the Empire under the Hapsburg emperors explains the rise of Prussia and the alliance of sympathies that came into being between Prussian despots and the German people. That two such disparate entities as the romantic lethargy of pre-Napoleonic Germany and the agile regiments of Prussian military autocracy could ultimately join together gives some indication of how unbearable the neglect of legalities and security, how uncomfortable the confusion of dead institutions had become in the Holy Roman Empire. Someone has noted quite properly that it is not a question of the sun never setting on an empire, but rather what the sun sees on its way over. And this is what was to be seen during the rule of the Hapsburgs: Turkish wars and racial massacres in the east, inquisitions and persecution of the Gueux* in the west, and

* Literally "beggar." Dutch fighters against Spanish control (beginning 1566).

in the middle, religious wars with near total destruction through robbery, murder, and arson.

The apostolic majesties on the Hapsburg throne lacked the new motive and centralizing strength. Escapism and the outdated spirit of the Crusades, dead Catholic dogma, and a quaint Jesuitism were no match for the greedy demands of the combination of a world kingdom and the new times. The independence of the Netherlands had to be recognized in 1648; in 1763, the supremacy of Prussia in the center of the kingdom. Even the Hungarian grandees, who were as uncontrollable as the Gueux and the Prussians, became more obtrusive and bolder until, as a result of the agreement with Bismarck, they succeeded during the nineteenth century in seizing half of the political power structure of the Danube monarchy.

The rise of Prussian princes who were constantly looking to gain the upper hand paralleled the fall of the House of Hapsburg. And to the same degree that Hapsburg lost moral influence, German sympathies shifted to Prussia, which, to be sure, not only matched the cunning, brutality, and sophistry of Austrianism but indeed succeeded where Austria had failed.

Listen to Bismarck's words: "Prussia is totally isolated. The single ally, if handled properly, is the German people." The Great Elector had made this discovery in 1675 when he took sides with the emperor against Louis XIV in the Palatinate War of Succession and was left to fend for himself, and suddenly came face to face with both France and Sweden. At that point he appealed to Germany,¹¹⁰ citing the "formidable tradition of our ancestors," and urged a union of German races, in effect committing an act of rebellion against the emperor. *Nostris ex ossibus ultor*, * he cursed Austria when Louis XIV forced him to the separate peace settlement of St. Germain en Laye. And in a similar fashion Friedrich Wilhelm I said of his son Friedrich "he is the one who will avenge me" when Charles VI thwarted him in the succession in Berg, contrary to the arrangements of the Pragmatic Sanction.

Friedrich II is the first Prussian king who succeeded in gaining Germany's sympathy in the battle against Catholic Austria—the sympathy of Protestant northern Germany, you understand. And we would be off target if we did not understand Prussian politics after 1648 in the only way that gives a unified view: Prussian politics as the expression of palace Machiavellianism and a Lu-

* Avenger from our own marrow.

theran pseudomorality. The League of Princes, founded by Friedrich in 1785, is the forerunner of that second German Confederation established even more fundamentally and extensively by Bismarck in 1871, but quite in keeping with the spirit of the old Prussian idea of unification of the Great Elector and the Great Fritz. The decisive issue in both cases was not the interests and the welfare of the people, but rather "the honor and security of the crowns."

The Hohenzollerns found in Friedrich II the most expeditious heir to their tradition, if not the wittiest, provided that you accept as wit what issued from the love of deception and sarcastic frivolity. But above all the most punctilious, for he was extraordinarily effective and possessed a staggering degree of self-presence.

His campaigns are not masterpieces of the art of war. Napoleon made fun of them.¹¹¹ He struck where it counted without much ceremony. And he found his match and took his licks in return, also without much ceremony. His philosophy consisted of an irritating cynicism that was fully prepared to sacrifice without scruple any talents and human insight "in the name of honor," even if they struck to the heart of profound convictions.¹¹² His pervasive melancholy and his lonely flute playing seem to come from the fact that the genius that inspired him "against his will" had fallen into irreconcilable contradiction with the Prussian taskmaster.

What set him apart was his tenacity, a flexibility that was present with unerring accuracy and expectancy, taking control but always remaining elusive. It was not the "philosopher" of Sanssouci, not the strategist, or the poet who set reason marching bewitched in rhymed columns—it was that daredevil of a fellow who compelled the Germans "to believe once again in the miracles of heroism." Finally someone did do something, never mind with what success; at least he still had eyes in his head, and brains, too. Ultimately somebody was willing to clean house with routine, phraseology, bombast, and file cabinets! Finally a tiger, even if he snapped at the air and bared his teeth. A man with temperament, at least in the eyes of pedants and boors, adepts and dreamers.

Lessing does speak occasionally of the Prussians as a half wild people, yet he claims in a surprised way that "they are born to heroic courage just like the Spartans." The battle at Roßbach * won

* One of the greatest victories of the Seven Years' War for Friedrich the Great, who defeated French forces at Roßbach, a small village in eastern Germany, on November 5, 1757.

over people who had even previously been "Fritz-fanciers," such as Goethe. And if, according to Treitschke, it was difficult for the heroes of German thought to come to terms with "the only vital nation of our people,"¹¹³ yet in Friedrich was manifest again the "ancient majesty of German national weaponry," and "idealism" did its best to gradually balance out the difference. In verse and in prose Goethe and Schiller joyfully celebrated the secession of the Protestant feudal Netherlands from the kingdom. Prussia's rebellion in the north, the insurrection of Friedrich II's vassals¹¹⁴ did not exactly coincide with their liberalism, but one had to be accommodating.¹¹⁵

What were the reasons that compelled our great-grandfathers on the other side of the Main River to become Prussian royalists, though at first they bristled and hesitated? The Holy Roman Empire lay close to death—actually, it had ceased to exist after the time of Luther. The educated class offered certain guarantees of independence, if only of a very provisional nature. One brooded according to inclination and at will; everyone for himself, God for us all. No rabble-rousing, no sentiments for the *canaille*, everything in peace and harmony! It is a long way to go from sympathy to the introduction of Prussian corporal punishment in the kingdom. Then even Austria probably would have some talking to do.

Protestant ideology was one thing that united poet, thinker, and Prussian ruler, and that could have seemed suspicious even then. When Friedrich voiced his discovery "I am to a certain degree the pope of the Lutherans and the ecclesiastical head of those who have been reformed,"¹¹⁶ in principle nothing was left standing in the way of the realization of his German aspirations. Kant's philosophy won over Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Kleist; the Protestant concept of the state captured Fichte and Hegel. The Seven Years' War had conquered Goethe. A predatory war, one way or the other, made little difference: the nation, corrupted by both classicism and Lutheranism, gained material ripe for poeticizing. "I fiercely seized my golden harp to storm the praise of Friedrich."¹¹⁷ Had not Friedrich granted freedom of thought? That view caught up Schiller (note Marquis Posa*). And did he not possess that "magnificent practicality of reason" that Goethe praised in the English. And even if Friedrich also wrote French and understood Voltaire and the Encyclopedists better than he did Weimar and Jena, where but in

* Marquis Posa, an important character in Schiller's drama *Don Carlos* (1787).

Prussia and its armies was to be found salvation from the evil radicalism of that horrible monster revolt in Paris?

The distress and misery in which the Hapsburg theocracy, founded as it was on a dead God, kept Germany preserved, make the decision confronting our ancestors even more palpable. They could not suspect what would result. Now, however, with the monstrosity right in our midst, with Prussia losing its senses and becoming a scourge to the whole country, what prevents us from preparing for the departure of the military and for the advent of the republic?

As a ruler Friedrich was not without his scruples. The influence of *La Henriade** went deeper than he admitted. "Growing greed," he wrote in his *Antimachiavell*, "is the sign of a most lowly constituted soul." And, continuing, "A desire to gain increase by robbing neighbors will hardly be acceptable to any proper person who puts any stock at all in the respect of the world." And this: "An evildoer needs only to come from noble origins to count on the support of the majority."¹¹⁸

In Germany people still claim as a philosophy the view that "real" life tosses such puerile idealism aside like a toy. Yet this conviction is moral desertion, and this view embodies the unheroic fact of our thought process. Of course the king knew that. His impudence revealed itself in that he realized the true duties of the ruler, betrayed them, and still managed to make philosophy of it.

As soon as there was an opportunity he fell upon Silesia. But at this point it would be well to note (see Masaryk†) that a revolt is not betrayal if and when, borne on by human compassion, based on necessity and rights, and supported by collective conscience, it is *compelled* to insurrection after repeated but unheeded petitions for rights.

The king confessed in 1741: "The fame of Prussian arms and the honor of the royal house determine my conduct and will accompany me to the grave."¹¹⁹ What do we care for the ambition of a sovereign and the lust for power of the Prussian military? The welfare of the people is entrusted to us. And he claims: "The Prussian king must make war his chief area of study and kindle the enthusiasm of those who have embraced this noble and dangerous profession of arms."¹²⁰ But what concern of ours is this Prussian domestic politics? Is it greatness to propagate war, the handiwork of Satan? An attacking wolf out of a lamb—and overnight! Hardly a

* An epic poem written by Voltaire in 1726–29.

† Thomás Masaryk (1850–1937), the first president of Czechoslovakia (1918–35).

surprise among Germans. Thomas Mann,* who in the spring of 1914 still found enthusiastic words for a humble Christmas piece by Paul Claudel entitled *The Prophecy*, † changed from a lamb into a wolf. And since he is a Friedrich by nature, his book about the Prussian king may offer many insights.¹²¹

A most curious thing happens: Prussia defends the "freedom of Europe." Friedrich claims "to shield the affairs of Protestantism and German freedom from the appetite for oppression to be found in the Viennese court."¹²² In repeated memoranda to the English court he asks "whether Germany and Protestantism will continue to survive? Whether the human race will even manage to retain the thoughts of freedom?"¹²³ Here is a clear anticipation of the famous *Kulturkampf* that Bismarck conducted later. Friedrich has just discovered that he is "in a certain sense the pope of the Lutherans and the spiritual authority of those who have been reformed." ‡ He sends French Jesuits to Silesia to resist Austrian Jesuits.¹²⁴ One of the earliest tests of "practical Christianity"! And since he is not only an apologist but also a philosopher, he endeavors to bring the Duke of Choiseul, Count von Struensee, and Socrates together in some "*Totengespräch*" (Conversations of the Dead) to deliver aphoristically some pithy wisdom, which likewise does honor to Prussian tradition: "A coup d'état is not a crime, and everything that brings honor is great."¹²⁵

In the year 1780, however, the publisher I. G. Decker in Berlin published a pamphlet, *De la littérature allemande* (On the Literature of Germany), that as far as I know has been adequately appreciated only by Franz Mehring; §¹²⁶ it had most destructive consequences. It was Friedrich's obvious intention, before moving on to found the League of Princes, to vigorously cut short the brash literature of the Storm and Stress writers. Goethe's *Goetz*, *Stella*, and *Werther* were fresh on the scene. Schiller's *Räuber*, Lessing's *Miss Sarah Sampson* had appeared and were working to create a self-aware middle class. That could become dangerous. Something had to be done.

Friedrich's pamphlet had principles and a certain class. It came as a bolt of lightning out of a clear sky. The young Germanic

* Thomas Mann (1875–1955) published a eulogy of Friedrich the Great, *Friedrich der Große und die große Koalition*, in 1914.

† Paul Claudel (1868–1955), French diplomat, poet, and dramatist.

‡ Here Ball misquotes material he has quoted earlier. See note 116 above.

§ Franz Mehring (1846–1919), German socialist politician, and literary critic.

Originalgenies measured against Bossuet,* Fénelon,† Pascal, Bayle! It was obvious from then on that even Prussia, hypothetically at least, was marching in the lead. No quotations are needed. The pamphlet, energetic in style and dictated casually from broad points of view, banished the sprinkling of local celebrities and took control of them as a snake does of a bird. Goethe's mother was beside herself and Wolfgang was considering some kind of retort. But the court of Gotha gave a warning and nothing was published. Herder resolved to revise his earlier fragment *Über die neuere deutsche Literatur* (Comments on Contemporary German Literature) and in fact did so. In the *Teutscher Merkur* Wieland wrote this: "For years we have been convinced that the illustrious writer of this pamphlet has taken little if any interest in our literature. But we can see now that he has of late been working with it and bears the best intentions for it and is inclined to wish it the best." Klopstock, who felt most strongly criticized, vented his fury in a series of bombastic odes.¹²⁷

The king had shown that not only could he handle batallions but was also a master in His Majesty's German Intellect. The king left no doubt in anyone's mind. The times were long past when missionaries were barbarically murdered in Prussia.¹²⁸

His suggestions should have been followed. They offered some significant remedies and freedom. A society under royal auspices, devoted to translations from the French, much like what Novikov and Catherine had in Russia,¹²⁹ was a more pressing need to the nation than an amateur theater in Weimar.‡ A proposal should have been made to the king to have all those French classicists whom he recommended published in translation. That would have been an indispensable accomplishment. But no one did that. People would have better understood the French Revolution when it broke out and, who knows, perhaps would have avoided Napoleon and the wars of independence, in addition to the dependence on Prussia that resulted from these wars. But no one did that. Friedrich was deified more than ever, this person who had shown himself to be a "double hero." He was granted the right to believe what he had proposed:

* Bishop Bossuet (1627–1704), influential French writer and Catholic polemicist.

† François Fénelon (1651–1715), French prelate and writer.

‡ A reference to the so-called Weimar Classicism, which flourished under the sponsorship of Duke Karl August of Saxon-Weimar, and at the center of which was the close friendship and collaboration between Goethe and Schiller (from 1794 to Schiller's death in 1805).

intellectuals are also subordinates, a *miles perpetuus*, so to speak.

Then came the League of Princes. It was the first step in the establishment of the Prussian kingdom of the German nation. The Protestant intelligentsia had been brought under control before they even realized what was going on.

VII

Rousseau revolutionized France. He revolutionized Russia. One day he will revolutionize Germany. A human being is not a machine: a return to nature. A human being is not a devil: a return to Christianity. A human being does not live in caves: a return to our homeland. Paradise has been lost. All of us are guilty, all are monstrosities of the times. We are all burdened with the original sin of habit, exiles from our own infancy. Everyone obeys because each one obeys. But the soul is not Prussian * by nature; humanity is not given to fratricide. Abolition of all contemporary norms, laws, customs, forms, conceits, and establishments. *Unio mystica* with God and with humanity!

In France a single condemnation of an impossible world was enough to set deeds in motion. The guillotine became the blade with which a new humanity was cut from the body of a coquette.

In Germany Rousseau's philosophy led to that magical flight of idealists called Romanticism. The German ideal was directly contemplative, not hungry for the attack; transcendental, not like Friedrich the Great. And if it was true that our ancestors were ever really "formidable to the whole world," then the Church did much to put them on the path of interior crusades, with sparkling fantasy, with the music of suffering and triumph, death at their heels, the Devil breathing down their necks, yet always their heads aswim with the creed: visionary brothers.

In Germany Rousseau's turbulent thought turned into longing and melancholy, cults of genius, and a music of "homesickness, here-sickness, anywheresickness," to quote Theodor Däubler.†¹³⁰ The Romantics took flight because they could not prevail against the brutality around them, because they did not want to prevail. The

* *Preussin*, lit. female Prussian, a predicate noun whose natural-gender form in the German follows the grammatical gender of the feminine subject *die Seele*, "the soul."

† Theodor Däubler (1876–1934), German poet, novelist, and essayist. Ball's quotation: " 'aus Heimweh, aus Herweh, aus Hinwegweh.' "

commonplace was too constricting, too abused; the chain could no longer be broken.¹³¹ Abdication, flight, and renunciation are the messages they left in their writings and translations; all of this was spiritualism to them, but it fills us with a spirit before which reality itself must yield. We are no longer Romantics; we are Futurists.

"Romantic poetry is universal poetry," announced Friedrich Schlegel, "it strives to combine poetry and prose, originality and criticism, and to fuse these elements, making poetry vital and significant, making life and society poetic, animating all cultural substance with humor. Romantic poetry is to the arts what wit is to philosophy, and what sociability, social intercourse, friendship, and love are to life."¹³² "Transcendental buffoonery" he defines as "the frame of mind that surveys everything and elevates itself infinitely above all conditional situations, even its own art, virtue, and originality."¹³³ For Schlegel, poetry is "infinite, because it alone is free, having recognized the law of laws, that the free will of the poet tolerates no restraint beyond itself."¹³⁴

What liberated and significant rules! Goethe had rediscovered the "demonic in nature" and the abyss of striving: Faust and the Blocksberg. He had discovered the nature of genius in the incommensurability of art.¹³⁵ In contact with the natural world of the five senses, he discovered the physical and moral primal phenomena and their permeation; he found light and the theory of color and that *unio mystica* with the sun that breaks forth in his dying words, "More light."

This was the source of Romanticism: a hieratic pandemonium of love, veneration, and a consciousness of brotherhood. Romanticism became the *Dombauhütte* of the Third Kingdom. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Novalis wrote *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, and Beethoven penned this sentence: "The spiritual realm is for me the supreme religious and temporal monarchy,"¹³⁶ and he jubilantly wrote these words to Cherubini: "*L'art unit tout le monde.*"*¹³⁷ His infectious rhythms soar against God to dispute for the neglected, the poor. In ecstatic urgency the Christian revolution is dawning against heavenly bodies and fate itself. Mankind is good in spite of everything. Beethoven demanded the return of Paradise for the poorest of the poor who have been sinned against.¹³⁸

Novalis embodied a complete renaissance of Christianity. His essay "Christendom or Europe" appeared in 1799 in the Schlegel Brothers' journal *Athenäum*. He made this claim: "Luther treated

* "Art unites the entire world."

Christianity willfully, misjudged its spirit and introduced a different language and a different religion. This episode of modern disbelief is most remarkable and holds the key to all the monstrous events of contemporary times. What if, in this case as in the sciences, a closer and more subtle connection and contiguity of the European states . . . a new impulse for slumbering Europe were to come into play, what if Europe were about to awaken again?"* ¹³⁹ His religion is an ecstasy of sublimated joy in suffering. He read *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and found, dispiritedly, that Voltaire was its model. "It is a *Candide* aimed at poetry," he writes, "a nobilized novel. It treats miraculous events expressly as poesy and reverie. Artistic atheism is the spirit of this book."¹⁴⁰ Novalis demanded that the work of art present the miraculous as something ordinary and usual, and he demanded the same of life.¹⁴¹ He saw the same marvelous powers at play in nature and in the human spirit; he viewed his life and the object of his love as blossom and leaf on the same stem. The world is reflected mystically and veridantly in his blood. Animal, mankind, and plant form a *single* kingdom. And only sadness and the Italian sun and its limpid skies separate him from St. Francis of Assisi. Resignation was his passion and his compassion with flowers, with God, and with Sophie Kühn, a young woman close to death. He loved her because she was touching the other world. Yet he wrote a single sentence that overcomes all Romanticism and points far into the future: "If we are obliged to love God, then he must be in need of our help."¹⁴²

Gustav Landauer's † penetrating comments on Friedrich Hölderlin have revealed new vistas on his works.¹⁴³ Hölderlin sought the unity of the nation in humility and in the dithyrambic spirit of community. He suffered unspeakably from the ferment of the times. His freely vibrant conception of things was unmatched by any writer who followed him. His hymns are a code, tenderly meted out, of loving passions. The tumult and expectation with which the French Revolution seized him caused him to ask: Have we been left behind, do we lack talent, the strength to act, and initiative, or are we being held back for some special task? This was his answer:

* This quotation is an example of Ball's practice of compressing excerpts from his sources. Although Ball quotes from Novalis's essay with only one indicated ellipsis, the passage quoted is actually pieced together from several pages. Cf. "Christendom or Europe," trans. Charles E. Passage, *Hymns to the Night and Other Selected Writings*, The Library of Liberal Arts (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), pp. 50, 55, and 60.

† Gustav Landauer (1870–1919), German anarchist and socialist.

"Oh you good people! We too are poor in action, rich in thought!"¹⁴⁴
 Yet in *Hyperion* he laments:

But the virtues of the Germans are glittering vices and nothing more; for they are but forced labor, wrung from the sterile heart in craven fear, with the toil of slaves, and they impart no comfort to any pure soul that, . . . ah! made fastidious by the sacred harmony in noble natures, cannot bear the discord that cries out in all the dead order of these men. I tell you: there is nothing sacred that is not desecrated, is not debased to a miserable expedient among this people; and what even among savages is usually preserved in sacred purity, these all-calculating barbarians pursue as one pursues any trade, and cannot do otherwise; for where a human being is once conditioned to look, there it serves its ends. . . . But you will sit in judgment, sacred Nature! For were they but modest, these people, did they but not make themselves a law unto the better among them! did they but revile not what they are not, yet even that could be condoned in them, did they but not mock the divine!¹⁴⁵

For Hölderlin as well as Friedrich Schlegel the original sin of the Germans is to be found in "the total separation and isolation of human faculties."¹⁴⁶

Another Romantic comes to mind here: Georg Büchner.* He established a revolutionary "Association of Human Rights." What German is not smiling? He threw himself from the *vita contemplativa* into politics, "as if to find a way out of spiritual needs and pains." The police pursued him to Strassburg. *The Death of Danton* was written while they waited for him in the street. They forced him to discard his rebellious tendencies in writing. He did not express the dogmas of 1789—what does a party scandal mean to him?—but gave voice to his suffering human heart, to a fatalism permeated by profoundest sorrow: "Creation is a wound, and we are drops of God's blood."¹⁴⁷ And he fervently calls out to us, the youth of today: "The world is chaos, nothingness, the birth pangs of the god of the world." In Gießen he fell into a deep depression and was ashamed "of being a vassal among vassals, all at the beck and call of an aristocracy of church servants."¹⁴⁸

The German intellectuals sought to elevate a poetry of saints and geniuses to the stature of a world religion.¹⁴⁹ In it they saw the

* Georg Büchner (1813–37). A student of medicine, history, and philosophy, Büchner was one of the truly visionary German writers and dramatists of the nineteenth century. His political pamphlet *Der hessische Landbote* appeared in 1833.

unity of all creatures, indeed the unity of all organic creation.¹⁵⁰ They saw God in this prophetic poetry. And what moved them on was living enthusiasm for goodness. For them God's course in all nature and the longing of all creatures to return to God constitutes divine reason.

Borgese warns the French and Italians against seeking kindred spirits among the German atheists and naturalists of the nineteenth century. "Whoever conceives of Christian morality as a refuge of traditional prejudices fights in spirit at least on the side of the Germans."¹⁵¹ I do not fight on the side of the Germans. I agree with Borgese, and that compels me to take issue with Heinrich Heine.

Heine had the misfortune to be fundamentally mistaken about Protestantism and German philosophy. He considered Luther to be the "greatest and most German of men."¹⁵² He committed the sad mistake of talking about a "Marquis of Brandenburg" who supposedly provided freedom of thought; he considered Kant and Fichte to be rebels, which unfortunately was not accurate, and he called Herr Hegel, that Prussian apologist of the *Credo quia absurdum*, "the magnificent Hegel, the greatest philosopher whom Germany has produced since Leibniz."¹⁵³ On the other hand, he inveighed against Romanticism, which he considered to be a form of obscurantism because it fled from Prussia to Vienna and to Rome, and found favor with Metternich, because it did not place much stock in Prussian freedom of thought nor, for that matter, in the other Prussian freedoms. But in 1852, after Baader's writings and notebooks had been republished, Heine changed his mind, and he may well have seen what mischief he had furthered.¹⁵⁴ But he did not recant his book against Romanticism. He was only too willing to take the weaknesses of the movement for its real nature, and instead of attacking the institutions that caused these weaknesses, he strode off with cleverly closed eyes, a skeptical nationalist and gourmand, to the side of those who dispense crimson cloaks and succulent joints of meat with equal fanfare.¹⁵⁵

What a strange case! A French irredentist from Düsseldorf defiles the flower of enthusiasm and ecstasy, the only Christian literature Germany possesses! What else binds us to other nations if it is not the Christian spirituality of Romanticism? * Did not Franz von Baader, the Mont Blanc of this attitude, establish deep ties to the

* In his Kandinsky lecture (Zurich, Galerie Dada, April 17, 1917), Ball praises the long tradition of Russian Christianity as the European source of just such a revitalizing romantic spirituality. See "Kandinsky" (trans. Christopher Middleton), app. to Ball's diary *The Flight Out of Time* (New York: Viking, 1974), pp. 222–34.

orthodox spirit of Russia?¹⁵⁶ To the Italian spirit of Francis of Assisi and the entire Gothic tradition? And to the *inspiration douloureuse* of Pascal, and the Thomism of Cardinal Mercier?¹⁵⁷ In his notebooks did he not expose delicately, yet forcefully, the irreligiosity of pantheistic German philosophy¹⁵⁸ and attempt to annul the eternal strife between Catholic and Protestant with his magnificent and grand proposal of reform?¹⁵⁹ Do not Münzer and Jakob Böhme * speak through his words when Baader says this: "It must be shown that kings are prisoners of the state, and all kingdoms are but pensioners"?¹⁶⁰ When he shows to Kant and Hegel, the heads of epistemology, that they have confused logic with Logos? When he says to Schelling: "You talk of a revelation of God through the laws of nature for each individual being in the great totality, and yet you will not hear of a human revelation to mankind? You have no sense of the human in God, even less a sense of the truly divine in mankind. And you still desire knowledge? Then know this, that beyond material experience your powers of reason serve only to chase you around in the unholy dialectical play of shadows. And that it is thus certainly most rational, the greatest and purest reason of all, simply to believe at that point where you can never have knowledge."¹⁶¹

Granted this much: the Romanticism of horrors, of knights-at-arms, and of pomp, and even the heraldic horn blowing of Wagnerian overtures has inaugurated the foundation of the German Reich. And as Friedrich Schlegel got on in years, he became a knight of the papal order of Christ. But in addition to the obscurantists who lost their independence, were there not pure, inspired, independent mystics who kept our eyes open to what we must wish for: an *ecclesia militans* with its capital in Paris, fathered by Pascal, Münzer, and Chaadayeve,† and whose God waits in the future and must be fought for, whose kingdom is not of this world but of a new world that we will create and can attain only in infinity?

And this much is evident: indolence and depravity for their own sake, asceticism and flight from the world as shown by Romanticism in its degenerate stages are not signs of holiness; they are signs of despair, the end results of the horrible Pauline dogma that states

* Jakob Böhme (1575–1674), a German mystic of exceptional influence. His works include *Aurora* (1612) and *Der Weg zu Christo* (The Path to Christ, 1624).

† Pyotr Chaadayeve (1793–1856), a Russian who wrote mostly in French. He praised Catholic universality and condemned Russian isolation from European culture and the narrow nationalism of Russian Orthodoxy.

that God is dead, that God has died on the cross. And the motto of contemporary Romanticism—the Church has a strong stomach, it can digest even carrion and decay—does not apply to the new church, the struggling democracy. We are no longer skeptical Hamlets, no longer inept followers of Paul. We constitute a conspiracy in Christo.¹⁶² Heine says this: “The new French romantics are dilettantes of Christianity; they revel in the Church without paying any heed to its symbolism; they are *catholiques marrons!*”^{*} We agree with him. We are not “Pro-Catholics” in the felicitous sense of the term used by René Gillouin† in his article on the pro-Catholicism of Lemaître, Maurras, and Barrès.¹⁶³ And Heine’s statement about Madame de Staël, “She talks of our honesty and our virtue and our intellectual culture, yet has never once seen our prisons, our brothels, and our barracks,”¹⁶⁴ is most appropriate, as is the campaign Heine launches against her, even if he did use the wrong weapons.

We believe in Don Quixote and in the profoundly fantastic quality of all life. We believe that the chains must fall and that slave galleys must be destroyed. We are prepared to make sacrifices that will make Kant’s ideal of duty seem to be nothing more than moral dilettantism. We do not believe in the visible church; we believe in the invisible Church; whoever wants to fight in its battles is a member. We believe in a holy Christian revolution and in the *unio mystica* of the freed world. We believe in the brotherhood and intimacy of humanity, animal, and plant; in the earth on which we stand and in the sun that shines above it. We believe in the infinite rejoicing of humanity. As Jan van Ruysbroek says in his *Buch der zwölf Beginne* (Book of Twelve Beginnings):

To be one with all love’s faces
And intoxicated with love
Is the blessed way.‡

Romanticism in Germany shattered traditions established in 1517. That is its achievement. It reestablished connections with the traditional spirituality of Europe. It attempted to criticize Protestantism and pointed beyond confessional conflict. It is powerful enough

* Fugitive Catholics.

† René Gillouin (1881–1971), French publicist and philosopher, an advocate of the alliance between Catholicism and Protestantism.

‡ John Ruysbroek (1293–1381), a Flemish mystic and writer. Ball cites these lines: “Verschmelzen mit der Liebe Angesichte / Und ganz von Liebe trunken sein / Ist selige Weise.”

to bring about a renaissance of Christianity in Germany if only we desire it. The saint and the genius need not be unique and accidental. May they become as manifest as the common and the ordinary. The most Christian festival is All Saints.

VIII

The establishment of the Berlin university in accord with the plan of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1810) was one of those counterrevolutionary measures that was agreed to by both Metternich and Humboldt and that celebrated their triumph over the "agitated classes" at the Congress of Vienna five years later.

Until recently Humboldt's role in the reactionary movement has been underestimated. Moeller van den Bruck undertook to put the situation in its proper perspective. Humboldt's "ideal state," theoretically an attempt to establish "the moral world order" in Prussia, exposed itself in practice as an institution of compulsions and security measures "that had granted the nation of the Germans both security against foreign powers and its internal freedoms"; among these, according to Herr Moeller, "the security from platitudes and the freedom from catchwords tended to be most obvious, but also most urgent."¹⁶⁵ It was an institution, thus, whose fundamental thesis culminated in the phrase that Ballin vouchsafed to us not long ago: "Hold your tongue and hold on."*

Humboldt's conception of a Berlin university seems to me to be even more significant as a reactionary scheme. Just think, the king of Prussia, *rector magnificentissimus* of the university of his capital city! The pope was *rector magnificentissimus* before the Reformation; but *after* the Reformation it was the Protestant reigning prince! Since the king of Prussia was proprietor of all bishoprics of his country's church as well as the absolute king of the military, the new palace institute of higher learning became a religious military protectorate that lacked only some talented interpretation to fulfill its potential of replacing in horrible fashion the papal despotism of the Middle Ages. And that interpreter was not long in coming.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel came to Berlin in 1818, and it is due to him that Prussia became the basis of a new quest for the universal state. And what a state it was to be: a universal state where worldly interests superseded divine ones; where Berlin of-

* "*Maulhalten und Durchhalten.*" Albert Ballin (1857-1918), owner of the Hamburg-Amerika steamship line and an intimate friend of Friedrich Wilhelm II.

ferred a shameless substitute for Rome and an omnipotent clergy of bureaucrats as a substitute for the priesthood; where a new scholasticism emerged under the name of state pragmatism; and where the Prussian king, with the aid of his ministers and professors, ruled over the abject penitentiary world of his subjects as its highest spiritual and worldly power. What a state indeed!

Hegel, the private citizen, was a comically mediocre bourgeois from Swabia. He was "schooled as a theologian" in the seminary in Tübingen.¹⁶⁶ He had lectured as professor and rector at Heidelberg, Nürnberg, and Jena. That was the time when poetic exaltations and exaggerations infected even philistines. "When in the flesh we surged into one another's presence," as they wrote in their letters.¹⁶⁷ And if anyone had the ineffable good fortune to see Napoleon Bonaparte, they called him, as did Goethe, "the Idea of the Most High made manifest," or, in Hegel's words, "the World Soul on horseback."¹⁶⁸

As early as his inaugural lecture of August 27, 1801, Hegel proposed the thesis, "*Principium scientiae moralis est reverentia fato habenda.*" *¹⁶⁹ And his biographer informs us that it was the great Hegel's ambition "to become the Machiavelli of Germany."¹⁷⁰ The health of a nation reveals itself, said Hegel—in 1917 Professor Nicolai had to refute this theory—"not so much in the calmness of peace as in the flurry of war."¹⁷¹ According to Hegel, every sovereign is "by birth the general of his military force." And—here is the causal connection—Hegel exalted Protestantism "*as the reinstating agent of conscientiousness and freedom of conscience, of the unity of Divine and human, as this in particular finds expression in the fact that the sovereign of a Protestant nation is also the supreme bishop of his church.*"¹⁷² Hegel emphatically rejected "the fatal error of believing it possible to found a nation without establishing belief in God as the essential principle of all thought, action, and conduct." Without the least hesitation he identified Protestantism and Christendom as the most natural circumstance of the world, even though his form of Protestantism clearly contradicts the salvation of one's fellow human being and the Sermon on the Mount and is responsible not to humanity, but primarily to the supreme principle of a pagan political state based on custodial authority and to the most successful of all dynasties.¹⁷³

In Hegel's Berlin inaugural lecture are to be found all the pompous phrasings that later Hegelianism tended to use in verifying the

* "The foundation of moral knowledge is to place reverence before fate."

connection between Hegelian philosophy and the "world-historical" destiny of the Prussian state. For him, Berlin University is the "University of the Center," which also must be made into "the focal point of all culture and all fields of knowledge."¹⁷⁴ He praises the Germans as he had done earlier in his Heidelberg address, calling them "God's chosen people in philosophy."¹⁷⁵ His first action was to further eclipse Kantian achievements. He noted this concerning Kant's division between obscurantism and pure reason: "Ultimately the so-called critical philosophy supplied a good conscience to the ignorance of eternity and of God by asserting that it had shown that nothing could be known either of eternity or of God. This purported knowledge even presumed to call itself philosophy."¹⁷⁶ For his part, Hegel believed that he had *absolute* knowledge of eternity and God. He promised a philosophy that would have "content," and he warned yet uncommitted youths of the "negative spirit of vanity, the emptiness of a merely critical enterprise." Hegel's real view of this "content" was shown in 1830 on the occasion of his speech celebrating the Augsburg Confession.

The Augsburg Confession is the most distinguished symbolic writing of the Lutherans, the key document of Prusso-German Byzantinism. Only by means of its total rejection * can Germany be reclaimed for Christendom. Without going any further into the cardinal point, Hegel claimed that the Augustana was the "*magna carta* of Protestantism" (because of the *sola fides justificat*). He portrayed—but what did he portray?—the corruption of the Church through papal Catholicism and the tyranny with which the Church had kept the autonomy of science and knowledge repressed. He outlined the factors leading to the general demoralization of life: the destruction of the family brought on by the rule of celibacy; the destruction of productive energy brought on by the adoration of poverty and indolence and idiotic sanctimoniousness and superficial piety; the destruction of conscientiousness resulting from the tendency toward passive obedience that in its shallowness left the responsibility for actions up to the priests; and finally, the *destruction of the nation brought on by the failure to recognize the true princely sovereignty*.¹⁷⁷ In short, he portrayed all charges that we now level against state Lutheranism as the end result of the Augsburg Confession and the Protestant establishment of the church: the corruption of the church (through dependence on princely power);

* *Aufhebung*. The 1980 edition reads *Diskreditierung*, "discrediting."

the enslavement of learning and knowledge (through dependence on princely power); the demoralization of human existence (through unscrupulous positivism); the destruction of the family (through wars and deportations); the destruction of productive life (through monopolies and special privileges); the deification of poverty (through a foreign propaganda of fatalism); the destruction of human conscience (through political manipulation and interdiction).

The senate took advantage of this celebration of the Augsburg Confession to draw attention to the lack of a university church in Berlin (in spite of Kant), and Hegel, who had in the meantime become Rector, threw his full weight behind the affair, urging that, at least initially, "a chapel could be endowed," even if no church could be built. A special church would indeed "be an essential part of any university" since "enrollment has grown to 1800 students, and that number plus the families of over a hundred instructors constitutes a rather substantial *community*."¹⁷⁸ Hegel as rector and the reigning prince as *rector magnificentissimus* were related to one another on a theological level as a clergyman is to a bishop.

The philosophy of Hegel culminated in the spread of Protestant thought and absolutism, but it did nothing for truth and knowledge. What of that statement from Hegel's preface to his philosophy of law: "Whatever is rational is real; and whatever is real is rational." At one time that might have represented quite an accomplishment as a recognition of reality as opposed to the doctrinaire suspicion and execration of all reality that flourished in the Holy Roman Empire. But it never contained any deep understanding, and even in its succinct recognition of the vile and the glorified alike, it could only be sustained within a system that was content with the intellectualized equilibrium of abstractions and concepts. But the other major thesis of Hegel: "The single thought that philosophy brings with it," the simple concept of reason, namely, "that reason rules the world, thus, that world history moves rationally"¹⁷⁹—is not this statement also an untruth, such an obviously palpable moral capitulation that only a nation with no critical sense in theological matters could overlook the insidious faith in absurdity that lay hidden behind it?¹⁸⁰

Hegel's philosophy of law and history had only one joint purpose: to set forth a proof of the author's conviction—a conviction fraught with Protestant dogma—that "the Prussian monarchy [is] the ideal of a political organism."¹⁸¹ For just as Bismarck later was to believe

in the "great process of development in which Moses, Christian revelation, and the Reformation all appear as stages," so too did Hegel in his *Philosophy of Law* express a belief in the "Germanic spirit" as the "spirit of the new world" and in an "impulse toward perfectibility."¹⁸² And how did he argue his case? "The third period of the Germanic world extends from the Reformation to our own times. It is here that the principle of the free spirit becomes the banner of the world, and the general axioms of reason evolve in accord with this spirit."¹⁸³ "With respect to conviction, it has already been said that the Protestant Church has reconciled religion with law." This is the consequence: "There is no sacred, no religious conscience that would be separate from, or even opposed to, worldly laws."¹⁸⁴ But in the context of the Hegelian system this pronouncement means that there is no sacred, no religious conscience beyond, or even contrary to, Protestant absolutism. And yet this terrible Jesuit wrote these words: "World history is progress in the consciousness of freedom."

How can such extreme, subservient devotion be explained? At the time of his appointment, Hegel was convinced that Prussia was "the absolute ideal." An appointment to the University of Berlin was his fondest dream even when he was in Heidelberg. Was it ultimately Prussia's "substance"* that attracted him? How could this monarchy have founded and so richly endowed the university in Berlin if Prussia did not excel all other nations?¹⁸⁵ How could the Prussian state have appointed him, Hegel, the poor wretch to whom Goethe sent small sums of money in letters to Jena because one could not live on Saxon salaries?¹⁸⁶ But at that time all of this accorded with Hegel's "speculation" and his theological schooling. It was only a question of outdoing Humboldt's "ideal state" as far as possible. After all, that was what you owed to the appointment and to the ruling prince.

Thus Hegel caught hold of the "World Soul" and sent it upward through thesis, antithesis, and synthesis to develop into the self-consciousness of Prussian subjects and the Prussian state. The process put great strain on the World Soul and on the Herr Professor as well, and the procedure became somewhat obscure, which made the result even more useful to our impresario. And what Hegel had known all along, that everything that is counterrevolutionary is also rational, including even the universal military service with

* "Gehalt." Ball is punning on the two meanings: (1) "contents," "substance"; and (2) "pay," "wages," "salary."

which Friedrich Wilhelm III blessed his people after the "wars of independence" (1814)—Hegel deduced every bit of it from the Idea without recalling his French sympathies of 1806, and he likewise deduced hereditary kingship, the rights of inheritance, and the bicameral system. Thus German "idealism" changed shape to become that privy chamber on whose roof was flapping the flag of reason and enlightenment while down below some mystagogue was throwing a chloroform mask on the face of his nation and preparing to deliver over the anesthetized body to the sadism of its rulers.

Hegel set world history in motion in order to conjure forth a Prussian dove. No one before him had attributed such superstitious importance to this monarchy. An instinctive sense of the absurdity of his system was the cause of Hegel's European success. But the charlatanism and three-cornered audacity of it was what drove Schopenhauer into a rage.¹⁸⁷

IX

Two types of rebellion are possible. A rebellion against the natural foundations of society and conscience. This is foolish and criminal. And a rebellion *on behalf of* these fundamentals out of universal conscience. This rebellion demands the freedom that is nothing short of the highest yield of an all-redeeming achievement.

It is inconceivable how one could claim Hegel to be a rebel on behalf of freedom. We recall Heine's optimistic prophecy: "Our philosophical revolution is over. Hegel closed its great circle. . . . Don't smile at my advice, the advice of a dreamer who warns you against Kantians, Fichteans, and nature philosophers. Don't smile at the visionary who expects in the realm of reality the same revolution that has taken place in the realm of the intellect."¹⁸⁸

It is inconceivable how anyone could see Protestantism as the guiding principle of German philosophy and development and at the same time expect a revolution to come from the professors of this principle. I agree fully with the French historian Theodore Duret, who makes these skeptical remarks in an inquiry into the possibility of a revolution in Germany: "The idea of revolution, to realize a profound change abruptly, could only be born and develop in a Latin, idealistic, and Catholic country like France. The idea did not take real root, and will never do so, in Germanic, positivistic, and Protestant countries like England and Germany."¹⁸⁹

Lutheran Protestantism in particular places material well-being

above all personal sacrifice, egoism above all goals of the whole. The *cabocherie** and capriciousness from which Protestantism arose prevents any solidarity in issues of conscience and excludes that sublime sensitivity in questions of moral and political freedom that, in the final analysis, has its origin in the self-awareness of *collectively developed* generations. Only collective consciousness can discern the arrogance of individuals or classes as an unbearable violation of the social concept of morality, and only by collective consciousness can such arrogance be put in order. Collective consciousness is the prerequisite of every productive rebellion.

The Germans, whether their names are Luther, Kant, Marx, or Hegel, always rebelled *against* conscience, *against* the basic principles of morality and society. The Protestantism of individuals, classes, or nations signifies today the violation of the remainder of the society of individuals, classes, or nations from which that Protestant view has issued and isolated itself. No social and political revolution, let alone a moral one, is possible in Germany now without a profound reversal of religious ideals. It is the world around us that rebels, the repressed tradition of pre-Reformation Christian ideals; the agent of suppression, that is, currently all Protestant Germany, will in the long run be no match for these powerful factors. German Protestantism was the *counterrevolution* that fought against the Christian-communist peasant revolt of the Middle Ages.

Hegel's rebellion against God had no synthetic impetus at all, but it certainly had a destructive, nihilistic one. You could not derive Prussia from God very easily. Hegel saw that, as did Kant, who probably could no longer believe in God because he knew Prussian reality and Friedrich Wilhelm I and was so ashamed. God, thus, had to be derived from Prussia or simply be pushed aside to make room for a substitute. Kant found the thing-in-itself and Hegel discovered the World Soul. Hegel's World Soul seemed respectable enough. No Prussian regent could complain about being put into intimate contact with it. (Or is a World Soul less lofty than a theistic god? What God had in character, the World Soul to a certain extent made up for in scope. The grandeur of both God and the World Soul existed precisely in the "capacity" of both to mystify.)

A fairly dignified substitute for God was discovered in the World Soul. Hegel placed it in a kind of wheelchair next to Adam and Eve, put thesis and antithesis in its hands as levers, and set it off in

* French: "pig-headedness."

synthesizing motion. He called this the "progression of pure reason from In-Itself through the For-Itself to the In-and-For-Itself." The distance traveled he called process or progress. After a few thousand years World Soul arrived in Berlin, and the students greeted it warmly as it climbed down at the Imperial Palace. And they gave Herr Professor Hegel, the machine's inventor, a torchlight parade through the streets.

The situation is not as humorous as it sounds. In addition to the fact that everybody got the urge to invent his or her own dialectical contraptions—we call them systems—Hegel's World Soul had brought a memento of its journey as a present for the Berliners and their king. It was the World Soul's catalog, a kind of hierarchy and table of political sciences, a utilitarian family tree of faculties and disciplines. Baader pointed out to no avail that divine and human thought processes, metaphysics and logic, must not be confused.¹⁹⁰ He pointed to servilists, pietists, and rationalists who derived a distinction between knowledge and belief from the principle of doubt *per generationem aequivocam*. And in vain he wrote to Hegel himself (September 30, 1830) that "the Devil is loose among us, and because everyone disdains the idea in its divine form, they are now compelled to tremble before its infernal caricature."¹⁹¹ Since the Prussian state was indeed the pinnacle of world history and could develop even further according to that impulse toward perfectibility—later, in social democracy this became the perfectibility of canned goods, baby carriages, and soft-drink bottles—there was no science except of it, through it, and for it. But the sustenance of political science, the science of the state, became anti-Christian platitudes.

And what became of the educated class, the Republic of Learning and Letters? By and by it was replaced by that destitute and instinctually crippled hierarchy of officials that had deserted Austria for Prussia after the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, taking with it its priestlike and party-boss indolence. The chief and most powerful agitator to this end was Hegel, the official—demiurge and operator of the World Soul at Berlin. With his "intricate finery of phrase," as Schopenhauer complained, Hegel paralyzed temperaments by entangling them in world processes. In 1848 Hegelian phrases and circumlocutions smothered the peoples' animosity. With his theory of "self-active development," however, he even mollified the new development of the nineteenth century, the revolutionary proletariat. "Self-active development" was so comfortable and required no council of rebels! One simply depended on others. Each

individual waited on the whole; no one expected anything from himself. By bringing forth nothing more rational than what was wholly and purely absurd, Hegel drew the French-inspired Young Germans into a pragmatic relationship with the very nation that, whenever it could, shunted them off like criminals to its "educational establishment," the army. And all this took place with the obscure self-awareness of a parlor heroism made self-complacent by the World Soul, a heroism whose opportunism spouting "yes, sir" and "Amen" was easier for janitors to see through than for sophisticated listeners.

X

It is from this vantage point that the problem of the German university and national pragmatism can be seen most clearly, for it is a problem whose truly regenerative resolution presupposes the total collapse of the current system of rule, the democratic alliance of all peoples, and an advisory congress composed of the intellectual factions of all nations.

Only large scale restitution of the original proselytizing tradition, a thorough internationalization of professorships, and the most vigorous exchange of intellectual authorities from all countries would validate with any certainty a university system and insure the reflowering of moral and scientific educational institutions in Germany.¹⁹² The century-long dependence of our universities on absolutistic, barbaric royal courts, on a military despotism whose boots we have all been licking, has led in the German mind to such confusion of convictions in matters of religion and freedom that only those of us who have searched in vain for religion and freedom in the official and unofficial literature can make any sense out of this at all. The resulting intellectual sickness of the nation can be eliminated only by means of a combined display of redeeming forces emanating from all other nations. Berlin University in particular has become the cupping glass of our moral and intellectual energies, and we will fall into total ruin if we do not find help in storming this Bastille and den of lies.

Our scientific discoveries, in as far as they did not remain confined to materialism, were never particularly new. "The Germans can say what they want," Lichtenberg perceived some time ago, "but no one can deny that our erudition is more a matter of the mastery of what comprises a science, and of being able occasionally

to cite clearly what this or that person has contributed, than it is of being able to perceive consequences or implications. Even among our greatest writers there are those who only publish in a well ordered form what has already been discovered and comprehended by someone else."¹⁹³ The sciences, which earlier served the heavenly realms, became "rational" under Hegel; world history became rational; reason itself became rational. And at any given time you can simply substitute the adjective "Prusso-Protestant" for "rational." The Germanic-Protestant state of reason (or the destruction of Western morality) became the supreme principle of the sciences, and anyone who does not mistake the sophistry of contemporary Berlin philosophers and philologists for profundity will also recognize the fate of a truly liberated scholar such as the Berlin biologist G. F. Nicolai to be a symptom of the kind of ominous freedom that was the end result.

Carrying reason over into history, this supreme goal of any thought process in the grand style—does this type of thinking consist of deriving reason from facts and thereby bringing world history and all individual striving to a standstill? Hegel did understand this much: "The idea of freedom has come into the world through Christianity, which teaches that the individual as such has an infinite value." And he realized "that mankind in itself is destined to move toward supreme freedom."¹⁹⁴ What did he do with this knowledge? He ascertained that freedom is "above all only a concept, a principle of mind and heart," a principle that "is destined to evolve to a state of objectivity," to a state of "legal, moral, religious, as well as scientific, reality." By following this route he arrived at his positive philosophy of law and concluded with this charming proposition: "The government's right to punish, its right to administer and so forth are at the same time its duties, to punish, to administer and so forth, in the same way that paying taxes and serving in the military are the duties of the citizens of the state. Essentially it is the case that whoever has no rights also has no duties, *and vice versa*."¹⁹⁵ Hegel's philosophical method consisted only in recognizing theological and political principles inherent in the values so dear to the existing regime and in drawing them together systematically through appropriate paraphrasing.

Yet any authentic position of self-awareness that is taken with respect to an existing world is necessarily a revolt. Only rebellion against what is established, the revolt of reason against what has been achieved, which is always inadequate and must always be

inadequate because the ideal is not realizable, can dare to grant itself the prerogative of carrying reason over into history. But that means revising history, for there is no such thing as a rationality of history or of world process in itself. We, those of us who live now and have something to say about how we want to live, exist only in so far as we assert ourselves, only in so far as we are rebels against the unreason that history has passed down to us and become advocates of those scarce few instances of reason we perceive to be close to our own hearts. There is no pragmatism, no concept and development that cannot be broken through by the will of a personality; "obligatoriness" does not exist. To be human means to be superior to nature; everything else is pure superstition. To be sure, we are in bondage everywhere; yet, in Rousseau's words, we are born free; and it amounts to weakness of courage, to subterfuge, and to pitiable cowardice to put more faith in state clerics, lawyers, and developmental theologians than we put in genius. History does not "develop" itself to progressively higher forms; it does not do it "by itself."

The Prussian state has staged a bloodbath, and before that it sought to undermine the foundations of conscience. Humanity will die and rot away if we do not come to its aid. Even the most humble among us should help out with this task of liberated reason; for we are fighting for *that person's* right, *that person's* love, *that person's* rationality. And we are fighting because our own reason will suffer damage as long as the most humble, the most oppressed, and the most abject members of human society are not in a position to speak for themselves in words that might well hold the redemption of us all. No single human being knows everything by himself, and there would be no single state presuming to know best everything by itself, had not scholars betrayed us, and had each of us expressed our opinions openly. Indolence is the single cardinal sin of humanity, and all misfortune and suffering plaguing us originate only from it.

"If Germany is not the place," says Rathenau, the mogul of state, "where all pragmatic measures must be seen as the will's translation of transcendently ethical valuation, and as this alone, then we have deluded ourselves about the German mission."¹⁹⁶ Who are these "we's," and who among "us" is not laughing at this statement? I have shown in the sections on Luther, Kant, Fichte, and here with Hegel what this "transcendently ethical valuation" consists of that Herr Rathenau talks about. I have demonstrated

that it has sought to justify and diabolically sanction Germany's pragmatism, that "obligatoriness," those very "compulsions" now causing the people to bleed. Why waste any more words? It is up to all of us to break through this pragmatic doctrine, these compulsions, and to prove that Germany is in fact *not* the place where successful career-seekers like Rathenau sadly make no mistake about their personal mission. In another citation Herr Rathenau attempts to acquit "Germanic rulers of the Western world" of aiding and abetting contemporary pragmatic policies.¹⁹⁷ By way of proof he observes that "a knickknack shop in Holstein is run more effectively, *more spontaneously*, and in a less businesslike fashion than any American church." But does that hold true of the National Electrical Power and Light Company and the Prussian General Staff? Or the fifty or so other corporations for which Herr Rathenau happens to be the *spiritus rector*? You leave transcendental ethical value off to the side if you are ordering raw materials for a nation of robbers, and you do not mention intelligible freedom when you deal with the stock market.

The German universities have put the people into a trusteeship and have distorted, suppressed, or used *against* the well-being of the people every discipline of knowledge that was not directly related to war, the state, and patriotism, every science that did not confuse minds, isolate them, and make them barren. Educating young people in the feudal tradition in the barracks and at militarized universities has totally ruined the sense of freedom, has caused it to become extinct. Not one single discipline serves freedom; liberalistically garnished political science is all that remains.

What is that nation about which eulogists make the claim that religious progress coincides with scientific and economic progress? What sort of thing is that state to which Herr Rathenau commends "a community consciousness generated by stalwart men"¹⁹⁸ right after he has referred to the emergence of Plato, Leonardo, and Goethe into the "solid objective world"?

The state is a practical, hence an inferior, institution. At best it is a convenience, and it can only be that because it satisfies the interests of individuals, sovereigns, classes, or factions. It is godless and non-Christian because it is only materially useful. The progress the state patronizes is at best a kind of enlightened guise aiming to show there is no God in order to more tightly gag freedom. But freedom without religion is inconceivable.

The philosophy of applied reason has erected the state as the

highest principle. Yet the highest principle is not the state but the freedom of the individual and the social whole, which all knowledge and the state must serve. This freedom alone guarantees that God one day will descend to us on earth because our purity and goodness compel him to do so.

And this is the task of a new order: that we will overcome the state, that it will become in our hands nothing more than an organizing structure, that the universities will conduct *our* affairs, the affairs of the people, of freedom, and of God, not the affairs of a prince, the state, and its servants.¹⁹⁹ Where are we to discover the examples and deeds that will strengthen us for such a calling, that will sound the alarm and lead us on? "The sacred writings alone," writes Franz von Baader, "preserve for us such deeds purely and without falsification; and the sacred physics [not the chemistry of war, H. B.] based upon them will remain always the most beautiful, most humane theoretical and philosophical account of them available to our limited powers of comprehension."²⁰⁰



FRANZ VON BAADER AND
THE CHRISTIAN RENAISSANCE
IN FRANCE AND RUSSIA

I

IN OUR SPEECHES and writing we must return to the simplicity of our ancestors, those heavenly chroniclers of truth and falsity who left no doubt about the motives of their work, marked as it is with the style of industry and patience, and whose *bona voluntas*, transformed into works for anyone who granted a *bona fides* in return, bore that threefold fruit that enchanted the subject, the author, and the audience at one and the same time. May your words be yea yea, nay nay, and may you see all sophistry as evasion, weakness, and deception. In a time that makes a demagogic tool out of ideology as perhaps no other time before, in a time when every political, social, and religious utterance falls victim to the vanity and interests of individuals, social groups, and classes—in times such as these, can the authority of the written and spoken word be reasserted in any other way than with the utmost sincerity?

From the speeches of an apocalyptic Herr von Hohenzollern to newspaper advertisements, what self-certainty in deception and fraud! What an absence of honesty, what cunning sensitivity to the misuse of naive trust! Whose motives are identical with the words they write or speak? Who still has the courage to answer for his or her experiences, actions, convictions? Is not that great capitulation to "what is best" for the Fatherland and personal welfare raging more ferociously than any plague? And has it become less contemptible

merely because there is more at stake now, because the dangers are greater?

Human beings, creatures from the same mother, related to us through sun, moon, and stars, writhe with hanging entrails and shredded limbs in tangled mounds of bodies, eat weeds in prison camps, perish in agony, in torment, in the torture of stinking graves, prisons, and locked compartments. Is it not time, you my brothers, to carry the struggle into the homeland instead of among "enemy nations"? To follow only the impulses of truth and righteousness?

This book concerns freedom and sanctification; it concerns the principles of those heroes for whom the welfare of the German people was, or should have been, identical with the well-being of the world. In the assembly of 1793 a German named Cloots * spoke these words: "I have fought all my life against the rulers of earth and heaven. There is only one God, nature, and only one ruler, the human race, the divine people united by reason in a common republic. I stand at the tribunal of the universe, and I repeat that the human race is God—*le Peuple Dieu*."¹ This view demands discussion. Cloots dreamt of an alliance of all mankind that would efface national boundaries; he proposed that the French no longer call themselves *Français*, but *Universel*. And he was no *agent provocateur* but the president of the Jacobin Club. Shabby scribbling spirits calling themselves his compatriots ridiculed this pioneer of the German future by saying that when Germans go mad, they are crazier than anyone from another country. Yet that does not alter the fact that perhaps in Paris in 1793 no one sensed and felt more strongly than he the universality of the great French Revolution.

The intellectual conflicts of the nineteenth century are the exegesis of the great French Revolution of 1789 and 1793. The principle of freedom that was despotic during the Renaissance and Enlightenment was given a Christian, and restorative, turn through the added concepts of equality and brotherhood. And even if all the ideas and systems that blessed the world, all the conspiracies of the Decembrists and anarchists, all the utopian efforts of Christian apologists and social emancipators emerged in contradiction to, and in combat with, each other, there was still undeniable gain: human rights, the rights of the masses and of each individual, the rights of the nation. The rejection of all suppressive, restrictive, despotic

* Jean Baptiste du Val-de-Grâce, Baron de Cloots (or Clootz), called Anacharsis Cloots (1755–guillotined 1794), French revolutionary enthusiast who assumed the title "Orator of the Human Race."

powers became the ultimate basis for the conscience of a new humanity.

We Germans least of all have cause to allow ourselves to be confused by the hairsplitting loudmouths of reaction who would hope to refute ideas with caricatures of them by telling us that "freedoms do not mean freedom," that "freedoms are not freedoms at all, but only politicized interests"; they would offer us the inner *civitas dei* as a substitute for political liberty.² We know that the politics of class did not promote brotherhood, but just let it shrink away in so-called brotherhoods, partyhoods, bowling clubs, or memberships in commercial interest groups. We know that brotherhood became "inhuman" by being particularized in specific circles, groups, and parties. That fact speaks only against the kind of realization, not against the principle involved; not against committed partisanship, or against the "incessant battle to liberate hands and heads for a salutary view and for affirmation of goodness," which René Schickele once spoke of in reference to earlier times.³ The Herrs Naumann,* Sombart, Scheler, and Rathenau can talk a lot about the facts and useless details of the French Revolution.⁴ They have felt nothing of the onslaught of ideas. It would be miraculous if they had.

The new democracy that we believe in and whose principles are being fought for by the world today has not drawn the conclusion that "freedom in God" can coexist with an absence of freedom in the law, with the use of force in the state, and with the tyranny of absolutism; nor has it concluded that a German parliamentary system modeled after Western democracies will resolve all conflicts currently separating Germany from the rest of the world. It is the worst of German traditions to renounce political freedom by alluding to that famous intelligible "freedom in God," and to renounce the revolution of 1793 because at the time it erupted it "did away with religion." But it would be just as nonsensical to attempt, *without* freedom in God, to combat contemporary governmental satanism in Germany with the democratic liberal trends that have become political facts in England, France, America, and Italy. Imperial Germany represents today the most monstrous accumulation of the reactionary methods of three empires and the papacy. Fighting against this anti-Christian bulwark entrenched in Berlin neces-

* Friedrich Naumann (1860–1919), German politician and writer, a liberal with imperialistic tendencies. His book *Mittleuropa* (1915) sets forth a program envisioning a central European empire embodying the pan-German concept.

sarily leads to an examination of the freedoms actually contained in the revolutionary thought of the preceding century. Only this scrutiny can furnish the leverage making it possible to topple that palace of Satan.

France rediscovered the communist teachings that had been lost since the days of the Taborites * and Thomas Münzer. Babeuf † was the discoverer's name. In following the conspiracies of Buonarrotti, ‡ he encountered Weitling, § who in Switzerland openly reasserted communism. In 1780 Brissot ** was claiming that private ownership was theft. And Proudhon's thinking embodied a bolder and wiser idealism that criticized personal property and culminated in anarchy, renouncing the state. †† Karl Marx, a student of both Proudhon and Hegel, discovered the principles of a new view of history (proletarian and materialistic). Michael Bakunin and his great Russian teacher, the Decembrist Pestel, asserted federalism and the decentralization of states as the new order of the Slavic world and of Europe. But Mazzini and Lamennais, §§ Weitling and Tolstoy sought to sanction freedom independently of the Church and thus shaped the concept of the Christian anarchist, democrat, republican, and revolutionary, which put them in close proximity to the teachings of Thomas Münzer.

The implications of these principles must gain new life in our thoughts and actions if we wish not only to excoriate the state system of contemporary Germany, but to strike out against it and destroy it. Enthusiastically prepared to make any sacrifice, the German youth must form an alliance with the spirit of freedom embraced by all peoples who fear us, if these youth are not to give up

* Radical religious group in Bohemia in the fifteenth century—the more extreme party of the Hussites; so called for their fortified encampment (1419) on a hill in Bohemia named by them Mount Tabor.

† François Noël Babeuf (1760–97), French agitator and communist, founder of the journal *Tribun du Peuple* (1794) and advocate of total equality and community of property, thus anticipating the thought of Karl Marx.

‡ Filippo Michele Buonarrotti (1761–1837), Italian political agitator, implicated in the conspiracy of Babeuf.

§ Wilhelm Weitling (1808–1871), German socialist

** Jacques Pierre Brissot (1754–guillotined 1793), French revolutionary politician and writer, the leader of the Girondists, who were originally called the Brissotins.

†† Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–65), French socialist, anarchist, and political theorist whose philosophical anarchism greatly influenced the syndicalist movement.

§§ Félicité Robert de Lamennais (1782–1854), French priest, writer, philosopher. Lamennais frequently argued for greater freedom in religious matters.

the battle and cynically creep into hiding out of despair for the future of their nation. The pervasive wretchedness of so-called German intellectual life must be exposed at all costs, and only when we have gotten to the bottom of the extent of the sins, the neglect, and the deception, when men among us find courage to admit that in affairs of humanity and humaneness we ourselves have been the most underhanded, callous, and indifferent nation in the world, only then will we find the solid and certain ground under our feet to help construct righteousness and to extricate ourselves from the morass where disguised servility continues to parade as finesse and profundity and where religion, art, and philosophy mask the faces of brutality.

It is the premise of this book that the new German regime that is swallowing up Belgians and French, Italians and Russians with its "sanctioned" appetite—this regime that gives all evidence of being bent only on reestablishing the medieval universal state of the Hohenstaufens—this regime must fall, either through surrender of its weapons, through collapse of its economy, or through the united intellectual effort of its revolutionaries. This nation of bug-bears and idols manifests the centralization of the energies of a great, hardworking people and its own murderous allies. This nation was helped into existence by the reckless opportunism or arrogance of its intellectual leaders, and this nation well knew how to sap or disarm all opposition. This state issued from a pietistic, compulsive militarism and a despotic penitentiary, setting itself up in opposition both to its own people and to the world, as moral judge and law, while at the same time making so bold as to break the laws and neutrality of other nations, inflicting wars, and annexing territories. This nation, in short, must be condemned and cast down if there are to be guarantees for the reconstruction of humanity, for a world republic, for the work of freedom on behalf of the salvation of afflicted peoples. All the furtive and cynical elements of the world, all secretive speculators on the "grand scale," and all obscurantists, along with the Jesuitical backward scuttle of ecclesiastical palace politics, cling to the Attila-esque posture of its rulers, to the saber-rattling politics of its advisers. This power structure will and must fall sooner or later, and it will be the task of a responsible intelligentsia to combat any retributive slaughter that might break out within the unscrupulous country with atrocities that would surpass those we have seen in this war. No single individual will be pure enough or great enough to withstand the

destructive force that will then ravage the country with the same intensity it has visited upon foreign lands. No one person, regardless of how firm the constitution of his or her moral and physical strengths might be, will be equal to the trials and the tumult that will once more convulse the world. Yet all this is inevitable if human life on this earth is not to become the laughingstock of all animal existence.

It is imperative that we seek and establish the highest principle of freedom as if the future salvation of humanity depended on us, and that we do so with the same fervor with which *we* have plunged the world into misfortune, suffering, and rubble. It is a question of drawing the conclusions each one of us knows and feels. And it is time to begin the great separation within our nation—putting our trust in the guarantees that a saved world will not hesitate to grant—to begin the separation between the rabid sadists at work to destroy us and the superhuman sufferings of those who have been deceived and lied to now for four years and who are defending the “honor” of the nation. Our only enemies live within the country. Our only hope exists beyond the battle trenches. Michael Bakunin published an essay, “Reaktion in Deutschland” (Reaction in Germany), in 1842 in Ruge’s * *Deutsche Jahrbücher* (German Annals). Listen to the closing lines: “Let us place our trust in the eternal spirit that destroys and annihilates only because it is the unfathomable and eternally creative source of all life. The desire to destroy is also the desire to create.”†

II

We would have to write the history of the concept of Christianity in the nineteenth century in order to show the isolation Germany was plunged into by Friedrich and Napoleon, by Hegel’s philosophy of reality, and by Bismarck’s politics of “blood and iron.” The Sicilian Borgese has described the new ideal of an *ecclesia militans* that is permeating to a progressively greater degree the conscience of the armies and philosophies that are united against Germany: “A song fills the air, like this discourse by Malines (Cardinal Mercier).

* Arnold Ruge (1802–80), German political and philosophical writer, colleague of Marx, editor of numerous radical journals.

† This statement is often cited as the philosophical core of Dada, at least in its earliest, Zurich stages.

It is fervent like the language of Saint Paul, pure like the words of Pascal; it is sublime and unpretentious, sacred and profane, orthodox and rational, pious and heroic, European and universal, equally good for the Beguine of Bruges and the cultured mind."⁵ The spiritual forces confronting one another in the twentieth century are named Napoleon and Christ, and Napoleonism is a leitmotif characterizing Germany's intellectual development. "Even more than the Europe of 1800–1801, which saw in the victor of Marengo the Mohammed of a new epoch, the forerunner of a new belief, contemporary Germany is giving serious study to 'Napoleonism' and the writings of Treitschke and Nietzsche. The Corsican has conquered the man from Galilee."⁶

And it must be kept in mind that Russia, France, and Italy, indeed England and America with their Quakers and pacifists, emancipated Christianity from orthodoxy and restored the Christian ideal independently of church and dogma, and thus are more profoundly separated from Germany than by any national and political differences.

Borgese showed the benefit that, in this sense, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* still offers today. "You see in it," he wrote, "how a Russian who was neither a builder of empty systems of ideas nor a chauvinist and nationalist grasped the mission of the Russian people during the Napoleonic wars, particularly the War of 1812, which brought about the collapse of that widely admired Antichrist." From the very first page of the book, Anna Pavlovna calls Bonaparte an antichrist. "Look at those heathen beasts!" screams the raging crowd as the French leave Moscow and violate a corpse. Tolstoy puts his saint, Platon Karatayev, the small peasant martyr, in opposition to the idol of power and energy. And the entire book portrays the conflict between the ideal of Christianity and the Napoleonic idolatry of nature.⁷

The severe, wild, blond, and beautiful beast (Schlegel, Schiller, Nietzsche, Wedekind*) finds no welcome among Russian philosophers and poets. To the contrary, there is only sadness and sorrow that the dreadful animality in mankind has not yet died out. The culture of the demigods of power, that remnant of the Renaissance that was gaining influence in Germany just when it was being overcome elsewhere in its last representatives, i.e., Napoleon and

* Benjamin Franklin Wedekind (1864–1918), German dramatist and forerunner of theatrical Expressionism.

Stendhal,* could not corrupt the Russian genius of the nineteenth century.⁸ And it is significant that the rejection of Renaissance ideology found its earliest proponents precisely among the Slavophiles (Danilevski, Strakhov, et al.),† who in Germany were accused of representing an expansive barbarism antagonistic toward "European culture."⁹

However, the Russians turned against anti-Christianity at home and abroad. The Raskolniki‡ preached that orthodox autocracy is impossible on *religious* grounds. They were the first to call Russian autocracy a kingdom of the Antichrist. Thus they preceded Tolstoy in espousing religious anarchy. The catechism of the Decembrists Pestel and Ryleyev (1825) contained the following passage: "What does the law of God command the Russian people and the Russian army to do? To rue their long servitude, to rise up against tyranny and godlessness, and to pledge that there is only one king on earth and in heaven, Jesus Christ."¹⁰

Chaadayev considered orthodoxy to be the greatest of all sins. "We will be free only when the confession for all sins of the past is torn from our lips and when a powerful cry of repentance and pain escapes from our throats."¹¹ He was convinced that Russia's salvation was to be sought neither in orthodoxy nor in Catholicism, but in a unique and unrealized revelation of new socio-religious foundations for the church, for the kingdom of God on earth, which, to be sure, were inherent in the teachings of Christ but had not yet been comprehended by mankind. Chaadayev, whom Schelling considered the "most intelligent man in Russia," was declared insane by royal decree, but in his work *Necropolis* he entombed the whole of orthodox, autocratic Russia as if in a city of the dead.

* Stendhal, pseudonym for Marie Henri Beyle (1783–1842), French novelist and critic, author of the novel *The Red and the Black*.

† Nikolai Yakovlevich Danilevski (1822–85), historian and philosopher who formulated a doctrine of national types that designated Russia and the Slavs as being culturally distinct from the West and that asserted that Russia should seek to unite the Slavs into a new empire centered in Constantinople. Nikolai Nikolayevich Strakhov (1828–96), publicist and thinker, coeditor of Dostoevsky's journal *Time* (1861–63), friend and correspondent of Tolstoy. A disciple of Danilevski, Strakhov defended traditional and indigenous elements of Russian culture against Western influence and fought against Darwin's theory of evolution.

‡ Raskolniki, the "schismatics," separated from the main Russian Orthodox Church at the time of Patriarch Nikon (1652–67) in order to return to Greek liturgical traditions and practices.

Dostoevsky provides in his novels the most gifted and trenchant presentation of the conflict between Christianity and anti-Christianity. Hermann Cohen,* the Marburg professor known for his support of the establishment of a Jewish university in Germany, has voiced the opinion that "our victory [will] move gradually toward completion" only when "we will have recognized" the difference that separates those "false literary heroes of that fad for foreign things . . . from us and have overcome them."¹² And Julius Bab,† a meeker literary soul, has seen fit in his support of our "realists" and rationalists to push indifferently aside as mere Romantic opportunism the enthusiasm for God that exists in hieratic Russia.¹³ The only thing that comes of all this is that it is highly questionable to leave literature to the likes of Herr Bab and philosophy to the likes of Herr Cohen.

Dostoevsky's major characters from Raskolnikov to Karamazov are as real and unromantic as you can imagine; they are political or religious rebels, Napoleonic criminals and atheists of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. "The revolt against human order evokes in them a revolt against divine order," noted Merezhkovsky.‡ "Dostoevsky not only denies the hate of religion and Christendom, of the Saviour; he extends this hate as the tempter himself to an affirmation of antireligion and anti-Christianity." Ultimately, however, he views Russia as the "possessed who is healed by Christ," and for him the atheistic revolutionaries are the "possessed swine who plummet into the abyss." Dostoevsky's flight into orthodoxy is his penultimate word; his last one is to be found in a diary entry he made before his death on March 1, 1881, "The end of the world draws near, the Antichrist is approaching." And the same holds for his disciple Soloviov, who repeats those final words in his *Antichrist*. § Soloviov teaches in effect that orthodox autocracy, which means the Russian variety, and the Protestant-Prussian version even

* Hermann Cohen (1842–1918), German philosopher and founder of the so-called Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism.

† Julius Bab (1880–1955), cultural critic, biographer, and dramatist who moved to New York in 1933.

‡ Dmitry Sergeevich Merezhkovsky (1865–1941), Russian man of letters, early symbolist poet, and author of historical novels, including one on the Decembrist uprising.

§ Vladimir Sergeevich Soloviov (1853–1900), Russian philosopher of religion, critic, and poet who favored the union of the Greek Orthodox Church with the Roman Catholic Church.

more so, is one of the major paths taken by world history toward the kingdom of the apocalyptic beast.¹⁴

In Italy the battle against the papacy and the regency was led by the ascetic Giuseppe Mazzini. The flight of the pope to Gaeta in 1848 under pressure from Garibaldi's * forces was the work of Mazzini, who, in his role as the president of the Roman republic, permanently dislodged the theological supports of autocracy existing in the minds of the Italian people. Mazzini's idea of an independent Christendom and the religious democracy was relentless and harsh in its fanaticism. In his major work *I doveri dell'uomo* he fought against the enlightened rational morality of the French Revolution with the same degree of fervor with which he demanded "the highest happiness in sacrifice" (in the sense of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky) during his struggle against the atheistic and materialistic Workers' International and its pleasure-bent philistinism.¹⁵

Just as Mazzini turned against both the papacy in Italy and the atheism of the nineteenth century, so, too, did he as one of the most suggestive and explosive figures of his time turn against the "apostolic Majesty" on the Hapsburg throne—"my most dangerous enemy," Metternich said of him. Had Mazzini been young enough in 1871, he would have turned against the Protestant pope in Berlin. No one has asserted the contrast between human duties and human rights more eloquently and more splendidly. And even though Mazzini fell into an unfortunate alliance with the "dark police force of the soul," as did both Dostoevsky and Chaadayev, his most vehement opponent, Michael Bakunin, was forced to admit that Mazzini remained "the keeper of the great seal of religious, metaphysical, and political idealism."¹⁶

In the Christian struggle against theocracy Mazzini believed that "the resurrection of Italy will be the beginning of a new life, the beginning of a new and powerful unity for the nations of Europe." He perceived "that an emptiness was developing in Europe; the authority, the true, the good, the holy authority whose existence permanently holds the secrets of our life, whether we acknowledge it or not, is being rejected by all those who exchange it for a chimaera, for deceptive authority, in the belief that they are denying God when they are denying idols."¹⁷ He spoke of the popes "whose former holiness is rivaled only by their current insanity." And of

* Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–82), Italian patriot who led various attacks on Sicily and the mainland as well as expeditions against Rome.

the revolutions: "You must prepare for them with education; they mature with proper care, culminate in strength, and sanctify themselves by being directed toward the common good." "My young brothers," he says to us contemporary republicans, as he once spoke to our fathers during the period of Young Germany, "take heart and dare to be great! Trust in God, in your own righteousness, and in us! Lift this call on high and go forward! Events will show us whether we are deceived when we exclaim: the future is ours."¹⁸ And in 1832 he addressed the poets of the nineteenth century with these words: "The personal world, the world of the Middle Ages, has passed. The social world, the new age, is now beginning. After Napoleon who will risk European despotism; who will be able to rule the peoples through conquest, or replace the thoughts of culture with his own? A world republic is needed, and a world republic will come to be."¹⁹

Italy is the classical nation of political and religious conspiracy. Where but in Russia was there to be found a force against theocracy and its Jesuits that could rival the Italian Carbonari * and the Freemasons? Who can know whether in our time the Palazzo Giustiniani in Rome will in fact emerge victorious over the Vatican, or whether humaneness and humanity will triumph over the theological Caesar of the Occident as in Russia they triumphed over the Caesar of the Orient? To have removed the papacy, the ultimate regenerative support of the thrones of Hapsburg and Hohenzollern, may well become Italy's claim to immortal fame.

III

It is interesting to ask if there was any struggle against religious despotism in the German countries. The problem is virtually unknown there. An "apostolic majesty" of German tongues can be found in Vienna and a Protestant *summus episcopus* in Berlin. But there is also an *entente théologique* of both theocratic systems with the papal curate in Rome. This terrifying and powerful doctrinal force of anti-Christian sentiment is difficult to pinpoint because of its trinitarian quality and its Jesuitical politics that is occasionally an enemy and often an ally. It seems that this doctrinal power can

* A secret society formed in the kingdom of Naples during the reign of Murat (1808–15) by republicans dissatisfied with French rule. The Carbonari became the champions of the national liberal cause against reactionary governments.

be exposed, and hence broken, only by means of a universal, armed insurrection in alliance with the concerned intelligentsia of all Christian nations. That is the crusade.

In the second half of the nineteenth century two bold individuals were incited by Napoleon I to move forth against this power; they were Friedrich Nietzsche and Michael Bakunin.²⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche followed the individualistic ideal of the Renaissance; Michael Bakunin carried the standard of the revolution, the masses, the collectivistic society. Nietzsche erred when he concluded that the battle against theology had to be intensified to a battle against Christianity itself. Thus he came into conflict with the spirit of Italian, Russian, and French thinking.²¹ Bakunin likewise stood in opposition to the collective mind of Christianity.²² He extended his attack against the theological state to include idealism and the concept of God.²³ Both men sought to stamp out deceitful authority and sacred authority as well, and both pushed to *abysmal* depths by doing battle with idols and with gods.

In no other nation could Nietzsche have produced the poor results that he was destined to have in Germany when he destroyed morality but permitted the state to remain intact. A true pastor's son of Lutheran extraction, by directing his rage against *principles* instead of against their *abuse*, he compounded the moral confusion and hence, contrary to all expectation, increased the omnipotence of the state.²⁴ And even Bakunin's stringent atheism led in the end to a strengthening of the rationalistic bloc of power and the state, even though he sought to establish a new ideal of solidarity on a denationalized and detheologized earth. The chaotic quixoticism of his errant life, his Russian soul, and the apostolic interpretation of his mission given in his letters and writings contradict frequently the literal meaning of his texts. Yet, as the result of broadly staged campaigns of suppression and slander mounted by German social patriots,²⁵ his embittered assaults on theocracy remained virtually unknown in the country where they ought to have been most effective: in Germany. Hence, it can be said of Bakunin's atheism that it did prove useful to Pan-Germanism in so far as Marx kept it localized in the Romance language *Internationale* and in Russia, where it contributed to the weakening of resistance.²⁶ Nietzsche was the first to raise Voltaire's whip in Germany. However, the originality of his arguments pales considerably in light of Bakunin's *Antithéologisme* (1867) and *Dieu et l'état* (1871). The latter, published in 1882 by Cafiero and Elisée Reclus, was perhaps in

Nietzsche's possession.²⁷ Both works emanated from the Tuscan Freemasonry that Bakunin knew through his contact with its grandmaster Dolfi.²⁸

At the turn of the eighteenth century only one formidable personality, Franz von Baader, stepped in with decisive arguments on behalf of Christianity and the unity of divine believers against anti-Christian philosophies. "Ἐν Ἰησοῦ εἰσι πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ τῆς γνώσεως ἀπόχρυφοι:"* With this sentence of the *philosophia occulta* he launched an attack against all pantheistically and rationalistically universalizing humanists and fanatics, against Kant and Hegel as well as Schelling, whose philosophy of nature impressed Baader as a mere "stew full of all sorts of ingredients, yes, even bits and pieces of Christianity."

Far removed from the construction of any system and from patented moral codices, Baader postulated an independent Christian morality as a "higher physics of the spirit." He wrote in his diaries,

All misuse of power, any usurpation must absolutely stop. It must fall to ruin or take on a new organization. Due to our nonsensical politics most human beings are groaning under this miserable self-deception and withering away to nothing but animals. . . . Benevolent nature, or rather God, has buried deep in every human being an ideal, a model of benevolence and magnitude the individual is to strive for in life, and according to which he is to fashion himself, but which, to the degree that it is attainable at all, continues to increase and grow. For who in this world has ever really attained the self within himself?²⁹

Baader asserted the belief "that the most certain obstacle to all evil is not just the Tablets of Stone, but a living enthusiasm for what is good." He lived this maxim: "Whenever a being like myself draws near, I recognize the same principle in him, the same nature; and this (perceived) sympathy of reason (and not one that is merely felt) is the shibboleth by which human beings seek out themselves and other human beings among natural creatures—seek, find, recognize, join, and love."³⁰

And he swore allegiance to truth: "To ponder from afar the thoughts of the All-Powerful, to join myself with the divine power of reason."³¹ And thus these magnificent sentences tower up in an *impetus philosophicus* for the Christmas celebration: "What is all

* In Christ are all the occult treasures of wisdom and of knowledge.

this quarreling among our great Chaldeans, our stargazers, soothsayers, and diviners over the divine Prince of Peace whom none of them has known? He lives in Bethlehem, not in Babel." He resides "only in the remorseful, the humble, and the meek spirits and in broken hearts, not in brains, books, or institutes of higher learning."³²

Profound holiness unites Baader with Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis, with the great mystics of the Middle Ages and Jakob Böhme, and with Pascal and d'Aurevilly and the Slavophiles Samarin and Chomiakov.³³ He is the only Christian philosopher in the grand style whom Germany has had; as a new edition of his works will show, he displaces entire schools and generations. He lacks only the understanding of our youth to become a magnetic mountain that could wrest the iron weapons from the nation's hands. In God Baader saw the archetypal society. A rare case among Germans, he rejected neither tradition nor the written word, neither good works nor faith.

The powers of thought are not the ultimate resources we must make sacred. No one has so clearly recognized and so succinctly traced the centrifugal movement of the whole of modern philosophy in its turning away from God, this apostasy of intellectuals, as Baader has done. This is one of his most splendid statements: "Love is the common bond that binds and weaves together all creatures in the universe. Without affinity we could have no totality, no world, not even thought itself; our earthly sphere would be a desolate, eternally lifeless chaos." "Satan separates," Baader wrote elsewhere, "and is a murderer from the start. Christ separates in order to unite." For Baader it is madness to assert "that we have to give up Christianity to gain intellectual and social freedom, or that we have to surrender these freedoms in order to uphold Christendom."³⁴ And no one has written more forceful words against the clergy than these: "I have been there in your booths, you priests, you who indeed still possess the Scriptures, but in your hands they become only a sevenfold lock, and you have lost the key. How you cling to your ABCs with your miserable slavishness! Your idol is nothing but a mummy; only its form is real. And this one, that one, all public booths in the marketplace of your great Babel are empty, offering nothing more than the tar and grease necessary to speed the voyage of contemporary literature."³⁵

Franz von Baader. But where are his followers? Who beyond him and the great mystics and musicians has written an *apologia Christi*

in Germany and has fought against the Antichrist? Hegel was convinced that he had written a theodicy consistent with Christianity. But he was only imitating Protestantism and absolutistic Prussianism. The theories of state and law generated by his vulgar servility revealed him to be a Lutheran and a follower of Napoleon with no inkling of the divine powers he was mocking.

They all became Machiavellians. Friedrich II was a Machiavellian; Fichte devoted himself to a study of Machiavelli.³⁶ Hegel aspired to become "as it were, the Machiavelli of Germany." Treitschke and Bismarck spread Machiavellianism. Nietzsche was a Machiavellian. So is Herr Rathenau. The fundamental principle is individuality and national advantage as the moral directive. This philosophical and cultural ideal cleaves to the state in that it establishes or decrees an idea as an abstraction and demands total subordination. The state is built upon the greedy complaisance of its subordinates. The will to power, which is essentially identical to weakness, exploits lies, fraud, and every method of treachery to gain success and achieve its goal. Here we have the Machiavellian conspiracy of Prusso-German philosophy from Kant to Nietzsche. They are all theoretical descendants of the Renaissance, that epoch of glittering relapses into paganism; as a whole they play into the hands of despotism and promote the kingdom of the cunning apocalyptic beast, even though they themselves often fly the flags of freedom and revolution, of revolt and the superman.*

Soloviov and Lecky† still speak of the "superiority of the Germans" in the field of rational philosophy—Soloviov, in his struggle against the Slavophile chauvinism he hoped to humble,³⁷ and Lecky in his *Geschichte der Aufklärung* (History of the Enlightenment), in other respects one of the most beautiful documents of the Christian attitude. But what a pathetic superiority it is that humbles God to the level of mankind in order to elevate humanity. It leads everywhere to disillusionment and catastrophe because it misapprehends its own dimension and culminates thus in nothing but submission, the machinery of the state, and an impudent system of coercion! As long as we do not remind ourselves of the irrationality of our own selfish individuality by joining ranks with the humanly

* *Das Übermenschentum*, "superhumanity," "supermanism," from Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.

† William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838–1903), Irish historian and essayist, author of *A History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe* (2 vols.) in 1865.

pure tradition of our truly great individuals, we will be only so much straw in the wind. As long as we do not intuit irrationality to be inherent in the *contradiction* between humanity and God, the illogical character of human existence to be inherent in the *contradiction* between the ideal and reality, we will remain closed to the most noble accomplishments of the European mind and all humanity, locked away in our idolatry of our own brutish superiority, unable to comprehend anything anybody has said against us. And we will remain barbarians in spite of all effort or ability.

Do not appeal any more to the "Goddess of Reason," the abolition of religion and of faith in God that issued from the events of 1793! The principles of the French Revolution, liberty, equality, and brotherhood, the influence of which continues to spread, are profoundly Christian and divine. The emancipation of slaves and the communism that revived in this revolution are Christian in nature. The evangelists and the apostles, the church fathers and Campanella,* Thomas Münzer, the Anabaptists, and in part the monks, the Quakers, the Russian sectarians—they are socialists.³⁸

The Christian significance of the French Revolution could no longer remain hidden from Europe and the French mind, though it was the Enlightenment that gave the initial impulse to the Revolution. Religion may well have been pushed aside in 1793, but by 1801 it had been reintroduced, and over half of the French nation became devout Roman Catholics. And if ecclesiastical dogma was shaken once and for all by the French Revolution, nonetheless intellectual development in France from 1801 onward reveals a growing, increasingly conscious, reaffirmation of the Christian tradition—a progressively more profound assimilation and formulation of lofty Christian values. I do not refer here to that brand of Catholicism that stomps along in parades or to the pro-Catholicism of second- or third-rate intellectuals. I am speaking of the cathedral-like edifice of a Christian apologetics that has led France from Chateaubriand, de Maistre, and Lamennais to Charles Péguy, André Suarès, and the Pascalian school of Boutroux, independently of the Church, to an increasingly more humane and more profound symbolism, to more lucid and encompassing forms, and ultimately to a national cult of Joan of Arc of the most exquisite sublimity. †³⁹

* Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639), Italian Renaissance theologian, philosopher, poet, and patriot. His *Civitas solio* (City of the Sun) is an account of a fancied communistic state.

† François René Chateaubriand (1769–1848), French politician and statesman,

If Cardinal Mercier were to become antipope and found a church of the Christian intelligentsia, one of his first acts would have to be to establish a council of translators for the propagation of the faith suitable to present times. Their task would be to demonstrate *ad oculos* the universality of the Christian renaissance and to reunite the Occidental church with the Eastern Church, which is standing ready for such a reunion.⁴⁰ Yes, the times are ripe. A common faith is reviving. (But those German pro-Catholics who during the war turned their sympathies and expectations toward the compromised throne of Benedict will not succeed under this aegis in completing either the division between good and evil, which Frau Annette Kolb * spoke about so enthusiastically,⁴¹ or the societal *civitas dei* that is so dear to the hearts of the most select minds.⁴² These pro-Catholic Germans serve only reactionism and the decay in Christ that forms the pedestal of the contemporary papacy.)

More needs to be said here. Any theodicy that exploits the bestiality of this war for defeatist and fatalistic purposes by calling it the "rage of God," on the one hand impeding the rebellion and, on the other hand, pretending to be able to establish a philosophy of irrationality, any such theodicy will be mystification, not mysticism; it will be paying homage to the Antichrist and will even attribute divinity to him and have Masses read for his appeasement instead of casting him aside. The germanophilic papacy is at work on such theodicies right now.⁴³ But this view seems to be gathering followers only in Germany, where nothing is too absurd to find support and to be used to relieve the decorum of a barren intelligentsia.⁴⁴

IV

The bragging rhetoric that fell in step behind Napoleon found nowhere else such spirited admiration as in Germany and nowhere else such faithful rendering as in the philosophy of Hegel and his followers. Fetishism of reality and the morality of success, career-

leading writer and influence in the French romantic movement. His eulogy of Christianity, *Le Génie du christianisme*, was published in 1802. Joseph Marie Comte de Maistre (1754–1821), French philosopher and statesman who opposed eighteenth-century rationalism. André Suarès (1866–1948), French poet, critic, essayist, self-styled "Knight Errant of Beauty," perhaps best known for his public personality, the embodiment of the romantic poet. Étienne Émile Marie Boutroux (1845–1921), French philosopher and educator.

* Annette Kolb (1870–1967), novelist, biographer, and essayist, representative of European humanitarianism.

tures of superiority and a lack of self-criticism—these are the major motifs of the atheistic mentality.

But the West did not permit itself to be corrupted by Hegelianism, nor did the East. The sects of Russian Hegelians in Moscow, whose members included Stankevich, Belinsky, Ogaryov,* and Bakunin, dispersed rapidly and never achieved an importance that could be taken as proof of the widespread productivity of German philosophy.⁴⁵ Stankevich died early on. Belinsky and Herzen enthusiastically embraced the theories of French socialism. By his own admission Bakunin, too, had seen through Hegelian philosophy and “had gone beyond it” as early as 1842.⁴⁶ In *Statism and Anarchism* (1873) he in fact turned against the most radical Young Hegelians with these words: “At the head of this faction stood Ludwig Feuerbach † who drew logical conclusions that rejected any divine world and even metaphysics itself. He could go no further. Yet he remained a metaphysician in spite of it all. He was compelled to yield to his heirs presumptive, those materialists or realists the majority of whom, like Büchner, Marx, and others, did not, and do not, comprehend *freeing themselves from the tyranny of metaphysical, abstract thinking.*”⁴⁷ Thus even the most prominent Russian Hegelian, who introduced thinkers such as Chaadayev and Proudhon to Hegelian phenomenology,⁴⁸ retreated from his faith in the “superiority of the German intellect.” And Bakunin later became the chief opponent of that “Germanic, philosophic idealism” Soloviov praised so highly.⁴⁹

And the Young Hegelians in the West, with their self-assurance and their doctrine of reality, ran up against the same opposing religious view that Napoleonism and rationalism had faced in Russia.⁵⁰ In the autumn of 1843, after the collapse of the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* (German Annals), Arnold Ruge and Karl Marx moved to France to publish the *Deutsch-französischen Jahrbücher* (German-French Annals) in Paris. But the establishment of this periodical showed what is always shown whenever censorship forces Germans

* Nikolai Vladimirovich Stankevich (1813–40), a philosopher who helped introduce German idealist philosophy into Russia and who stimulated Russian romantic idealism. Vissarion Belinsky (1811–48), Russian critic and journalist who expounded liberalism in politics and sociology. He greatly influenced later critical writing in Russia. Nikolai Platonovich Orgayov (1813–77), poet, publicist, friend of Herzen and coeditor of Herzen’s newspaper in exile *The Bell*.

† Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72), German philosopher, who rejected Hegelianism in favor of naturalistic materialism and argued that the human concept of God was a result of self-projection (*The Essence of Christianity*, 1841).

to publish abroad. Distribution in the home country runs into "insurmountable obstacles," and financial support becomes unavailable. No one has yet learned the lesson: only a clean break with the patriotic clique and the rejection of all ambiguity is capable of shaping a new basis and of amplifying thinking. The Young German emigration of 1843 had as little success in convincing the French of German superiority as the new German emigration of 1914–18 has had in exalting Europeanism and in conveying new principles into its own country.⁵¹ The publishers of the *Deutsch-französischen Jahrbücher*, a journal that counted Heine, Herwegh, Jacoby, Marx, Engels, and Ruge among its contributors, found no support among the French intellectuals.*

Franz Mehring, who is an eminent Marxist, to be sure, but also a solid patriot, has reacted bitterly to this treatment.⁵² "Lamennais delivered a two-hour lecture to the publishers outlining his religious objections and then explained that he would await results before joining forces with them." And there was Louis Blanc, † "that nervous petty bourgeois who could not get over the cloying habit of enshrining the struggles of practical life in some kind of religion and thereby blocking the thorough understanding of them."⁵³ "A few had pledged support (Lamartine, ‡ for example), but delivered nothing, and others simply refused, often in a most unpleasant fashion." But Mehring, like all Marxists, especially the most committed ones, misconstrued the prevailing intellectual situation in a crass and inaccurate way. He spoke of Lamennais' "religious bickering." Should he not acknowledge in principle the conflict Lamennais was fighting at that point with the Church? Have the Marxists monopolized truth and method to such an extent that they are receptive only to quotations from Marx? "We hope," wrote Lamennais, "to dash the kingdom of power to the ground and to put in its place the kingdom of justice and love, which will generate between the members of the great family that harmony in which each individual is a part of the whole and shares in the common well-being."⁵⁴ Is this "religious bickering"? The atheism of the Ency-

* Georg Herwegh (1817–75), German lyric poet who became involved in the mid-nineteenth-century political unrest and spent most of his life in exile. Johann Jacoby (1805–77), Prussian politician and opponent of Bismarck.

† Louis Blanc (1811–82), French socialist and historian, prominent in the revolution of 1848; author of the *Histoire de la Revolution* (12 vols., 1847–62).

‡ Alphonse Lamartine (1790–1869), French poet and statesman. He was an active political moderate and spent his career caught between radical and reactionary currents.

clopedists had repelled him, as did the megalomania and atheism of the Young Hegelians. He sought the emancipation of humanity in the power of a religious consciousness of fraternity, and when he did not find freedom, he broke boldly and decisively with the Church and with Pope Gregory, who had earlier praised him as a new Bossuet and the latest of the church fathers. Are chapters 4, 13, 20, 35, and 36 of the *Paroles d'un Croyant* (Utterances of a Believer) only religious prattling, or are they prophecy of utmost relevance? Do we have in our own socialistic literature anything remotely comparable to the writings of this precursor of Charles Péguy?⁵⁵ Let us not forget that Ludwig Börne,* whom Mehring would dismiss as a bourgeois just as Heine had done, translated these *Paroles d'un Croyant* into German in 1834 because he believed it was possible "to put an end to the infamous impulses of German government through an alliance between political and religious radicalism," rather than through rational philosophy!

And was Louis Blanc, our nervous petty bourgeois, wrong when he "congratulated the German youth for beginning to direct their attention toward the practical issues of life," but warned them against atheism, "since atheism in philosophy entails anarchy in politics"; or when he drew to their attention that as Neo-Hegelians with their reverence for Diderot, Holbach, and the French materialists they were arriving almost a century too late? Do not the Marxists themselves now celestialize the intellectual struggles of practical existence even more annoyingly and blindly in their grand struggle of the classes? Where does anyone dare to break with the papal edifice of Marxism and restore a resonant socialism?⁵⁶ What was Marx to the contemporary representatives of Western thought? Nothing but a questionable character, and it is unheard of among the French, the English, or the Russians that one could be a great man and a base character at the same time.

Whether Marx and his circle put in an appearance in Paris, Brussels, or London, you will always find in the letters and the memoirs of contemporary leaders the same complaints about perfidious, bourgeois, and slanderous conduct, and we would be falsifying history if we ascribed this fact to the chauvinism of other writers without first looking for causes at home. Bakunin wrote this about Marx in a letter to Georg Herwegh (Brussels, December 1847):

* Ludwig Börne (1786–1837), German satirist and political writer, whose revolutionary voice often took its cues from Paris.

The German workmen, Bornstädt, Marx, and Engels, particularly Marx, are raising their usual ruckus around here. Vanity, animosity, idle chatter, theoretical bravado, and a timidity in practical matters; ruminations about life, deeds, and simplicity, literary and discouraging workers and disgusting flirtation with them. The phrase "Feuerbach is a bourgeois," and the word *bourgeois* itself are turning into catchwords echoed *ad nauseam*, and yet everyone here is, from head to toe, through and through, a petty bourgeois. . . . I am keeping my distance from them and have explained most decisively that I am not going to join their communist workers organization and that I do not want to have anything to do with it.⁵⁷

And *Alexander Herzen*, writing about the Marxists in London: "Oh, those bands of mistaken German politicians who hover around that genius of the first magnitude, Marx. Out of his failed patriotism and his frightening pretensions they have constructed a kind of secondary institution of slander and accusation against anyone who has had more success than they."⁵⁸ And *Proudhon*, commenting on the "libel of a certain Doctor Marx" directed at his own *Philosophy of Poverty*, calls it nothing but "a fabric woven from rudeness, accusation, falsification, and plagiarism."⁵⁹

I have cited the attitudes of the three leading Western minds of the period. They show remarkable unanimity and more than adequately elucidate the aversion that sprang from even a short acquaintance with Marx and his circle. The cause was this: The Germans considered themselves to be representatives of the "chosen people in philosophy," embodiments of the World Spirit and the World Soul. Their lofty, doctrinaire self-assurance left them no time to doubt their intrinsic superiority. They carried the *spiritus* of the absolute idea in the great round decanters of their heads. Their obstinacy turned them into obnoxious rationalists, and wherever they were unable to convince quieter minds of their own godlike qualities, they launched attacks with such words as "bourgeois, philistine, utopian fools!"

What has not been beaten to death by Marxist social democracy with its catchword "utopia"! The rich literature of French and English socialists at the beginning of the nineteenth century, without which Marxism would not exist at all, was withheld from Germany by the despotic jealousy of orthodox Marxists. Marx's dictates and the apostleship of his epigones were most adept at discrediting the beginnings of socialism, and they also kept ideolog-

ical conflicts, such as took place in the extraordinarily important First International, from penetrating into Germany except in intentionally distorted form.⁶⁰ And that polemic mode *sans façon*,* the so-called muckraking style so characteristic of the writing of the early decades of German social democracy, kept away the young kindred spirits of the German middle-class intelligentsia, a class that elsewhere—for example, in Italy, Russia, France, and England—was supplying the most enthusiastic recruits. Only in the past few years has socialism succeeded again in attracting a broader circle of bourgeois youth into its orbit.

The Germans of 1840 exaggerated Hegelian accomplishments. What did they consist of? What was taken to Paris? Heine speaks of the “writers of present-day Young Germany, who likewise wish to make no distinction between life and writing, who never separate politics from science, art, and religion, and who are simultaneously artists, tribunes, and apostles.”⁶¹ That description sounds positive and praiseworthy, but in fact the Young Germans emerged somewhat differently. Italians claim that the rally cry “Young Germany” was a gift from Mazzini, whose programmatic articles “Unterweisung für die Verbrüdereten des jungen Italien” (Instructions for the Fraternity of Young Italy), “Manifest der Giovine Italia,” and “Vom jungen Italien” (Young Italy) were published in 1831 and 1832 and, due to Mazzini’s work for German journals, were no less sensational in Germany than they were elsewhere in Europe.⁶²

Characteristic of Young Germany is the lack of a liberal tradition conjoined with the lack of application and of a clearly defined point of attack. They suffered under the censorship of fifty petty princes and their police forces without being able to systematically attack and temper the central cabinet of Humboldt and Metternich.⁶³ Revolutions pressing in from all sides (Greece, Flanders, Italy, France) and progress in philosophical critique nurtured a kind of sympathetic rebelliousness by word of mouth. But the poisons spread by Fichte and Hegel turned any corporate reaction into just so much noise. Börne, for one, called Goethe and Hegel “consonant” and “dissonant” servants respectively; people broke with the best classicist traditions in education without fully comprehending the new Prussian tradition. Even worse, no significant critical stance toward either the classicist or the Hegelian system ever reached through to

* Without ceremony.

the people. The Protestant rationalistic philosophy passed for revolutionary (note Heine's views), and Feuerbach was considered an ultrarevolutionary. It was commonly believed that one was far superior to Voltaire if one combined a greater appearance of profundity with dialectic methods in gospel exegesis and if one considered playing a higher card in atheism to be the spirit of freedom.⁶⁴ But the aspirations that went along with it all are again revealed by Heine: "And if someday that restraining talisman, the Cross, falls to pieces, then the savagery of the old warriors will explode again, the mad berserker rage about which the Nordic poets have told so much. [. . .] The old stone gods will then arise from the forgotten ruins and wipe the dust of centuries from their eyes, and Thor will at last leap up with his giant hammer and smash the Gothic cathedrals."⁶⁵

The great reactionary forces of the period were not introduced systematically. No urbane liberalistic politics came into vogue. Even Heine, who showed certain tendencies in this direction, grasped at the wrong goals and means. People were reasoners and rebels without reality, although as Hegelians they did feel superior to the French in their sense of what was real (and a hundred other things). The theologians, Bruno Bauer* and his ilk, perceived themselves, according to Mehring, to be "personal incarnations of critical philosophy, of the absolute spirit, which through them, as distinct from the rest of mankind, was to consciously play the role of the World Spirit."⁶⁶ Yet they overlooked the connection between Hegel and the spirit of the Talmud—a connection that, to my knowledge, was not evident even to Marx; and they overlooked the Mendelssohnian messianism manifested in Hegel's "elected" philosophy. Grillparzer† said of the Young Hegelian Hebbel‡ when the latter came to Vienna in the 1840s: he knows everything, even who God is.⁶⁷ That judgment fit exactly the political Neo-Hegelians who moved through the express mails between Paris, Brussels, Cologne, and London, excitedly and unshakably convinced of the cosmic import of those Hegelian paragraphs on regimenta-

* Bruno Bauer (1809–1882), German philosopher and theologian; leader of the Young Hegelians.

† Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872), one of the foremost Austrian writers and dramatists.

‡ Friedrich Hebbel (1813–63), one of the foremost German dramatists of the nineteenth century, whose theory of tragedy was greatly influenced by Hegel's philosophy of history.

tion and discipline, but who lacked the ultimate openness that is actually prepared to take up new ideas with any kind of affection.

The revolution of 1848 did bring things to light. The counterrevolutionary principle that had disciples everywhere contradicted the demands being made by reality. Surrogate spirit and language showed themselves to be incapable of getting to the essence of things. Hegel's blasphemous stance toward freedom, his philosophy of government and law, and his amoralism neutered actions, and, all in all, there came about the kind of confusion more reminiscent of a poorly staged operetta than of a revolution. Political and theological naivety built worse barricades than those in the streets. The socialism newly discovered by Marx and Engels sabotaged the courtship between middle-class opposition and Herwegh's Baden legions of farmers. Stirner's* cynical nihilism stayed put in the cafes. And those people who did fight on the Berlin barricades had names usually ending with *-sky* or *-ic*. The leaders of the May uprisings in Dresden were Russians and Poles.

One exchange of letters during this period is most instructive. Bakunin wrote to Herwegh (Berlin, August 1848): "Germany is now staging the most interesting and unusual spectacle—no sham or shadowy battle, but a battle of shadows that take themselves for realities and yet constantly sense and unintentionally reveal their own immeasurable weaknesses. The official reaction and the official revolution are competing in terms of nothingness and stupidity; hence, all that hollow philosophico-religio-politico-socio-bombastic phraseology."⁶⁸ And Bakunin wrote to Herwegh (Köthen, December 8, 1848):

The bourgeois is never a lovable person, but the German bourgeois is vile with *Gemütlichkeit*. Even the tendency of these people to become enraged is enraging. This is my ultimate judgment: If the German nation consisted solely of the great, unfortunately too great, masses of petty bourgeois, the bourgeois which could now be called the official Germany—and if, within this official German nation, there were no urban proletarians, and particularly no large faction of farmers—then I would be forced to conclude that Germany no longer

* Max Stirner, pseudonym for Kaspar Schmidt (1806–56), a foremost defender of anarchism in Germany and author of *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (The Individual and His Property, 1845).

exists as a nation, that Germany will be conquered and condemned to total destruction.⁶⁹

In 1848—and this is a little known fact in Germany today—Bakunin was right in the middle of the conspiracy; he was speaking from experience. He led the May uprisings in Dresden and was friends with Ruge, Varnhagen von Ense,* Jacoby, Wagner, Röckel, Heubner, and, at that time, even with Marx.

If a single thought guided all factions, it was the thought of German unity. Yet the republican view, which Mazzini was able to impart to the Italian quest for unity, was held by a dwindling minority in Germany. What was really on everyone's mind, whether they admitted it or not, was the Napoleonic-Machiavellian concept of the office of emperor, and it was a notion whose glitter and power had captivated the German petty bourgeois from the very first years of the empire. Napoleon served to call forth medieval Hohenstaufendom from the storage rooms. For the nation's benefit preachers like Arndt† ticked off on their fingers the heroic deeds of the emperors from Otto to Konradin, and it was only a question of whether Prussia or Austria would "assume" responsibility for the new German unity and empire.

The most accurate thing that has ever been said about the revolution of 1848 was written by Bakunin:

Had the German democrats been less doctrinaire and thus more revolutionary than they actually were, had they been inclined to give their support to that spontaneous peasant movement instead of looking for salvation in national and provincial parliaments, had they joined with the urban proletariat to this end—had these things been the case, then the triumph of a true revolution would have been possible in Germany in the midst of the general confusion and complete impotence in which the government found itself in March and April. The German parliaments of 1848 produced what all parliaments produce in times of revolution: a flood of phrases and a deluge of documents that were, if not directly reactionary, at least conducive to reaction. The German parliaments of 1848 have in fact done nothing momentous and lasting for the cause of freedom. On the contrary,

* Karl August Varnhagen von Ense (1785–1858), German writer.

† Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860), German poet and historian; writer of nationalistic pamphlets and songs against Napoleon.

they prepared the fundamental elements of contemporary German unity. And we can say, then, that the pseudorevolutionism of the German patriots of 1848 became for the Bismarckianism of 1871 what General Cavaignac in France became for Napoleon III: nothing more than a forerunner.⁷⁰

V

To a German trade apprentice, Wilhelm Weitling, goes the honor of having not only sought and represented that union between political and religious radicalism that Börne spoke of, but also of having established it as a new spiritual ideal in widely dispersed brotherhoods extending over all of western Europe.

The Romantics had rediscovered journeyman poetry; Weitling, the journeyman, rediscovered primitive Christianity. "These [journeymen]," wrote Heine in his work *Die romantische Schule* ("The Romantic School"), "very often on my walking tours I joined company with these people and noticed how, at times inspired by some unusual event, they would improvise a snatch of a folksong or whistle it into the open air. [. . .] The words come from out of the blue to the lips of such a lad, and he needs only to utter them, and they are then even more poetic than all the fine poetical phrases that we concoct from the depths of our hearts."⁷¹

That statement gives us a true picture of Wilhelm Weitling. The journeymen who belonged to Weitling's *Bund der Gerechten* (League of the Righteous) displayed an idealism, a fire, and a sense of sacrifice that seemed to have vanished from bourgeois society. "It is difficult to overestimate their drive for education and their thirst for knowledge," writes Mehring; "they hired teachers to tutor them in various subjects, and they donated all their savings to publish important writings."⁷²

Weitling was born a Prussian subject in Magdeburg in 1810. He was a tailor and traveled the length and breadth of Germany for seven years. It is said that he contributed satiric poems to the Saxon riots of 1830. He then went to Paris, where he lived until 1840. His *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* (Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom, 1842) contains the first theoretical formulations of German communism and is one of the most significant documents in socialist literature, and his *Evangelium der armen Sünder* (Gospel of Poor Sinners, 1845) is one of the most beautiful and moving manifestations of the German spirit. Karl Marx and Michael Baku-

nin became acquainted with communism through Wilhelm Weitling, and Weitling's name will forever be remembered as noble proof that socialism, even in its initial German stages, was by no means the politics of commercial interests, but a lofty, spiritual ideal.

Marx was still the editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* when he wrote the following words:

Where did the bourgeoisie, including its philosophers and educated writers, have a work rivaling Weitling's *Garantien* with respect to its sense of freedom, its sense of political emancipation? Compare the timid, whispering mediocrity of German literature with this expansive and brilliant literary debut of the German worker; compare this gigantic child's slipper of the proletariat with the dwarfish, run-down footgear of the bourgeois, and you will have to agree that our German Cinderella seems destined to take on athletic proportions.⁷³

Friedrich Engels called Weitling the "only German socialist who has done anything significant." Arriving in Zurich with Herwegh in 1843, Bakunin was introduced to the *Garantien* and to Weitling, who had just arrived from Lausanne. And Michael Bakunin wrote these words:

One must guard against confusing the cosmopolitanism of the communists with the cosmopolitanism of the previous century. The theoretical cosmopolitanism of the previous century was cold, indifferent, contrived, lacking in fundament and passion; it was dead and barren abstraction, theoretical busywork that harbored no spark of productive, creative fire. But you cannot charge communism with any lack of passion or fire. Communism is not a phantom, not a shadow. There is a warmth, a heat buried within it that is striving toward ignition—a glowing heat that can no longer be suppressed and whose discharge can become dangerous, even horrible, if the privileged class does not ease its birth with love, with sacrifice, and with full recognition of its calling in world history.⁷⁴

That was the political side. The religious effect was just as great. Ludwig Feuerbach received a copy of the *Garantien* from a journeyman and proclaimed: "How overcome I was by the sentiment and the spirit this tailor expressed! Truly he is a prophet of his class! How astounded I was by the earnestness, the attitude, the drive for education! What is all the baggage of our academic journeymen by comparison!"⁷⁵ And Bakunin, once more:

Since Christendom no longer provides the cohesive vitality of the European nations, what does bind them together and give them life? What in them still upholds the concord and love that Christianity pronounced over them? The holy spirit of freedom and equality, the spirit of pure humanity revealed amidst lightning and thunder by the French Revolution and spread by the stormy revolutionary wars as the seed of a new life. (Communism arose from this spirit.) This spirit now invisibly unites all peoples regardless of their nationality. The so-called Christian governments and all monarchistic sovereigns and power mongers are now opposing this spirit, this sublime son of Christianity, for they know full well that their self-serving dealings will not be able to withstand his searing scrutiny.⁷⁶

Weitling's religious communism came from France and England. In England Owen * was speaking of positive religion, personal possessions, and permanent marriage as a "trinity of evils." When Weitling fled to London, Owen referred to him as the "leader of the German communists."⁷⁷

Mary Wollstonecraft's book † on women's rights (1792) and Godwin's portrayal of social ills in his work *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness* ‡ had compelled Franz von Baader to make this statement: "We must show that kings are the prisoners of the state and that the rich are in fact all just pensioners."⁷⁸ In France, however, Buchez § was giving a practical turn to the religious impulses of Saint-Simonism by demanding that the commandments of Christian morality be realized in society. To deafening applause Louis Cabet ** was preaching that "Icarian communism is the Christianity that Jesus Christ set in motion in its original purity, for Christianity is the principle of

* Robert Owen (1771–1858), British manufacturer and founder of British socialism.

† Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1759–97), the leading woman radical of the period and wife of William Godwin. Her book *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* was published in 1792.

‡ William Godwin (1756–1836), English political writer, novelist, historian, and champion of the ideas of the French Revolution. The book Ball refers to was the principal medium through which French revolutionary ideas entered England.

§ Philippe Buchez (1796–1865), French man of letters and politician.

** Louis Etienne Cabet (1788–1856), French socialist who met with, and was influenced by, Robert Owen in England. Cabet published his *Voyage en Icarie, roman philosophique et social* in 1840.

brotherly love, equality, freedom, community, and communal ownership."⁷⁹ Béranger* was urging: "People, let us form a holy alliance!" Lamennais, who was proposing the priesthood of the people and who possessed the gift of prophecy in so many other areas, warned of socialist systems within which "the people would be condemned to a condition of slavery the likes of which the world has never seen," slavery that "would debase mankind to the level of a mere machine, to a tool, stationing them among the Negro, even among the animals." Proudhon read the apocalypse of St. John in his spare time; his work *Philosophie des Elends* (The Philosophy of Poverty) clearly reflects the Christian goodwill that led him to his critique of ownership. And is it mere coincidence that those two men whom Bakunin named as founders of revolutionary socialism, Cabet and Louis Blanc, were also Christian revolutionaries?⁸⁰

In Franz Mehring's view Weitling "toppled the barriers that separated Western utopians from the working class." That may be Weitling's historical importance, but it is not his contemporary significance.

"After the French Revolution had proclaimed the human rights and obligations of each individual," Bakunin wrote,⁸¹ [""]it reached the proportions of Babeufism in its final consequences. Babeuf was one of the last pure and energetic figures whom the Revolution created and then destroyed. He unified in a unique way the old political traditions of his country with the most modern ideas of social revolution. *When he perceived that the economic situation of the Revolution had become untenable and that the Revolution was incapable of further radical development,*⁸² he remained true to the revolutionary spirit that had replaced individual initiative with the gradual actions of the state, and he shaped a socio-political system in which the republic, as the expression of the collective will of the citizens, was to confiscate all individual property and to administer it in the interests of all citizens. Under the same terms everyone was to receive education, training, means of support, and property; without exception everyone was to be compelled to contribute physically and intellectually according to his or her strengths and abilities. The Babeuf plot failed. He was sent to the guillotine along with many of his friends. But his ideal of a socialistic republic did not die with him. Its pieces were gathered up by his friend

* Pierre Jean de Béranger (1780–1857), French lyric poet, author of political, satirical, and philosophical songs.

Buonarrotti, the greatest conspirator of his century, and were passed on to the new generation as a precious legacy."*

In the secret societies established by Buonarrotti in Switzerland, Belgium, and France, the collectivist ideas lived on, merged with the romantico-religious movement, and developed into communism.⁸³ Weitling received his initial impulse from Buonarrotti's followers, and he based his own League of the Righteous on Buonarrotti's brotherhoods. Judging from appearances, his model in this undertaking was the Alliance of Outcasts in Paris, an organization to which Börne belonged and whose statutes as early as 1834 demanded the liberation and rebirth of Germany, the establishment and maintenance of social and political equality, freedom, civic virtue, and national unity.⁸⁴

The fraternalization of Europe in the spirit of primitive Christianity is, for Weitling, also a condition of political rebirth. He is strikingly contemporary *precisely in this point*. Do not believe for a moment that knowledge excludes religion, or that economic analysis shuts out Christ. Both do exclude theocratic dogma and cults of otherworldliness, but not love, the human heart, and the courage of sacrifice. It is righteousness that we must all insist upon. But its prerequisite is the formulation of the precise knowledge of natural limits and rights.

Weitling's disciples included not only craftsmen and workers but also the bourgeoisie and property owners. The winning power of his idea is so characteristic of him. The attitude of enmity that arose in the German proletariat as a result of Marx and the class struggle was totally alien to him.⁸⁵ Weitling rejected the Young Germans not because he considered them to be bourgeois—although he would have been justified in making that judgment—but because they were "fishing in murky supersensuous depths for abstractions." He wrote in his *Evangelium*,

Come this way, you who labor, who are miserable, burdened, poor, scorned, ridiculed, and repressed. If you want freedom and justice for *all* mankind, this gospel will steel your courage and will thrust forth new blossoms of hope. It will strengthen the cowardly, weakened heart and pour forth the powers of conviction into despairing hearts. It will press the kiss of forgiveness to the transgressor's brow and will

* In the 1919 edition this passage ends with quotation marks, omitted in the 1970 and 1980 editions. From note 81 on, Ball could be quoting Bakunin at length, although quotation marks do not appear here in the 1919 text or in the later versions.

illumine the darkened walls of their prisons with its rays of hope. It will cast the glow of love and freedom into the hearts of all sinners. So shall it be.⁸⁶

Weitling spoke of Voltaire as did Ernest Hello, who called him a *farçeur*: "It was the fundamental principle adhered to by Voltaire and others that religion must be destroyed in order to liberate humanity. However, Lamennais, and before him numerous Christian reformers such as Karlstadt, Thomas Münzer, and others, showed that all democratic ideals issue from Christianity."⁸⁷ He did not scorn the results of gospel exegesis; he believed that it was not his task to expose contradictions as David Strauss* did, but to accept as true both the essential and the potential features upon which Christianity rests and to determine from them the basic principle of Christianity.⁸⁸ He called German philosophers "fog makers." "For me Hegel just makes so much fog. And I am able to say that even though I have never read anything that he has written. Why? Because no one has been able to tell me what he intended, although all German fog philosophy makes such a great fuss about him." Weitling believed that reason alone has not ruled supreme in world history; history for him is nothing more than a "great thieves' tale" in which honorable people were always those who ended up being swindled. "All goodness arises from the freedom and harmony of desires and passions; all evil from the oppression and control of them for the benefit of a few."⁸⁹

A perfect society has no government, but only management; no laws, only obligations; no punishments, only remedies. There are no signs or formulae of subservience; no marks of fame or scorn; there is no commanding or obeying, only regulating, arranging, and bringing to fulfillment. There are neither crimes nor punishments; there is only a modicum of human illness and weakness put in our way by nature so that in overcoming the afflictions we will ignite our physical and spiritual capabilities.⁹⁰

He was determined to raise existent disorder to its highest degree and to see the suffering classes experience boundless suffering. He viewed despair as the most effective leverage of revolution, and he called theft "the ultimate weapon of the poor against the rich." His religion is the religion of suffering and sympathizing, of the impov-

* David Friedrich Strauss (1808–74), German theologian, philosophical writer, and biographer who sought to prove that gospel history is mythical in character.

erished and the dissolute, the scorned, and the abandoned—the only religion and philosophy that exist. He loved criminals and prostitutes alike, loved them as Jesus Christ loved them. And his claim that the *Lord* had permitted himself to be kept by women of pleasure cost him ten months in jail.⁹¹ And this was his prophecy:

A new messiah will come forth to realize the teaching of the first messiah. He will crush the rotten structure of the old social order, divert streams of tears into the sea of forgetfulness, and transform the earth into a paradise. He will descend from the heights of opulence to the depths of misery, go among the throng of the miserable and the despised and add his tears to theirs. Yet he will not relinquish the powers vested in him until his bold task is completed.⁹²

No, Weitling's brand of communism was not the politics of special interests that Marx and Lassalle* made out of it; it was a doctrine of suffering, just as Proudhon's teaching was a philosophy of social responsibility. And this fact must be stressed at a time when material and spiritual catastrophe is threatening the entire nation, at a time when, because of special interests, the worker has become as guilty as every other citizen, and a new proletariat is shaping itself out of the discontented members of every class, a new criminality, and an abyss of need and suffering. What Weitling was saying in 1843 about the gospel of the clerics holds just as true today for the socialism of the Marxists: "You, good sirs, have demonstrated it; you have made it a gospel of tyranny, of oppression, and of deception. I wanted to make the gospel one of freedom, equality, and community, of knowledge, hope and love. If you went wrong, it has happened out of personal interests; if I am wrong, it has happened out of love for mankind. My intention is widely known, and the sources from which I draw are noted clearly enough. Readers can read, test, judge, and believe what they want to believe."⁹³

These principles come from the Sermon on the Mount. They treat "the radical, revolutionary Christ," the Christian republic.⁹⁴ May they crush utility, self-interest, the state, despotism; may they atomize racial prejudice and patriotic lies "that serve the most rabid enemies of progress and *universal* freedom as the sheet anchor of

* Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–64), German socialist and founder of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein*. Lassalle embraced the Marxian doctrine but substituted government action for revolution and nationalism for internationalism.

their errors, as a protective breakwater for their special priorities." Weitling was writing for Germany when he said this: "What kind of love can anyone have now for the so-called Fatherland, when nothing is lost there that cannot be found in every other foreign country?" And it is a German promise when Weitling holds out this prospect to his French friends: "You will see by and by that we are disgusted by the idea of wanting to make a prison or a military compound of the world. You will see that we do not want to sacrifice personal freedom to universal equality, since it is precisely this natural drive toward freedom that makes us defenders of the principle of equality."⁹⁵ But who is to take possession of "the free Rhein"? "The people who first seek to realize the pure principle of charity will capture the hearts of all peoples without lifting a sword. That is the solution to the Rhein question. There is no other way."

Mehring discovered that even Weitling is a utopian, and like all Marxists, he gave the term a negative, judgmental twist. Why is this? What does it mean to be a utopian? In Marxist terminology a utopian expresses ideas that cannot be realized, or more accurately, ideas whose reality contradicts Marxism. "Freedom can be made real." This Hegelian proposition, via Marx, still terrorizes thinkers today. But is it valid for that reason? The battle against utopism has done immeasurable damage, and the doctrinaire omniscience from which it originated has contributed much to that "ingenious" impotence whose representatives swore by the prescriptions even though the course of events rejected those prescriptions hundreds of times.⁹⁶ But official Hegelianism was also raging against the "utopians" and went even a step further than the Marxists by proclaiming that freedom *has already been* realized in the law. It is a sign of authentic redemption that increasingly bolder voices are finally emerging from the ranks of the socialists and attempting to put that displaced "utopia" into its proper place. Nettlau * and Guillaume † destroyed the fairy tale of Bakunin's "utopia."⁹⁷ Brupbacher ‡ crushed the Marx legend.⁹⁸ And a philosophical view may appear that is disposed to make a clean sweep of the utopians of *reality*.

To be sure, utopia has its risks. It can be despicable, especially in

* Max Nettlau, historian of anarchism, the editor of the first volume of the first edition of Bakunin's works (Paris: Stock, 1895).

† James Guillaume, the second editor of the French edition of Bakunin's works (5 vols., 1907–13).

‡ Fritz Brupbacher, political writer active in the Swiss worker's movement and, until 1933, a member of the Swiss communist party. His book *Marx und Bakunin* was published in Munich in 1911.

times of revolutionary tension and atrocious assaults on the masses; it diverts from direct action those noble and valuable strengths that society has claim to. But on the other hand, is the realized thought, or thought in the process of becoming real, itself free? Is it not necessary that a vestige of pure thought remain in the minds of a few thinkers as a reserve of spirit in anticipation of the possible bankruptcy of the individuals who strive for actualities? Are not utopians and even skeptics of actions necessary to insure that humanity does not atrophy and is not slowly immobilized? Are not utopians those very thinkers who again and again show new weapons and ways in the quest for freedom? And are not those great practical minds unjust, obdurate, yes, inhuman to the same degree that dreamers and preoccupied minds, the hopeless idealists, and ideological capons are worldly shy and unrealistic out of excess?

But was Weitling perhaps no utopian at all? His brotherhoods spanned the most important cities of Europe. There is proof of them being in Frankfurt, Leipzig, Zurich, Paris, Brussels, London, Geneva, and Berlin. Perhaps all those French "utopians" and fanatic followers of Jesus were not really utopians at all, but only—French? And perhaps the Young Germans who went to Paris were much less actualizers of great ideas than they were—greedy feeders on the French? * That would be extraordinary!

VI

If Wilhelm Weitling was the founder of German communism, then two Jewish intellectuals, Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx, were to become the founders of German social democracy. The fact that Weitling is nearly forgotten, while (from the Jewish perspective) social democracy is considered "a significant aspect of the German spirit"⁹⁹ is reason enough to recall a few more indispensable facts pertaining to the beginnings of socialism in Germany. I would like to say in advance that it is not my intention to fuel the fires of anti-Semitism and the persecution of the socialists. I would count myself fortunate indeed to be of equal service to social, Jewish, and German emancipation.

The establishment of German social democracy must be viewed initially as a stage in the Jewish struggle for emancipation. Hermann Cohen, the recently deceased champion of German Judaism,

* Ball coins the noun *Franzosenfresser*, the root element of which is derived from the verb *fressen*, "to eat" (of beasts).

has documented the materials that connect the Jewish mind to the German mind since Luther's translation of the Old Testament and Moses Mendelssohn's reforms of ritual. His informative pamphlet *Germanism and Judaism* reveals an alliance between the Jewish concept of the messiah and the Protestant theories of state, an alliance whose extent and significance Cohen himself stresses most vigorously.¹⁰⁰ I fully agree with him that this alliance does in fact exist, and I agree with him when he asserts that the founding of German social democracy must be judged primarily within the context of this alliance. But I do not agree that (the sovereign authority of this type of Jewish-German thought) [it] * will prove to be the salvation of the world and Germany. And I would like to explain why I do not share this opinion.

To begin with, it seems to me that the German participation in this alliance is neither specific nor strong enough. That quasi-German concept of state is much more a product of Lutheran development than of the German people and presupposes Jewish theology. The authoritarian national government that Cohen dates from the Reformation is much more Old Testament, Pauline, and Roman than it is German; it contradicts the sense, if not in fact the letter, of the *New Testament*, and only Luther's faith in the written word, which makes Jewish theology into German theology and Jewish messianism into German messianism, gave it any sanction at all. At that point when proof can be furnished that the "Protestant conception of the state" derives its power from Jewish theology, the imported authority of this principle of state collapses, and its oriental elements—despotism and prostration, isolation under the pretense of being the chosen people, subjugation under a divine abstraction, exploitation by means of egoistic principles—will simply disappear in the face of the real, purely human mission of both Germanism and Judaism.

Hermann Cohen properly views German social democracy as a chief bulwark of this authoritarian alliance. But it was much more. Let us keep in mind the goal that he ascribes to this Jewish-German agreement, namely, to establish an alliance of states with Germany as the focal point and *supreme element*, an alliance that is to establish "world peace and to provide within it the authentic founding of a cultural world!"¹⁰¹ (In as far as Marx succeeded in uniting the Jewish International with the socialistic one and in placing

* The pronoun has been supplied in the 1970 and 1980 editions to bridge the material deleted from the 1919 edition.

German-Jewish messianism at the head of both, and in as far as Lassalle at the same time linked the proletariat to Prussianism, then, hypothetically, the dictatorship of German-Judaism, the Jewish-Junker world rule, was on solid ground. Only the World War was needed to confirm it.¹⁰²)

If you hold the view that the messianic predominance of any nation signifies the peace and welfare of the world, then you will have to support Paul and Luther, the Prusso-Protestant concept of the state and Hegel; you will have to support the Machiavellianism of Fichte and Treitschke, the "German" social democracy of Marx and Lassalle; you will have to support the federal communism of Walter Rathenau and Cohen's metaphysics of the state. But if you hold the opposing view that welfare, freedom, and independence of the individual—not the *exploitation* of the world—is the meaning of this life, then you (cannot expect much from a Prussianized Europe operating under Jewish directive, and) will have to propose this alternative: Christ or Jehovah.

(I have called the establishment of German social democracy a stage in the Jewish struggle for emancipation, and Cohen shares this view. "For the German worker, for the majority of the German people," Cohen wrote, "the historical concept of the Jew will thus be relieved of that stigma through whose recurrent renewal even Lessing's fatherland was occasionally lured onto dangerous side roads."¹⁰³ But while Cohen sees the *merit* of Marx and Lassalle in their recognition and reinforcement of the German idea of the state, I see no reason to forget the price that Europe had to pay for the advances gained by Judaism: the surrender of the social ideal to the messianic, *antisocial*, Prusso-German concept of the state as power and success; the initiation of the most horrible of all wars; the annihilation of twenty million human beings; and the ruination of Germany. It should require no proof at all that socialism relates to German social democracy as freedom relates to its own collapse and to that "freedom within the law" postulated by Hegel and, along with him, by the totality of Protestant philosophy.

In his essay "Aux citoyens rédacteurs du *Réveil*" (1869) Bakunin raised the question to what extent Jewish nature could meet the demands of free socialism.¹⁰⁴

Long before the Christian era, their history had already sent them in an essentially mercantile and bourgeois direction, and it is for this

reason that, seen as a national group, they live preeminently from the work of others and have a natural disinclination toward, and fear of, the national groups, which in general despise them either openly or covertly. The habit of exploitation developed their intelligence to a superb degree, but at the same time it gave them a lamentable tendency toward exclusiveness that contradicts the interests, as well as the instincts, of the proletariat. I am well aware that I expose myself to great dangers by voicing so openly my most intimate thoughts about the Jews. Many others share these views, but only a few venture to express them. The Jewish sect today represents a much more ominous power in Europe than do the Catholic and Protestant Jesuits. They reign despotically in business and finance alike. They control three-quarters of German journalism and a most substantial share of journalism in other countries. Woe to anyone who is clumsy enough to offend them.¹⁰⁵

These remarks will always be served up unjustly by anti-Semites. They go far beyond the mark and look for an explanation only in the relentless war of extermination that the socialistic German Jews of 1870—Hess, Borkheim, and Marx, in occasional alliance with Liebknecht* and even Bebel†—conducted against Bakunin and the federalistic International. Yet it must be admitted that the exploitative and mercantilistic tradition does have a more profound hold on the Jewish mind than even Jews are aware of. Not to be underestimated either is the broader view of this Jewish race, wherein it is not the achievement of the individual that is decisive, but the result to which his conspiratorial work often leads generations later. The individual sacrifices himself for the Jewish ideal. The individual may be revolutionary; he can seem to betray his race, but developments will show that he was responsible to it alone. You cannot judge Marx as a Jew without having experienced how a later Jew, Walter Rathenau, seeks with the proposals of national communism to directly deliver over to subjugation and expropriation those masses that were organized and politicized by Marx and Lassalle.¹⁰⁶

* Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826–1900), German politician and journalist, close friends with Marx and Engels in England, editor of *Vorwärts*, leader of the social democratic party in 1868, and the father of Karl Liebknecht.

† Ferdinand August Bebel (1840–1913), German labor politician and writer, one of the leaders of the social democratic party.

The fervor of Marx as well as Lassalle at the beginning of their careers cannot be denied. But there is no greater contrast imaginable than the contrast between the ideals of the Weitling contingent, to whose forefront they moved, and the positive methods resulting from their own dialectic and authoritarian talents. Yet the political deprivation of rights suffered by a Breslau Jew in the 1840s, as in Lassalle's case, and the analytical intelligence of a mind engendered by a race of rabbis and honed on the Talmud, as in Marx's case, did promise the proletarian movement essentially the greatest assistance. An anti-Semitic state, such as the Prussia of the Junkers, and a commercial context, such as existed in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century, had particular need of Jewish revolutionaries if new heroes of freedom were to continue to emerge. No one felt more deprived of rights than Lassalle, and no one felt more suited to the critique of capital than Marx. A field of action was ready and waiting for the Jewish rebel, especially if he inclined to identify his own emancipation and that of his race with the disenfranchised class, the proletariat. The tough, rebellious fanaticism of Lassalle and Marx's temperament, which cut deeply into problems of domestic economics, both seemed ordained as mutual complements to achieve with equal quantities of political daring and economic acumen the political and social emancipation of both Germanism and Judaism.

How did it come to pass, then, that emancipation not only did not come about, but that a political party took its place, a party that seemed at first to represent the ultimate and most modern principles of social revolution, but that fairly quickly faded away into the middle-class, bureaucratic, and military state? Marx as well as Lassalle guarded against attacking the state and rejected taking any position beyond the scope of official aspirations of power. Marx in particular bitterly persecuted such suspicions when he realized that the dangers inherent in his system had been clearly understood.¹⁰⁷ The German rebels were equally intolerant of Bonapartism and czarism, but they instinctively encouraged Bismarckianism. Theoretically they preached revolution, but on a practical level they flirted with the centralized imperial system and were not about to stand aside when success and big money started pouring in.¹⁰⁸

One of Bakunin's statements pointedly describes this historical situation:

Like some Doctor Faustus these prominent patriots pursued two goals, two contradictory tendencies: they wanted powerful national unity, and they wanted freedom. By striving to combine what is irreconcilable, they hobbled the one thing with the other, until finally, having learned a lesson from their experience, they decided to sacrifice freedom in order to seize political power. And so, it is now the case [1871] that they are busy trying to erect their great Prusso-Teutonic empire on ruins—not the ruins of their freedom, for they were never free, but the ruins of their liberal dreams.¹⁰⁹

CHAPTER FOUR



THE GERMAN-JEWISH CONSPIRACY TO DESTROY MORALITY

I

LASSALLE WAS BORN ON APRIL 11, 1825, in Breslau, where, according to Eduard Bernstein,* Jews were not even formally emancipated until 1848. And, according to Bernstein, the awareness of being Jewish was "most painful" to Lassalle "even in his advanced years."¹ Lassalle's diary was not published until 1890, and it shows that the torment of his Jewish origin governs him and provides the key to his life. When he was fifteen years old he wrote these words: "I could risk my life, like that Jew in Bulwer's *Leila*, to tear the Jews from their present oppression. If I could make them a respected people again, I would not run even from the gallows."² And his fondest dream was "to stand at the head of the Jews, weapons in hand, to make them an independent people." The tortures he speaks of goad him to seek recognition and respect at any price. All his lofty plans are aimed at emancipating the Jews. He handles the so-called strongbox trial of the Countess Hatzfeld† with any and all means at his disposal—spying, innuendo, bribery, slander—to prove to a noble lady, like some Jewish knight, that talent is a more

* Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932), German socialist and writer, a revisionist who advocated evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, paths to Marxian socialism.

† Lassalle took the part of Countess Hatzfeld in a suit against her husband, eventually securing a liberal settlement. However, Lassalle was implicated in the theft of a strongbox containing evidence. This event remained a black mark on his career throughout his life.

decisive factor than the noble birth of the Prussian Junker against whom the proceedings are directed. His passion to cause astonishment with his extraordinary undertakings springs from a consuming hunger for distinction, power, and fame.

Germany has a Jewish Alcibiades in its midst. In 1845 Weitling's followers in Leipzig offer Lassalle their leadership. At thirty-seven years of age he puts himself at the head of the movement, although he himself has nothing in common with its voluntary disavowal of pleasure, power, and fame, or with its communistic intent, not to mention Weitling's concept of Christianity. For his goal in making this movement "a summons to arms for his lofty plans"³ is as typical as the reproach that Marx was able to level against him later: that he either distorted the *Communist Manifesto* or did not understand it.

He had his friend Countess Hatzfeld arrange fanciful meetings with Bismarck, and shortly before the outbreak of the war of 1866, which as fratricidal conflict had no prospect of popularity at all, Lassalle proposed that Bismarck use the means of state to impose universal suffrage and cooperative associations, two proposals that amounted to a blatant breach of faith with the workers' organization that was so blindly devoted to him.⁴ His boundless vanity reveled in the role of Bismarck's intimate, and he had duplicate copies of all his publications sent to Bismarck through the secretariat of the General German Workers' Association in sealed wrappers marked "Personal."⁵ His ambition to become the fiancé of a noble woman shows this unusual Jewish revolutionary fully prepared to convert to Catholicism, to hobnob with ministers of state, and to fight duels with Junkers.⁶ In the most naive fashion he confuses public with personal nobility. He knows no discretion or restraint whenever his "honor" (with Junkers!) and his career (among the Germans!) are at stake. And yet, at the Gotha Union Conference (1875) between Marxists and Lassalleans, two-thirds of the young social democratic party swore allegiance to his name. His diaries exposed the secret of his real plans too late, plans in which the proletariat was to play only the role of his tool, the role of a weapon that he intended to use to deliver thrusts of personal power.

All of us are familiar with the flattery that Lassalle found for the German workers: "You are the rock upon which the edifice of the present will be built!" Or, in more messianic tones: "The German *Volksgeist* is the metaphysical concept of *Volk*, and this is its significance: that the Germans have the *lofty and universally his-*

torical import of shaping out of the *pure spirit* [!] not merely an actual reality for it, but also the sole abodes of its existence, its own unique territory!"⁷ It is even more astounding how much indulgence Eduard Bernstein still musters in 1892 for the questionable nature of Lassalle's dealings with Bismarck. Bismarck himself wrote the following words in 1878: "What could Lassalle have offered and given me! He had nothing behind him! The *do ut des* * is something standing in the background in all political negotiations, even if, for the sake of propriety, one says nothing about it in the meantime." He was certainly correct. But in keeping with the way that "general franchise" and "social legislation" had blunted proletarian opposition, is it fitting to respond to these issues with nearly Lassallean pride: "Lassalle could still offer him something. But the situation was such that it was not enough to sway Bismarck."⁸ (Is it the race that also speaks through Bernstein and tries to offer its protection? With what shameful indulgence it does so!)

Bismarck characterized Lassalle most accurately: "He was one of the most gifted and charming men with whom I have had contact, a man who was ambitious in the grand style, absolutely not a republican. He had a pronounced national and *monarchistic* disposition. The ideal he strove for was the German Empire, and we were on common ground there. Perhaps he was uncertain whether the German Empire was to conclude with the Hohenzollern dynasty or *with the dynasty of Lassalle*, but his disposition was monarchistic through and through."⁹ Mehring adds on this point, moreover, that Bismarck came out second best during these conferences, and his attempts to drink out of the same cup with socialism (of course Lassalle was trying the same thing with Bismarck) ended with Bismarck getting nothing but the dregs.¹⁰ But that is just idle talk; socialism does tend to brag when it is under the influence of idealism.¹¹ Lassalle's weaknesses simply cannot be covered up. He himself admitted: "I do not know, although I do have revolutionary-democratic-republican ideas like any one of them, yet I do feel that in Count Lavagna's place [in Schiller's drama *Fiesko*] I would have done as he did, and I would not have been satisfied with being Genoa's leading citizen. I would have reached out for the diadem itself. And it follows, on closer inspection, that I am purely an *egoist*. Had I been born a prince or sovereign, I would be an aristocrat life and limb."¹² And at the end of his career he remarked: "Oh

* "I give so that you may give," signifying the pragmatics of self-interest in mutually beneficial negotiations.

how little you * are *au fait* in me. I wish for nothing more passionately than to be rid of all politics. I am tired of politics, sated with politics. Naturally I would burn as passionately as ever for the same things if serious opportunities were to arise, of *if I had the power* or saw some means of *capturing* it, some means that *suited me* [!]; for nothing can be done without supreme power."¹³

This frame of mind is not to be taken as some fleeting fit of depression, or as a joke. It expresses Lassalle's disappointment over the failure of his most personal plans for power. This attitude was an intimate force in Lassalle's life and even lived on in his party after his death, when the executor of his will, Countess Hatzfeld, attempted (in the most duplicitous fashion) to play the party into the hands of the government.¹⁴

(There is no reason to be surprised now about Scheidemann and the governing committee of the party, since the heroes of German socialism themselves bred corruption.†) Heine's comment that the Prussian government knew how to gain advantage even from its revolutionaries certainly hits home in the case of Lassalle. Lassalle was aware of it and wrote to Marx: "You seem to have looked at Prussian justice in a much too rosy light. I have had different experiences with these fellows. When I think of the decade of daily judicial murder that I have experienced, I see red, and I choke with rage!"¹⁵ Nonetheless, he was unable to decide to break fully with this system and to take sides with the people. On the contrary, when the question of the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein was at issue in 1863, he urged that Prussia ought to tear up the London protocol with "revolutionary resolve" and throw the pieces into the faces of the major European powers.¹⁶ And before the same judges who were still practicing that "daily judicial murder," he said: "However extensive the differences that separate us may be, I will join with you in defending the ancient vestal fire of civilization, the state, against those contemporary barbarians."¹⁷

In 1866 war against Austria was in the offing, and Bebel declared

* The antecedent of the German formal pronoun *Sie* is unclear.

† Philipp Scheidemann (1865–1939) was second in command to Friedrich Ebert (1871–1925) in the Social Democratic party, which carried the day in the German congress on December 19, 1918, when the congress (1) defeated a motion to make the conciliar principle the foundation of the new German government, and (2) advanced by one month (from February 16 to January 19, 1919) the election for the Constituent Assembly. Thus the German revolution was brought to an end. Germany was not to become a soviet republic (on the pattern of Russia), but a bourgeois republic with some socialist overtones.

his opposition to it in a meeting of progressives and national unionists who were expressing their views that one ought not to be so hesitant, perhaps something quite different could result from the war than its leaders might imagine. What might result? The revolution or a greater imperial Germany? The *Sozialdemokrat*, the organ of the General German Workers' Association, offered Prussia a pact to establish a "free and unified Germany." J. B. von Schweitzer, Lassalle's successor, who denounced his German comrades outside of Germany as Bismarck's spies, stressed, according to Mehring, that "he and the workers of his persuasion stood on Prussia's side with regard to foreign countries."¹⁸ Of the two prevalent factions, the Lassalleans reproached the Eisenachers, saying that they were not taking the proletarian class struggle seriously, that they were only "semisocialists." But the Eisenachers got their revenge by publishing this gibe in their *Volksstaat*: "If there had been no Lassalle, Bismarck would have been forced to invent him."¹⁹

Lassalle sought (as a Jew) to make an arrangement with the Protestant liberalistic tradition (of his native land), and this attempt gave his arguments a certain foundation and weight, and gave impetus to his enthusiasm. He seems to have found the balanced image of his aspiration and talent in his attachment to Ulrich von Hutten and Franz von Sickingen—those two sixteenth-century chivalric heroes who offered Luther an alliance against the pope on behalf of a united Germany—and in his sympathetic predilection for Fichte and Hegel, those speculative Machiavellians. In his verse drama *Franz von Sickingen* (1859) Lassalle, that motley socialist, revealed himself to be everything that he would not have dared to be as a rebel in pursuit of freedom: an apologist for reason, an apostle of the sword, and a monarchist. "Venerable Sir! How poorly you understand history. You are quite right, reason is its content," he allows himself to perceive in Hegelian fashion. And there is this to consider: after he has had Oekolampadius (a pseudonym for Weitling?) speak of the desecration of the doctrine of love with the sword, he offers a "panegyric on the sword" that would bring joy to the hearts of Bismarck and the Pan-Germanists of all ages. Here is the conclusion of the speech:

Through the ages the sword has brought about
 All magnificence that history ever saw,
 And all greatness that was, or ever will be made,
 Owes all its glory to the flashing blade.²⁰

A pretty enough prophecy of 1871 and of the magnificence whose final witnesses we have become today. That Bismarck in his diary hit the nail on the head when he called this man no republican, but a monarchist, is verified by Sickingen's words to Hutten:

What we want . . .
 Is a single, great and powerful Germany

 Founded solidly on the forceful thrust
 Of these times, rooted in its depths and soul,
 This—an evangelical head as emperor at the front
 Of the great kingdom.²¹

Monarchists in France may cite reasons that are open to debate. The French kingdom did give Joan of Arc and French literature to the world. In Germany, however, it may well cost much more effort to acquire a taste for monarchy. And when some ambitious adventurer puts himself at the helm of a group of Weitling's followers without even bothering to discuss the principles of their founder, then, ultimately, even historians of socialism in Germany ought to tell the youth that, unfortunately, a pseudorebel was one of the movement's earliest leaders.

II

Lassalle may have had a German tradition for himself, but Marx, typically, broke with that tradition and looked to France and England for new principles. The Jewish struggle for emancipation finds in Marx a representative of incomparably more profound and fundamental significance. It almost appears that Judaism was absorbed into the figure of Marx. But that is only an illusion.

Marx started out as a student of law and philosophy. In 1842 he was still intending to qualify as a lecturer in philosophy. When the *venia legendi** was withdrawn from his fellow student and friend, Bruno Bauer, the twenty-four-year-old Marx took up journalism as the editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*. (His career as intellectual and revolutionary, Jew and Prussian, pamphletist and organizer begins at that point.)

In Marx's case the Jewish problem emerges not only more pro-

* Permission to participate in academic affairs.

foundly and forcefully, but also more complexly in nature and in scope than it did with Lassalle. It cannot be judged according to his individual statements and works, but springs from the relationship between his personality and the intellectual and political situation of his times, indeed, of his century. Marx's sympathies and animosities are often much more telling than his own admissions, and we would sorely underestimate the work of a man who became one of the most influential leaders of his country if we were to concentrate more on his pretensions than on the political context in which he stood.

Marx emerges with his stormy temperament at the time of Young Germany. Fully under the spell of Hegelian doctrines, never calling into question their Talmudic dialectic, their theological doctrine of authority and their abstractive methods of subordination, he attempts, under the influence of Bauer and Feuerbach, to establish with Hegelian tools a realistic antithesis to Hegelian philosophy: a world of relentless negation in the realm of politics as well as in economics and religion; a world of materiality as opposed to a theological, idealistic theodicy; a world of revolt against an overindulged state, of knowledge against faith, of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. His doctrinaire contradiction, his ordained antithetical system forced him into a violence and opposition that cannot be justified today. Polarities such as materiality and idealism, knowledge and faith, proletariat and bourgeoisie hardly exist any more in the sharp-edged fashion in which Marx's method presented them. And we no longer revere critique and negation for their own sake. But the denial of affirmation, the contradiction that stood for rebelliousness, was nevertheless new and valuable to a time that could in fact still stand gaping with a silly grin of satisfied wonder at total destruction.

Issues of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* show the Young German Marx to be a penetrating and self-confident fighter. Politically it was inconceivable that he could be more radical. In addition to the most virulent attacks on the monarchy, there is an almost cynical contempt for anyone who allows himself to be ruled. Marx's full hate and disgust, the issue of the Romantic cult of genius, is directed at the "philistine state" of Friedrich Wilhelm IV. "The philistine world is a political animal kingdom, and if we are compelled to recognize its existence, then there is nothing left to do but simply grant the status quo." "The world belongs to the philistine, and we must study these world masters with greatest care. There is

nothing to stop us from taking our critique to the critique of politics, to partisanship in politics, and hence, to actual battles."²²

Louis Blanc was right when he said that it was a commendable plan. But did Marx follow it? Did he study "the masters of the world," the philistines? He did analyze the beginnings of Friedrich Wilhelm as the attempt of a shrewd monarch to preserve the philistine state on his own terms, an attempt that failed and led straight back to the old state of servant and slave. But then Marx concluded that philistinism was rooted only in ownership, and that the secularization of privileges by means of the proletariat would displace even philistinism. This purely economic conception of the "bourgeois" underestimated the force of ideology and overlooked the fact that only the *renunciation* of possessions has the moral power to put an end to philistinism; this economic conception became his gospel. And he carried the analysis of bourgeois power, capital, to its resolution. Yet nowhere did Marx touch on that essential "indolence of the world" that Hebbel's *Kandaules** was to warn of decades later. Nor did he touch on any aspect of the actual ideological causes of the German-Austrian philistine state, with its millenium-long Sleeping Beauty tradition that owed its existence not to ownership, but to the specific German vices of spiritual indolence and drunkenness and to the moral quietism of medieval dogmas under which the Holy Roman Empire, since the time of Olim, had lain fallow and neglected. How could there be any serious talk of political or social revolution before religious philistinism was exposed? Or before the fairy tale of a dead, crucified God was cleared away and divine activity resurrected? Schopenhauer, then Nietzsche, were the first Germans to attempt to write the critique of moral philistinism. But a program such as Marx's "self-awareness of the times about their own conflicts and aspirations" necessarily had to remain superficial as long as "conflict" was understood on the level of the economic conflict of classes, and "aspirations" were conceived in terms of the distribution of profits. Much more than critical powers are needed now to jolt the world out of its sleep, before steps can be taken today toward any changes. And this is the reason why only garbled noise was left over from all the revolutionary shouting that filled the air before Bismarck's time.

Marx saw one thing, that Germany was stuck infinitely far be-

* A major character in Friedrich Hebbel's *Gyges und sein Ring* (1856), one of the most poetic of his plays. *Kandaules* is sacrificed to reaction because he is a liberal, far-seeing king.

hind the other nations. He saw that Germany had not even reached the point where France had been in 1789, and that Germany had never joined in any modern revolution, but instead had had a share in the restorations of other nations. "I admit that shame does not exist yet in Germany; on the contrary, those who suffer most are still patriots." "Germanomania has even gone into raw materials. In England and France the problem is political economics or the rule of society over resources; in Germany the problem is seen as national economics, or the rule of personal property over nationality."²³ Only philosophy, and, of course, Hegelian philosophy, met with his approval. For Marx, it is "the only German concern standing *al pari* with the official and contemporary world."²⁴ To be sure, it was not Hegelian philosophy, at least it was not recognized *al pari* in Paris, and Paris at that time had the last word on the ultimate value of philosophies. But it did in any case offer the possibility of an antithetical system of unreason, which, erected to Hegelian proportions, *could* have stood *al pari* with historical developments in Europe.²⁵ And though neither Marx, nor Bauer, nor Feuerbach provided such a system, they, as doctrinaire atheists, materialists, and anthropomorphists, did succeed in comprehending fundamentally the English and French enlightenment, but not the new Christian spirit that the suffering of the proletariat in England and France was calling into being. Marx made the same mistake that Heine had made. Filled with Hegel and Feuerbach, Marx overestimated Protestant philosophy as the point of departure of revolution. Germany's political situation, torn and split as it was, in no way paralleled situations in France and England. Even now philosophies and systems have no real roots at all in the German people. To assume, as Marx did, that philosophical theories will seize the masses and thus gain power is to make empty promises or to deceive oneself.²⁶

The stance of the young Marx toward religion is much more informative than his stance toward the nation and toward philosophy. Religion led him into a polemic with Bauer on the Jewish question and compelled him to formulate his deepest convictions. His essay "Zur Judenfrage" (On the Jewish Question) in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* is of exceptional significance to any proper evaluation of Marx. In his *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte* (Critique of Protestant History, 1841), Bauer had emphasized that the world ruler in Rome, who represented all rights and carried the power of life and death on his lips, was a close brother to the Lord

of Protestant history, who could tame nature or strike down his enemies with a single breath and who had proclaimed himself the ruler of the earth and judge of the world—a hostile brother, but a brother nevertheless.²⁷ Bauer's critique comes suspiciously close to the ruling god Jehovah of the Old Testament, the avenging, punishing God of the Jews. In his *Essence of Christianity* (1841), Ludwig Feuerbach exhaustively analyzed the Jewish religion as a religion of selfish interest.

The Jews have maintained their religious idiosyncrasies up to the present. Their principle, their god, is the most practical principle of the world; their central principle is egoism, egoism in the form of religion. Egoism is the god who does not permit harm to come to his servants. Egoism is essentially monotheistic, for it has only one end, namely, itself. Egoism gathers in and focuses the energies of human beings on themselves, but it makes them narrow-minded in theoretical matters because it breeds indifference to everything that does not relate directly to the welfare of the self.²⁸

In turn, Bauer held that Jews cannot be emancipated as long as they remain Jews. But that is an extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, proposition for the Jews to accept, Bauer continued, for they have always been opposed to historical progress, and in their animosity toward all peoples have shaped the most quixotic and confined national existence, the religion of which is one of beastly slyness and cunning.²⁹

Jewish religion and separatism were profoundly compromised by such a critique and perspective; hence there is to be found in Marx's polemic with Bauer a certain desperate leap from the tradition of his fathers, a leap Marx undertakes on the premise that the critique of religion is the prerequisite of all critique. Without accepting the humanistically inclined attitude of Feuerbach, who intended to draw off Jewish elements from official Christianity with the redeemed love of one person for another, that is, with elements taken from the New Testament, Marx cast off religion as a category like some worn-out garment without finding any substitute in freedom, equality, and brotherhood—terms he later proclaimed to be his catchwords. For him, religion is the "fantastic realization of humanity," "the opium of the people," for "human suffering achieves expression" in religion, "and at the same time, religion lulls consciousness to sleep"; the dissolution of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is necessary for their actual happiness.³⁰ But

there is more to be said. Marx also turns against the compromised economic and egoistic presuppositions of this religion, the "temporal basis of Judaism, the broker" and his "worldly god, money."³¹ He exposes in Judaism a "general, current, antisocial element" that has grown even more dangerous since even Christianity has reverted to Judaism and the practical Christians have once more become Jews. He encounters the "illusory nationality of the Jews," the nationality of moneymen and merchants, and at the end of this self-laceration Marx ultimately arrives at this conclusion: "The social emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of society from Judaism." (Thus he became an apostate, but we can only wish that this ultimate candor were characteristic of members of every race.)

It is important to my investigation to show that Marx's critique of capital, according to his own conception, was to be originally a critique of Judaism; and it is important to emphasize that his 1844 essay "On the Jewish Question" deals not only with the religious, but also with the economic, issues attending the political *emancipation of the Jews*. His irreligiosity and his emergence in opposition to capital are the concessions of a Jew, who, since he is compelled to sacrifice his own religion and the financial mania of his race, is determined to offer up *every* religion and *every type* of ownership.³²

Marx does not acknowledge a distinction between Old and New Testament. Any form of *Christianity* directed against the state, or at least constituted outside the influences of the state, like the form postulated by Weitling and Tolstoy, is the furthest thing from his mind. Separating church and state without pitting one against the other is enough for him. And thus he tries to convince us that "where the state is a political state without a state religion," the Jewish question "completely loses its theological character and becomes a temporal issue."³³

The question as to how the Jews are to be "emancipated," how the bias against them is to be broken, leads him enthusiastically to communism, to which he gives a decidedly material, amoral, and antireligious twist. He is astute enough to turn not only against privileged religion, the "Christian state" (and, unfortunately, more against Christianness than against the state), but also against privileged capital. It is his hope, as if such optimism itself were not open to serious charges, to be able to prepare the elements of a new state within the Prussian, universal conception of the state, in which science would displace theology, and scholars would replace rabbis.³⁴

Just as the Reformation was begun on a theoretical basis, so, too, is the revolution of the future to begin on theoretical ground. This revolution is to emanate from the proletariat, indeed from the industrial proletariat that was already, in part at least, militarized by industrialization. The proletariat is to secularize capital and the means of production; the atheistic proletariat simultaneously will sweep away the Jewish religion, and, thus, the Jewish problem, and financial institutions. The assault is not on industry, the machine, or depersonalization by means of the division of labor, but only on the control of these elements by an even more intangible element—privileged capital, money.

Marx sets to work with a feverish scholarly flurry. Proudhon's critique of ownership was a "kind of revelation" for him. Babeuf and Owen, Saint-Simon and Fourier* replace Hegel. And Marx is writing these words in his letters: "I do not favor planting a dogmatic flag, on the contrary. We must try to help the dogmatists clarify their statements."³⁵ And yet he writes that religious and political issues were to be given "self-aware human form." He found that "communism as taught by Cabet, Dezamy, Weitling, and others, is a dogmatic abstraction."³⁶ Yet later he himself became more intolerant of dissenters than the pope. Whereas the proletariat in Germany "begins to come into existence first through the impinging industrial movement," Marx reaches the view that political economics, and it alone, makes possible the analysis of middle-class society, and he sees in gross material production the birthplace of all history.³⁷

Extraordinarily enough, this revolutionary without a revolutionizable nation shows an interest in industrial centralization because it will create a German proletariat; Marx is working toward this condition because he needs a centralized proletariat for the emancipation he dreams of. According to Brupbacher's trenchant phrasing, Marx becomes the "economic psychoanalyst" and the "technical brains" of the workers' movement, and even though French and English class struggles provide him more basis than the German one, he feels little gratitude toward them and even a certain amount of animosity, particularly toward his French teachers.³⁸ Purely intellectual interests, not love, stand in the foreground. Marx follows the dictates of his ambition to be an authority and leader, not those

* Claude Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825), French philosopher considered by some to be the founder of French socialism. François Marie Charles Fourier (1772–1837), French socialist, originator of the cooperative social system.

of the human heart and the belief in human rights.³⁹ Pleasure in his own mentality replaces religion for him, and he seeks to avenge the pricks of apostasy through malicious, sarcastic, and even insidious polemic whenever his holy of holies, his vanity, feels wounded.⁴⁰

Driven from Paris, Marx assumed the leadership of the followers of Weitling and Buonarrotti in Brussels in 1845. Paradoxical as Lassalle's summons by the followers of Weitling was, that the conspiratorial leadership of the communist trade union in Brussels should be given to Marx is just as paradoxical. "You know," he gossips in Berlin in 1848, "I now head such a well-disciplined, socialist secret society that if I tell one of the members, 'murder Bakunin,' he would in fact do so."⁴¹ Weitling's primitive Christianity, stressing the infinite significance of the individual and freedom, was cut off on the one side by a tyrannical Jewish scholar in love with abstractions and weakened on the other by an ambitious Jewish flagellant! And both were doctrinaires of the state and were systematic absolutarians of Hegelian origin who stood in profound inner contradiction to the consciousness of brotherhood that was beginning to flourish in Weitling's circles in the 1840s.⁴²

Knowledge, when it emerges as the highest principle, necessarily kills enthusiasm, the spirit, and that human instinct flowing from irrational sources that is capable of discovering the most simple resolution of conflicts. Knowledge multiplies problems, but rapture resolves and simplifies them. Knowledge cripples and confuses; rapture strengthens and liberates. Under Marx's leadership, knowledge became the tabernacle of the World Spirit, and as its exalted resident and owner, Karl Marx became the founder of a doctrine that has become as sacrosanct as the exclusive, beatifying beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Yet Weitling tells us this: "All we poor sinners also believe in God although we do not talk much about it and do not often pray to Him. Yet, what do we know of God? Nothing."⁴³ And this is the solution of the problem: "self-awareness of the times about its own conflicts and aspirations."⁴⁴ Weitling has yet more to say: "Christ is a prophet of freedom; he teaches freedom and love. This Christ must be the friend and brother of all us poor sinners; he is not some supernatural, incomprehensible being, but is like us, and subject to the same weaknesses."⁴⁵ And the motto "All men are brothers," which appeared in twenty languages on the London membership cards of the Communist Workers Union, became the slogan "Proletarians of all nations, unite!"⁴⁶

Following the facile dismissal of dissatisfied rivals, the workers' movement remained, as Mehring points out, "dimly, if at all, illuminated by Christian socialism." When Marx and Engels presented their *Communist Manifesto* to the London congress in 1841, they knew (according to Mehring) that "in strenuous class struggles nothing would be accomplished with that weak and insecure frame of mind the philistines called their human compassion and moral indignation."⁴⁷ "They showed no traces of sentimentality." But then, it is a philistine phrase that says of them: "They loved the bright laughter of the child's world; nothing pleased them so much about Christ in the Bible as his friendly disposition toward children."⁴⁸

In Marx's view commodities were identical to labor, and labor was identical to commodities. For him the revolutionary class was "the greatest force of production among all the instruments of production."⁴⁹ He even calculated the maintenance costs of livestock among the production costs of goods, like any crafty capitalist. Freedom, equality, and brotherhood were intangibles and as such necessarily threw his accounts off, and you can even say that Marx was the first German to help give theoretical expression to the concept of "human materiel."

Was the materialism represented by such a point of view "revolutionary," a protest? Marx supplied palpable concepts not only to the workers' movement, but also to a censured capitalism. And it is certainly well worth noting that, according to Freiligrath's * testimony, when *Das Kapital* appeared in 1867, "many young merchants and *factory owners* on the Rhine greeted it with enthusiasm."⁵⁰ Marx's impenetrable style had made the book a closed mystery to workers who did not have a classical, high-school education.

III

Did Marx actually betray the religion of his fathers? Did not his spiritual materialism, that disillusioning way of looking at things that he called critique, remain Jewish in the conventional † sense? And is there not reflected in it more the perspective of the factory

* Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810–1876), German politically and socially engaged poet, who, with Karl Marx, assumed the editorship of the *Neue rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne.

† The 1970 and 1980 editions add emphasis to this word.

owner than the viewpoint of the worker? To be sure, in the *Communist Manifesto* he demanded the expropriation of the "bourgeoisie" and the transference of the machinery of production to the proletariat. As long as the oppositions were as sharply evident as they were in the first half of the nineteenth century, these demands were indispensable principles of social revolution. But he also wrote of the "compulsion to do work" and "the armies of workers."⁵¹ And if you turn these around they become "compulsory labor" and "workers' armies." Where was his insurrectionist party destined to lead if he permitted the monopoly of the state to remain intact? Where, then, when he could claim in 1847 that the feudalism of the bourgeois had been "beaten to the ground,"⁵² while indeed a few decades later this very feudalism was to establish a military power, baptized with the name of Bismarck, that was to set all the continent trembling; or when Marx in 1871 even urged taking up parliamentary struggles on behalf of the bourgeois state he had so fiercely attacked earlier?⁵³

Marx dissected the mechanisms of manufacturing, finance, and the marketplace. He was a scintillating analyst of the economic system. Yet his dual classification of proletariat and middle class took no account of the Junkers who would soon gain power over both. Indeed, from the moment the sovereign Junker state in Germany, by means of suffrage and inclusive social legislation, permitted the proletariat to emerge as members of the middle class and as public officials, in order to gain the proletariat for the army, from that moment on the factory worker as well as Marx's system simply ceased to embody the principles of freedom.⁵⁴

From the very beginning Marx's International had nothing to do with freedom, religion, or morals. It was an organization devoted to economic interests and the labor market, and it embodied a doctrine of the *state κατ' ἐξοχὴν*.* (What preoccupied Marx was, according to his own words, that "chimeric nationality of the Jews," the International of moneymen and businessmen.) Placing commodities above religious and ideological needs, matter above spirit—this overestimation of the salesman, which emerged with the pretensions of philosophy although it had nothing to do with the realm of ideas—this transvaluation of all values† is his real achievement. His International is neither the Christian organization of Weitling nor the Bakunin ideal of freedom and humanity founded on the

* *Kat exochen*, "in every respect, preeminently."

† *Diese Umwertung aller Werte*. A Nietzschean phrase and concept.

solidarity of labor. It was an International of market quotes and purchasing power, of moral destruction.⁵⁵ It aimed at doing away with quality and gallantry, at leveling national and personal individuality. This thought emerges as its cynical, governing conviction: profit rules the world. Profit is the World Soul.

Problems are the same throughout the world, according to Marx. With the burgeoning of industry the African tribal chief and the telegraph agent in Stockholm both have their little roles to play. In America, England, and Russia, according to Marx, "capital" determines the ultimate goals of the nation—grain grown here or there smells the same, tastes the same, and differs only in price.⁵⁶ Marx is far from drawing the conclusion from this universal materiality he believed he had recognized that this condition must be alleviated, alleviated to be sure by means of the opposite force—universal spirituality. Instead, he pledges himself to it and becomes its prophet. In concerning himself with giving exhaustive documentation of this materiality and in affirming it as a principle of history, he does indeed become one of the most deadly enemies of the people, for he corrupts the last source of moral strength: poverty, the proletarians.

⟨The disdain of making cultural and moral distinctions between peoples, which is so characteristic of Marx, is not just a quirk in the systematic thought of some German Jew.⟩ The Marxist International arose out of the desperation of a German patriot who saw that his people did not stand on the economic or moral heights enjoyed by the rest of Europe, a patriot who, through a general equalization, had everything to win and nothing to lose.⁵⁷ ⟨But disinterestedness in national moral issues, that typical anationalism of the Jew, is doubly unfortunate for us Germans, those of us who have never devoted much energy to national or human emancipation.⁵⁸⟩

Marx completely misunderstood the great Christian movement that followed the appearance of Napoleon. With hairsplitting precision he analyzed the material situation of the factory worker, but he denied him any vestige of soul or the power to assert himself against the devaluation of human personality in an authoritarian state. He coldly destroyed any notion of freedom, to the great advantage of the state and entrepreneurship. In considering only quantity and size, he introduced into the proletariat the same nihilistic, fragmenting spirit that ruled the world of finance. Marx did revolutionize systems of knowledge, but not persons. His impatient atti-

tude toward individualism, which had asserted itself in the workers' movement, could only work to confuse enthusiasm, and it became awesome once the individual, engulfed in policies based on commercial interests, began to lose sight of his human mission.

There was no lack of warning about this "philosophy" of dictatorially greedy necessity, particularly since this view renounced moral and political idealism. In early 1868, at the same time that Marx's *Kapital* appeared in print and the International was holding its first congress, Michael Bakunin wrote the following words in a letter to Chassin's *Démocratie européenne* in Paris:

I, too, regret the delusion of that workers' faction in Europe (let us hope that its number is not too large) that imagines that it better serves its material interests the more it refrains from any intervention in the political issues of its country and believes that it will be able to achieve economic equality and justice in other ways than by means of freedom. Equality without freedom is a wicked fiction devised by liars to deceive blockheads. Equality without freedom is the mark of the despotism of the state. Our greatest teacher of all, Proudhon, says in his magnificent book *Justice in Revolution and in the Church* that the most unfortunate combination that could arise would be the union of socialism and absolutism—the striving of the people for economic emancipation and material prosperity with the dictatorship and the concentration of all political and social powers in the state. May the future protect us from the patronage of despotism. May the future also preserve us from the accursed consequences and stupefaction of doctrinaire or state socialism. Let us always be socialists, but never a people driven in herds. . . . Let us seek justice, every political, economic, and social justice, but only by the means of freedom. Nothing vital and human can flourish outside of freedom, and any type of socialism that would cast off freedom or not acknowledge it as its single creative principle and foundation would lead us directly into slavery and into bestiality.⁵⁹

What was Marx's attitude toward political freedom? What was the situation of the Jews in the "Christian-Germanic" state? We cite Mehring, one of the most competent voices on this issue:

The Christian-Germanic state mishandled, suppressed, and persecuted the Jews while at the same time condoning, promoting, even courting them. In the eighteenth century Old Fritz [Friedrich II] had stripped the Jews of all their rights, but at the same time he had

granted them extensive protection, primarily to encourage "business, commerce, manufacture, and factories." The philosophical king granted immunity from Christian bankers to those financial Jews who helped him in his counterfeiting and his other suspect financial manipulations. . . . In the '40s of the previous [the nineteenth] century Friedrich Wilhelm IV harassed the Jews with all possible annoyances, but economic development nonetheless promoted Jewish capital. And it began to take control of the ruling classes and to crack the whip over the subjugated masses, over the proletariat, in the form of industrial capital, and over the vast majority of small property holders and petty bourgeois in the form of interest capital.⁶⁰

Feuerbach opposed Judaism, calling it "the religion of selfish interest." In his essay "The Jewish Question" Marx pledged to take up the pen against the "Jewish capitalism" that was flourishing under imperial sanction. But it was a precarious situation. It was necessary to attack both imperial patronage and capital, if anything was to be done about the latter. To form a front against the "philistine state" would only split the issue, and referring to the "Christian"-Germanic state would ultimately amount only to diverting attention from the much more essential Jewish-Germanic conception of the state, which was more and more intent upon shaping the foundation of Prussianism. (Marx, that miscarried professor, decided to attack privileged property and to let imperial patronage take its own course.)

A passage in Marx's critique of Proudhon's "The Philosophy of Poverty" is crucial to his view of the relationship of money to the sovereign. For Proudhon, gold and silver had become money through the sovereign ordination bestowed on metals by the imprint of the monarch's seal. Proudhon's system was anarchistic. To him the abolition of money also meant the abolition of the monarchy and the state. Marx, on the contrary, stressed that "one had to lack all historical knowledge in order not to know that sovereigns always had to sanction economic affairs but have never dictated the law to them. Political, as well as civil, legislation proclaims and records only the volition of economic providence.[!] The law is but the official recognition of this fact."⁶¹

In these statements is to be found more than a Marxian superlativism that exaggerates in fact the results of the critique of French economy; there is also implicit here the total misunderstanding of the Prussian dynasty, which after Friedrich II had determined to

play providence on its own (and to call upon its precious, monied Jews to just that end.) And here, too, is to be found that proclivity of the later Marx and Marxists to represent the monarchy, in spite of its monstrous theological and military underpinning, as some transient apparition *dependent* on capital. Yet, they neglect to point out the following facts. First, in certain states the monarch is the major landowner and capitalist; second, as a result, finance takes the greatest interest in maintaining the dynasty; and third, the dynasty consequently promotes capitalistic exploitation with all the means of power and entitlements of representation at its disposal. The one-sided animosity toward industrial capital (shown by some Jew who was lenient toward the agrarian, Junker dynasty) left itself open to interpretation by Bismarck as a special gesture of meekness and loyalty. And even if Marx did refuse to work on the official government bulletin—the job was in fact offered to him⁶²—a publication by the Prussian minister of the press, Otto Hamann, has revealed that the Prusso-German government even under Caprivi * quite consciously condoned Marxist opposition to industrial concerns and that, moreover, one of the grounds for Bismarck's dismissal was in fact his shortsighted terrorism with regard to social democracy.⁶³

Marx's campaign focused on (Jewish mobility within proletarian society, following) the elimination of the two greatest obstacles, "bourgeois" ideology (alias morals) and officially sanctioned religion (alias Christianity). But why fight the state itself, which in Germany represents coercive power unrivaled elsewhere? And why attack only the monarchy (that first of all offers protection to the Jews and would later disappear of its own accord?) Is not the monarchy just a fortuitous form of government? And does it not actually help make the masses pliant, training them to be willing instruments that *any* authority can command, even a scholar, if he knows how to combine the gestures of a true friend of humanity with the appearances of profoundest rebellion?

Marx opposed capital, but he did so within an indulgent monarchy whose decreed authority caused him little unrest in spite of a correspondent like Lassalle.⁶⁴ Yes, he sympathizes with the official activities of the Junker state. If they furthered the centralism that

* Count Leo von Caprivi (1831–99), German chancellor (1890–94) who succeeded Bismarck after his fall (March 20, 1890). Otto Hamann (1852–1929), German journalist and government official who served as head of the public relations division of the German Foreign Office and defended Caprivi's policies.

Marx needed for his doctrine of impoverishment, they also helped to shift the major weight of the workers' movement toward Germany. And at that point he *was conspiring* with Lassalle, who, in any case, was promising to make what use he could of the Prussian spirit for the organization of the "revolutionary" masses of workers. But even if the revolution did not deliver what it first had promised—did it not come to pass that Hermann Cohen in 1915 (see his previously cited work) *charged the state loyalty* of Marx and Lassalle to the anti-Semitic autocracy?

The historical development of political Marxism deserves closer attention. According to the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847, "the Communist Party, as soon as the bourgeoisie becomes revolutionary, can still fight as an ally with the bourgeois against the absolute monarchy, feudal landed property, and the petty bourgeoisie."⁶⁵ But in 1848, as the German Revolution began to take on serious proportions, Marx and Engels turned not toward Berlin, but stayed literarily occupied in a less dangerous location (Cologne), launched decrees against Herwegh's "revolutionary horseplay" in Baden, and spun out intrigues against the "Pan-Slavism" of Bakunin, the first European in Prague to espouse the dissolution of Prussia, Austria, and Turkey.⁶⁶

The passage cited above from the *Communist Manifesto* seems to have been Marx's concession to the strong democratic currents within the emigrant movement. For in 1843, while studying Weiting's *Garantien*, Marx already was undertaking the separation that Bakunin fought against (see the citation above from Bakunin's letter to Chassin) as a flight from political intervention: "That Germany has a classical calling for social revolution matching its inability to effect political revolution." And in his 1847 polemic with Proudhon, he denied the autonomous power of sovereigns who, as the result of an end-oriented internal politics and an alliance with the worst romantic forces of reaction, were at that very moment in Prussia dispensing decrees more capriciously and self-confidently than was being done anywhere else.⁶⁷

Under the lasting impression of the events of 1849 Marx moved even more decisively away from "political intervention." And why was this so? Does the hopelessness of a situation justify the renunciation of taking necessary positions? And even if it is correct, to borrow Marx's own words, that a political revolution without its social counterpart "leaves the pillars of the house standing," it is no less correct that a social revolution without a political one—at

least as long as things stay only on theoretical levels—hoists only half a flag. But both revolutions are worthless, in fact impossible, without the *moral* revolution, and Marx would hear nothing of that.

“The result of the movements of 1848–49,” Brupbacher writes, “was that after this period, Marx, in harshest contrast to Bakunin, no longer believed in the possibility of an imminent revolution.”⁶⁸ It was more important to test carefully the principles of freedom and to guard them against any elements standing in their way or threatening them. The stronger the Prussian state became, the more it became a matter of disavowing it as clearly and energetically as possible, and the more it became a question of raising questions not only about its economic, but also about its politico-moral, foundations—that is, of analyzing the *dangers* of the movement toward unity and centralization that had begun to emerge (clearly) after 1848.

Marx did not acknowledge this task. He bitterly persecuted all the ideas that were relevant to it and that had been brought forth after 1868 within the International. With every permitted and forbidden means at his disposal, he turned against the federalistic-anarchistic impulse in the same way he turned against the Christian ideal of charity. “The democrats turn the word *Volk* into some kind of holy essence, and we have done the same thing with the word ‘proletariat!’” With that Marx aspired to have turned against the “catchword of the revolution,” against the bourgeois concepts of freedom, equality, and fraternity, to which, according to the will of the “bourgeois socialists,” the proletariat was supposed to be “elevated.” Thus, he probably shared the anarchist view that the proletariat would have to produce from within itself new, simplified, more humane social forms. And preserving the proletariat could have no other sense than that, if class-conscious proletariat was not to be synonymous with class-conscious lack of freedom, class-conscious lack of education, and class-conscious misery. Philosophically one can play off the primitivism of an ill-defined stratum of humanity that has been deprived of its rights against a degenerate, uprooted, oppressive, and exploitative society—but is that not a frivolous game? Is not the elevation of humanity the great task of socialism? Erecting the *dictatorship* of the proletariat means renouncing emancipation, seizing on methods of force, and destroying the fundamentals of society. We have the lessons of Bolshevism before us. Proposing the *seizure of political power* (that is, vanquishing an exhausted political system) means renouncing

the most inherent moral powers of the masses; it means in fact delivering them up to corruption. And it was this pseudorebellious contradiction in Marx's political program, which also emerged with all the arrogance of invulnerability, that offset the great merits of his economic critique and brought him, like Lassalle, into increasingly jealous conflict with the representatives of official politics, rather than into the company of the great emancipators of humanity.⁶⁹

Marx raised the thunderbolts of Jupiter against Bonapartism to the right and against czarism to the left. But he had only idle indulgence and naivety for Bismarckianism at the first signs of its own loathsomeness. Engels wrote to Marx on September 11, 1868: "Since you have connections with Vermorel, could you not see to it that he stops writing such idiotic things about Germany? He is adamant in demanding that Napoleon III become more liberal, liberal in a middle-class way, and then declare war on Germany to free her from Bismarck's tyranny. These toads, etc. etc."⁷⁰ And Marx wrote to Engels on July 20, 1870, when war was breaking out in the wake of Bismarck's provocation:

The French need a sound beating. If the Prussians win, the centralization of state power will become useful for the consolidation of the German working class. Further, German predominance will shift the fulcrum of the western European workers' movement to Germany [!], and you need only to compare the movement in both countries since 1866 to see that the German working class is superior to the French in both theory and organization. Its dominance on the world scene [!] would also be evidence of the dominance of our theory over Proudhon's.⁷¹

A peculiar logic and mode of argumentation: Prussian victories will bring "dominance" over Proudhon's theory! Is this view any different from Lassalle's assertion that splendor will be brought about ultimately by the sword?

Brupbacher traces Marx's low estimation of the concept of freedom back to "Hegel's hold over Marx."

Through Hegel, Marx becomes the prophet of the ideal of historical necessity for the past, but also for the future. He becomes an accessory to the laws of the World Spirit, and retains the hard, ruthless self-assurance of those in the know against those who are not. Like Engels, he will call the Swiss, who are fighting for their freedom,

reactionaries because world history demands centralization, and they are interceding for federalism and freedom. He lacks the mentality to be an authoritarian, but he knows that world history is authoritarian, and he is its servant on earth.⁷²

This is a case of finding idealistic explanations for very material motives. The real issue was power, and Marx was adept at manipulating the proletariat.

Without giving any account of where the World Spirit wanted to go with Prussia, or whether the World Spirit along with Prussia might well be going straight to the devil, Marx came forth against Bonaparte as early as 1852. And the second edition of his work *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* appeared in 1869, when the Franco-German war was right at the door. Instead of directing his lofty attention toward the Austro-Prussian rivalry for the kaiser's crown of Germany, in his pamphlet "Herr Vogt" (1866) Marx directed repeated and vehement attacks against the "rotten Bonapartist administration." Instead of celebrating the coronation of Wilhelm I, the army reform, and the blood and iron politics of von Roon* and Bismarck with some kind of commemorative piece, the statutes of the International (1864) contain only the timid paragraphs stating in most general terms that, as means to an end, political action is to be subordinate to economic action.⁷³ The first edition of *Das Kapital* (1867) contains this passage, deleted in later editions: "If the development of capitalistic influence in Europe keeps pace with growing militarism, national debts, and taxes, etc., then the rejuvenation of Europe, which was so earnestly prophesied by that half Russian and full-fledged Muscovite named Herzen as taking place by means of terrorism and the forced infusion of Kalmuck blood, might well ultimately become unavoidable."⁷⁴ But in 1868, when the Luxembourg question was threatening war between Germany and France, (the German Jew) Borkheim, bearing instructions from Marx, appeared at the Bern Congress of the Peace and Freedom League to speak against the "agitation for peace" that was to be played out against "a single government of central and western Europe" (i.e., Germany), with Russia standing in the background, the "declared enemy of economic development."⁷⁵

If you want to get a sense of the means Marx used to oppose Pan-

* Count Albrecht von Roon (1803–79), Prussian general and statesman, Minister of War (1859–73), known for his reorganization of the Prussian army, which enabled it to rapidly mobilize (1866 and 1870).

Slavism without ever referring to Pan-Germanism by name, then read two of Bakunin's writings, "Aux citoyens redacteurs du *Réveil*" (To the Patriot Editors of the *Réveil*, 1869) and the section entitled "L'alliance russe et la russophobie des Allemands" (The Russian Alliance and the Russophobia of Germany) in his *The Knouto-Germanic Empire* (1870–71). It is no accident that both pieces appeared at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. They fully unmask the conspiratorial character of Marxist action in its relationship to Bismarckian politics and uncover one of the most scandalous campaigns of slander. These writings also show that Marx's witch hunt of the Pan-Slavists, a pursuit acquiesced in by all German (and German-Jewish) socialists of his time, was recognized even then for what it was: an attempt by German patriots to divert attention from the prospective pan-Germanic empire toward the Russian "threat to Western culture."⁷⁶

The Russian Revolution of 1917 has shown how accurate Bakunin was in 1871 when he sensed that the new German Empire was a greater danger to civilization than czarist Russia. It is more than regrettable that the writings of Bakunin, which are indispensable to the evaluation of Marx, have not yet been translated into German; that fact alone reveals the fury and the long life of Marxist intrigues. More complete knowledge of these things would perhaps have helped make positions easier to formulate in Germany in 1914 and at the conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal in 1915–16.

In the most malicious variations imaginable you can read again and again the vague reports of the historians of German social democracy that a certain utopian named Bakunin disrupted the first (German) International. We do not learn *why* he did so. Let it be recorded here and now in clear and unambiguous language: He did so because he perceived it to be the propaganda institute of Bismarckian plans. In like spirit we are now fighting the vestiges of the Second (social democratic) International, the Marxist Zimmerwald-Kienthal establishment in its role as Ludendorff's * propaganda instrument, our evidence being the peace treaties of Brest-Litovsk.⁷⁷ Above all, the Marxian doctrine of capital must be overthrown; it holds power everywhere, indeed more despotically in England and America than anywhere else. This doctrine reveals itself to be the subterfuge of a patriotic Jew who intended to cover up the continen-

* Erich von Ludendorff (1865–1937), German general and chief of staff to Hindenburg in the First World War and author of many anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and anti-Masonic works.

tal implications of his nation's emerging military autocracy, who wanted to hide the fact that after 1871 the residence of the World Soul, Berlin, had become the roosting place of world reaction.⁷⁸

Perhaps the hour of universal brotherhood will strike. At that point the work of Europe's generations of thinkers will have nourished German thought. But the exaltation of freedom, the most significant idea in Europe and the world, will be impossible as long as a people of the magnitude of the Germans still lack even the primitive provisions for it. The time of theoretical promises is over. The entire world waits for us. If we cast off the methods of force and sophistry, the new International will become a reality. Marxist pseudology has plunged Russia into ruin and has made despotism stronger than ever. And now it is attempting to incite revolutions in France and Italy in order to save the military spirit in its own country; for to the German philistine and even to the commoner guardianship, "order and security," appear more comfortable and less horrible than rebellion. Our historical responsibility is too great. Let us confess it! Let us admit it! We will not find reconciliation until we bear freedom aloft on *white* flags.

IV

The significance of Prussian Junkerism and its detestable influence on German politics were underestimated by foreign nations and came as a surprise in 1914; there had been too little political schooling and too much patriotic constraint in the activities of German political parties during the few decades of their development.

The German nobility has had less written about it than any other subject in Germany. What writing there is was done with a kind of uplifted, heaven-directed harmlessness—with a devotion lacking strength of nerve and imagination. There was no eye for the threatening character of its ranks or for the danger of its feigned or shopworn nationalistic assertions; there was not the faintest skepticism with regard to its own impoverished thinking and the saber-swinging security of state's reason. In particular, there was no sense of that penetrating urgency that was willing to go to any lengths and that, from our points of view—that is, the side of the rebels—also could have said something new to the contemporary, non-German world.

Is anyone outside of Germany familiar with Franz Mehring's *Lessinglegende* (Lessing Legend) in which the Junkerism of Fried-

rich the Great and the whitewashing, closed-rank tactics of German university professors take turns scourging a far superior scholar? Did any of us at home believe even in the possibility of honorable indignation or in the fanaticism that filled Hermann Roesemeier's crassly caricaturish sketches of the Junkers with such grim irony? And is this not as sad as it is true: Mehring's pamphlet was the only one of its kind until the appearance of Hermann Fernau's Prussian landowner book, *Das Königtum ist der Krieg* (The Kingship Is the War), which contains an unvarnished précis of Prussian constitutional history and the Junkers?

That fact will surprise anyone who is not familiar with the history of German censorship and the tradition behind the German idea of the state, anyone, that is, who has not paid attention to the suppression of liberal demands by a backward parliament and to the overpowering corruption worked by feats of physical strength on the German temper. The people have served their princes with a naivety and devotion that Herr Walter Rathenau characterized even as late as 1917 by saying that one "fulfills every demand to the outer limits of his strength." "The sense of duty does not express this relationship; still less is it blind obedience, because free inclination is also a factor. It most closely resembles a kind of childlike docility."⁷⁹ What events reveal this disposition? During the war any warning voice in the nation could be stifled or vilified without opposition: Liebknecht and Dittmann were condemned, Muehlton and Lichnowsky* simply were declared insane, and even the seventy-year-old Mehring was taken into protective custody. All of this without any significant uproar in the Reichstag.

The speeches and writings of these exceptional men are widely known. Nevertheless, I cannot deny myself the opportunity of describing in greater detail certain aspects of the relationship between

* Karl Liebknecht (1871–assassinated January 15, 1919). The son of Wilhelm Liebknecht, he was a cofounder of the German Communist (Spartacist) party in 1918. He had supported war credits (1914) but soon agitated against them and was sentenced (1916) to four years of hard labor. He was released in 1918. Wilhelm Dittmann (born 1874), German politician who became a social democrat journalist, cofounder of the Independent Social Democratic party. He organized strikes in munitions plants, was sentenced to five years of hard labor, but was released in November 1918. Prince Karl Max Lichnowsky (1860–1928), German diplomat, ambassador to England who worked for greater German-English understanding. His book *Meine Londoner Mission: 1912–14* caused his expulsion from the Prussian Landtag.

the nobility and Junkerism. They share these three essential features:

1. A rigid posturing in the theocratic ideology of the German Middle Ages that makes them appear as the counsel and defense of the most sacrosanct national convictions against foreign, international movements (socialism, pacifism, Judaism);⁸⁰
2. The aristocratic-athletic conception of soldiering, which since the times of Friedrich the Great has given them cause to feel superior to civilians and the civilian preoccupation with possessions and to so-called utilitarian morality—their idealism and heroism, as it were, a boorishly dandy-esque philosophy of the worthlessness of the private individual and of human life that corresponds to a Machiavellianism in politics that is just as impudent as it is gross;⁸¹
3. An unscrupulous cynicism that was most adept at seducing not only wide circles of the middle-class intelligentsia, but even large numbers of the working class; an unscrupulous cynicism that was exceptionally adroit in asserting itself against Christianity and enlightenment, against humanitarianism and human rights in spite of Louis XIV and the French Revolution and in spite of the events of 1830 and 1848—so adroit, in fact, that one can almost say at this point that those concepts have simply disappeared from national consciousness.

“It would be difficult,” Mehring writes, “to discover in the whole of world history a class that has been as poor in spirit and strength and as rich in human depravity as the German princes have been during the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.”⁸² That is the starting point.

The fanciful Austrian emperors at the time of the Reformation, inclined as they were toward otherworldly thoughts, did not succeed in holding this aristocracy in check. The subjugation of provincial princes in France created a nobility that brought on the blossoming of French literature. In England the nobility that survived the Revolution adapted itself to the interests of the people. And during the Decembrist insurrection in Russia the nobility in fact even pledged itself against the czar, supporting the spirit of the emancipation of the people, contrary to its own vested privileges.

But how did things stand in Germany? "Germany is aswarm with princes," wrote Count Manteuffel, an astute observer of German courtly life in the first half of the eighteenth century,

and three-quarters of them show hardly any capacity for human thought at all and are the scourge and lash of mankind. No matter how small their holdings, they delude themselves into thinking that mankind is created just to serve their personal tomfoolery. Viewing their often questionable birth as the source of all merit, they consider efforts to nurture their spirit and their heart to be superfluous or beneath their dignity. Just seeing them in action makes one believe that they were put on earth only to brutalize their fellow human beings by destroying, through the perversity of their own deeds, all basic principles without which a person is not worthy to be called a rational creature.⁸³

But did the intelligentsia condone or condemn them? From Luther to Rathenau the most prominent minds contributed to strengthening this nobility by contenting themselves with that "*intelligible freedom*" that, whether it was called music, transcendence, inner *civitas dei*, or the "freedom of Christian humanity," amounted to a willing or forced abdication and even, at times, to a hardnosed, servile, eyewinking conspiracy against world morals.

The special privileges of the nobility had been cut back everywhere by the rise of the middle class—everywhere except in Germany and Prussia, thanks to Luther. The Peasants' War turned into a bloodbath. Three more revolutions came and went without leaving a trace. The Prussian Junker, the most insolent of them all, sat, and still sits today, in his dominion like some king, aware that his family tree is often older than that of his employer. The antique concepts of feudal lordship and vassaldom have remained intact. And the old Augsburg notions of divinely ordained dependence live on. Our fathers still enjoyed an example of this dependence in the scurrilous relationship between Bismarck and Wilhelm I. Bismarck's words: "He cannot lie without your knowing it." And the king: "My great good fortune, living in your proximity." The vassal rules his sovereign, pesters him, plucks at his sword knot, embarrasses him in a conversation about Pietism. Intimidated, the king falls prey to him like a dove to a hawk. "If it is not God's command," asks the Junker, "why otherwise should I subordinate myself to these Hohenzollerns? They are just a Swabian family, no better than my own."⁸⁴ In 1848, when royal command forced troops

to retreat before the rock-throwing crowds without firing a shot, Bismarck was openly inviting the generals to rebel. He knew nothing of subordination. Commander in chief? What a joke! Decorum is to be maintained only before the rabble.

The uncouth childishness of the Junkers shows its most stirring colors in Prussia. The Great Elector wrestled with an "arrogantly rampant, overgrown, hideous weedpatch of Junkers" for contributions to his standing army.⁸⁵ Those Junkers, what cunning creatures! Ultimately the peasants have to carry the burden. Friedrich Wilhelm I, the founder of Prussian power, proclaimed in 1717 that "the Junkers will be ruined by their authority. But I will stabilize the sovereignty as a *rocher von bronze*."* But even Friedrich II finds himself compelled to form a pact with the Junkers: "Whereas the sons of nobles do defend the country and are such a good breed in every possible way, they merit being conserved in all respects."⁸⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm I went testily about Berlin brandishing a cane whenever he was looking for right conduct, and even Friedrich II had his journalists occasionally knocked about. We can find all this put quaintly enough in German books as dog-eared history, but we witnessed firsthand in 1918 the trial of the Mecklenburg Junker von Oertzen zu Roggow, who had a harvester stripped to the waist and tied to a tree, and who gave him fifty lashes with his riding whip.

It is clear that any talk of milder impulses in the thoroughly brutal, terroristic, slave-driving state of Prussia could only be difficult at best. Lessing has left a monument to that much praised tolerance under Friedrich II, a monument that has gained a certain level of reality today. He wrote the following in a letter of August 1769 to Nicolai:

Do not talk to me about your Berlin freedoms of thinking and writing. It comes down to the one and only freedom of carrying off to market as many stupidities as you want against religion [note Marx and Nietzsche, H. B.]; and any righteous man will soon be ashamed of himself for serving this freedom. Just let anyone in Berlin even attempt to write as openly on other issues . . . , just try to tell the truth to the elegant rabble at court . . . , just let one person appear in Berlin who would be willing to lift his voice on behalf of the rights of the subjects or in opposition to exploitation and despotism. . . . You will know soon enough which country right at this very minute is the most slavish country in Europe.⁸⁷

* Rock of bronze.

Compare, too, the profound despair of a Prussian subject under Friedrich II that is expressed in the passages Mehring cites from Winckelmann's letters.

Following the defeat at Jena and Auerstädt (1806), the Prussian Junkers were forced to submit to middle-class reforms of the army. Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were marked as revolutionaries because they did away with "Junker positions" in the Prussian force and brought about the "liberation of the back," that is, the abolition of flogging! But in a flash the Junker rebels forced the dismissal of two reform-minded barons, von Stein and von Hardenberg, because the one demanded a kind of "Prussian republic" and the other, in a more conciliatory manner, a "revolution in the good sense of the term." The reforms themselves enabled Prussia to conduct the "Wars of Independence," and the wars helped reaction gain the upper hand again.⁸⁸

But where was she, philosophy, the great conductor and seductress toward the freedom and the well-being of the people, the madonna of humanity and guardian saint against assassinating usurpers, our Joan of Arc of redemption from darkness and all the transgressions against society—where was she to be found? "In a comedy of universal history," Mehring writes, "the Prussian corporal staff had driven German philosophy to progressively loftier heights until what in reality was a storm-laden cloud looked like some harmless camel or insubstantial weasel."⁸⁹

Romantic-Teutonic ideas combined with Protestantism, the Reich's supremacy of the feudal Middle Ages joined with the Protestant pretensions of scaling off papal autocracy by means of the Prussian supreme episcopate. Hegel's philosophy made a system out of what had been a philistine ideal under Friedrich Wilhelm IV: an exalted, heightened, ecclesiastically founded absolutism. "I am impelled," explained the king in April 1847 at the convocation of the United Provincial Diet, "to make the solemn declaration that no power on earth will ever succeed in moving me to transform into any conventional, constitutional arrangement that natural relationship between prince and people, a relationship unique to us and that strengthens us through its *inner truth*. Nor will I ever concede that any writing on a piece of paper could intervene like some second providence between our God in Heaven and this country, to rule us with its paragraphs."⁹⁰ It was the evening of the revolution. The bourgeoisie had been strengthened by the ideas of the revolution in England and France, and its patience was stretched

beyond the breaking point. On March 18, 1848, the patented representative of God was forced to decree: "It is the king's will that freedom of the press prevail; it is the king's will that the Diet be called into session immediately; it is the king's will that a constitution of the most broad-minded principles be drawn up to include all German lands, etc., etc."

The nation allowed itself to be duped. It talked and gossiped, rationalized and squabbled, but it did not act. It was just as bewildered by its own success as the Junkers were by the extraordinary fate of a king whose power had been absolute for so long. Parallels to contemporary situations are alarmingly clear. By April 27, 1849, the Junkers had recovered from their shock. The Prussian government routed the lower house. On April 28, it announced a general conference in Berlin and invited those governments that "wanted to work toward the establishment of German unity," giving assurances that preparations had been made for any unforeseen circumstances and declaring that it was available to meet the needs of any "dangerous crises," even those abroad. The court camarilla appeared to be a thing of the past. Yet Wilhelm I, as a "passionate soldier," immediately established his famous military cabinet. Von Manteuffel* became its leader; the Junker demagogue von Roon became the Minister of War, and immediately after his appointment he declared that he "had never placed much stock in all that constitutional business." Together the military cabinet and the war ministry hatched the new man: the Junker, Otto von Bismarck.

V

The reversal of moral concepts undertaken by Luther in conferring papal stature to the brutality of sixteenth-century German princes and in granting divine power and authority to the state confirms the original sin of our nation, its paradoxical conception of freedom, that complacency in the face of barbaric conditions. Merezhkovsky called the Reformation "the second assault of barbarians" on Latin morals.⁹¹ And in fact this joy in successful destruction—this so-called *Schadenfreude*—and the canonization of profanation are the essence of Lutheranism, whose pinnacle is reached in the glorification of all attacks on the spirit, the abolition of morals and univer-

* Baron Edwin von Manteuffel (1809–85), Prussian field marshal and cousin of Baron Otto von Manteuffel (1805–82). He became chief of the military cabinet in 1857.

sal humanity, and the destruction of religion and conscience with regard to humanity at large.

The World Soul had to invent Bismarck in order to show Europe by flagrant example what people agree to in Germany and what someone versed in the German conception of freedom is capable of doing. Bismarck has been called the "most German of all Germans."⁹² And there is truth in that, if the Bismarck monuments standing so tall in all German provinces show anything. He has unleashed the nation more profoundly than Luther and Nietzsche did. He was the "most unrestrained" German. He did not shrink from the worst instincts. He made Germany more manifest than anyone before him had done, unequivocally and without hesitation.

Even among Germans there is little agreement about the meaning of the word *German*, but among foreigners it has become an insult. Prominent leaders have tried in vain to establish a norm for what is German. They produced nothing but contradictions. Fichte came closest to the problem. He discovered that being German means being original. And since he was a Lutheran, originality consisted in breaking with tradition, in starting anew again and again, and from the very beginning, which negates ideas instead of building them, which attacks thoughts before they truly have been born. Being German means taking a position against the grain of humanity; being German means confusing, overthrowing, and bending all concepts to protect "freedom." Being German means erecting Babylonian towers from which in ten thousand tongues nonsense lays claim to novelty; being German means excogitating refractory systems full of sophistry out of the simple fear of truth and goodness.

Belief in such philosophy makes one an adversary and a crank. You become a malcontent and a public enemy fleeing before reality, misery, and sacrifice, standing pat in contrivances or perverseness; stammering, denying, hovering in midair. Little wonder that Bismarck was greeted with success when he determined that being German means *succeeding*, regardless of the means employed. It was astounding that anyone dared to speak out, no matter what his views. It was a plausible and handy formula that put an end to much ruminating and brooding, and a formula that was fallen upon voraciously by all the tortured soulful people who liked to do business while it was forbidden. Life was given some sense, and the nation, too. Cunning became law; craftiness became morality. No more tricks, let's be practical!⁹³

And Bismarck *had* success, eminent success, at least for the fleeting instant of a few decades. With the most audacious means he did "open the way" for Germany, and he was the most German man. He succeeded in delivering all Germany to the Junkers, enchanted and tied in a neat bundle, much as a successful detective first baits his victim, then springs the trap. He vigorously forged all crowns into a single ring and then bound a great people into a dreadful slavery that the people have not yet fully comprehended. But what if his system were to collapse: the system of success, of power, of deceit, and of moral piracy? What would be left of Germanness? Anything more than misery?

"Red reactionary, smells of blood, to be used later," Friedrich Wilhelm IV is supposed to have said as he at first crossed Bismarck's name from his list of ministers.⁹⁴ In debt, poor and hungry, the country squire Bismarck was a child of his romantic times. As a romantic he read Byron and Shakespeare; as a Junker he studied Machiavelli. These were the times when eager Hegelians were translating revelations of the World Soul into the jargon of Prussian bureaucracy. One of them even wrote a national legal history in which the Prussian state appeared as a gigantic harp waiting tautly tuned in God's garden to take the lead in the world anthem. The Junkers struggled against this bureaucracy and its punctuality, order, and stability supporting the kingship. For them the rationale of the Prussian monarchy did not need to be derived from the World Soul. That was much too lofty and vapid for them, too "highbrow."

Herr von Bismarck shared this aversion to a bureaucracy that was prone to argue rights of state and to take pride in its own knowledge. Not that he asserted the people's rights; how was he to do that? The "caste of pen-pushers" was repugnant to "Mr. Dike Superintendent." He found these delicate words most appropriate: "The bureaucracy is eaten with cancer from head to foot. Only its stomach is healthy, and the excrement of laws that it passes is the most natural dung of the world."⁹⁵ Note the sense of envy in the reference to the stomach and in the allusion to natural law and process that was still lurking in scholardom at that time!

Bismarck's romanticism differs somewhat from the usual variety. It is a Jücker's romanticism. Of all the adventuresome, spiritual excursions of his times, which were yearning instinctively for the Middle Ages, there was for Bismarck only the thought of the power of those early emperors, the executioner's faith in the heavy-handed resolution of conflicts, the Shakespearean world charged with mon-

strous intrigues, the belief in "blood and iron" as the universal means to cure political problems. And as self-confidently as he came out against ideologues, dreamers, and visionaries, he remained loyal in like degree to his Junker's romanticism of strength, brawling, and drinking.⁹⁶ The realm of robber-knight and vassal, the bloody sadism of ancient Teutonic mercenary massacres, and the rusty weaponry of Elizabethan tragedies—all these found a contemporary apologist in Bismarck. Though weakened by nervous seizures and fits of crying, though considered suspect by a threadbare "Christian faith" that was always stumbling into conflict with the problems of nineteenth-century domestic economics, Bismarck was applauded by the egoistic pseudonationalism of the Luther school. Where could that feudal-heroic Reich's splendor of the Middle Ages that had been rotting away in the back room and on the Hapsburg throne stand a better chance of being reborn than in Further Pomerania, in Prussia? But did it have to rise again at all? That is another question.

Impatient and bored, young Herr von Bismarck was facing "a few more years of being amused with the strict training of recruits, then taking a wife, fathering children, working the land, and corrupting the souls of his peasants through the carefully planned production of brandy" (his own words); he was suffering from "wildness and lack of love." His "traffic with horses, dogs, and country squires" (his own words) was ruining him. He is a Rimbaud without a Paris. On the king's birthday he "gets drunk and screams *vivat*." In the first row at the opera he behaves "as rudely as possible."⁹⁷ But Rimbaud carried the high flame of his charity away from the depravity of the continent to the Negroes, and in Marseilles at the end of his life, in the wake of blinding confusion and adventures, he sobbingly embraced Jesus. Bismarck is a Caliban in Sachsenwald with a buckled saber and double eyesacks from which two huge tears run like devoted brothers while Dryander* reads from the Bible: "Protect us from accursed grandeur, O Lord."⁹⁸

The black day of Olmütz, when Prussia in 1850 took such a beating from Austria that, according to Mehring, the genuine Junkers were wallowing around like cats in valerian—that was the day Bismarck caught the eye of his romantic king. In 1848 Bismarck had viewed German unity as a threat to the glory of Prussian Junk-

* Ernst von Dryander (1843–1922), Lutheran clergyman appointed court ecclesiastic in Berlin in 1898, the year Bismarck died. Vice-president of the High Consistory (until 1918). Dryander's sermons had wide influence.

ers and so fiendishly wanted to order shots fired into the crowds. Now Bismarck became the representative of the humbled Prussian court at the reinstated Federal Diet in Frankfurt. Thus his career began.

The era of Bismarck was typically Junker—characterized in domestic politics by state strikes, prohibitions of mass meetings, “muzzle” laws, and all manner of the shocking, violent, illegal measures of a military dictatorship that argues its power with police batons. And in foreign policy it was characterized first by a servile crawling to the cross (Olmütz), then by a rough and ready shoving (the so-called dilatory transactions), then by some dupery (1866 and 1870), and finally by the open provocation of world history—the establishment of the Prusso-German Reich. Usurpation, boorish Jesuitism, and compounded hypocrisy reinforced one another in diplomacy to hide the total lack of moral conviction. Nevertheless, the goal was dominion over the continent.

A few of Bismarck’s pithy sayings, parade ground as well as commonplace phrases—all untested and yet brimming with self-confidence—might well show a startling intellectual poverty. “Only kings make revolutions in Prussia” (to Napoleon III, final conference, 1862). Or: “The single sound basis of a great state is national egoism, not romanticism” (before the Prussian Diet, 1853). Or: “The pressures and dependencies that come with practical life are divinely ordained; they should not, and cannot, be ignored. Etc., etc.”⁹⁹ When he was marshaling arms against Austria, he considered the “homily about fratricidal war” to have no binding power. There is only a single “uncompromising politics: on and on, keep moving.” And following the conclusion of the German-Austrian defense treaty, Bismarck wrote to Andrassy: * “*Si vis pacem, para bellum.* † Only our combined striking forces, not our good intentions, are the guarantors of peace.”¹⁰⁰ He admitted in his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* (Thoughts and Memoirs): “European law is created by European negotiations, but it would be an illusion to claim that these negotiations are defensible according to the principles of justice and morality.” And only in his later years did this “honorable broker, who sought only to bring his transactions to comple-

* Count Gyula Andrassy (1823–90), Hungarian diplomat and one of the leaders (with Kossuth and Deák) of the Hungarian insurrection. Andrassy engineered with Deák a compromise (1867) creating the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy and became the first premier of Hungary.

† “If you want peace, prepare for war.”

tion" become, in the words of his pastor, "more openly and broadly pious." And in the Reichstag of 1882 he tried to impress on those "who no longer believe in revelation" (!) that "their conceptions of morals, honor, and the sense of duty are in essence only the fossilized remnants of the Christianity of their fathers."¹⁰¹

If the state in itself, particularly the Prussian state, is indeed the negation of humanity because its militaristic, juridical, and theological foundations systematically affirm the cruelty and scorn of corrupted classes, then that state must become unbearable under a despotic personality such as Bismarck. And it becomes an even more disgraceful provocation to the entire world when the victimized nation shows little or no sensitivity to its fate. The hypocritical underhandedness of such a state is even more shocking than its power.

Bismarck was as typically Protestant as he was Junker. Indeed, it can be said that he helped bring about a renaissance of the concept of Protestantism among the Germans by drawing upon those romantic notions of the emperor that were essentially derived from the pre-Lutheran Middle Ages.¹⁰² Bismarck, the private individual, attended the sacrament, and tears rolled down his cheeks. Yet it was not a question of the mystery of love, but a question of the state, "for in the realm of *this* world, It [the state] has the right and takes precedence." He prayed regularly with his pastor, but he bore his true testimony to the consul Michahelles: * "Yes, we are in God's hands, and in that circumstance the best comfort is a reliable revolver; at least we will not have to set out on the journey alone."¹⁰³ Five hundred families lost their livelihood through the laws of exception passed against the socialists. Fifteen hundred people were sentenced to prison to the tune of about one thousand years. But the celebrated social legislation, one of the greatest and most ominous attempts at corruption ever witnessed, occurred in "accession to the real powers of Christian national life" and is an application of "practical Christianity" in the same way that the standing army of the Great Elector was an application of practical Christianity and Protestant charity.¹⁰⁴

When will people in Germany become convinced that the monk of Wittenberg was a disaster? (Or is there still any doubt that as a result of *his* religion God Himself descended to the Germans during the time of Bismarck?) Friedrich Naumann found that "the Catho-

* Perhaps Ball refers here to Georg Michaelis (1857–1936), German lawyer and politician.

lic Counter-Reformation was the grave of the German spirit on the Danube," and Bismarck was called "the second Luther," the "greatest of the Protestants," for he did indeed force the antireformational Hapsburg dynasty out of Germany, replacing it with the house of Hohenzollern. The *Preussische Jahrbücher* (Prussian Annals) of 1900 wrote this about the battles for liberation: "Luther's spirit moved on through the spring rains of 1813 before his blessed people like the pillar of fire before the people of Israel in the desert"; and how accurate Superintendent Meyer was in characterizing Bismarck's Empire as the "national crowning of the work of the Reformation"! It was Treitschke, however, who opened a rosy view into the future with this announcement: "It is Prussia, the greatest Protestant power of modern times, that will help others shake off the fetters of the all-encompassing Church."¹⁰⁵

In addition to a Protestant politics, there is also a Protestant philosophy, and it "is shaking off its chains." For Bismarck, war is "essentially the natural condition of humanity." The predatory life of the hunter is "essentially natural to human beings." Of course—hunting animals and other human beings. "Prisoners," he exclaimed in Versailles, "they are always taking prisoners. They should have shot them down one by one!" And when someone spoke of the deserted houses from which the contents had been confiscated for the war treasury, Bismarck was full of praise and added: "Properly speaking, those houses should be burned to the ground, but that action would offend reasonable people, and, unfortunately, that will not do."¹⁰⁶ Properly speaking—indeed!

Bismarck's blasphemous attitude toward religion is equaled by his mocking attitude toward the people. He calls parliament a "house of clichés," which is easy enough to say if you know that loaded weapons are backing you up. And he claims that the affairs of foreign policy, which he had made his personal province, are difficult enough and could only be made more confused by the participation of "three hundred simpletons." A man of feeling; no doubt, "the most German of Germans." Did he understand anything about practical considerations? Practical kindness? He knew only practical brutality. He followed "natural drives, without any scruples." He became enraged one time when a Prussian general entered into negotiations with the citizens of Tours after they had raised the white flag. He, Bismarck, would have used "grenades against those people" until they "delivered four hundred hostages."¹⁰⁷ This sickeningly familiar language of the Junker recurred again and again

with the vulgar sounds that did not need to wait on precedents and that made no distinction between friend and enemy. Here is that dissolute flair for barbarity that fancy literary journalists, such as Herr Emil Ludwig,* have tried in vain to wrap in the cloak of the demonic and other such problematic Goethean themes. Here we see the exaltation of the hallowed doers of bloody deeds and power plays that distinguishes the Prusso-German Parnassus.¹⁰⁸

The rise of Bismarck and his way of thinking means that bestiality henceforth need not be ashamed of itself, that it has become philosophy. Bismarck's rise signals the preparation of the third and final invasion of Teutonic barbarism into Latin civilization: the World War of 1914. Pascal and Rousseau, in warning of arrogance and in alluding to the close kinship between humans and animals, were proposing an ideal of humility. Bismarck and Nietzsche by claiming, as nihilists and cynics, that animal instincts provide the *authentic*, natural state of humanity, tore down humanitarianism and promoted the wild animal tamer. "Fawning" became a heroic ideal. Again a path is opened to human originality, and the conviction spreads that even moral successes are contested with elbows, accomplished with threats, pushed through with cunning.

If you want to learn what France and Russia felt was uniting them in 1914, do not reach any more conclusions about their motives from your own evil ones. Read the chapter "Bismarck chez Louis XIV" in Léon Bloy's *Sueur du sang* (Sweating Blood). There you will see that the nation of Bloy and d'Aureville perceived the Prussians in 1871 in the same light in which Leo Tolstoy's people perceived the superhuman French in 1813. Bismarck appears as "a disconcerting combination of glutton, dolt, and bloodthirsty hypocrite." And the house owned by Mme. Contesse de Jesse, where Herr Chancellor lived, was fumigated as soon as he had left.¹⁰⁹

VI

No opponent of sufficient stature rose up against the system of Bismarck and his successors in Germany. This fact has hardly received the attention it deserves. Indeed, there was no antipode and apologist of superior nature to protest in the name of the nation; no one who possessed the intellectual power to refute Bismarck's

* Emil Ludwig (1881–1948), German writer known for his biographies of Goethe, Wagner, Bismarck, Napoleon, and others. He was employed by the German government during the First World War as a propagandist.

arguments, if not for his own generation, then at least for the next one.

The Guelph Windthorst* was Bismarck's ablest opponent in parliament and did have some success in arousing the impression that "there were certain unscrupulous people in the government of our king who are working on behalf of the pagan state"; that the school inspection law of 1872 could well have been "designed to introduce paganism within our midst, a state without God; and that the Reichstag representative from Meppen [Windthorst himself] and his ilk remained the sole advocates of God."¹¹⁰ But Bismarck played the papal claim of exclusive stewardship of grace against him and succeeded in bringing the "serenity" of the Lutheran majority over to his side. And Windthorst even declared his support for the "monarchical Christian principle of state."¹¹¹ Thus, his opposition to policies that were based on ecclesiastical interest diminished. On Bismarck's side the *Kulturkampf* initiative opposed the Roman Church, instead of the reverse, and the chancellor even succeeded in winning the sympathies of rationalistic rebels who were his most vehement enemies in the political arena.

In the new Reichstag August Bebel, on behalf of socialism, embraced "atheism in religious matters, republicanism in political affairs, and communism in economics," and Bebel, to be sure, was convinced that his actions had spelled out a formula of lethal opposition. Yet for all his laudable bravery, he remained the son of a Prussian soldier and was fully prepared "to sling a rifle over his shoulder" for a proper cause; unfortunately, the Junker war of 1870 had to be regarded as just such a cause. Mehring himself was forced to make this admission: "Whatever sins Bismarck might have committed, and as little as the North German Confederation might have in common with an ideal state, it was a matter of showing foreign nations once and for all that Germany was determined and fit to have its own will. Amid all the diplomatic lying [all of it?] the people saw only a single fact: war had to be waged to insure national existence."¹¹²

Only after nine months in prison did Bebel come to understand that the people had *not* fought for freedom and *not* for their national life, but, on the contrary, for the freedom of the Junkers and for *their* national life. Bismarck had no need to fear "atheism in reli-

* Ludwig Windthorst (1812–91), German statesman and lawyer. He was head of the Catholic Center party and leading opponent of Bismarck during the *Kulturkampf*.

gious matters," and as little reason to fear "communism in economics." He manifested the first much more fundamentally than Bebel did, if with some pietistic trimmings. But he did see through the materialistic greed of state communism and tossed it a few social legislative crumbs of favor and reconciliation just to take the edge off its appetite.

Bismarck's system was more powerful than his official enemies. The century-old Machiavellianism of the nation came to a head in his system, as did authoritarian systems, from the official church of state down to the alliance of social democratic dogmas. Hungry for business, careers, satisfaction, and support, the various atheistic, materialistic, anthropomorphic, and natural-philosophical schools of thought all saw themselves raised to a higher power in this system. The system's climax was reached in the destruction of morality, and its most wicked representative, after Luther and Hegel, is Bismarck.¹¹³

Do not consider the Germans superficial. They are very profound, deeper than anyone had imagined. They burrow subterranean shafts and passageways in all directions, but only in cunning, in subterfuge, when they ought to be going in the straight, the proper, the human, logical way. Yes, the Germans are profound. But only when destruction is at issue, be it of morality, religion, or society, only when it is a question of their own "freedom." I am not speaking of our music, the splendor of our slavery. I speak of our slavery itself, that purblind, scuttling, uncanny creature that seeks from beneath the smooth surfaces of a conciliatory, banally grinning optimism to work the revenge of those who were corrupted long ago, who have lost their honest manhood. It is these *awesome* depths that supply our only hope, if, enraptured, we guide God and not the Devil down into them and reemerge into the light, purer, inspired, knowing, and exhausted by our trial.

The young Nietzsche constituted a threat to Bismarck, because he was sufficiently great in talent and the play of imagination to nullify idolatry, to break the sword of Wotan. He grew up under Wagner's sibylline influence. The tradition of the romantics was at work here: the shedding of an infamous degeneration, divine rapture in human proximity. The abolition of the schools of pedants who were thinking up moral world orders and despotically imposing them. The abolition of the slavery of heart and spirit, the liberation of our buried, timid, and most sweet *vox humana*: the *spiritual unity of the nation*. Baader, Novalis, and Hölderlin all lived on

in Wagner's music, as did the spirit of Beethoven and Suso.* Bismarck had sought the material, economic, and external unity of the nation, shockingly, grossly, with mob methods. The inner, spiritual, nobler unity was yet to be sought and found.

Nietzsche came from the best schools, Schopenhauer and Wagner, two church fathers of Romanticism, two of the most human, inexhaustible spirits the nation has ever produced. Schopenhauer's pessimistic renunciation touched Nietzsche and guided him—Schopenhauer's bitterly, inwardly focused rapture. What was Schopenhauer's pessimism if not the disillusionment of a fanatic friend of truth who had seen through the swindle of a tyrannical world that was filled with illusions, a world of gilded hearts and basest philistinism?¹¹⁴ Who rejected more fundamentally than Schopenhauer the *Kultur* and the new German Reich of Hegelian origin with its snobbism of power and spirit? Or who so biting and relentlessly scourged the general hedonistic frenzy? Let Mehring follow the party routine in calling Schopenhauer the "philosopher of the overwrought, petty bourgeois mind."¹¹⁵ Schopenhauer had knowledge of a concept that unfortunately was lost to German development: hubris, sin and guilt. And he knew of a heroism that entombed the entire Teutonic social democracy: the heroism of saints and ascetics.¹¹⁶ Schopenhauer would not have acquiesced in the vote to support war credits, nor would he have sacrificed spiritual unity to national or political unity, nor *human unity* to *national unity*. Schopenhauer did have a following. In his name the young intellectual faction of his time renounced the "malicious optimism" that celebrated its saturnalia in 1871, was judged in 1918, but is not even yet conscious of that fact. Pascal was resurrected in Schopenhauer, the apology of the heart and tears, the apology of genuine reason and unflinching candor. His philosophy, which suffered from passion though not seeking it; his philosophy, which saw the wounds of the crucified Christ bleeding from every creature; his profoundly Christian doctrine of genius—the mystery, the enigma, God must be redeemed; his philosophy of illusion, which led from the pains of isolation and confinement to the communion of all things in art—it was all these things that cast both Wagner and Nietzsche under his spell.¹¹⁷

* Heinrich Seuse or Suso (1295?–1366), German Dominican and student of Meister Eckhardt, known for his mystic religious poetry, which embodies features of medieval courtly love poetry. Suso is looked upon as the author of the first autobiography in the German language.

I wish by no means to defend the individual elements of Schopenhauer's concept of redemption. I consider his esthetics as well as his concept of nirvana to be evasions and would raise the same objection against them that I have voiced against another romantic concept, that of universality.¹¹⁸ The French Revolution has shown that there can no longer be any question of carrying out self-redemption and of taking refuge from an unacceptable reality in art and illusion. The issue at stake now is to redeem this reality, to *redeem society* down to its last, most forsaken member. At issue is the material and spiritual liberation of all sufferers; it is a question of Christian democracy. However, concepts must exist before they can be employed in productive ways, and Schopenhauer and Wagner are to be praised for having helped the notion of redemption to be reborn during a period of the most committedly burgeoning philistinism.¹¹⁹

One must read Nietzsche's earlier writings to gauge what a pandemonium of great and productive thoughts united these three men. Nietzsche writes that "the Schopenhauerian will to life finds here [with Wagner] its expression in art: this gloomy striving without goal, this ecstasy, this despair, this tone of suffering and craving, this accent of love and of ardor."¹²⁰ And, deeply immersed in his study of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche writes:

His [Schopenhauer's] greatness is extraordinary: to have looked again into the heart of existence with no academic diversions, with no wearisome lingering, with no spinning of webs into philosophic scholasticism. He *demolished secularization* and the barbarizing power of the sciences, he awakens the most colossal need, as Socrates too awakened such a need. *What religion was has been forgotten*, as has the significance art holds for life. Schopenhauer stands in sharpest contradiction to everything that is currently considered to be culture.¹²¹

Applying the concept of redemption to "culture" was the task confronting a candid intellect. Yet Nietzsche himself was Protestant, more profoundly gripped by the egoism of his nation and his times than he imagined. Under the influence of Jakob Burckhardt *

* Jakob Burckhardt (1818–97), Swiss historian and cultural critic, author of the influential *Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860) and *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* (1898–1902) and chief originator of the school of cultural history, which makes artifacts of the period interpret the spirit of the times. His disciples include Heinrich Wölfflin and Oswald Spengler.

and the Renaissance, Nietzsche soon began to have doubts about Schopenhauer and Wagner and, unfortunately, about the very bond between them that he ought to have reinforced, but loosened instead: the spirit of guilt and renunciation, the spirit of humility and weakness, the spirit of failure and aberration.

The compromise Wagner entered into with Rome and Bayreuth following the founding of the Empire, the compromise with those commercial ministers and those father confessors of His Majesty, that hysteric materialization of the music of redemption, is attributed by Nietzsche to the pestilential stench of a "dying religion," instead of to an absence of opposition to a prostituting system of coercion. Instead of aiming his negating powers against the *nation* that dishonored religion and conscience, Nietzsche followed the inclination of the state and turns against the alleged "residue" of *religion*, making it responsible for changing the master's mind, and further claiming that these remnants are alien and repugnant to "Teutonic nature."¹²² Indeed, he labeled Christian morality the actual destructive element instead of taking it as a point of departure for a critique of the concept of the state itself.

But he discovered this: "The denial of life is no longer so easy to achieve; whether you are a hermit or a monk—what is being denied?" And: "There is such variety in pleasant sensations that I despair of defining the highest good." Instead of attending to the teachings of the early Middle Ages, he turned to the French moralists of the *ancien régime* and to the school of Feuerbach, Bauer, and Stirner. He attempts to reestablish the Germanic "urtext," the "unique" and natural state of the Teutons, pre-Christian barbarity, to achieve what he believes will be a pure nation following the elimination of Eastern, Jewish moralism. And he attempts to rescue future genius from that confusion of ideas and the stagnation he saw victimizing Wagner.¹²³ The shrewd, worldly-wise individual became for him—as it was for Luther, Kant, and Stirner—the guarantor of conscience. And although he turned against the Reformation, if only on the grounds of taste, he did indeed slip into its orbit and into a position that conflicts with the collective consciousness of the people as it had begun to develop after 1789.

As early as *The Birth of Tragedy*, which was written under Wagner's influence, Nietzsche had prophesied a tragic culture and had advocated the dissolution of individuality in tragedy. Next, he became convinced that it would be even more radical to expand his campaign against the Church to a campaign against Christianity

and even morality itself, and not against the sanctioning of the philistine and the herd.¹²⁴ He attacked precisely the most profoundly Christian, and human, virtues: brotherly love, compassion, and charity. The pastor's son welled up within him, the arrogance and overweening self-esteem of a Protestant from a long line of priests, born on the battlefield at Lützen.

Nietzsche becomes "original," "eccentric"; he falls victim to the original sin of Protestantism. And he moves into a progressively closer alliance of sympathy with the Prussian-Protestant spirit of duty and soldiering. Instead of exalting medieval wisdom as Schopenhauer had done, he concludes that its ideas are exhausted and used up and, like Marx, throws them aside.¹²⁵ Yet, he can find no substitute. He decrees a morality of master and slave, assigning to the latter the ideals of freedom arising from the French Revolution and the Gospels, while reckoning to the former the self-adulation of the Renaissance and pre-Socratic Hellenism. It is his aspiration to strike at German servility, the confusion of instincts, the lack of a sense of distance. In his delusion he prefers to side with the arrogance of the Prussian codes of breeding and discipline, rather than with the hierarchical order in the Catholic Church or with the spiritual discipline of the monks.¹²⁶ He is convinced that he is shattering the death trance of the world by depriving Teutonism of the last restraints of conscience, and he unwittingly becomes the herald and the grave digger of those raging blue-eyed hyenas with the sadist's wrinkles around their twisted mouths who are now whipping up and baiting national passions for philosophical reasons.

Consciously and with an awareness of his own responsibility, he undermines his own foundations step by step, contrary to his own feelings, his own fiber, even contrary to his own insight.¹²⁷ And the more he isolates himself, the louder he calls this isolation his new heroism, his better spirituality, his bravery, until at last, powerless to keep in check what he himself has unleashed, he loses that ultimate power, his control over himself, his personal Power of the Keys. He collapses exactly at the moment when he coincides with the greatest satanist of modern history, Napoleon Bonaparte, and sees himself compelled to promote the strictest despotism, breeding, training.

VII

It cannot be the intention of this inquiry to enter into disputes of theological positions. Nevertheless, there is a need to affirm that religion must be fully liberated, not fully destroyed, and, thus, a need to sort out that most powerful caste of intellectuals, the caste of the priests and the petty officials of the human soul.

The opposition between two powerful currents has shaped the ideological structures of the Church: the doctrine of official orthodoxy and the teachings of the saints, mystics, and prophets. I am saying "opposition" in order not to say "antithesis" or "contradiction," for orthodoxy has often been uncertain whether its saints were heretics or the sons of God. And this fact alone could be sufficient to dislodge the notion that the Church is the incarnation of Christ and that the person of Christ is the incarnation of God. Two statements in the gospel contradicted one another: "You are Peter, the rock, and upon this rock I will build my church"; and "My kingdom is not of this world."

Biblical scholarship from the most diverse periods and schools has shown that the texts of the Gospels were being reedited by the earliest Jewish ecclesiastics and rabbis; the Apostles themselves, consciously and unconsciously, were also editors of the divine message. May my purest Christian intentions and goodwill protect me and my reader from harm if I take theological sides with Thomas Münzer and abbot Joachim, both of whom denied, first, that Jesus Christ is really God and, second, that the fourth-century gospel text is really the word of God. Jesus Christ bore witness, the Gospels bear witness. God can be neither incarnated nor made manifest. Miracles do not exist, but there were miraculous events occurring among us. The fulfilled incarnation of the eternal in temporal form would be a miracle. The incarnation never was, and it will never be. God and freedom are one. The kingdom of God on earth is sacrilege. Visible church, a sacrilege. The infallible representative of God, a sacrilege. Theocracy, power instituted by God, is the sacrilege of all sacrileges. God is the freedom of the most humble within the spiritual communion of all. God is universal goodness, love, compassion, wisdom, and the highest thought—never to be achieved, but always to be striven for. God is the torment and the longing of a human race bound to this earth. "Sons of God," prophets and saints, will draw near to Him to find more profoundly their responsibility to humanity.

The belief in revealed religion held by theological academies introduced basic misconceptions on which the public structure of the church was built. The doctrine of God's incarnation in the person of Christ, which originated as a defense against the Roman aristocracy's hatred of the Jews and as a means to impart more authority to the new doctrine among superstitious people, created salvation as an absolute truth and shaped a false, exaggerated doctrine of individual redemption. Everything has been accomplished, the world is saved, mankind owes only its faith. The doctrine of the incarnation of fulfilled individual salvation in the church created the monopoly of the stewardship of the Host. Divine intelligence is the exclusive province of the clergy, the laity's ignorance fosters tutelage, tutelage promotes the antithesis of a theological aristocracy and a brutishly profane proletariat.

If the words of Peter, the rock, and the church that is to be built on it are authentic, Christ sinned in changing from a witness of God to the founder of a religion, but the Apostles sinned in deriving a workshop of salvation from the letter of the Gospels. Humility, the sense of guilt, and contrition rest on spontaneous insight and are the postulates of a higher moral self-commitment that does not fit into any law book of dogmatic conditions. Christ's commandment of love is contained in the Sermon on the Mount in a form so simply and so readily available to all creatures; Paul, the reformed rabbi, added his own interpretation of the personal tragedy of Christ. And the doctrine of the sacrificial death of a God incarnate, with all the profound, but highly complex and arcane symbolism that defied the common people's powers of comprehension, guaranteed the supremacy of institutionalized religious thought over the mentality of the laity.

Positive pragmatics and Jewish longing for exaltation have distorted the work of a master and erected a destructive regimen for souls. In the fourth century the Church effected a compromise with the pagan state, concerning which Ivan Karamazov himself grants that it should be more suitable for an earthly kingdom to transform itself into the church and to reject goals that are not amenable to it, than vice versa. And in the tenth century the Church concluded a further compromise with the barbarism of the German kings, upon whom the Church bestowed the honor of being the guardians and the "emperors of Christianity" in return for the pledge to spread the Christian faith with their might. The theological and feudal

aristocracy entered into a patriarchal alliance that, in spite of the mutual bickering on questions of rank, did erect a universal intellectual and military despotism over a common flock, which was compelled to bring forth and offer up all it possessed, its body and mind, its blood and goods. With what crafty arrogance the universal state and its duly appointed spiritual and temporal officials manage the total productive energy of slaving serfs! The "divinely ordained social order," and "divinely ordained dependence," the "divinely sanctioned realities," all date from this point and are still in force today. The Church's compromise with the state allowed the gospel of the poor to sink into oblivion and forced the tragic drama of sacrifice into the foreground. The compromise of theology with the secular kingdom distilled from the "martyrdom" of Christ the bloodsucking methods of exploiting the crucified populace; it suffocated heretics and rebels, and banished the flock's potential claims to happiness into the Great Beyond. Theocracy became the breeding ground of every conceivable servility.

Theocracy was based on suffering, not on happiness. Suffering was dogma. The theocracy derived its awesomeness from the sense of a divine mission; it derived authority from the belief of its subjects. The doctrine of love was spread by force, suffering maintained or initiated by force. Obedience was the highest virtue. The world is a deceptive apparition to be overcome. Universal depravity makes a centralizing sovereign necessary. Loyalty, simplicity, the performance of duty find "favor." The favor of Heaven is visited on the representative of God; the favor of the pope, on the temporal sovereign. It is a Sino-Christian kingdom of the dead. The world is redeemed. God has lived. Everything has come to pass.

The ideology of a system that rests on idolatrous principles (the doctrine of incarnation is, in its entirety, pure idolatry) is still in power even now and has not deteriorated to the level of empty magic and ceremony. This state of affairs has its causes: until recently, the hierarchical claim of the Austrian emperor kept in motion a world of Jesuits and lackeys, and the German emperor as supreme head of the Protestant church has favored pastoral chancellors of the Empire. But in addition, servility itself has also lived on. There are always freeborn minds around to offer their thoughtful systems to the national churches of the Catholics or the Protestants. As *summus episcopus* the Prussian emperor was both *rector magnificentissimus* of his universities and the chief of the general

staff. University teachers became his academic bodyguard. They could be ordered about like noncommissioned officers. And indeed they were.

We must interpret in a theoretical sense the actions of the German and the Austro-Hungarian governments and their attitudes toward the masses of people under their rule in order to see the true proportions of this tower of sins. The prepossessions of this Pan-German ideology ultimately hark back to the suppositions of theocracy and the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation: the presumption of moral superiority and the messianic calling, the presumption of cultural superiority, the assumed right to subjugate "bordering countries" with force, and the firm belief in the moral inferiority of these bordering nations. Moreover, there is the allure of serving as judge in war and in questions of European politics, and the punitive expeditions to take the measure of any supposed high treason committed against the "moral heart and core of Europe." This list rephrases the romantic vocabulary of the medieval universal state and echoes from those long centuries when a single Holy Roman "emperor of Christendom" watched over the civilized world from Germany. Germany then was not only the showplace of his pageantry, but also the exercise-ground of his mobs and the encampment of his drunken soldiers.

The Christian-Germanic dogma of God's dominance over the world, and of the dominance of the spirit over matter, or the dogma of the guardianship of the emperor over his subjects and of the superiority of the educated caste over the ignorant plebeian, was split in half during the Reformation. The theocracy of the Catholic nobility favored otherworldliness; the Protestant theocracy favored thisworldliness. The rise of the Hohenzollerns and the extension of their rule over Germany from Prussia were made possible only by the neglect that Germany suffered under the politically universal, but religiously escapist, Hapsburg kaisers such as Rudolph II and Charles V. The Catholic branch was distinguished by "passive" Christianity, greater spirituality, aversion to affairs of the world, and by its music, romanticism, and secret diplomacy. The Protestant branch displayed "practical" Christianity, broad attempts to redress traditional neglects, federal and juridical administration, prison and charity organization, educational institutions, objectivity, and consummate talent in establishing goals (this is called organization). In Austria the "cultural mission" was dominant, accompanied by attacks of brutality, while in Prussia that "honorable"

authority of the saber set the tone. In Prussia the theocracy found its ideal and fulfillment in the criminal who had been elevated to the rank of soldier. (See chapter 2, section 5 above.) In Austria the ideal was the disciplined fanatics of the divine, the spy and playactor of the senses, the worldly-wise Jesuit. Metternich is Austria's most illustrious name; the man was a friend of the pope, the conqueror of the crass Napoleon, the creator of the Holy Alliance he made so much fun of, and the conductor of that "European concert" of 1815, that most illustrious congressional recital of reaction featuring theocratic rulers and diplomats. Prussia's most revered name is Friedrich II; the man was the Protestant pope—he was the first to make that discovery—and the victor of a "world coalition," the despotic skeletal structure of sadism and of duties performed, the prime servant of the state, and the taskmaster of the stammering German intelligentsia, to whom he had the means and inclination to try to teach Prussian postures in the French language.

The history of Machiavellianism in Germany must be written! It would yield astounding results and would reveal several things. First, that although the theological idea dawned on the Prussian rulers (under Friedrich II) during their rivalry with the house of Hapsburg, the Prussian Machiavellians on throne and rostrum from the beginning valued this idea only for its economic worth—with the result that Prussian state omnipotence resigned itself to the symbolism of the emperor first in Germany (under Bismarck), then in Austria itself (under Ludendorff) and began using it as a means and a tool. Second, such a history would reveal that at the turn of the eighteenth century Machiavellian thought fell into contradiction with the Christian conscience of German philosophers and precipitated a lively conflict of systems, until, under the influence of Napoleon, the spirit of practicality won out, the ideologies went to ruin, and Bismarck, through the founding of the German Empire, was able to erect a structure in which the most abominable Machiavellian commercialism paraded its wares behind the facade of the Lutheran nation of God. And third, it would be seen that even the Protestant "idealism" of German philosophy (the views of Fichte, Humboldt, and Hegel) never fully renounced the romantic idea of the universal state. The ontological principle (inertia!) of their systems accords with the dogma of a dead God and an accomplished redemption. The world is standing still; its problems need only to be more clearly defined, described, comprehended, and thereupon neatly tucked away in hierarchical patterns. These philosophers are

the disguised secret police of the old orthodoxy, sent about in the world to paralyze the true God, the true world, and true human understanding. No other plan can be derived from their systems. No one unequivocally takes the side of Christ, and no one unequivocally takes the side of the Devil. The most radical group of freedom fighters and the most servile pack of governmental flunkies can quote those philosophers simultaneously to support the most antithetical goals.

Finally, we would see that the historical development of Machiavellianism in Germany—Marx and Lassalle would have to have their own chapter—perverted in its practical, utilitarian aspects the systematic conception of God that lay at the heart of the Holy Roman Empire, and we would see that these struggles to define the highest authority are still not concluded in Germany. In addition we would see a caste mentality hostile to the people, and the scholasticism of even Germany's most brilliant period of humanism, the representatives of which—Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Humboldt, and Hegel—all built their political speculations on the premise of the malignity and depravity of the individuals upon whom the state is to be based. The German schoolmaster who is supposed to have won the war of 1866 and 1870 guarded against conveying the liberal attitudes of German thinkers to the people and against carrying the better opinions of the people and the "herds" into the cozy bachelor clubs of the scholars. Love, devotion, and sorrow were lacking. There were no Russian nihilists in Germany, those pioneers of the intelligentsia of the people. There were only pedants, dreamers, and achievers.

With profound respect and love I cited Dostoevsky at the beginning of this book. I will let him speak at the end of it. In a letter to Maykov* (Dresden, 1870) he wrote these words: "Professors, doctors, and students are agitating and making the outcry; the people are not doing this. A white-haired scholar screams 'We must bombard Paris!' Their absurdity, if not their learning, has taken them that far. They could be scholars forever and still be just as childish. Another thing: Here the people can read and write, but they nevertheless are incredibly uncultured, stupid, and narrow-minded; and they are driven by the basest interests." And on February 5, 1871, he wrote this comment: "They are crying out 'Young Germany!' But it is quite the opposite. They comprise a nation that has ex-

* Apollon Nikolayevich Maykov (1821–97), Russian lyric poet and noted translator from the western European and Slavonic languages.

hausted its energy, for they declare allegiance only to the idea of the sword, blood, and force. They do not have the faintest notion of spiritual victory, and they scoff at the idea of it with militant brutality."

What Dostoevsky saw in Germany was Doctor Faustus turned savage—the martial death mask of an exhausted theocracy.

EPILOGUE

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS I have sought to find points of reference and criteria for a critique of Pan-German ideology. I realize that I am not the first to attempt such a critique. To the German intelligentsia I proposed a reassessment of its heroes, and I showed in the traditions of German thought the ruinous, pragmatically oriented Protestant filiation in which Luther, Hegel, and Bismarck were seen to emerge as its major representatives. Once more I would like to stress that these were the features I called anti-Christian, blasphemous, and in servitude to the devil: the union of religion and the state, the divine sanction of autocracy, the reification of God and the idea, the control of thought by a ruthless national authoritarianism, and the quest to form the military "Kingdom of God on Earth." Protestantism is a heresy, a heresy of Catholicism that has been set up on earth. God and freedom cannot be made into things; they are ideals. The nation is a condition and contingency to be penetrated, to be permeated by the concept of the divine and to be absorbed within it. The concept of the divine is not to be pervaded and displaced by the concept of the state.

A full critique of the theocratic systems of the Central Powers would reveal that, in the final analysis, the charge of responsibility is to be directed against the papacy, rather than at the last refuge of the militaristic systems of guardianship that appeal to ordination by God and to roles played as God's representatives. Those systems emerged as advocates of the "holiest goodness of Europe" even as

the hour of their defeat was striking, and they thus attempted to confuse and deceive the conscience of the world in spite of the unholy atrocities they had perpetrated. I see the future of liberated thought and thinkers in Germany in the solidarity of the controlling spirit of Europe over against the theocratic claims of any national metaphysics that would presume to control not only economic matters but also intellectual issues. Economic affairs are to be left to an alliance of free nations; the management of the intellect, to a churchlike alliance of freed individuals. An International of a more productive nature, a moral unity of the world and humanity will be possible only if the Protestant-Catholic nation of God and despots is cleared away along with its economic supports—a degenerate financial establishment—and its theological supports—the infallible absolutistic papacy. The nation will collapse beneath the burden of the crimes of this war. However, a syntax of free divine and human rights will constitute the democratic church of the intelligentsia. To it will be entrusted the governance of conscience and the care of all things sacred.

NOTES

Foreword

1. Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden: Patriotische Besinnungen* (Munich: Duncker and Humblot, 1915), p. 143.

2. Professor Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Die Balkenvölker," *Neue Rundschau* (Berlin) January 1918.

3. Karl Kraus, editor of the satirical Viennese periodical *Die Fackel*.

4. Max Scheler's "Kriegsphilosophie." See his Catholic exaltation *Der Genius des Krieges* (Leipzig: Wolff, 1915) and its vindication *Die Ursachen des Deutschen Hasses* (Leipzig: Wolff, 1917).

5. Léon Bloy, *Jeanne d'Arc et l'Allemagne* (Paris: Crès, 1915), p. 261: "Today our own people are seven times worse than they have ever been. We steal, we lie, we deceive, we eat and drink to excess, and we devote ourselves to all manner of vices. . . . We Germans have become the laughingstock and the disgrace of every nation; they take us for ignominious and obscene pigs. . . . If you wanted to draw a true picture of Germany today, you would have to depict it as a brood sow."

6. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion oder der Eremit in Griechenland* (Leipzig: Reclam). [Translator's note: *Hyperion, or the Hermit in Greece*, trans. Willard R. Trask, adapted by David Schwarz, in "*Hyperion, or the Hermit in Greece*" and *Selected Poems*, ed. Eric L. Santner, The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1990), 22:128.]

7. Goethe, conversations with Eckermann, May 3, 1827. Beethoven died a martyr in Vienna on March 26, 1827, poverty-stricken and broken.

8. In 1918 Professor Wilhelm Bode published an extensive collection of the letters of some of Goethe's most well-known friends (*Goethe in vertraulichen Briefen seiner Zeitgenossen, 1749–1803*). What emerges is

the image of a highly gifted individual tortured by pastoral pedantry, who, with advancing age, was driven progressively inward by pretentious ignorance, hypocritical chatter, and an impertinent sense of better judgment to the point of resignation, paralysis, and hopelessness. We would ask the editor a question of conscience: Was it appropriate to publish such an extensive collection of unabridged and unedited letters?

9. The controversies over establishing a memorial for the author of *Atta Troll* [i.e. Heine, trans.] are still not concluded in Germany. Pamphleteering against the Young Jews blooms bravely on. We all are familiar with the poem that Richard Dehmel has proposed for such a monument. And even Alfred Kerr gained a certain renown between 1910 and 1914 through his support of a Heine memorial. There was desperate resistance in Hamburg.

10. *Ecce homo: Wie man wird, was man ist* (1888). "Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikantenproblem."

11. Cf. *Werke*, vol. 11, "Nachlass aus der Zeit von 1875–76": "I have unified and collected what makes individuals great and self-sufficient. And I see that we are in ascendance; shortly we will be the protectors of the entire culture."

12. André Suarès in that magnificent chapter "La plainte de Reims" in his book *Nous et Eux* (Paris: Emile Paul Frères, 1915).

13. Bloy, *Jeanne d'Arc et l'Allemagne*, p. 14.

14. Romain Rolland, *Au dessus de la Mêlée*, 42d ed. (Paris: Ollendorf, 1915), p. 17. [Ball quotes in German, perhaps his translation, trans.]

15. Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden*, pp. 84–85.

Chapter 1

1. The last work printed by Johannes Gensfleisch zum Gutenberg appeared in 1460: the *Katholikon* of Johannes di Balis. At the end it contains the following words, a kind of testament of Gutenberg: "This book has been completed and printed under the patronage of the highest powers . . . in the year of our Lord 1460 in Mainz, a city in the renowned German nation, which the grace of God has exalted and singled out with such bright light of spirit and freely bestowed gifts above all other nations of the earth."

2. That is precisely the significance of Wilhelm II's pretension to European power, which at home relies on loyalty to the emperor, abroad on Bolshevist propaganda.

3. *Un appel des socialistes serbes au monde civilisé*, pref. Camille Huysmans (Uppsala: Appelberg, 1917).

4. August Bebel, *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg mit Berücksichtigung der hauptsächlichsten sozialen Bewegungen des Mittelalters* (Leipzig, 1876).

5. And not just in recent times. Zimmermann (*Allgemeine Geschichte des großen Bauernkriegs*) cites a statement by the Hapsburg emperor Maximilian I that shows that Hapsburg domestic policy was cognizant of the

significance of the Lutheran rebellion from the instant it began to gain political influence. (See p. 25 and note 18 below.)

6. See his well-known peace address (December 14, 1917). The Prince's true sentiments have in the meantime come to light in his letter to Prince Alexander zu Hohenlohe (January 12, 1918).

7. Friedrich Naumann, *Die Freiheit Luthers* (Berlin: Reimer, 1918).

8. Theodor Däubler, *Lucidarium in arte musicae* (Hellerau: Hegner, 1917), p. 53.

9. Novalis, "Die Christenheit oder Europa." ["Christendom or Europe," trans. Charles E. Passage, *Hymns to the Night" and Other Selected Writings*, The Library of Liberal Arts (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), p. 45].

10. Theodor Lessing, *Asien und Europa* (Berlin: Verlag der Aktion, 1918).

11. Cf. Scheler's war essays in the Catholic journal *Hochland* and the discussion of his *Ursachen des Deutschen Hasses* by Friedrich Meineke in the *Neue Rundschau*, Berlin, January 1918.

12. Victor Fraenkl, "Eine Streitschrift vom Glauben," *Die Aktion*, nos. 47–48 (1917).

13. M. Dragomanov, *Bakunins sozialpolitischer Briefwechsel mit A. J. Herzen und Ogarjow*, ed. Th. Schiemann, Bibliothek russischer Denkwürdigkeiten (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1895), vol. 6.

14. Friedrich Naumann, *Die Freiheit Luthers*, p. 15.

15. "Luther und der Staat," Special Issue "Protestantismus," *Süd-deutsche Monatshefte* (Munich), October 1917.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Hermann Bahr, *Vienna* (Stuttgart: Krabbe, 1906), p. 21.

18. W. Zimmermann, *Allgemeine Geschichte des großen Bauernkriegs* (Stuttgart, 1840–44), 1:345.

19. Cited by Maximilian Harden in *Zukunft*, January or February 1918.

20. Cited in *Die Aktion*, nos. 3–4 (1918): "Napoleon, for whom in any case life could have been more precious, expressed this opinion: 'One day war will be an anachronism. Believe me, civilization will get its revenge. Victories will be won without cannons and bayonets.' But Luther, on the other hand, that monk who was responsible for the Reformation, wrote a book about conscience and gave it this title: *Ob Kriegsleute auch in seligem Stande sein können!* In this book are to be found the following incredible things." (The material I quote begins at this point.)

21. René Schickele, *Schreie auf dem Boulevard* (Leipzig: Verlag der Weissen Bücher, 1910).

22. W. E. Hartpole Lecky, *Geschichte des Ursprungs und Einflusses der Aufklärung in Europa* (Leipzig, Heidelberg, 1868), 2:16.

23. A pastor's son, Friedrich Nietzsche sympathizes with him at this point. Luther's relationship to the monastic ideal is replicated in Nietzsche's relationship to Schopenhauer's doctrine of saints and ascetics. "Critique of unattainable ideals. We must see to it that the impossible, unnatural, and fantastic elements in the ideal of God, Christ, and Christian saints meet

with intellectual aversion. [!] Our model is to be no phantasm" (*Werke*, vol. 11). Or: "Neoplatonism and Christianity, the religiosi, those higher humans! The Reformation discarded these exalted persons and denied the fulfillment of ethical, religious ideals. Luther felt much malice and opposition toward the *vita contemplativa*" (ibid.). Or this: "Luther, the great benefactor. Luther's most important result is the suspicion which he awakened against the saints and the entire Christian *vita contemplativa*" (*Werke*, vol. 4). [*The Dawn of Day*, trans. J. M. Kennedy, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy (1909–1911; reissue, New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), p. 9:sec. 88, p. 88.] But is the impossibility of fulfilling an ideal sufficient to justify its condemnation? That is the question. The entirety of French culture is dedicated to the sublimation of traditional notions and symbols and answers "no" to this question.

24. Luther's companions in spirit were Dürer and Cranach. They shared neither in the uniquely sublime concept of God of the earliest stages of the Renaissance nor in the delicate sense of illusion and the decorative, sensual intoxication of the late Renaissance manifest in simple gesture. Luther's friends were coarse realists, if not cynics. The prosaic, old Frankish world was familiar to them and a worthy subject: plump magistrates and pernickety or common-sensical bourgeois women. The ultimate distinction between the religious and the cynical spirit is this: whether it releases humanity into God or God into humanity. Matthias Grünewald was the only truly heroic artist of Luther's age.

25. In a fragment, "Wir Philologen" (*Werke*, vol. 10), Nietzsche points out one ideal of the Renaissance: philology as the embodiment of worldly knowledge actively directed against the Church. He believed that the Church had succeeded fully in transforming aggressive philologists into educated amateurs. But Protestantism is aggressive philology in just this sense. Nietzsche is merely the ultimate offspring of this worldly poet-philology of the Renaissance that was first so seriously represented by Luther.

26. Melanchthon also revised the infamous document of the German enslavement of conscience, the Augsburg Confession. With the Augsburg Confession, Luther and Melanchthon ceremoniously renounced the individual freedom of conscience, Luther's original gospel, before the kaiser and princes. The *Confessio Augustana* constituted a new (Protestant) church that, in its relationship to secular power, is equaled only by the Byzantine Church; it sanctioned absolutism in the name of God, and, by granting highest spiritual rank to sovereigns, established as many Protestant popes as there were Protestant princes. The Augsburg Confession still reigns supreme in Germany today, and therefore one of the most significant points in the program of a German republican party is to eliminate it in the name of freedom of conscience.

27. Walter Rathenau, *Von kommenden Dingen* (Berlin: Fischer, 1917), p. 227.

28. Decisive to Luther's position vis-à-vis the papacy was Laurentius

Valla's exposé that the Donation of Constantine rested on a series of forged documents which the papacy had assumed in its decretals.

29. Note Nietzsche's statements regarding the relationship between Jewish and German morals: "This crucified Christianity has found one form in Catholicism, in which the Roman element has gained dominance, and another form in Protestantism, in which the Jewish element is dominant" (*Werke*, vol. 11). "Perhaps nothing has contributed more to Europe's self-effacement than this absorption of Jewish literature" (*ibid.*). "The view that the Jews are the most reprehensible race on earth is supported nicely by the fact that the Christian belief in the absolute sinfulness and reprehensibility of mankind originated with the Jews, and that they rejected it" (*ibid.*).

30. Contrary to the habit of calling it the Holy Scripture and in spite of the radical critique of the Old Testament developed by Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer in the 1840s.

31. In a lead article in the *Stuttgarter Tageblatt*, "Der deutsche Freiheitsglaube." Also, the "Bund für Freiheit und Vaterland," which was established along governmental lines, is probably his doing. Dr. Naumann has become a kind of impresario of Prussian freedom.

32. Naumann, *Die Freiheit Luthers*, p. 21.

33. The question of responsibility, as it was raised right at the beginning of the war, had at first a purely political significance. It was directed against a specific governmental camarilla. But it soon reached out to include the political and moral foundations of an entire system. I would like to extend it to include the historical development of the German nation. Thus, the question of guilt would be restored to the stature of a religious inventory. Acknowledging and affirming it in the political sense, as well as in the moral, philosophical, and religious sense, would enable Germany to reestablish peace and the Christian cultural unity of Europe.

34. The aphorism is entitled "The First Christian" and begins thus: "But who—apart from a few learned men—know that it [the Bible] likewise records the history of one of the most ambitious and importunate souls that ever existed, of a mind full of superstition and cunning: the history of the Apostle Paul?" [*The Dawn of Day*, trans. J. M. Kennedy, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy (1909–1911; reissue, New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), 9:sec. 68, p. 66.]

35. The English Revolution, which originated in the conflict of the free Scotch and English churches with the official Anglican church, was the first revolution in Europe to break with the concept of the individual redeemer.

36. "The conquest of the religious mixture, the Asiatic," Nietzsche exclaimed. "Europe has allowed an excess of oriental morality to grow unchecked, a morality devised and perceived by Jews" (*Werke*, vol. 10).

37. The study of history in Germany helps itself around its own political characterlessness by presenting students in a statistical manner only

with factual materials that it has already passed on to teachers in distorted and truncated form. Indeed, there is neither opportunity nor directive for enthusiasm.

38. Luther's burning of the Papal Bull was *political* insubordination.

39. René Schickele, "Lehrmeister wider Willen: Loyola," in *Schreie auf dem Boulevard*.

40. See Münzer, "Vom getichteten Glauben," and Zimmermann, *Geschichte des großen Bauernkriegs*, 2:55–56.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

42. Otto Merx, *Thomas Münzer und Heinrich Pfeiffer* (Göttingen, 1889), p. 20.

43. J. K. Seidemann, *Thomas Münzer* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1842), pp. 60–61.

44. Münzer's comments to Sebastian Franck and Melanchthon, in Münzer's "Ausgedrückte Entblößung des falschen Glaubens" and Luther's "Warnung vor den neuen Propheten an die Christen zu Antorf."

45. Karlstadt to Münzer, July 19, 1524, cited in Seidemann, *Thomas Münzer*, p. 128.

46. Herzog, *Enzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie*, 10:109.

47. De Wette, *Luthers Briefe*, 2:379 (August 3, 1523).

48. Similarly to Count Ernst von Mansfeld. See C. E. Förstemann, *Neues Urkundenbuch zur evangelischen Kirchenreformation* (1842), pp. 229ff.

49. "Brief an die Fürsten von Sachsen von dem aufrührischen Geist." But why should the peasants suffer and be passive Christians, why not the princes, too? The doctrine of suffering has caused so much harm and been used to justify it. And this principle was the major source of that moral defeatism that, since Luther, has preached of the state in place of the church. Christendom has the mission to relieve suffering, not to inflict it. Passive, fatalistic Christianity belongs to the Middle Ages and to the despotic forms of church and state, to the same extent that active, liberating Christianity is the ideal of a new, democratic period.

50. Friedrich Schlegel, *Fragmente* (Leipzig: Inselverlag).

51. Oscar Loerke, in *Neue Rundschau* (Berlin), December 1917.

52. Zimmermann, *Geschichte des großen Bauernkriegs*, 2:56.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

54. C. E. Förstemann, *Neues Urkundenbuch*, and *Neue Mitteilungen historisch-antiquarischer Forschungen*, vol. 12 (1867).

55. Zimmermann, *Geschichte des großen Bauernkriegs*, 2:69.

56. Thomas Münzer, "Hochverursachte Schutzrede und Antwort wider das geistlose, sanftlebende Fleisch zu Wittenberg" (1525).

57. Münzer in an address before his sovereign. Cf. Th. C. Strobel, *Leben, Schriften und Lehren Thomas Müntzers* (Nürnberg, 1795), pp. 51–52.

58. Zimmermann, *Geschichte des großen Bauernkriegs*, 2:82.

59. Luther, "Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der Bauern" (1525). In this article Luther declares that the removal of bondage is an act

that would be “criminal and directly contrary to the gospel” because everyone would view his own particularized nature as his master.

60. Merx, *Thomas Münzer und Heinrich Pfeiffer*, p. 24.

61. Ricarda Huch, *Luthers Glaube: Briefe an einen Freund* (Leipzig: Inselverlag, 1916), p. 5.

62. “Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Bauern.” Compare also his letter to Doctor Rühl: “The wise man says *cibus, onus et virga asino*, oatstraw belongs in a peasant. They do not hear the word and are senseless. Thus let them hear the *virgam*, the cannons. We should implore them to obey; if they do not, then let little mercy be found. Let the shots whistle among them; otherwise they will make things a thousand times worse.”

63. “Schutzrede wider das sanftlebende Fleisch zu Wittenberg.”

64. Melancthon, “Die Historie von Thome Müntzer des anfangers der doringischen Uffrur” (1525).

65. Bakunin in *L’Empire knoutogermanique* (1871), pp. 451–52: “To find evidence of the spirit that characterizes even today the Lutheran Church in Germany, read the forms and written promises that every minister of the Church in the kingdom of Prussia must sign in taking office and swear to observe. These prescriptions do not surpass those to which the Russian clergy are subjected, but they certainly equal in servility the obligations imposed upon them. Each minister of the gospel in Prussia takes an oath to be a lifelong devoted and submissive subject of his lord and master, the King of Prussia, and not of the Good Lord; to observe scrupulously and forever the holy commandments and never lose sight of the interests sacred to His Majesty; to inculcate this same respect and absolute obedience in his flocks, and to inform the government of all tendencies, activities, and deeds that might be contrary either to the will or to the interests of the government. And it is to such slaves that one entrusts the complete management of public schools in Prussia. (The Ministry of Public Worship and Education.) [Up to this point, Ball has been citing Bakunin’s French. The material in parentheses—the Ministry of Public Worship and Education—however, appears in German (*das Kultusministerium*).] This much-praised education is nothing more than a poisoning of the masses, a systematic propagation of the doctrine of slavery.”

66. Jules Lemaître in *Enquête sur la Monarchie*, ed. Charles Maurras, Nouvelle Librairie Nationale (Paris, 1909).

67. Yet, Fichte confesses this: “Accordingly, anyone is able to renounce allegiance to the church whenever he wants. . . . The agreement is canceled; he returns the divine treasure to the church, *untouched and intact*, and grants the church freedom to anoint him with all vials of wrath in the imperceptible world, and the church returns his religious freedom” (*Deutscher Glaube*, p. 27).

68. And Nietzsche made this discovery: “The Reformation alienated us from antiquity: did it have to? It discovered anew the old polarity of paganism-Christianity” (*Werke*, vol. 10). Yet he committed the fundamen-

tal error of deciding in favor of Teutonic paganism instead of Romance Christianity. He was forced to pay dearly for this decision.

Chapter 2

1. That is a legacy of the Augustinian Order, in whose spirit Johannes Tauler, Luther's theological teacher, was also working. "Because of our sins," said Tauler, "we are by nature children of wrath and eternal death and eternal damnation. St. Augustine says, 'Man is composed of putrid matter, rotten and reeking, mere lumps and festering material and earthly dominion, and the end is eternal death'" (Wilhelm Preger, *Geschichte der deutschen Mystik im Mittelalter* [Leipzig, 1893], pt. 3, p. 177).

2. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Vermischte Schriften* (Göttingen, 1844), 1:252.

3. It stands to reason that the first serious attempts at biblical criticism originate with a Jew: Baruch Spinoza.

4. Lichtenberg, *Vermischte Schriften*, 1:99: "You ought to say *there's thinking*, just as you say *there's lightning*. Saying *cogito* is already too much as soon as you translate it *I think*. Assuming the *I*, postulating it, is a practical necessity."

5. Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, *Italia e Germania* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1915).

6. F. G. Nicolai, *Die Biologie des Krieges: Betrachtungen eines deutschen Naturforschers* (Zürich: Füssli, 1917), pp. 343ff.

7. Professor Th. G. Masaryk has shown the decisive influence of Hume on Feuerbach's ethics (humanism) and, through Feuerbach, on Marx. See Masaryk, *Die philosophischen und soziologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus* (Vienna: Konegen, 1899), pp. 35ff.

8. This is the significance of English "utilitarian philosophy" still maligned in Germany today by warmongers such as Sombart.

9. Nicolai, *Die Biologie des Krieges*, pp. 350–51.

10. Heinrich Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (Leipzig: Hendel), p. 84.

11. Ludwig Ernst Borowsky, Prussian royal chaplain and member of the church consistory. The first sketch of his biography dates from 1792.

12. Borowsky, *Immanuel Kant: Sein Leben in Darstellungen von Zeitgenossen*, Deutsche Bibliothek (Berlin), p. 41.

13. Cited in Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie*, p. 110. ["Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," trans. Helen Mustard, in *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub, The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:229.]

14. Letter to Usteri, January 15, 1763, cited in Franz Mehring, *Die Lessinglegende: Zur Geschichte und Kritik des preussischen Despotismus und der klassischen Literatur* (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1913).

15. The separation of church and state is first of all the most indispens-

able requisite. Then adaptation of the New Testament, with philosophical, moral, and esthetic exegesis as the basis of a reform of theology and the educational system. The departure point of all instruction is the evangelical tradition, the subject, the Christian republic. The collection and reedition of the writings of all Christian heroes following a large-scale plan for popular and educational use!

16. Borowsky, *Immanuel Kant*, p. 57.

17. *Ibid.* The same biographer reports that youths in the streets frequently threw stones at the philosopher from beyond his garden fence.

18. "The universal imperative could well take this form: act as if the maxim of your behavior is to become a universal law of nature through your act of will." [The 1980 edition lists no source for this cited material. However, the original 1919 edition lists *Der deutsche Mensch: Bekenntnisse und Forderungen unserer Klassiker* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1915).]

19. Moreover, Borowski himself adds this observation: "I wish from my heart that Kant would have perceived the positive religion, the Christian religion, not merely as a *necessity of state* or as an institution to be put up with for the sake of the weak, but that he would have fully recognized the stabilizing, ameliorative, and beneficial features of Christendom" (p. 91).

20. Cardinal Mercier, *Le Christianisme dans la vie moderne* (Paris: Perrin, 1918), p. 92: "We would declare that it [i.e. Kantianism, trans.] has thus compromised the foundations of the moral order and that today the heirs of its thinking no longer have the same faith in the objective value of science."

21. Barbey d'Aurevilly, *Les prophètes du passé* (Paris: Calman-Levy, 1889), p. 7: "Whatever the pretensions of philosophy may be, and the relative force of the systems that its most illustrious thinkers have produced, when one looks at it, it is basically only a grand exercise in methodology necessarily taken up repeatedly by human intelligence in order to arrive at the truth."

22. Borowsky, *Immanuel Kant*, p. 79: "Perhaps many will find this anecdote noteworthy: Before he published his *Religion innerhalb . . .*, Kant carefully read through one of our oldest catechisms, 'Grundlegung der christlichen Lehre' (ca. 1732, 1733)."

23. Paul Deussen, "Kant und die Zensur," in *Die neuere Philosophie von Descartes bis Schopenhauer* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1917).

24. Rudolf Kassner, *Der indische Idealismus: Eine Studie* (Dresden-Hellerau: Hellerauer Verlag, 1915), p. 21.

25. Heinrich von Treitschke, *Deutsches Volkstum* (Jena: Diederichs, 1914), p. 64.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

27. Cf. Borgese's critique of German humanism and Machiavellianism in *L'Italie contre l'Allemagne* (Lausanne: Payot, 1917), particularly the chapter in which he discusses the *Räuber*, *Götz von Berlichingen*, *Faust*, and Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation*.

28. Fichte acknowledges that “the attempted total surpassing of all belief in foreign authority was an idea that had initially spread from the church reform in Germany. In turn, it gave new impetus to the Germans” (*Deutsches Volkstum*, p. 19).

29. Rathenau, *Von kommenden Dingen*, p. 282.

30. I will go even further. All adamant, committed, fundamental individualism is irreligious and nihilistic in its consequences, leading to nothingness and to negation. The attempt by Luther, Kant, and Nietzsche to establish a morality and religion on the basis of individualism necessarily led to absurdity and to disaster. Morals and religion are indeed the disciplines of limitation and abrogation of the individual over against and in the totality. Enthusiasm is the highest virtue of the individual. The problem of the intellectual resides in the sorrowful and painful insight of the individual into the mysterious actuality of separation from the totality.

31. Treitschke, *Deutsches Volkstum*, p. 64.

32. Heinrich Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie*, p. 16.

33. “Die Bedeutung des evangelischen Pfarrhauses für das deutsche Geistesleben,” Special Issue “Protestantismus,” *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*, October 1917.

34. *Ibid.*, “Luther und der Staat.”

35. Rathenau, *Von kommenden Dingen*, p. 209.

36. *Der deutsche Glaube: Religiöse Bekenntnisse aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Jena: Diederichs, 1914), p. 24.

37. Letter to the Gotha librarian Friedrich Jakobs, in which he speaks of the “recrudescent fogs of a calculating barbarism.”

38. As Frau von Stein reports: “Finally, he responded to someone who was praising the view of Ilmthal: ‘That is hardly a view,’ and he looked extremely sullen.” It was after his return from Italy.

39. D’Aurevilly’s ardent opposition to Luther: “Well,” he wrote in *Prophètes du passé*, “if, instead of burning the writings of Luther, ashes from which fell back upon Europe like seeds, one had burnt Luther himself, the world would have been spared for at least a century. Burning Luther! people are going to shout. But there is *more at issue here than the saving of the blood of mankind; it is also a matter of the respect for the conscience and intelligence of the human race.* Luther perverted first one, then the other.”

40. “*Die Feldpostbücherei*,” as the publisher notes, “appeared during the first six months of war, replacing our cultural journal *Die Tat*, which, however, reappeared after March 1915. Both publications attempt to do the same thing: to prepare on popular and religious bases a new German idealism in the tradition of Fichte and Lagarde.”

41. We know how Kleist suffered under Kant’s influence; Kant shattered Kleist’s instinctual energies and was his unique bane. We know, too,

what intellectual fabrications Schiller permitted himself to derive from Kant and how Goethe set against Kant.

42. See Christian Reuter's novel *Schelmuffsky*, a persiflage of the student barbarism of the period.

43. Bode, *Goethe in vertraulichen Briefen seiner Zeitgenossen*, p. 517. Schiller's letter to Körner, May 1795.

44. Even Karoline Böhmer (in 1796) ridiculed the "high riding pieces of poetry, the rimed metaphysics and moral philosophies" in Schiller's *Musen Almanach*.

45. Schiller to Körner, November 1, 1790: "I do not like his philosophy all that well either—it draws too much from the world of the senses. His mode of presentation is, in general, too sensuous and it *manipulates* me too easily." And Körner to Schiller November 11, 1790: "I also find Goethe too *sensuous* in his philosophy; but I do think that it is good for you and me to touch on him now and then, so that he can serve as a warning whenever we are going too far into intellectual realms."

46. Bode, *Goethe in vertraulichen Briefen*, p. 513.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 357.

49. *Ibid.*, letter to Schiller, p. 371.

50. One must read the writings of the period to get a sense of the foolish spectacle the *Xenien* evoked. The Berlin book dealer Nicolai wrote in a rejoinder that perhaps a little chastisement administered by Lessing in his own unique way would have done Goethe some good. A polemic against the *Xenien* had been sent on to Kant, and he responded that he "was highly displeased with the undignified behavior of Schiller and Goethe and was particularly enraged at the former, found that manner of fending off the malicious attack of the latter to be first class" (Bode, *Goethe in vertraulichen Briefen*, 596). Lavater wrote these words to Count Friedrich Stollberg: "Dear friend, we want to work quietly, forcefully, humbly, courageously with brightest wisdom and dignity against the nasty sansculottism without letting ourselves be tainted by it! And now even Goethe is—I would have almost said, the provost of that sansculottic rabble" (p. 597).

51. *Der deutsche Mensch*, p. 97.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

53. The same thing was true in 1914. Note Thomas Mann, Gerhart Hauptmann, Richard Dehmel, Frank Wedekind. Not to mention the "philosophers."

54. Bode, *Goethe in vertraulichen Briefen*, p. 281.

55. *Der deutsche Mensch*, pp. 46-47.

56. Even the socialistic cosmopolitanism of the Germans, the Marxist International, has to be viewed in this way. It is the offspring of national desperation. In the German Reichstag (October 24, 1918) Ledebour admitted in elevated tones: "My membership in the international socialist move-

ment does not mean that I have stopped being a German." He was confessing his Germanness at a time when it would have been more appropriate not to do so. He was making this admission in opposition to the fulfillment of well-warranted Polish claims on West Prussia.

57. *Deutscher Glaube*, p. 26.

58. *Der deutsche Mensch*, pp. 7, 19.

59. Fichte, Kant, Humboldt, and Hegel alike, indeed even Schopenhauer, assumed malignity whenever they spoke of the duties of the state.

60. Treitschke, *Deutsches Volkstum*, p. 30.

61. Heinrich Heine, *Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, pp. 110–11. ["Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," trans. Helen Mustard, in *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub, The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:229.]

62. Heine has previously substantiated that "Fichteian idealism belongs to the most colossal errors ever concocted by the human mind. It is more atheistic and damnable than the grossest materialism." And note Schopenhauer's words: "In order to orient myself regarding the intellectual character of the Germans and the underlying expectations of that character, I have made a few hard and fast points I always look back to: first, that Fichte, this outbidding Hanswurst of Kant, even forty years after his emergence is still named in the same breath with Kant, as if he were on the same level. "Ἡρακλῆς καὶ πίθηκος!" ("Heracles [Hercules] and the ape!") What do the gentlemen at Eugen Diederichs have to say to this? Even in 1914 they were preparing "on popular and religious bases, a new German idealism in the tradition of Fichte and Lagarde." Here is a sampling of Herr Lagarde's thinking:

"The Christian doctrine of the twentieth century will not be dogmatic; it will be a local history."

"The following considerations demonstrate that every nation needs a national religion."

"But the state is capable of one thing. It can pave the way for religion, and that is what it must do."

"It is not our task to create a national religion, but, certainly, to do everything that seems appropriate to pave the way for national religion."

"A life on intimate terms with the omnipotent creator and redeemer, kingly grandeur, and ruler's power, in face of everything that is not of the divine race."

"We should not be human, but children of God."

63. *Deutscher Glaube*, p. 35.

64. François Auguste Marie Mignet, *Geschichte der französischen Revolution 1789–1814* (Leipzig: Reclam), pp. 174–75.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

67. It is worth noting that none of the great party doctrinaires of the Revolution has outlived this fact.

68. Bode, *Goethe in vertraulichen Briefen seiner Zeitgenossen*, David Veit to Rahel Levin, pp. 477–78.

69. In the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Sec. 23). In 1795 Pichegru conquered Holland and instituted a Batavian republic. Driven into a corner by the revocation of English financial aid and the hostile stance of Russia and England, Prussia withdrew from the coalition war and in the Treaty of Basel was forced to cede its possessions on the left bank of the Rhine to France.

70. Cf. Nicolai, "Der Missbrauch Kants," in *Die Biologie des Krieges*, pp. 439–42. It will pain German republicans that my presentation contradicts that of Nicolai, but I believe that mine is the more correct one. Our classical authors prove little. They are ambiguous. We must create a new tradition.

71. "In the Middle Ages a city was called freed and republican after it had wrested itself free from a distant kingdom that never offered any protection and that became burdensome. As a rule, these liberations brought it about that they established their own anarchy instead of remaining a part of the greater one. And the blows one was supposed to receive were from then on administered by oneself" (Fichte, *Machiavell*, crit. ed. by H. Schulz [Leipzig: Meiner, 1918], pp. 7–8). What Fichte describes here is Prussia's relationship to the Empire at that time. And what Kant had in mind, probably as a concession to the French threat, was a dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire into aristocratic republics, not a Prussian, or even German, republic in the contemporary sense.

72. E. A. Ch. Wasiansky, "Immanuel Kant in seinen letzten Lebensjahren," in Borowsky, *Immanuel Kant*, p. 224.

73. *Der deutsche Mensch*, p. 38.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

76. As an example of the influence of the Rousseauian thesis in Germany and how it was interpreted, compare, furthermore, Schelling's verdict claiming that the conception of "freedom which is the goal of coercion" was Kant's discovery: "The ruler who gives no room to voluntary virtues [sic!], who does not allow society to develop, or for whom, to use Kant's language, freedom is not the goal of coercion, is a despot." Indicative of Rousseau's influence on Kant is the fact that "beyond an engraving of J. J. Rousseau in Kant's living room, there was nothing of the sort to be found in his house" (in Borowsky).

77. Moeller van den Bruck, "Wilhelm von Humboldt und die preussische Freiheit," feuilleton in *Roter Tag* (Berlin, Winter 1918). Moeller van den Bruck is the author of a fine specimen of a book, *Die Deutschen: Unsere Menschengeschichte*, published by Bruns in Minden. The work

“breaks down” into eight volumes: 1–2, “Lost and Leading Germans”; 3–4, “Enraptured and Critical Germans”; 5–6, “Formative Germans. Goethe”; 7–8, “Despondent and Laughing Germans.” Let’s hope Herr Moeller van den Bruck will publish an addendum 9–10, “Inspid and Caustic Germans,” in which he will acknowledge this note.

78. Ch. Seignobos, *1815–1915: Vom Wiener Kongress bis zum Krieg von 1914* (Lausanne: Payot, 1915), p. 5.

79. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, “Politische Betrachtungen,” *Ver-mischte Schriften*, 1:225, 243.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

81. *Ibid.*, “Nachtrag zu den Politischen Betrachtungen,” p. 253.

82. These are harsh words and also strike at Schiller. He, if anyone, would have been viewed as the liberated man of the Revolution to give new ideals definitive form in prose instead of demeaning them esthetically and decoratively like some versifying imitator of Racine. A real awareness of the facts of inhumanity and bondage would have come from feudal-philanthropic humanitarian fanaticism, while a healing confession of the “limitations of the nation” would have come from glib humanism.

83. See Tim Klein, *Der deutsche Soldat: Zeugnisse von seinem wahren Wesen* (Munich: Hanfstängel, 1916). The book is dedicated to “The memory of our war dead” and begins with quotations from Lessing and Goethe.

84. Friedrich II, letter to Voltaire, November 27, 1773.

85. When will Prussian officers turn into Loyolas?

86. A letter of Friedrich Wilhelm I to Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau, the “old man from Dessau,” his chief drillmaster and master of arms.

87. Mercenaries newly recruited and conscripted from the scum of foreign countries swelled the ranks of pardoned criminals. Mehring (*Die Lessinglegende*) documents official records that reveal that the recruiting officers of Friedrich Wilhelm I were outlawed in the nations bordering Prussia and were subject to the death penalty if they were apprehended. The Prussian army was a kind of foreign legion in the worst sense attributed to the term in popular song. “And I beheld an empty, barren expanse and sought to erect an edifice in it,” wrote Friedrich II (*Zur Einführung in die Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Hauses Brandenburg*).

88. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. Kant continues: “To be sure, we are legislative members of a realm of customs that is made possible by freedom and that practical reason commends to our esteem. Yet we are also the *subordinates, not the sovereigns, of this realm*. The failure to recognize *our inferior status, as creatures*, and the refusal by self-conceit to accept the authority of the divine law is, in fact, *an apostasy* against that law according to the spirit, *even if the letter of the law has been met.*”

89. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*.

90. It would be easy enough to marshal evidence that, as the philosopher of the Prussian state, he was unable to think otherwise. The Augsburg Confession transformed him into the religious instrument of his prince.

The Summepiscopus confirmed his professorship, and, in accepting the position, Kant pledged himself to serve only the interests and the honor of his sovereign as a faithful subordinate.

91. In the pamphlet "Teutschlands wahrhaftes Interesse bei jetzigen Konjunkturen," published in 1675 (*Quellenbücher* [Voigtländer], vol. 50).

92. Klein, *Der deutsche Soldat*, p. 26.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

94. "Churfürstliches Brandenburgisches Kriegs-Recht oder Articul-Brieff. De Anno 1656" (Mylius, *Corpus Const. March. III.*).

95. Klein, *Der deutsche Soldat*, p. 33.

96. "Friedrichs des Grossen General-Prinzipa vom Kriege, appliciret auf die Tactique und auf die Disciplin, derer Preußischen Trouppen" (1753).

97. Klein, *Der deutsche Soldat*, p. 98.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

99. M. Jähns, "Scharnhorst über das stehende Heer," *Heeresverfassungen und Völkerleben*.

100. Klein, *Der deutsche Soldat*, p. 118.

101. He took this position because he feared that compulsory military service could be wrecked by the old Prussian practices of using the stocks and running the gauntlet. It was a concession to the romantic middle class, not to the spirit of freedom. (Cf. Delbrück, *Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen N. v. Gneisenau.*)

102. August 1811. Cf. Klein, *Der deutsche Soldat*, p. 131.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

104. Johannes Scherr, *Blücher: Seine Zeit und sein Leben*, 4th ed. (1887), 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1862–63).

105. Klein, *Der deutsche Soldat*, p. 145.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

108. Cf. Maximilian Harden, "Hirn und Schwert," in *Zukunft* (January 19, 1918).

109. Cf. Wilhelm Dittmann, "Drei Reden über Belagerungszustand, Schutzhaft und Zensur," delivered in the Reichstag on January 18, May 24, and October 28, 1916 (Bern: Der Freie Verlag, 1918). When the Munich literary journal *Das Forum* was banned by the Bavarian War Ministry, these were the reasons given: "propagation of an unpatriotic middle class and class of esthetes" and the dissemination "of the irrelevant and misleading views and opinions of individual, largely foreign, pacifists and utopians" (Dittmann, p. 20).

110. "Teutschlands wahrhaftes Interesse bei jetzigen Konjunkturen."

111. See Général Courgaud, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France sous Napoléon, écrites à Sainte Hélène* (Paris, 1823); German trans. *Napoleons Gedanken und Erinnerungen* (Stuttgart: Lutz).

112. "Das Militär muß in Preussen die erste Stelle einnehmen" (Political Testament of 1752).

113. Treitschke, *Deutsches Volkstum*, p. 68.

114. It was a revolt of vassals. Friedrich himself writes: "If, after my death, my nephew falls into a stupor, then . . . the Emperor [Joseph II] will have swallowed everything, eventually making all Germany subordinate to his rule, robbing its sovereign princes of their capacity to create a monarchy such as exists in France" (May 9, 1782).

115. It is sufficiently clear that the political ideal of Goethe and Schiller, as seen in *Egmont*, *Fiesco*, and *Don Carlos*, is the Protestant revolt of the nobility, borne by a humanistic fanaticism. Politically, they were living during the reign of Louis XIV and believed in reforms from above. The freedom they had in mind is the freedom of religion and thought guaranteed by the sovereign, the freedom of morals, as opposed to etiquette, the voluntary consent to the "law." They misunderstood the doctrine imparted by Friedrich II (Political Testament of 1768): "Always remember that all great sovereigns at all times harbor the thoughts of extending their power." The rebellious sons in Schiller's works run up against tyrannical patriarchy, against the "moral world order." In his works the fathers are tragic, the sons are not. This idea is alien to us now.

116. Political Testament of 1752.

117. By the Swabian poet Schubart (1739–91), who formerly had boasted of "the wicked attacks of almost all crowned heads on earth." His poems were published by Reclam.

118. *Antimachiavell* (1739–40).

119. Letter to August Wilhelm, Prince of Prussia, April 8, 1741.

120. Political Testament of 1752.

121. Thomas Mann, *Friedrich und die große Koalition* (Berlin: Fischer, 1915).

122. In a manifesto against Austria, July 1756.

123. "Vierte Denkschrift über die gegenwärtige Lage Europas" (mid-November 1756).

124. "To pit altar against altar, I have summoned French Jesuits to educate the Silesian nobility" (Political Testament, 1752).

125. "Totengespräch zwischen dem Herzog von Choiseul, Graf Struensee und Sokrates" (February 1772).

126. In his *Lessinglegende*.

127. Quotations from the introduction to Friedrich der Große, *Über die deutsche Literatur* (Leipzig: Reclam).

128. Bishop Adalbert of Prague was killed by pagan Prussians in 997, and the missionary monk Bruno of Querfurt was slain in the year 1008. King Ottokar of Bohemia was forced to lead a crusade to Prussia in 1255. He founded the city of Königsberg. About 1400, during the time of the Dietrichs and Quitzows, brute force and robbery were the general rule in Brandenburg. During the Thirty Years' War, Brandenburg was devastated to a greater degree than any other country. And Goethe remarked of Berlin that "an untamed breed of people" still lived there.

129. Cf. Ludwig Kulczicky, *Geschichte der russischen Revolution* (Gotha: Perthes, 1910), 1:43ff., according to which Novikov published 440 various works that predominantly dealt with moral issues in the manner of the Freemasons.

130. Däubler, *Lucidarium in arte musicae*, p. 92. And the same location for this significant passage: "The uncanniness of ears turned toward home, of the ocean of repose, found richly endowed masters in Ambrose and Gregory. A monk harmonized the whole Christian quest for peace in these words: *Ut queant laxis resonare fibris / Mira gestorum famuli tuorum / Solve polluti labii reatum / Sancte Johanne.*" ["That thy servants may be able to sing thy marvellous acts to the loosened strings, absolve them, Saint John, from the guilt of polluted lips" (Trans. W. Francis H. King, in *Classical and Foreign Quotations* [New York: Ungar, n.d.], pp. 363–64. A medieval Sapphic verse of a hymn to St. John the Baptist by the Benedictine Paulus Diaconus (725–97), in which the names of the notes in the usual gamut may be traced in the initial syllables of key words. As long ago as the eleventh century, Guido of Arezzo originated the use of this verse in the teaching of singing.)

131. An aphorism by Chamfort (d. 1794), whose thoughts and maxims had decisive influence on Friedrich Schlegel: "It seems impossible, given the present state of society, to find a single man who could reveal the depths of his soul and the intricacies of both his character and, above all, his weaknesses even to his best friend. Furthermore, one has to play his role so well that like any good actor on stage he cannot be treated with contempt for his performance" (*Oeuvres* [ed. Auguis, 1824], 4:379ff).

132. Friedrich Schlegel, *Fragmente* (Leipzig: Inselverlag), pp. 53–54.

133. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

134. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

135. All of this is essentially formulated by Rousseau. The accent lies on the word "nature." Goethe was much more a Rousseauist than is known or can be known.

136. Letter to Kanka during the Vienna Congress. See Romain Rolland, *Beethoven* (Zurich: Rascher, 1918), p. 52.

137. In 1823.

138. This spirit in Germany had to be reborn via a detour through the thought of Tolstoy. In the office occupied by Charles Péguy, editor of *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*—a publication to which Romain Rolland was an ardent contributor—hung a striking portrait of Tolstoy. Leonhard Frank's volume of novellas, *Der Mensch ist gut* (Zurich: Rascher, 1917), was inspired by Tolstoy, as was Ludwig Rubiner's "Der Mensch in der Mitte" (Berlin: Verlag der Aktion, 1918). Beethoven seems to have been forgotten.

139. Novalis, "Die Christenheit oder Europa" (Leipzig: Inselverlag), pp. 39, 47, 57. The essay concludes with these words: "Will there soon once again be a throng of divine souls—ought not all true, religious minds be filled with the desire to see heaven on earth? Christendom must live once

more. It will rise up again out of the divine womb of a venerable European church council, and the task of awakening religion will be carried out according to an all-embracing, divine plan. And there will be no more protestation against Christian and secular forces, for the essence of the Church will be genuine freedom, and all necessary reforms will be carried out under its guidance as peaceful and ceremonious procedures of the state." [Ball here has pieced together separated passages into an apparently seamless quotation. Cf. "Christendom or Europe," *"Hymns to the Night" and Other Selected Writings*, trans. Charles E. Passage. The Library of Liberal Arts (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), pp. 62–63.]

140. Franz Blei, "Novalis," in *Vermischte Schriften* (Munich: Müller, 1912), 4:136. See also the preface to Novalis's poems in the Reclam edition.

141. A comment on the religion of Romanticism is appropriate here. I do not share Franz Blei's belief that the Christianity of the Romantics was a religion "that had grown out of antiquity, preserving heathenism in its cultism more strongly than any other religion has done." I do agree that it was a reawakening of the senses "in accord with the theoretical and practical fabrications of pure reason" that drove the sensitive natures of the Protestant North to Catholicism. The "pagan Catholicism" Blei describes, with its "festivals and processions, colorful garments and images, music and gods and goddesses," that "consecrates ecstasy and has acknowledged the power of the flesh beyond all other things to such an extent that it designates mortification as its primary dogma," in short, the Renaissance Catholicism of Herr Blei, Scheler, Borchard and Wiegler—we have witnessed the military consequences of its materiality. This decorative Catholicism that abandoned the older stringent tradition may have suited the Schlegel brothers in their later years. But it was not the spiritual province of Baader, Novalis, and Beethoven. Novalis said of Sophie Kühn: "Sophie is not my love, she is my religion." And we know that Beethoven scorned Mozart because of Don Juan. For Novalis and Beethoven the profanation of love was the profanation of genius. What moved them was certainly not "pagan Catholicism" and not "veneration of God through affront to God in sinning," which Blei defines as the morality (!) of Barbey d'Aureville and Baudelaire (p. 116). They were moved by the suffering spirituality of Christ, that magic bridge to the otherworldly, the absorption of all nature and humanity in the suffering God who yet would rejoice. Compare also Beethoven, *Gespräche 1819–20*: "Socrates and Jesus have been my examples."

142. Franz Blei, *ibid.*, p. 109. The aphorism begins thus: "The religious duty: to have pity on the deity."

143. Gustav Landauer, "Friedrich Hölderlin in seinen Gedichten," *Die Weißen Blätter* (June 1916).

144. *Ibid.*, p. 201. "If we have need of heroes," wrote Landauer, "who do not destroy and rant and rave, but who build, bring order, and consecrate, if we need heroes of love, then Hölderlin is a leading spirit of our future, of our present" (p. 211).

145. Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (Reclam). [*Hyperion, or the Hermit in Greece*, trans. Willard R. Trask, adapted by David Schwarz, *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, ed. Eric L. Santner. The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1990), 22:128–29. Ball's quotation truncates three paragraphs of Hölderlin's novel.]

146. "It is a hard saying," we read in *Hyperion*, "and yet I speak it because it is the truth: I can think of no people more at odds with themselves than the Germans. You see artisans, but no men, thinkers, but no men, priests, but no men, masters and servants, but no men, minors and adults, but no men—is this not like a battlefield on which hacked-off hands and arms and every other member are scattered, while the life-blood flows from them to vanish in the sand?" [Trask, trans., *Hyperion*, p. 128]. Hölderlin was one of the first who sought, if only in hymns, to reestablish the spiritual unity of the nation. All Romanticism is literature and music against Luther and Kant, against individualistic and enlightened formation of character and philosophy—a conspiracy, if you will, a freemasonry. *Franz von Baader* and *Goethe* transported the religious primal unity of the Middle Ages and its symbolism of the abyss into the contemporary age. *Schopenhauer* remained the imposing treasury of the fall of intellectual philosophy and superficializing Alexandrianism. *Beethoven* released the enthusiastic and dithyrambic forces of the nation. *Wagner* guided them back to Dante, Ambrose, and Giotto. The sweetness of madonnas, the central stewardship of things sacred! Music as the essence of all magical and sacerdotal doctrines. *Nietzsche* was the first to seek to turn the spirit of this music toward life, to storm the authority and pseudomorals of the Holy Roman Empire and to expose the monstrousness of barbarian darkness, barbaric hardness, barbaric dissension. And yet, music itself is blasphemous and godless, contrary to its exalted pretensions, perverted by the great reign of philistines. Nietzsche discovered this fact too late. And he himself was only a heretic, only a Protestant. The conditions required for our recovery are these: the collapse of this reign of philistines, return to scholastic philosophy and liturgical mysticism! Let us go back to the times before the Reformation!

147. Cf. "Der Fatalismus des Büchnerschen *Danton* und seine Beziehungen zur Romantik," *Wissen und Leben* (Zurich) Spring 1918.

148. *Ibid.*

149. The doctrine of saints begins with Baader and Novalis and is continued by Schopenhauer and Wagner. And in the thought of Nietzsche and Kassner one can find the ideal of the "saints of knowledge," an ideal that was also discovered by Romanticism (in its Indic studies).

150. In Novalis, a "Sister Flower" corresponds to the "Brother Wolf" of Francis of Assisi. Heine compares it to the Arabian magician who, at will, brings any stone to life. "Novalis saw everywhere only marvels, lovely marvels. He listened to the plants conversing with each other, he knew the secret of every young rose, in the end he identified himself with all of

nature, and when autumn came and the leaves fell, he died" (*Die romantische Schule* [Halle: Hendel], p. 72). ["The Romantic School," trans. Helen Mustard, *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub. The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:76.] Compare also Franz von Baader, a strong influence on Novalis: "Behold the flower, how it turns toward its betrothed, the sun! She drinks in light, is resplendent, and blooms. Surrounded by night and darkness she fades. That happens each day before our eyes, according to physical laws, as we say. And must not these same laws operate within things, in the world of spirit? Is my spirit so isolated, cut off, and willful as we suppose? No, it turns outward toward the source and toward the sun of all being, and light and truth and goodness and heavenly pleasure fills it, all according to the same eternal, physical laws! An authentic influx that affirms our sense of self-esteem. The single, true philosophy and physics of all prayer."

151. Borgese, *L'Italie contre l'Allemagne*, p. 145.

152. Heine, *Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, p. 36.

153. *Ibid.*, p. 118: "There is no doubt that he far surpasses Kant and Fichte. He is as penetrating as the former and as forceful as the latter, and possesses in addition a fundamental tranquility of mind, a harmony of thought, not to be found in Kant and Fichte, in both of whom a revolutionary spirit [!] prevails. . . . Hegel was a man of character." ["Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," trans. Helen Mustard, *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub. The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:237.]

154. In the preface to the second edition, "Paris, May 1852," he wrote: "I confess point-blank that everything in this book that has particular reference to the question of God is as false as it is reckless. Equally reckless and false is the assertion I borrowed from others that deism has in theory been destroyed and manages only to survive fitfully in the world of appearances. No, it is not true that the critique of reason, which has demolished the proofs of the existence of God as we have known them since Anselm of Canterbury, has also put an end to the existence of God. Deism is alive, living its most vibrant life; it is not dead; least of all has it been killed by the most recent German philosophy. This web-spinning Berlin dialectic cannot even coax the dog from behind the stove, or, for that matter, harm a fly, not to mention God."

155. "Of course spiritual interests," he emphasized, "must always form an alliance with material interests in order to emerge victorious" (*Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie*, p. 341). Of course they are not Romantics, but pure pragmatists. Heine, Marx, Lassalle, and Rathenau are Protestants by adoption sponsored by materialistic elective affinity.

156. See Vladimir Soloviov, "Vorlesungen über das Gottmenschentum," *Ausgewählte Werke* (Jena: Diederichs), vol. 3. Compare also Masaryk, *Rußland und Europa*, 1:250, where evidence is cited that Baader influenced not

only the major Russian orthodoxists (Samarin, Chomyakov, and Kireyevsky), but also the founder of the Holy Alliance, Alexander I. Since the first sketch of the Holy Alliance stems from Baader, it can be said that he was the one who overthrew the atheistic positivist Napoleon.

157. This entry in the *Tagebücher*, 1786: "God knows how much and how often I felt in agreement with Pascal, that for all our speculating and demonstrations we are always in the world without God. To be sure, your metaphysical God is such a delicate, pure little spirit flame that neither illuminates nor warms, and in proximity to it, all good resolve simply freezes." His treatise, "Über Kants Deduktion der praktischen Vernunft und die absolute Blindheit der letzteren," appeared in 1796. An article, "Über den Affekt der Bewunderung und der Ehrfurcht," followed in 1804. In 1823 appeared a discussion, "Über den Zwiespalt des religiösen Glaubens und Wissens als die geistige Wurzel des Verfalls der religiösen und politischen Sozietät." Baader's magical influence on the Romantics was great. Friedrich Schlegel, Goethe, and Schelling as well as Novalis paid homage to his thought. However, rationalism and Hegelianism pushed him into the background. The great treasures of a Christian philosophy possessing irresistible healing power are to be uncovered here.

158. "Revision der Hegel'schen Philosopheme bezüglich auf das Christentum" (1839). He held all modern philosophy from Descartes to Locke to be a mental disorder, which, nonetheless, was not capable of doing permanent damage to the healthy constitution of the human thought process; and he foresaw the approach of a great moral catastrophe. He wrote the following words in 1786: "Doctors and all students of nature agree that all living matter functioning in such a fashion is diseased. The increasing spiritual and nervous infirmities and enlightenment in our cultured human populations unfortunately are unmistakable symptoms of an imminent *universal* revolution. Fleshed out with all our senseless and godless poetizing, with our activities and feats of destruction, we are but dwarfish offspring of those weaknesses and that miserable, sickly impotence, mere miniatures of what was embodied to a gigantic degree by those towers of flesh and those heroes before the flood. Those stormers of the heavens sinned through gigantic deeds, and we little assailants of the heavens sin through our nothingness. The heart is the first organ that appears in the tiny droplet of lymph in which, and from which, the human image is prepared; and indeed it is the heart's formation that is the ultimate aim of the entire tragicomedy."

159. He did not consider the papacy to be indispensable to Catholicism. He valued Protestantism for its negation of hierarchical despotism, but saw the papacy of emperors, the temporal rule of the church, as a consequence. In opposition to both churches he advanced the Greco-Russian church as the model of ecclesiastical organization. These words appear in an essay, "Der morgenländische und abendländische Katholizismus mehr in seinem inneren wesentlichen als in seinem äußeren Verhältnisse dargestellt," writ-

ten in 1818: "The superiority with which Roman Catholics as well as many Protestants in the West presume to be able to look askance at the police-like dependence of the Greco-Russian church as *ecclesia pressa* puts them in a bad way, in that they ought to recognize that such dependence does in fact exist accidentally, not essentially, which is the exact opposite in the case of the Roman, as well as the Protestant, churches. The Roman Church is capable of escaping temporal sovereignty only through submitting unconditionally to a spiritual sovereignty, and the Protestant church purports to escape submissiveness to a spiritual despot, but only by recognizing temporal sovereigns as supreme pastor and bishop." In a letter to Varnhagen von Ense (1824) he called Protestantism the "great ground floor of the church"; and in another letter he wrote: "Protestantism ought to establish its status quo. The Evangelicals ought to have . . . a gospel. But if Protestantism cannot establish this status quo, then *pereat*" (*Kleine Schriften* [Leipzig, 1850], pp. 380–82). His ecclesiastical hopes were directed unerringly at the reunification of the Eastern and Western churches. Baader was convinced that he had discovered in the Eastern Church a collegial form of the ecclesiastical regimens that represented the collective nature of the Church; more basic, purer forms in the administration of the sacrament; a purer concept of the conditions under which enslaved mankind could be freed from the control of sins and guilt. German idealistic philosophy for him was only a step toward the dissolution of Protestantism.

160. Franz von Baader, *Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1789 bis 1793. Gesammelte Schriften* (Leipzig, 1850), 11:253.

161. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

162. "There is among us," says George D. Herron, "a feeling of the presence of Christ unequalled in the past" (*Le Germanisme et la croisade américaine* [Geneva: Atar, 1918]).

163. *Mercure de France* (Paris, November 1, 1916).

164. Heine, *Gedanken und Einfälle*, vol. 12 of *Vermischte Schriften*.

165. Moeller van den Bruck, "Wilhelm von Humboldt und die preußische Freiheit."

166. Karl Rosenkranz, *Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegels Leben* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1844), p. 48.

167. Hufnagel's letter to Hegel, May 4, 1803, in Rosenkranz, *ibid.*, p. 224.

168. I cite Hegel's letter, which is of interest on several counts: "Jena, Monday, October 13, 1806—the day on which Jena was occupied by the French and the Emperor Napoleon passed through its gates: I saw the Emperor, this *world soul*, riding out through the city on a reconnaissance mission. It is in fact a remarkable experience to see astride a horse such an individual on whom all things seem to be focused, who spans the globe and rules the world. *As I had done even earlier, everyone wishes the French army luck, which they will surely have, given the extraordinary difference between their leaders and common soldiers and those of their enemy* [the

Prussians!]. Thus our region will soon be freed from the throng." An extraordinary patriot, we would all agree! And yet his publisher claims that he gave "the utmost" of what "German idealism had to offer." Cf. K. P. Hasse, foreword, *Hegels Philosophie*, Deutsche Bibliothek (Berlin, 1917).

169. Rosenkranz, *Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegels Leben*, p. 159. The first two propositions of his inaugural dissertation are: (1) "Contradictio est regula veri, non contradictio falsi"; (2) "Syllogismus est principium Idealismi." ("1. Contradiction is the basic principle of truth, noncontradiction is the rule of falsehood. 2. A syllogism is the principle of idealism.")

170. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

171. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

172. *Ibid.*, p. 411. The union of the divine and human is the full-blown blasphemy of Protestantism. The union of the divine and human, represented by the Prussian soldier kings—that is the doctrinaire satanism for which Lutheran theology must bear responsibility.

173. There is no mention of private morality in Hegel's writings and in general only the discussion of the virtues of positions, the state, the totality. His superstition is the concept, the collective. A realm of concepts is to efface personal immorality and excuse moral quietism. His philosophy is a flight into abstraction. The contradiction he postulates at the beginning of his philosophy abolishes morals, in that God and the Devil enjoy the same rights. Contradiction, Hegel's most personal problem (expressed in thesis and antithesis) is to be forgotten and buried in synthesis, in the higher concept. There we have the "ideological superstructure" that Marx assumed; as its basis and realization he recognized and designated the crassest materialism and fatalism. All those abstruse, dialectical processes with which Hegel and Marx thought they could achieve morality in history are but desperate attempts to be deceptive with regard to personal immorality and despicable, materialistic greediness. No one has more thoroughly exposed the moralistic nihilism of Hegelian philosophy than Ernest Hello in his magnanimous book *Philosophie et athéisme* (new ed., Paris: Perrin, 1903): "Where was Hegel led by this theory of the identity of opposites? If, indeed, affirmation and negation are identical, then all doctrines become equal and unimportant. Hegel proclaims the equality, the identity of being and nothingness. Therein lies the radical, the fundamental and enormous error of this century; therein is to be found the source of all negation; therein resides this absolute doubt, which is the absence of philosophy itself instituted as an absolute philosophy." And he also designated the root of this philosophy of nothing: "the great disaster, the original sin of modern society: Protestantism." ("L'Allemagne et le Christianisme," pp. 247-60).

174. Rosenkranz, *Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegels Leben*, p. 328.

175. In his Heidelberg address he had expressly drawn attention to the chosen race of the Jews.

176. Rosenkranz, *Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegels Leben*, p. 328, re-

marks, however, that Hegel was “indebted to Kantian philosophy, the original Prussian philosophy, for the most essential points in his own philosophy.” And that turns out to be true.

177. *Ibid.*, p. 411.

178. *Ibid.*, p. 412.

179. Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechts*, secs. 341–42.

180. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were first to erect systems against Hegel, hoping to establish a new (heroic) idealism based on the absolute irrationality of history. The expulsion of God from the workings of the world, which Schopenhauer undertook, is the expulsion of the optimistic Hegelian assumption of universal reason. For Hegel, the true theodicy was “the vindication of God in history” (*Philosophie der Geschichte*). “Only this insight,” he wrote, “can reconcile the spirit with [Prussian, H.B.] world history and [Prussian, H.B.] reality: everything that has happened and that happens everyday occurs not only not without God, but is essentially his very own work.” Kant had used almost identical words in his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*.

181. Not only Prussian monarchy, but Prussian absolutism. “Government resides within the realm of officials [!], and the personal judgment of the monarch heads it; for an ultimate judgment is . . . absolutely necessary.” Or this remark: “Indeed, it is to be taken as most fortunate whenever a noble monarch is allotted to a people; *yet even that is less significant in a great state*, for it has strength in its own reason.” Or: “The knowledgeable are to rule, *οἱ ἀριστοί*, (The best men), not the ignorance and the conceit of a sense of superior judgment” (Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte*). Prussian military absolutism and Hegelian absolutism of the intellect derive in like degree from the desperate human and moral conditions following on the national demoralization brought on by the Thirty Years’ War and Hapsburg rule.

182. Masaryk (*Die philosophischen und soziologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus*) has shown clearly and conclusively where this “drive for perfectibility” and the belief in the “historical natural law” leads in the case of the worst of Hegel’s students, Karl Marx—to moral anarchy. Religion and ethics (ideology) are abolished. Fate rules. Evolution, which is synonymous with reason, will decide all things itself, and morals is simply this: might makes right. Morality becomes “the recognition of the facts,” being able to act morally or immorally, given all freedoms. Unleashed criminality is the result.

183. But it must be noted in this connection that the banner of freedom raised aloft by the Reformation was of religious, not political, origin, and its herald was not the Luther who sanctioned the Augsburg Confession, but Roger Williams, who was driven by powerful, profoundly religious enthusiasm and withdrew into *solitude* to found a kingdom of freedom of belief. (Cf. J. Jelinek, *Die Erklärung der Menschen- und Bürgerrechte: Ein Beitrag zur modernen Verfassungsgeschichte* [1895], p. 42.)

184. Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte*.

185. "The ministry constantly supported Hegel in extraordinary ways, with considerable remuneration and liberal travel allowances; and it was most congenial in attempting to satisfy other of Hegel's wishes. He was pleased by all this, and the most daring hopes for his success spread, accompanied by smug smiles. Who really knows what sort of perspectives shimmered before his grasping spirit! Who knows whether he envisioned joining the government?" (Rosenkranz, *Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegels Leben*, pp. 318–19).

186. Goethe's letter to Hegel, June 27, 1806: "Look on the enclosure, my dear Herr Doctor, as some proof at least that I have not stopped working quietly on in your behalf. To be sure, I would wish to report more, but in such cases much is gained for the future through the merest of beginnings. I would express the wish that you are well and to see you again . . ." (Rosenkranz, *ibid.*, p. 223).

187. It would be a mistake to assume that Goethe was in agreement with Hegelian "philosophy." He did entertain a certain goodwill toward that tedious Swabian who was so boldly adept at using the Prussian situation on behalf of his own career. Surely he did not anticipate the results. In 1821 he sent Hegel a wine goblet with this ironic explanatory message: "The primal phenomenon / commends itself / most graciously as a token of friendship / to the absolute." But there are lines in *Faust* that can even now stand as a motto of Hegelian philosophy: "My father was a brooding nobleman, / Who used endless recipes / To fuse all contraries." [Ball cites these lines: "Dem Absoluten / empfiehlt sich / schönstens / zu freundlicher Aufnahme / das Urphänomen." In quoting Goethe's *Faust*, Ball compresses and slightly rewrites these lines (part 1, 1034, 1040–44): "Mein Vater war ein dunkler Ehrenmann / [. . .] / Und nach unendlichen Rezepten / Das Widrige zusammengoß."]

188. Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, pp. 121–24. ["Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," trans. Helen Mustard, in *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub, The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:240, 243.]

189. *En Allemagne une révolution est-elle possible?*, introduction and notes by Marius-Ary Leblond, with Barrès, Huret, Lichtenberger, Roland, Schuré, Seignobos, Sembat, Wetterlé, et al. (Paris: Michel, 1917).

190. At numerous points in his writings. See *Gesammelte Schriften zur philosophischen Erkenntniswissenschaft als spekulative Logik, Werke*, ed. Franz Hoffmann (Leipzig, 1851), vol. 1.

191. Rosenkranz, *Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegels Leben*, p. 408.

192. Constantin Frantz had proposed the foundation of an *Internationale Akademie* for the specialized study of the political and social sciences as being of utmost significance to the establishment and development of international law ("European Peace Institution," *The Chronicle* [1874]). By

all means, we Germans are more interested than any other nation in the establishment of such academies.

193. Lichtenberg, "Literarische Bemerkungen," *Vermischte Schriften*, 1:287.

194. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, sec. 482.

195. *Ibid.*, secs. 485–86.

196. Rathenau, *Von kommenden Dingen*, pp. 169–70.

197. Rathenau, *Zur Kritik der Zeit* (Berlin: Fischer, 1912).

198. Rathenau, *Von kommenden Dingen*, p. 18.

199. Charles Péguy ("De la situation faite au parti intellectuelle dans le monde moderne," *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* 8 [5], 1906) is in agreement with me when he recommends not only the separation of church and state, but also the separation of state and metaphysics. "The modern intellectual party has the absolute right to harbor a metaphysics, a philosophy, a religion, a superstition as coarse and stupid as it pleases. I mean, if not the civic right, at least a social and political right; in a word, the legal right. But what is the real issue here, and what is it about? The object of the debate is to determine if the modern state has the right and whether it is its task, its duty, its function, its official charge to adopt this metaphysics, to assimilate it, to impose it on the world by putting at its service all the enormous means of governmental power. There is no universally demonstrable, and thus politically and socially valid, metaphysics. When, therefore, will the state, which does everything from making matches to levying fines, understand that it is not its business to make itself philosopher and metaphysician? We already have officially deinstitutionalized the churches. When will we deinstitutionalize metaphysics? Will it be necessary for this godless world, by a reversal which doubtless you could not expect, to become in turn a new governmental credo taught by the local constabulary, with the benevolent collaboration of the duly appointed administrative guardians of the peace?" (*Oeuvres choisies 1900–1910* [Paris, Grasset]). At the present time when Marxist metaphysics of the state is making desperate efforts to secure dictatorial power these statements of an early friend of Jean Jaurès cannot be taken enough to heart.

200. Franz von Baader, *Tagebücher*, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 11:113.

Chapter 3

1. *Moniteur*, No. 120 (1793), cited by Tim Klein, "Die deutschen Träumer," Special Edition, *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*, April 1918.

2. Cf. Franz Blei, *Menschliche Betrachtungen zur Politik* (Munich: Müller, 1916).

3. René Schickele, "Die Pflicht zur Demokratie," *Die Weißen Blätter* 3 (November 1916).

4. It is always the same old song: bourgeois freedoms, commercial freedoms, the presumptive, godless, superficializing freedoms. And one

tends to forget that the evolution of western democracies did not stop in 1830, but moved gradually toward a religious permeation and an intensification of those freedoms. Today we are by no means any longer struggling as advocates of theological relics against rationalistic paganism, as in the times of the Holy Alliance. The opposite is the case: The Holy War is being waged against us as enlightened satanists and antichrists to a degree that even the political leaders of the Entente have not realized. The notion of a crusade against German ideology grew in a grand fashion out of the fusion of Calvinist and Rousseauist ideas.

5. Borgese, *L'Italie contra l'Allemagne*, p. 68.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

8. Turgenev! is the name I hear called out. But Dostoevsky responds: "What have men like Turgenev, Herzen, Outine, and Chernyshevski brought us? Instead of divine beauty, which they ridicule, we see in them an atrocious vanity, a frivolous pride" (Serge Persky, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Dostojevsky* [Paris: Payot, 1918]). Belinsky! is the cry. And Dostoevsky answers once again: "This man was not capable of holding himself, and those who would lead the people, up to Christ in order to draw a comparison. He could not have distinguished how much vanity, hatred, impatience, and above all, egoism there was in him and in them. He never once asked himself: What are we going to put in His place? Are we ourselves worthy enough? Belinsky was content merely to find fault with the Russians" (*ibid.*).

9. The analysis of the German concept of "European culture" shows that a crass fetishism of nature rules precisely where "Muscovite barbarism" is feared most—in Germany. The identification of the divine with the human thought process and the deduction of spirit from matter—two basic views of nineteenth-century German philosophy—signified the destruction of the idea and the glorification of nature. Catholicism had guarded the primacy of the spirit all too despotically. But the Reformation and its daughter, the French Revolution, with the *privileges* of the intelligentsia and the *enslavement* of nature regrettably also abolished the eternal contradiction existing between these two hostile realms; the Teutons in particular discovered their genius in the *release* and *affirmation* of *natural* passions (Schiller, Kleist, Wagner, Nietzsche), while the Romans and Slavs, in short, the Catholic peoples, generally devoted their spiritual efforts to *sublimation* and *elevation*, to *liberation* from the bonds of mind, body, and nature. Arising under the influence of Napoleon, the anthropomorphic school of thought of Feuerbach, Stirner, Marx, and Nietzsche, which aimed its collective catapults at "divine delusion," had no cause at all to fear barbarity from *beyond* its own borders. It would have done well to heed the warning of Dostoevsky, Strakhov, Danilevski, and Soloviev that its *human megalomania* was a thousand times worse and more desperately in need of

enlightenment than the “reactionary” dogmatics of an orthodoxy that, at least in principle, was heading in the right direction.

10. Dmitri Merezhkovsky, *Der Zar und die Revolution* (Munich: Piper, 1908).

11. *Ibid.*

12. Hermann Cohen, *Deutschtum und Judentum* (Gießen: Töpelmann, 1915), p. 43. Verbatim: “Pressing need as well as the relationship of our own future to Russia’s imperialism demands above all that we draw attention to perhaps the most powerful Russian writer, Dostoevsky. He embodies the full threat of Byzantine Christianity and the fanaticism of that oriental mysticism, unfolding yet disguising it with his powers. Only when we will have recognized how these false literary heroes of that fad for foreign things [sic !] differ from us and have overcome them will our victory move gradually toward completion.”

13. Julius Bab, *Fortinbras oder der Kampf des 19. Jahrhunderts mit dem Geiste der Romantik* (Berlin: Bondi, 1914). The book concludes with these words: “What colors will they wear, these models of new spirits, devout doers of deeds, celebrants of the earth, *conquerors of Romanticism!* I speak of tempered steel, the words of fire and the barrage of cannons! Fortinbras: ‘Let all the battlements their ordinance fire!’” (p. 208).

14. Soloviov’s last work, *Die Rechtfertigung des Guten* (German edition Jena, Diederichs), was directed against the antichrist Nietzsche.

15. Dostoevsky’s testament (Diary 1881): “The spirit of Russian socialism does not derive from communism or from the mastery and control of mechanized forces. This people believes that salvation comes only by means of universal union in Christ. Here is to be found the heart of Russian socialism” (Persky, p. 454). And Tolstoy: “First see to the kingdom of God and its righteousness; then all such things will fall to you. That is the single means to achieve the goals of socialism” (*Leo Tolstois Tagebuch: 1895–1899*, ed. L. Rubiner [Zurich: Rascher, 1918], p. 163).

16. Michael Bakunin, “Réponse d’un International à Mazzini,” *Oeuvres*, 6:110.

17. Guiseppe Mazzini, “Erinnerungen aus dem Leben Mazzinis” (1861), in *Politische Schriften*, translated and introduction by S. Flesch, (Leipzig: Reichenbach, 1911), 1:28.

18. Mazzini, “Vom jungen Italien” (1832), *Politische Schriften*, 1:155.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 256, 261.

20. Nietzsche. His *Will to Power* is a kind of exegesis and application of the concept of Napoleon to the realm of philosophy. “The two great tentative steps taken to overcome the eighteenth century: Napoleon, in that he reawakened the man, the soldier, the great struggle for power.” (Aphorism 104). And Bakunin called Napoleon “this presumed tamer of democratism,” a “worthy son of the revolution, who spread its equalizing principles throughout Europe with his conquering hand” (“Die Reaktion in Deutschland,” in Ruge’s *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, Dresden, 1842).

21. Of Nietzsche's opponents, I name the Frenchman André Suarès (*Nous et eux*), the Italian G. A. Borgese (*Italia e Germania* and *La guerra dell'Idee*), and the Russian Vladimir Soloviov (*Die Rechtfertigung des Guten*).

22. I refer to Mazzini and Dostoevsky. The former first spoke out against Bakunin in an article in the bimonthly *La Roma del Popolo* by attacking the commune from a politico-religious perspective (Lugarno, Spring 1871); then, as the polemic attracted world attention, Mazzini's friend, Aurelio Saffi, added his voice in Mazzini's journal *L'Unità italiana* (Milan, September 1871). Dostoevsky took aim at Bakunin and his friend Netschayev in the figures of Shigalev and Verkovensky in *The Possessed*. "Shigalev sets forth his utopian program for the organization of humanity," writes Persky, "and Dostoevsky underscores the fact that this project must annul all the systems of Plato, Rousseau, and Fourier, which, according to Shigalev, are appropriate for hedge sparrows but not for a human society having a purely rational character" (Persky, *Dostojevsky*).

23. Bakunin's main arguments went as follows: "All temporal or human authority originates directly from spiritual or divine authority. But authority is the negation of liberty. God, or rather the fiction of God, is therefore the consecration and the intellectual and moral cause of slavery on earth, and the freedom of mankind will be complete only when it will have totally annihilated the unfortunate fiction of a heavenly master" (*Dieu et l'Etat, Oeuvres* [Paris: Stock, 1895], 1:283). And further: "Who now stands beneath the banner of God? From Napoleon III to Bismarck, Empress Eugénie to Queen Isabella, and between them the Pope, gallantly offering his mystic rose to each in turn, it is all the emperors, all the kings and all the official, officious, noble or otherwise privileged world of Europe, meticulously catalogued in the Almanach de Gotha; it is all the swollen blood-suckers of industry, commerce and banking; the established teachers and all the servants of the State—police great and small, gendarmes, jailers and executioners, not to mention the priests who now constitute the black police of the soul, on the State's behalf; it is the generals, those humane defenders of public order, and the kept editors of the press, pure representatives of all the official virtues. This is the army of God" ("Réponse d'un International à Mazzini," *Oeuvres* [Paris: Stock, 1913], 6:110–11.) ["The Political Theology of Mazzini," trans. Steven Cox, in *Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings*, ed. Arthur Lehning. Writings on the Left (New York: Grove, 1974), p. 215.] But with this passage he meant not the army of God, but the army of the devil, to which we can add a few components: materialistic state socialists, rationalistic "cultural apostles," prophets of a healthy human mind, the true Jacobs of social democratic hubbub, the communistic worshipers of money, and those general equalizers of the divine with the commonplace.

24. His freethinking proved useful only to Bismarck and his successors. Bringing all manner of things to bear against religion was warmly wel-

comed in Prussia after Friedrich II. This situation alone ought to have been sufficient to cause skeptical voices to be raised against both freethinking and atheism. It is a feature of freedom that it leads only to slavery if it rises against the idea of God.

25. Karl Marx was the protector of this campaign.

26. Compare the following two pieces written by Marx and circulated clandestinely: first, "Confidentielle Mitteilung International Working Men's Association Central Council London," along with the letter of March 28, 1870, to Kugelman, the contents of which are glossed by Fritz Brupbacher in his *Marx und Bakunin* (Munich: Birk), pp. 79ff.; and second, "Angewandte Spaltungen in der Internationale" (May 1872), which James Guillaume has commented on and put into proper perspective in his memoirs. Cf. also James Guillaume, *Karl Marx Pangermaniste et l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs de 1864 à 1870* (Paris: Colin, 1915). "To get a proper view," Brupbacher writes of the second piece, "reread the 'Konfidentielle Mitteilung' and simply raise it to the tenth power."

27. It is quite reasonable to assume that Nietzsche knew *both* writings by Bakunin. In *Fédéralisme, Socialisme et Antithéologisme* (1867) are to be found trains of thought on the genealogy of morals that reappear almost verbatim in Nietzsche's writings. And the contents of *Dieu et l'Etat* could well have been passed on to Nietzsche by a common acquaintance, Malwida von Meysenbug. *Dieu et l'Etat* was translated into almost all the major languages.

28. In the year 1864. The first sketches for *Antithéologisme* and *Dieu et l'Etat* arose as rejoinders to a papal syllabus of winter 1864. Right at that time Tuscan Freemasonry, which Mazzini had commended to Bakunin's attention, was carrying on a pitched battle against the papacy.

29. Franz Hoffmann, ed., *Franz von Baader als Begründer der Philosophie der Zukunft* (Leipzig: Bethmann, 1856), pp. 12, 18.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 19.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

32. I do not know where these remarks are to be found in Baader's works. They were communicated to me by a sister of the *Ordo templi Orientalis* (O.T.O.) for use in the present work. [These remarks are to be found in Baader's collected works (Leipzig, 1851 et seq.) 5:274f. Ed. note, 1980 edition, trans.]

33. "The dependence of the Slavophiles on German philosophy," writes Masaryk (*Rußland und Europa*, Studien über die geistigen Strömungen in Rußland, 1:250f.), "appears to grow. Baader had intimate connections with Russia for a long time. In a memorandum (1814) to Czar Alexander I, to the emperor of Austria, and to the king of Prussia he worked out an outline of the Holy Alliance and likely encouraged its formation. The memorandum, 'Über das durch die französische Revolution herbeigeführte Bedürfnis einer neuen und innigeren Verbindung der Religion mit der Politik,' was dedicated to Prince Golizyn, the friend of Alexander I and minister of spiritual

affairs. For a lengthy period of time Baader received a substantial monthly stipend for it (140 rubles). In 1815 Alexander I commissioned him to write a work for the Russian clergy. Baader intended to establish an archaeological institute [The 1980 edition reads "*eine theologische Akademie*," a theological institute.] in Petersburg, which he wanted to use to promote more intimate connections among religion, science, and art, and to further the reconciliation of the three churches. He set out for Russia in 1822, but was forced to turn back at Riga because his enthusiastic patron and traveling companion, Baron Yxküll [Perhaps a variant spelling of Uexküll or Üxküll.], had visited Benjamin Constant and fell into disfavor. This carelessness also cost Baader his stipend." To avoid confusing Baader's plan for the Holy Alliance with the reactionary and stifling measures that were later practiced by Metternich, one must have clear knowledge of the contents of Baader's plan. "The covenant personally agreed to by the monarchs of Russia, Prussia, and Austria firmly establishes in the document of September 26, 1815, that the monarchs will allow themselves to be guided only by the precepts of the Christian religion: to wit, righteousness, Christian love, and peace. They wish henceforth to act like brothers, because all men are brothers according to the Holy Scriptures, and their subjects are to view themselves as members of a single nation. The monarchs view themselves only as plenipotentiaries of divine providence in order to rule the three branches of the same family, and they recognize no other sovereign than God, Christ, the living word of the Almighty" (*Rußland und Europa*, 1:80). Barbey d'Aurevilly sympathized with this plan (*Les prophètes du Passée*, p. 171), and it was Metternich who made fun of Alexander's proposal by asserting commercial considerations. However, even Metternich had to admit the following: "The Holy Alliance was not an institution for the suppression of the rights of the people, for the promotion of absolutism and some sort of tyranny. It was purely the emanation of a pietistic mood of Czar Alexander and an application of Christian fundamentals to politics. Under the influence of Frau Krüdener and Herr von Bergasse the concept of the Holy Alliance had evolved out of a union of religious and politically liberal elements. No one has keener knowledge of all of the circumstances pertaining to this 'reverberating nothing' than I do" (Prince von Metternich, *Nachgelassene Papiere*, 1:214).

34. Hoffmann, ed., *Franz von Baader als Begründer der Philosophie der Zukunft*, p. 104. These are his views on communism and society: "People can build a true community only if they are united with God. In the merely external aggregate life of the modern state, each person has his own independence (despicable because it is abstract), which he places in opposition to others and which, thus, is not merely a condition of equality, but of hidden hostility. The great kingdom of God has no other significance than to bring mankind into a system of authentically organic, internal relationships, for only in this living community does God become all in all, as the one and the same spirit of life manifest in every person, each in their own

way. Therefore, each person has need of all others in order to effect the totality of God's manifestation. Each is indispensable, for each has his own contribution to make. The *conjunctio in solidum* of mankind rests on this mystery of manifestation" (*Sämtliche Werke*, 2:73).

35. Diary entry, end of November 1789 (*Tagebücher, Werke*, 11:193).

36. Fichte was a professor at the Prussian university at Erlangen when he was writing his *Machiavell*. Following the unfortunate October battle in 1806, he found it to be "irreconcilable with his conscience" to remain in Berlin under foreign occupation, and he fled through Pomerania to Königsberg. He remained at the disposal of the king and on December 20, 1808, was appointed "henceforth to a tenured position as regular professor at the local university." And there was an additional condition included in his charter of appointment: "He is charged with the censorship of local newspapers, and it shall be his duty to see that news releases concerning war and similar public events are not reported in a manner that would undermine patriotism, to the contrary, that all inducements be loyally employed to animate the courage of subjects." (Cited by Robert Prutz, "J. G. Fichte in Königsberg," *Allgemeine Zeitung* [Munich], supp. 181 [1893].) "He was active in both areas," writes the editor of *Machiavell*, "he delivered lectures as long as he had students and served as censor until *relieved* of this office" (J. G. Fichte's *Machiavell*, with a letter of General von Clausewitz to Fichte, crit. ed. H. Schulz [Leipzig: Meiner, 1918], vii).

37. *Rußland und Europa*. Soloviov here is quite unjust toward his countrymen, and it is probably only on chauvinistic grounds that the publishers printed under separate cover a work designed to prove the worthlessness of Russian literature and to affirm the "sins of Russia."

38. By 1849 Alexander Herzen was making this point in a letter. "Socialistic ideas, if you will, emerge not only in the context of political economics; they appear also in the context of theories of universal history. Every protest against the unjust division of labor, against usury, against the misuse of personal ownership is in fact socialism. The gospel and the Apostles, to speak only of the New World, preach communism. Campanella, Thomas Münzer, the Anabaptists, in part the monks, the Quakers, the Moravian Brothers, the greater part of the Russian schismatists are all socialists." ("Die Feinde des Sozialismus," *Die Aktion* [Berlin], nos. 41–42 [1917].)

39. From a book by André Suarès on Charles Péguy, published in 1916 by Emile Paul Frères, I would like to cite the following characteristic passage, which I translated in October 1916 for *Die Weißen Blätter*: "Do not imagine that Joan of Arc was only a literary topic for Péguy. Joan of Arc is his life's work, his task, his mission. He saw himself ordained and born for Joan of Arc, as Joinville was destined for Saint Louis. His first book, written when he was twenty-five years old, was on Joan of Arc. He admitted to me that he considered devoting his entire life to writing on the subject of Joan of Arc, even if he should live to be a hundred years old. The

prospect of twenty or thirty such books did not shake his courage. He secretly dedicated everything to Joan of Arc. He translated everything into the terms of Joan of Arc, raised them to a higher reality. For Péguy, Joan of Arc was ultimately impassioned France manifest in its most exalted immediacy. The true Christian lives continually in the passion of Jesus Christ. And Péguy never tired of living in the passion of our beloved, valiant Maid of Orléans. All his works, his pamphlets, his treatises, his discourses on and about himself are but the records of the conflicts and skirmishes of Saint Joan in the twentieth century."

40. "The pope would have absolute power," says Suarès ("Remarques IV," *Nouvelle Revue Française*, November 1917), "if he did not harbor the yearning for, and belief in, temporal power. Even if he were alone or without a city, the Vatican and an army, he would have authority, which is the very soul of power. But what of that? He would not be alone; for an army he would have all the throngs of Catholics, even those who do not attend mass; for a city, the Western world; for his Vatican, the entire planet. Let us give it a try: Be gone, Pope Benedict, leave the tiara to Cardinal Mercier."

(41. *Briefe einer Deutsch-Französin* (German ed., Berlin: Reiss, 1916; French ed., Geneva: Atar, 1917).)

(42. In Germany Franz Blei is working bravely and actively toward this end in various ways and in his publication *Summa*.)

43. Spring 1918, following the Italian defeat at Isonzo.

44. Cf. the book by the Marburg theologian and philosopher of religion, Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau: Trewendt and Grenier, 1917). Jakob Böhme transferred "fury," the Old Testament Teutonic pathos, into the essence of the divine and derived his further manifestations from this "primal revelation." Thus, in his analysis of the saint and the sense of the divine, Rudolf Otto discovers the dark, horrible elements in the Old Testament and Luther, finding the light, fascinating elements in the evangelists. Irrationality arises here only in the contradictory consciousness in the scriptures.

45. Soloviov (*Rußland und Europa*, p. 20) confirms this: "The spiritual life of these times was doubtless distinguished by a purely philosophical character, but it was never expressed in any philosophical work. And this period has not given us any completely consistent monuments, beyond a few disconnected inscriptions, or rather, certain essays, which in part were inspired by the world view of western philosophers, in part directed against them."

46. Cf. Bakunin's autobiographical remarks to Richard Wagner during the May uprising in Dresden in 1849. (Richard Wagner, *Mein Leben* [Munich, 1911].)

47. Even now people in Germany do not know how to free themselves fully from the rule of metaphysical, abstract thinking. The intellectualized

works of our most recent philosophers show this fact. The situation is particularly bad in times that more than ever demand the identification of an author with the written word. In Germany the Talmudic joy in reasoning resulted in a circumlocutory bonhomme and an inconsequentiality of thought.

48. (According to Alexander Herzen.) In his *Erinnerungen* Herzen reports the "endless discussions on phenomenology" in Hegel's thought that Bakunin had with Proudhon in Paris in 1847. "Bakunin at that time lived with Adolph Reichel in an extremely modest apartment across the Seine in the Rue de Bourgogne. Proudhon was in the habit of paying frequent visits to hear Reichel's Beethoven and *Bakunin's Hegel*, but the philosophical debates lasted longer than the concerts. These discussions were reminiscent of the famous "evening worship services" that Bakunin was in the habit of holding with Chomyakov in the company of Chaadayev and Jelagina, those nightlong discussions over the same Hegel.

49. He wrote the following words in a manuscript (1871) directed against Mazzini's religious dogmatism: "Here is what revolted us so much in recent times and provided the basis for making us all more or less idealists. Because of our youthful fantasy and the fiery blood seething in our veins, we felt so infinite that even the endlessness of the visible world seemed too constricting for us. We looked down on it with contempt and soared far, far above it. Toward what? Into the emptiness of abstraction, into nothing. Yes, our infinity was that nothingness, that 'absolute nullity' we sought ardently to fill up with phantasmagoric creations, with the dreams of our delirious imaginings. But when we looked more closely at these creations, we saw that our phantasms and dreams, which had seemed so endless and rich, were in reality nothing more than pale reproductions and monstrous exaggerations of that real world we treated with so much contempt. And finally we realized that when we elevated ourselves so far, right into empty space, we became not richer, but just the opposite, poorer in heart and spirit, not more powerful, but on the contrary, impotent. And ultimately we saw that with our childish pleasure, dreaming the incommensurable, God, to animate the nothingness created by our own powers of abstraction or negation, we, I say, left society, ourselves, our whole real existence in the lurch and became instead prophets, dreamers, religious, political, and economic exploiters of the 'divine idea of the world.' And that we, in our quest for an ideal freedom beyond the conditions of the actual world, condemned ourselves to the most lamentable and destructive dependence. We realized that to fulfill our earthly fate we would have to direct our thoughts and efforts solely toward the emancipation of human society on this earth." (Max Nettlau, *Michael Bakunin: Eine Biographie*, hectograph ms. [London, 1900], 1:37.)

50. Dostoevsky relentlessly led the battle against the enlightened westernism of Belinsky, Herzen, Turgenev, Chernyshevski, etc. The great mon-

ument of this struggle against the "conceited rebels" is *The Possessed*. "For Dostoevsky," Persky writes, "the revolutionary party is above all a gang of rogues lacking the intuition for truth who have been caught and carried away by the winds of Occidental liberalism. All of them are men uprooted from the soil of the people. All of them are demons, men possessed." He anticipated a transformation of all classes with the help of the religious ideal and threatened the apologists of atheism with counterrevolution and the destruction of their apocalyptic Babylon.

51. The German periodicals published in Switzerland during the war, *Die Weißen Blätter* (ed. René Schickele) and *Zeitecho* (ed. Ludwig Rubiner), sought indeed to promote international understanding. Yet both were unable to break completely with German prejudices. Thus, their influence remained limited, both in Germany and in other nations, to those circles of readers who even now are unwilling to admit that the lesson to be drawn from the war is the alignment of a nation that has rebelled against society.

52. Franz Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1903), 1:157–58.

53. This passage is doubly amusing because Marx raised generous loans with Louis Blanc for the *Communist Manifesto*, but there is nothing known of any loans taken by Blanc for his "Organisation du travail," which appeared in 1847. As early as 1833 in his periodical *Revue du Progrès* Louis Blanc began to unveil his system of state socialism. (Cf. Vladimir Cherkessov, *Blätter aus der Geschichte des Sozialismus: Die Lehren und Handlungen der Sozialdemokratie*, 1893. Cf. also Anton Labriola, *Die Urheber-schaft des kommunistischen Manifestes* [Berlin, 1906], where Cherkessov's statements are supported; and Pierre Ramus, "Marx und Engels als Plagiatoren," *Freie Generation* vols. 4, 6, 8 [1906–7].) Even Kautsky was forced to admit that the fundamental principles of the *Communist Manifesto* were not original and were not great discoveries of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, as others, including Kautsky himself and Bebel, had previously maintained (Kautsky, "Das Kommunistische Manifest ein Plagiat," *Neue Zeit* [Stuttgart] 47 [August 18, 1906]: 693–702). Marx admitted in 1857 that in 1842 he was not familiar with either economics or socialism. He began studying economics in Paris (i.e., in 1843). See the preface to *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*.

54. In his periodical *L'Avenir*. (Cf. the Foreword to Lamennais' *Paroles d'un Croyant*, trans. Ludwig Börne [Reclam], p. 15.) In his *Versuch über die Gleichgültigkeit gegen religiöse Dinge* (1817), which is still well worth recommending to all social democratic gentlemen today, he emphasized the following: "Speculative reason, which has been corrupted by sins, is in itself incapable of recognizing the truth. Truth is primarily given through divine revelation, and reason thus has to recognize this means as the single, infallible guiding principle." But indeed the extreme self- and class-conscious German leadership and misleadership of the proletariat purports to

know nothing of sins, guilt, atonement, and whatever else these disconcerting entities are called. The less there is of revelation, the more their own shallow doctrines turn out to be the topics.

55. The following is a passage from the *Paroles d'un Croyant* that could well be dedicated to a young German republic: "Do not let yourselves be deceived by idle words. Many will try to persuade you that you are actually free because they have written the word *freedom* on pieces of paper and pasted them up in all of the streets. Freedom is not some message you read on street corners. It is a living force you feel within and around you, the guardian spirit of domestic existence, the security of social rights. Hence, be on guard against those who say 'freedom,' 'freedom,' and who destroy it with their deeds." (Lamennais, *Worte eines Gläubigen* [Leipzig: Reclam], p. 63)

56. The exception is Gustav Landauer. I readily admit here that the significance of his humane, liberated *Ausruf zum Socialismus* (Berlin, 1912) surpassed my own insight in 1914.

57. Nettlau, *Michael Bakunin* 1:78.

58. Alexander Herzen, "Die Deutschen in der Emigration," *Nachgelassene Schriften*.

59. Proudhon, *Correspondence* (Paris, 1875), 2:198. The "Libel eines Doctor Marx" is Karl Marx's "Misère de la philosophie. Réponse à la philosophie de la misère de M. Proudhon" (Brussels and Paris, 1847; German by Ed. Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, 1892).

60. Even Mehring in his extraordinary historical study propagates the legends of Bakunin's Pan-Slavism, his deceitfulness, and his personal jealousy of Marx. While he exceeds all decency in emphasizing dilettantes such as Borkheim and Hess merely because they were standing within the great halo of the Marxist sun, he hardly mentions Bakunin's federalism and antistatism, his critique of Marx, and his active, humanitarian ideal that does have many German roots. One reads in vol. 2 on page 176 that Bakunin "worked passionately to destroy the alliance (the magnificent Marxist Internationale)"; on page 370 that Bakunin "confused the ideological superstructure with the economic foundations," although neither one is tenable. The whole International was in agreement right up to the London Conference (1871) that, as means, electoral action was to be *subordinate* to the economic battle for emancipation. Bakunin's system remained essentially the same from its inception in 1867 up to Bakunin's death: it opposed participation in bourgeois parliaments, especially the Prusso-German parliament. But Marx dissolved the International into national factions through his change of attitude toward electoral politics in 1871, thus actually destroying and corrupting socialism's capacity to unify separate nations. At the infamous congress at The Hague (1872), where, according to Mehring, Marx cleansed the International of "anarchistic blight" (actually he was only too adept in the reptilian ways of securing a majority against the federalist and antinationalist opposition), Marx directed his

reactionism against the humanistic spirit of the International, which at that time was already beginning to identify the centralism of Bismarck and Marx. "The congress," Mehring wrote (4:54), "passed a resolution renouncing any responsibility for the actions of the Bakuninists" (Who had assigned this responsibility to the congress?) "and expelled Bakunin along with one of his handymen from the alliance." This "handyman" was James Guillaume, Bakunin's friend and the leader of the renowned Jurassienne. Mehring's four-volume work covers all the shoddy and ridiculous aspects of the development of German social democracy, but it contains not one word about Guillaume. Yet, Guillaume wrote a "*Geschichte der Internationale*" one ought to at least compare with the *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* in order to form some kind of balanced judgment. It will not do to continue carrying on private politics and sectarian dogmatics with one of the most important affairs of humanity. German editions of the complete works of both Bakunin and James Guillaume would serve a most useful purpose and service.

61. Heinrich Heine, *Die romantische Schule* (Halle: Hendel, n.d.), 95. ["The Romantic School," trans. Helen Mustard, in *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub, The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:100.]

62. At the time of the Hambach festival, essays by Mazzini appeared in a democratic journal edited by a Dr. Wirth in Zweibrücken. See also note 84.

63. The humane system of Ludwig Feuerbach should not be underestimated in this regard. Though only now reaching a popular status through the works of Marx, Bakunin, and Nietzsche, it does nonetheless present the first real *socially* rebellious philosophy of modern Germany and, hence, is to be counted among the authentically classical achievements of the nation. "Whoever knows and says of me," notes Feuerbach (*Werke*, 1:xiv-xv), "nothing more than that I am an atheist, knows and says nothing of me. The question whether God exists or does not exist, the opposition between theism and atheism belongs to the seventeenth and eighteenth century. I negate God, and that means for me that I negate *the negation of mankind*, and in place of the illusory, fantastic, heavenly status of man, which in actual life leads necessarily to the negation of man, I put the physical, actual, thus necessarily even *political* and *social* relevance of man." By identifying reason with love ("Die Liebe ist Vernunft," *Werke*, 1:119), in general emphasizing tasks and duties in this life, he sharply and most productively attacked the ruling theocratic system, and Masaryk affirms that Feuerbach's influence particularly on Marx "was most significant, much more significant than one is accustomed to accept." Feuerbach wrote: "The purpose of my lectures as of my books is to transform theologians into anthropologists, lovers of God into lovers of man, candidates for the next world into students of this world, religious and political flunkeys of heavenly and earthly monarchs and lords into free, self-reliant citizens

of the earth" (*Vorlesungen über das Wesen der Religion*). [Third Lecture, *Lectures on the Essence of Religion*, trans. Ralph Mannheim, (New York: Harper, 1967), p. 23.] And one should take note of these words by Marx: "In completing and criticizing Hegel from Hegelian perspectives, in that he reconciled the metaphysical, absolute mind with actual human beings on natural principles, Feuerbach was the first thinker to complete the critique of religion, in that he also framed the great and masterful outline for the critique of Hegelian speculation and, thus, all metaphysics" (*Die heilige Familie* [1845], p. 220). Anchored firmly in Feuerbach, Marx then pushed further into "revolutionizing application": "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; but the main issue is to change it." (For insight into the relationship between Feuerbach and Marx, which in turn illuminates the fundamentals of the Young German rebellion, compare Th. G. Masaryk's penetrating analysis in his work *Die philosophischen und soziologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus* [Vienna: Konegen, 1899]. Unfortunately, it is currently out of print, but it belongs to the best writing on Marx because it elucidates both the phraseology of the aristocratic Protestantism of the Feuerbach school—Stirner, Marx, Nietzsche—and the eclectic aphoristics of the Marxist philosophical system.)

64. Indeed Heine had written these words: "I have divulged to them [the French] the ultimate thought that underlies all of these systems and is the *opposite of everything we have previously taken to be piety*. In Germany, philosophy has waged the same war against religion that it once waged against traditional mythology in Greece, and again it slashed its way through to victory. In theory contemporary religion has been just as thoroughly defeated; *its concept has been killed*, and religion is living only a mechanical life, like a fly whose head has been cut off and does not seem to notice it and just keeps buzzing cheerfully about [1835!]. We now have monks of atheism who would roast our Mister Voltaire alive because he is a stubborn deist. And I must admit that I do not like this music, but, on the other hand, *it does not frighten me either*. When old doctrines of belief fall, traditional *morals will also be uprooted*. The masses no longer bear their earthly suffering with Christian patience; they yearn for *bliss on earth*" ("Briefe über Deutschland," *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie*, pp. 129–31). [In this note Ball extracts from several pages of Heine's essay, adding emphasis and a date. Cf. "From 'Letters on Germany,'" trans. Frederic Ewen and Robert C. Holub, *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub, The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:288–90.]

65. *Ibid.*, p. 124. ["Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," trans. Helen Mustard, *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub. The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:243.] Was he referring to the cathedral at Reims?

66. "If Hegelian philosophy was the speculative expression of the Chris-

tian Germanic dogma of the rule of God over the world, of the spirit over theory," says Mehring, "thus the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* (on which all these people worked) was the critical caricature in which Hegelian philosophy was carrying itself to absurdity" (*Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 1:195). The *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* appeared in Charlottenburg after December 1843. In 1845 "Die Heilige Familie oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik, gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten, von Friedrich Engels und Karl Marx" rose against it—a typical example, by the way, of how Marx tended to treat earlier friends to whom he was indebted. Bruno Bauer, along with Max Stirner, was on the staff of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842 when Marx took over the editorship. Bauer had been a student friend and intimate of Marx and had introduced him to Hegelian philosophy.

67. Friedrich Hebbel, 1813-1863. His Napoleonesque theatrical heroes, Holofernes, Golo, and Kandaules, endorse the boasting and reasoning processes of the Hegelian school. Napoleon and Young Germany—that is the ingenious philistine mixture still animating Richard Wagner's supermanism and speculation.

68. Nettleau, *Michael Bakunin* 1:95.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

70. Michael Bakunin, "Aux compagnons de la Fédération jurassienne" (1872), ms (1872) appearing in Nettleau, *Biographie*, 1:94.

71. Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, p. 83. ["The Romantic School," trans. Helen Mustard, in *The Romantic School and Other Essays*, eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub, The German Library (New York: Continuum, 1985), 33:88.]

72. To publish the two thousand copies of the first edition of *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit*, three hundred workers shared the costs, taking copies of the book in payment; four workers gave their entire savings, in the amount of two hundred francs, for the publication.

73. Mehring, *Geschichte*, 1:115.

74. "Kommunismus," ser. in Fröbel's *Schweizerischer Republikaner* (June 1842), in Nettleau, *Michael Bakunin*, 1:55-60.

75. Mehring, *Geschichte*, 1:115.

76. Bakunin, "Kommunismus," *ibid.*, p. 60.

77. Mehring, *Geschichte*, 1:232: "Weitling went to London [following his imprisonment and release]; the German, English, and French socialists of the metropolis welcomed the 'courageous, talented leader of the German communists,' as Owen's publication called him, in a large meeting." It was probably in 1845 or 1846, in any case, sometime before Marx went to London. At that time in Paris, in the wake of a report on the communists published by the Swiss police, three hundred German workers joined Weitling's *Bund der Gerechten*. A German factory proletariat hardly existed.

78. Hoffmann, ed., *Baader als Begründer der Philosophie der Zukunft*, p. 102: "Godwin's descriptions of social miseries in England aroused Baad-

er's deepest sympathy. His diary contains extensive extracts from Godwin's works. The latter's masonic ideas were very much on Baader's mind."

79. Mehring, *Geschichte*, 1:35. For his part Cabet reached communist views through the influence of (the *utopian*) Thomas Moore and through Owen. Cabet formulated the *religious* foundations of communism with such enthusiasm that he was denounced as a hack of the Holy Alliance. Moreover, as Mehring confirms: "In this respect Cabet touched the nerve of the modern proletariat, which in the initial stages of its struggle for emancipation gladly looked back toward Christianity. *Dezamy*, by attempting to found communism on atheism and materialism, proceeded far more consistently than Cabet [?], but had similar influence on the workers."

80. Michael Bakunin, *Fédéralisme, Socialisme et Antithéologisme* (Paris: Stock, 1895), p. 37: "Communist ideas were germinating in the popular imagination. From 1830 to 1848 they found clever interpreters in *Cabet* and *Louis Blanc*, who definitively laid the foundations of revolutionary socialism."

81. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

82. I emphasize these words, for they show that the initial collectivism consisted of a series of practical proposals answering a special economic situation. It was a *system of liquidation* the revolution's ideology of freedom sought to bring into accord with an exhausted economic system.

83. It is important to establish that collectivism at first was thus essentially different from communism, which became associated with it only later. Collectivism (Babeuf's discovery) is political, positive; communism, whose tradition can be traced back to the evangelists and the Essenes, is originally religio-idealistic. The mixture of various collectivist and communistic, practical and utopian, systems leads to the dogmatic state communism of the Marxists, which, as a practical system, neither conforms to the present economic situation, nor, as a religious system, has supported that unity of morals and the spirit of sacrifice that would serve equally all individuals of the Christian brotherhood. *Collectivism* will still be most relevant today to those nations where a lost war has destroyed economic systems and commerce. It contains a large number of useful suggestions for a new social structure, and in this regard it must be borne in mind, however, that liquidation with respect to the economic and intellectual level of attainment in Germany would confront different conditions than in Russia or Turkey. *Communism* as a universally human, utopian movement can of course merge with the program of collectivism, but it will only find true support where a strongly religious, Catholic tradition has prepared the way. That situation was the case in Russia; and yet, there where defeat and religious tradition merged, Bolshevism, this hybrid of Jacobinism and evangelism, was able to find such powerful resonance.

84. Compare Mehring, *Geschichte*, 1:97–101: "At that time Paris was the capital of the European revolution, and, after the public national orga-

nization supporting south German opposition to French government had been repressed, there arose in the city in 1834 the first secret organization of German refugees, the "Bund der Geächteten." Its goal followed these statutes: liberation and rebirth of Germany, establishment of social and political equality, freedom, civic virtue, and national unity. It espoused democratic-republican aims, much like the French society of human rights, and like it as well, was organized as a hierarchically structured society of conspirators with absolute obedience toward secret superiors. The organ of the group was the monthly journal *Der Geächtete*, published after 1834 by Venedy. It began with a fanatical article by Börne on the *Worte eines Gläubigen*, which *Lamennais* had just published. Even Venedy himself joined *Lamennais*. . . . Shortly after the establishment of the alliance, the first organization of German refugees was founded in Switzerland. From there, *Mazzini* undertook an armed attack in February 1834 on Savoy with the support of German revolutionaries. The Savoy attack failed, and *Mazzini* began shaping a 'Young Europe of the People' in opposition to the old Europe of kings. It arose from a Young Germany, a Young Italy, and a Young Poland, which were joined later by a Young France and a Young Switzerland. In the articles of brotherhood dating from April 1834, *freedom, equality, and humanitarianism* are named as the three sovereign elements from which exclusively the solution of social problems is able to proceed." Note the fact that the emigrant movement of the '30s led by *Lamennais* and *Mazzini* was a *religious-democratic* movement. In 1839, after lengthy imprisonment, Karl Schapper and Heinrich Bauer went from France to London and founded, in conjunction with Josef Moll, a watchmaker from Cologne, a public "Worker's Educational Society" (February 7, 1840). At the same time they reestablished the "Bund der Gerechten" and shifted its point of main effort to London. *The addition of Marx*, because of his positivism, banished martyrdom from the fanatical, idealistic movement. You could even say that *Hegel* was the father of this corruption of a higher ideal. Religion does not need to be shunted aside, it needs only to be made more intense and to be brought into harmony with knowledge. Marx was incapable of doing that.

85. The demands of the proletariat! Of the class-conscious proletariat! decree this doctrine of hate. Yet the more righteous the demands, the more strictly their advocates ought to watch over their own morals and the morals of the individuals and masses entrusted to them. And that requires a sense of *justice*. One would assume that particularly a party of disenfranchised persons would have developed the concepts of freedom and mutual respect, the knowledge of natural laws and boundaries, in short, that it would be the most perfect in form and measure. On the contrary, what a rout and confusion of all concepts of freedom rule in the German class-conscious proletariat! Sterile dogmatism, obtrusive and opportunistic politics, bestiality, pseudoknowledge, and the neglect of all actual needs, including material and spiritual needs, these elements all rule the actual

party program. And this party, which will no longer stand firm against actual suffering, is to find the moral strength to promote the International!

86. Wilhelm Weitling, *Das Evangelium der armen Sünder* (Zurich, May 1843), confiscated, then appearing in 1845 under the title *Das Evangelium eines armen Sünders* (Bern: Jenni, 1845), iii–iv.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 17: "Religion must not be destroyed, but used to free humanity. Christ is a prophet of freedom and thus for us a symbol of God and love."

88. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

89. Weitling, *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* (published by the author, 1842), p. 117.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

91. The relevant chapter in the *Evangelium der armen Sünder* carried this heading: "Jesus travels with sinful women and girls through the country and is aided by them." Weitling's arrest and punishment for blasphemy followed from persecution by the Zurich consistory and attracted great attention, the more so, since a governmental report on communist activities in Switzerland resulted. I list the most important documents covering the trial and the movement: "Die Kommunisten in der Schweiz nach den bei Weitling vorgefundenen Papieren," Commission Report by Dr. Bluntschli, Zurich, 1843; "Der Schriftsteller Wilhelm Weitling und der Kommunistenlärm in Zurich," Bern, 1843; and "Die geheimen deutschen Verbindungen in der Schweiz seit 1833," Basel, 1847.

92. Weitling, *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit*, p. 260.

93. Weitling, *Evangelium*, p. 133.

94. No one has set forth the principles of a Christian republic more clearly than Weitling has done. He cites Matthew 23:8, 11, and 12, and reaches the following conclusion: "It follows from this that monarchy is irreconcilable with Christianity, or, more clearly, that a Christian cannot be a monarch. And it also follows that in a Christian republic no one is permitted to mete out political power or to assume it, for a Christian is not to administer justice or power or commands to his fellow humans; the Christian is to assume no office in which he is compelled to judge and to punish; at most he is to assume an office only with the intention of thwarting acts of ruling, commanding, punishing, etc. Further, in a Christian republic, no one individual is to be superior, no one inferior, no one master or slave, or call himself master or assume any other title of honor. At the time of the Reformation the Anabaptists showed clear awareness of these precepts, and, although during the war they were influenced by the attitudes of the kingdom, nonetheless right up to the present time, they have held fast to certain principles that were established then. Thus, for example, they assume no public, governmental office whatever it might be; they take no oaths, do not become merchants, landlords, and soldiers; and they believe of Christ that he was not the son of God, but rather the holiest of all saints. Another of their principles was this: No Christian can, with a

good conscience, own any possession whatever; on the contrary, what each individual owns must be given over to the community" (pp. 83–84). Compare here Dostoevsky's social credo: "The Christian, the true, ideal, perfected Christian will say: 'I must share my possessions with my poor brothers. I must serve all men.' The Communard claims: 'You must share with me because I am poor; you must serve me.' The Christian is right; the Communard is wrong."

95. Weitling, *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit*, p. 72.

96. What in the whole of Marxism is tenable today? Evolutionism, the theory of catastrophic event, class struggle, the seizure of political power, the materialistic conception of history, animalism, and amorality—which of these has not been repudiated by knowledge? Bakunin called *Marxism* a utopia even when it was in full flower. The actualization of freedom through the participation in elections in Bismarck's parvenu nation—this political pinnacle of Marxism during the 1870s—did not that also signify the collapse of morals and ideals? That was the view shared by the majority in the first International. And does not the catastrophe we find ourselves in today—a catastrophe that has fewer commercial causes than moral ones—refute the Marxist school in total? Let us keep to the facts and leave dogma aside! The current situation demands new methods, in philosophy as well as in practical politics. Contemporary liquidation requires a new moral and religious system, a freer view of history, a more astute "theory of catastrophic event," a new orientation from the ground up. No new German systematic thinker will be able to build without a complete exaltation and sublimation of the concept of guilt, of responsibility. The *moral revolution* is the precondition for any social and political one. The question of responsibility alone (the question of what each one owes and is owed) will guarantee rebirth and salvation from extreme material and spiritual hardship.

97. Nettlau, in his Bakunin biography (3 vols., London, 1900), which unfortunately remains in manuscript form. And Guillaume, through publication of Bakunin's works (Paris: Stock, 1895–1913) and the historical study *L'Internationale. Documents et Souvenirs* (4 vols., Paris: Stock, 1905–10). Bakunin's federalism of free productive societies lying beyond the historical state would have been a stronger guarantee of freedom and welfare during Bismarck's time than was Marx's doctrine of national and commercial centralization, which, to be sure, established the proletariat, but then through war made his life doubly difficult. Centralization destroys, decentralization promotes morals and freedom.

98. Fritz Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin* (Munich: Birk, 1911).

99. Hermann Cohen, *Deutschtum und Judentum*, p. 33.

100. [This note appears in the 1980 edition as no. 98, notes 41 and 42 having been omitted, and records only "Ibid., pp. 19ff."] ("It is known that even during Roman times Jews had migrated to the banks of the Rhein. Under the rule of Charlemagne they spread the German language everywhere in their travels. And at the same time they also zealously propagated

the educational traditions of their religion; the schools at Worms, Mainz, and Speyer became thriving Jewish grammar schools. Of course there were similar schools in Spain and France, but Südemann points out in his *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Kultur der abendländischen Juden* that in these locations they *remained without the essential influence* that was gained by the German Jews. This contact with German surroundings, this influence to which German Jews yielded more intimately in their environment than anywhere else [sic!] speaks once again for the primacy of this relationship [!]. They have been settled in these regions since the remotest Germanic times and have remained firmly established; they will never be completely driven out *as elsewhere, as in France and England*; they always return, those who had emigrated to Poland and Russia when the horrible persecutions took the upper hand during the time of the Black Death in Germany" (Cohen, p. 19). But today, according to Moses Mendelssohn, who has brought Germanness "into play as a life force of Judaism" (p. 25), according to Herder, who saw "the messiah . . . resurrected in the German spirit through the Jews" (p. 30), "we as German Jews are conscious of a *central cultural force* called upon to unite nations in the spirit of messianic humanity. If it comes once again to sincere striving for international understanding and an authentically based peace of the peoples, then *our example can venture to serve as a model* [!] for the recognition of German *supremacy* in all the fundamentals of the life of the mind and the soul" (p. 37). More candid words have seldom been spoken.)

101. Ibid., p. 45.

⟨102. Note here also a letter by Bakunin (to Morago; see Nettlau, 2:370) that alludes to the psychological affinities between Marx and *Rotschild*. "Where economic centralization exists, by necessity a financial centralization also exists." Marx's state communism and the financial concerns of Rotschild overlap. Hence, the particular interest of Jews in state communism. He envisioned an enormous national bank and at the same time complete freedom within a materialized world.)

⟨103. Cohen, *Deutschtum und Judentum*, p. 33.)

⟨104. Michael Bakunin, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Stock, 1911), 5:243. This work is still extraordinarily pertinent and ought at last to be translated into German.)

⟨105. When Alexander Herzen saw the essay, he was surprised that Bakunin attacked Hess and Borkheim instead of "their leader," Karl Marx. Bakunin answered: "I am not ignorant of the fact that Marx has been the instigator and the ringleader of all that slanderous and sordid polemic that has been unleashed against us. Why have I treated him with respect, even praised him by calling him a giant? For two reasons, Herzen. The first is a matter of justness. Quite aside from all of the nastiness he has spewed forth against us, we should not fail to recognize, I least of all, the enormous service he has rendered to the cause of socialism, which he has done with intelligence, energy, and sincerity for almost twenty-five years, without a

doubt surpassing all of us" (p. 213). He continues: "The second reason involves politics and a tactic I believe to be most sound: *I might well enter into a struggle with him* in the near future, not for personal reasons, of course, but on a question of principle *concerning state communism*, which he and the English and German factions he controls defend most staunchly. Then, it will be a fight to the finish. If, at that time, I have waged open war against Marx himself, then three-quarters of the members of the International would turn against me, and I would be at a disadvantage. I would lose the ground upon which I must stand firm. But in undertaking this war by attacking the rabble who surround him, I'll have the majority on my side. In addition, Marx himself is full of that *Schadenfreude* you have witnessed in him so many times, and he will be very pleased to see his friends embarrassed" (p. 234). We know how the struggle between Bakunin and Marx, between free federal socialism and centralized state communism ended. With the help of a false majority, Marx succeeded in having Bakunin excluded from the International (Congress at The Hague, September 2–7, 1872). But the real majority, the one on the side of the federalist concept, forced the few supporters of Marx to transfer the General Council from London to New York (Congress at St. Imier, September 15, 1872) and even after this dispersion held brilliant meetings (Geneva, 1873; Brussels, 1874). Federalism had won the day. Bakunin died in Bern on July 3, 1876.)

(106. Cf. Rathenau, *Von kommenden Dingen*. Rathenau's ideal is a trust of industrial and banking concerns by the state, following the secularization of socialistic ideals, and under the military direction of the Prussian monarchy. Protestant newspapers compare this book with Luther's proclamation "An den christlichen Adel teutscher Nation.")

107. None of these suspicions were forthcoming in Germany, where socialism arose hardly distinct from petty bourgeois democracy, and where a strict Marxist such as Mehring was still a strange animal in 1917. All charges came from outside Germany.

108. It was in 1871 at the London conference, following the overthrow of the Paris Commune, when Marx and Engels gave the general statutes the interpretation that put electoral action in the foreground, wounding the spirit of the previous International and precipitating division. (Cf. Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin*, 104–09; and James Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2.) The *statutes* of the International had set forth "that the economic emancipation of the proletariat is the great goal to which every political action, 'as a means' [in English, trans.], must be subordinated." "We were miles away from thinking," Guillaume writes, "that one fine day some one would interpret the words 'as a means' [in English, trans.] in a different way, discovering them to make it incumbent upon the socialists to either become involved in electoral politics or be expelled. Moreover, we had shown that we ascribed no significance to the presence or absence of the words 'as means' [*als Mittel*] or 'as simple means' [*als einfaches Mittel*], since we had no premonition of the special significance Marx and his loyal

followers would ascribe to these phrases." The contested point of the resolution that Marx and Engels brought to ratification at the London conference began thus: "In recognition that the proletariat can emerge as a class in opposition to the collective power of propertied classes only if it constitutes itself as a *distinct political party*"; and it closed with these words: "The conference recalls to the minds of the members of the International that in preparing the working class for its struggle, its economic and political activities are *inseparably joined*" (Brupbacher, p. 108).

109. "L'empire knoutogermanique et la révolution sociale" (1870–71), *Oeuvres* (Paris: Stock, 1907), 2:417–18. This statement is corroborated by Guillaume: "From the moment of its founding under the inspiration of Marx, German social democracy was an imperialist party, for it was envisioning the foundation of a centralized Germany, even if this were to be accomplished by means of Prussian militarism, and was seeing in Bismarck a collaborator to whom it had to be willing to submit" ("Karl Marx Pangermaniste," iii).

Chapter 4

1. Eduard Bernstein, ed., *Ferdinand Lassalles Reden und Schriften*, with a biographical introduction (Berlin: Vorwärts-Verlag, 1892), 1:18.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 17. He even prophesied that at sometime or other revolutionary "*regiments of German soldiers or workers will stand on the shore of the Bosphorus*" (letter to Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, May 8, 1863).

4. Bernstein, *ibid.*, p. 160: "It is now clear beyond any doubt that in the winter of 1863–64 [at the time of the founding of the International] Lassalle had repeated and extensive secret discussions with the then *Herr Bismarck*. Lassalle's longtime confidante, Countess Sophie von Hatzfeld, revealed these facts on her own initiative in the summer of 1878 to Bismarck's representatives, along with additional material concerning the particulars when Bismarck introduced his laws of censure against the German social democrats. When the delegate Bebel raised the issue in the German Reichstag, Bismarck admitted having had meetings with Lassalle and attempted to deny that any political negotiations had transpired. Bolstered by the reports from Countess Hatzfeld, Bebel had said this: "Two things were at issue in these conversations and negotiations: first, the imposition of universal suffrage; and second, the granting of governmental resources to production guilds." "Lassalle's sympathy for the *power politician* Bismarck went so far that when the Schleswig-Holstein question appeared on the agenda, he was determined to introduce a resolution at a meeting in Hamburg stating that Bismarck was *obligated* to annex the duchies against the will of Austria and the remaining German states. At the time of the Crimean War (1857) Lassalle had the best of connections with the Prussian cabinet and also with Karl Marx in London, with whom he was corresponding.

5. Bernstein, *ibid.*, p. 163.

6. Bernstein, *ibid.*, p. 176: "For him any means is right that promises success. Spies are employed to watch the Dönniges family (parents of the bride) and to report every step they take. Through Hans von Bülow, Richard Wagner is urged to induce the king of Bavaria to intervene on Lassalle's behalf with Herr von Dönniges, and Lassalle's conversion to Catholicism is proffered to Bishop Ketteler of Mainz so that the bishop assert his influence on Lassalle's behalf."

7. The first citation is from a Berlin speech, "Über den besonderen Zusammenhang der Idee des Arbeiterstandes mit der gegenwärtigen Geschichtsperiode" (Spring 1862); the second, from a formal address, "Die Philosophie Fichtes und die Bedeutung des deutschen Volksgeistes," delivered on May 19, 1862, at the Berlin Philosophical Society on the occasion of Fichte's one-hundredth birthday (from Bernstein, pp. 103, 105). Here once again is to be seen the active influence of the chauvinistic spirit of Protestant philosophy.

8. Bernstein, *Lassalles Reden und Schriften*, p. 164.

9. Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 3:118.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

11. Note the pompous parade of militaristic chapter headings that escort Mehring's treatment of Lassalle: "Lassalle's Campaign Plan," "Lassalle's Battle Plan," "Master on the Rhein and the Storming of the Bastille." Throughout his life Lassalle never stood at the head of an armed force, unlike Mazzini and Garibaldi, nor has anyone ever taken up arms in rebellion for him or for his ideas. Even Mehring makes this admission: "Of the thousands who had hung breathlessly on Lassalle's words, only a few hundred at most enlisted in the General German Workers Association, and of these hundreds, only a few dozen fulfilled the obligations they had thus assumed" (3:141).

12. Bernstein, *Lassalles Reden und Schriften*, p. 19.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

14. The German social democrats *praise* Lassalle for having created the "class consciousness" of the worker. This "class consciousness" in Germany is a euphemistic expression for Prussian militarization and discipline, of which Lassalle was the political instrument. We have seen the consequences of this class consciousness: in 1866, 1871, and 1914. And we see now—November 1918—with the so-called revolution, how social democracy, even down through the ranks of its independents, allows itself to be used as police and security squads to the reactionary point of calling its constituents to arms. As early as 1847 *Marx* and *Engels* saw themselves compelled to write in opposition to "imperial Prussian governmental socialism" (in the *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung*). In 1864 the "directing head" of the *Sozialdemokrat* (the organ of the General German Workers Association, whose staff included Engels, Herwegh, Hess, Marx, Liebknecht) was *Jean Baptiste von Schweitzer*, a man who spoke of Bismarck's "significant

politics," who praised "Old Fritz" (Friedrich II) as a "powerful genius," and who aroused the impression through his articles on Bismarck that the young workers' party quite properly ought to be cleaned out. Yet another of Lassalle's followers, *Bernhard Becker*, caricatured Lassalle's personal dictatorship in the General German Workers Association by posing as the "President of Humanity." And Mehring reports that Lassalle's executor, *Countess Hatzfeld*, "in her delusion . . . took Prussian federal reform to be the fulfillment of Lassalle's national program; indeed the entirety of her political activities after 1866 moved toward making the General German Workers Association into Bismarck's tool—whether she stood in intimate or distant relationship with the 'great minister' and was drawing from her own funds or from other sources the ample amounts of money she was throwing out the window." Yet, what Bismarck was then, Hindenburg is today. And Bernstein *praises* this as "Lassalle's great, immortal accomplishment": "to have trained the working force for combat, to have put the sword in its hand, as the song says" (p. 185).

15. Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 2:327.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 306. The "chiffon de papier" [scrap of paper] thus was not original with Bethmann.

17. Mehring, *Geschichte*, 3:130. Georg Brandes has found that Lassalle's avowal of revolutionary democracy and of the general franchise of the Prussian nation was a contradiction one "does not maintain without paying some penalty" (*Ferdinand Lassalle: Ein literarisches Charakterbild* [Berlin, 1877]). Such an idea issued from the schools of Hegel and Fichte and from optative Protestantism, to which, in addition to Lassalle, Heine and Marx also fell victim. Lassalle was an enthusiastic Hegelian. In his "System der erworbenen Rechte" (1861) he characterized the Hegelian philosophy of law as the first attempt "to demonstrate that law was an organism developing *rationaly* from within itself"; and in demanding a "total reformation" of Hegelian philosophy, with his conception of the positive and historical "as necessary issues of a timeless, historical conception of spirit," he was determined to prove "that Hegelian philosophy was *far more correct than Hegel himself was aware* and that the speculative concept ruled still further realms and *more intensively* than Hegel himself had recognized" (Foreword to "System der erworbenen Rechte"). How much more uncontrolled his suffocation of natural law turns out to be than the philosophy of law offered by someone like the Jesuit Victor Cathrein and other nineteenth-century Catholic legal scholars, who were far removed from presenting the ideal, but who also worked against positivistic leveling without pretending to be revolutionary. (Cf. Victor Cathrein, S. J., "Die Grundlagen des Völkerrechts," supp. "Kulturfragen," *Stimmen der Zeit*, vol. 5.)

18. *Ibid.*, 3:288.

19. *Ibid.*, 3:63. The two factions fused into the Social Democratic party at the Gotha Unification Conference (May 22–27, 1875). Moreover, the

confusion of the Gotha program is revealed in the fact that it promoted a revolutionary demand ("full work output") and at the same time demanded a bourgeois reform ("the thorough legislative protection of workers"), thus recognizing the established state. The great ideological struggles of the First International (1864–74), according to Mehring's evidence, "had no, or as good as no" effect. Countess Hatzfeld had won over the chief agitators of the party with her "bottomless bank accounts for war" (after about 1868), while Schweitzer led the workers movement "onto the broader, freer paths of the Communist Manifesto." Even up to that point Marx's unpopular, murky writing style had influenced only a few leaders with whom he personally corresponded. Indeed, Marx and Engels, the party popes enthroned in London, were generally concerned, according to Eduard Bernstein, "only with the world republic and revolution; what happened to Germany was a matter of total indifference to them" (p. 47). The leaders of the French, Jural, Belgian, Italian, and Spanish Internationals found the reform program of German social democracy to be contemptible, its principles muddled, its leaders undebatable. That changed only sometime around 1870 when, in the wake of German victories, Marx made his move at the London conference with his proposals of political electoral action and attempted to emerge as the *dictator of the International* by citing the fact that the "gravity center of the workers movement" had shifted to Germany (Congress at The Hague, 1872). People then busied themselves principally with the German doctrines, and the result was the departure of the German general council from London to New York.

20. Bernstein, *Lassalles Reden und Schriften*, p. 35. [Ball quotes these lines: "So vor- wie seitdem ward durchs Schwert vollendet / Das Herrliche, das die Geschichte sah, / Und alles Grosse, was sich jemals wird vollbringen, / Dem Schwert zuletzt verdankt es sein Gelingen."]

21. *Ibid.*, p. 38. [The original reads: "Was wir wollen . . . / Das ist ein ein'ges, grosses, mächt'ges Deutschland, / . . . / Und machtvoll auf der Zeit gewalt'gem Drang / Gestützt, in ihrer Seele Tiefen wurzelnd / Ein—evangelisch Haupt als Kaiser an der Spitze / Des grossen Reichs."]

22. From letters of the young Marx, in Fritz Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin*, p. 13.

23. Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie," *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, pp. 75ff.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

25. The universality of *reason* was Hegel's major thesis. A system of universal *unreason* would have been the actual antithesis.

26. "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie," p. 85.

27. Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 1:127.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

30. Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie," *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, p. 72. It is the same confusion of religion and

misuse of religion, the confusion of temporal form and eternal idea that also caused three other significant students of Feuerbach (Stirner, Bakunin, and Nietzsche), as resolute anthropomorphists and conscious or unconscious Protestants, to throw the baby out with the bath water. "Protestantism," says Masaryk, "made a human being out of God: Christ the human is the God of Protestantism." And, unfortunately, he still believed in 1899 that through its "practical negation of God" Protestantism had strengthened thinking "to the point that philosophy ultimately became manifest within it" (Masaryk, *Die philosophischen und soziologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus*, p. 24).

31. Marx, "Zur Judenfrage," *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, p. 209.

32. The inclination toward superlatives, the tendency to fall into extremes in all things and to become enraptured with one's own passion, despair, or radicalism typifies not just oriental Judaism; it is a mark of all egocentrics and absolutists. This outbidding spirit, lacerating itself and things around it, is to be found in Kleist and Wagner and most particularly in Lassalle, who, having once recognized Austria as a reactionary force, even wanted the Austrian concept of state to be "shredded, broken to bits, annihilated, crushed, flung to the four winds."

33. Marx, "Zur Judenfrage," 198. (However, that is totally false. Judaism will presumably retain its "religious," exclusively conspiratorial, character, and hence it would in short order gain control of all the more important posts in the press, government, and politics of a noncritical nation. Thus, it is of double importance to combat the German-Jewish, authoritarian doctrines of the state with *religious* principles.)

34. Certainly documents can be cited to show Marx speaking out against every form of state. Masaryk has compiled a list of them (*Die Grundlagen des Marxismus*, pp. 390–94). They stem from the time of 1848, and, showing the influence of Feuerbach and Proudhon, resist the "Christian state," theocracy, with the same spirit with which Marx, under Hegel's influence, earlier perceived the "actual leader of society" in the state. (See *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, pp. 187, 207.) Only in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847, under the influence of Louis Blanc, does he return to the state (state socialism and the seizure of political power), but he does so without bearing in mind that concerning stability or fearsomeness the Prussian concept of state cannot be compared with, or equated to, the French conception. The disappointments of 1848–49 strengthened him in his *political* views, and the German victories of 1870–71 even allowed him to advocate the electoral system. We must guard against confusing these various Marxes or against deriving a kind of arithmetic mean from any scholarly adumbration of these individual contradictions. Marx was a great eclectic, an enormously absorptive sponge of foreign ideas. For his own system he accepted what he came to see as particularly radical and promising in France, without taking into consideration the relative state of developments in Germany.

35. Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin*, p. 14.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

37. Marx, "Herr Vogt," p. 35.

38. See his polemic with Proudhon, *Das Elend der Philosophie* (Brussels, 1847).

39. According to Mehring, recognition of human rights for him is "nothing other than the recognition of egoistic bourgeois individualism [!] and the unchecked movement of spiritual and material elements. Human rights do not free people from religion [!], but rather give them the freedom of religion; they do not free them from property, but rather create the freedom to own property; they do not free them from the drudgery of earning, but rather grant them the freedom to earn. The recognition of human rights by the modern state has the same significance as the recognition of slavery by the ancient state" (*Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 1:175). (Strange that Marx stood up so enthusiastically for Jewish human rights. "He not only said *that*, but also showed *why*, the Jew has the most unassailable claim to the enjoyment of human rights" (p. 176).)

40. Bakunin maintains (I believe it is in a letter to Morago) that the fact that he did not praise Marx's *Kapital* immediately after he received it was enough in itself to earn him Marx's vehement displeasure. *Das Kapital* appeared in 1867, and the first public meeting between Marx and Bakunin took place in 1868 at the Basel congress. Bakunin made the first Russian translations of *Kapital* and the *Communist Manifesto*.

41. Nettlau, *Michael Bakunin*, 1:93.

42. At that time Marx wrote these half-truths in the *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung*: "The social principles of Christianity justified ancient slavery. The social principles of Christianity preach the natural necessity of a ruling and a repressed class. The social principles of Christianity explain the vile actions of the repressors against the repressed as the justified punishment of original sin or some other sins. The social principles of Christianity preach indolence, self-deprecation, humiliation, submissiveness, meekness—in short, all characteristics of the rabble. The social principles of Christianity are cowardly, and the proletariat is revolutionary." These comments hit home with Protestant and Catholic theocracy, but not with the social principles of Christianity as Münzer, Cabet, and Weitling formulated them anew, as Marx had to have clearly known in order to admit distinctions. Marx's anti-Christian action proceeded erroneously from the assumption that the analysis of consciousness, so-called "knowledge," excluded religion and faith. On his break with Weitling, compare Mehring (1:330): "Weitling's utopian presumption [!] could be cured no more, and thus nothing was left but to remove this obstacle to the development of the proletariat." Has there ever been a more daring Jacobinism in the realm of thought?

43. Weitling, *Evangelium der armen Sünder*, p. 12.

44. Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin*, p. 16.

45. Weitling, *Evangelium der armen Sünder*, p. 17.

46. In this regard Mehring (*Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 1:207) remarks: "The flag of intellectual communism was planted." But James Guillaume knows better: "It is not true that the International was a creation of Karl Marx. He took *absolutely no part* in the preparatory work from 1862 to September 1864. He joined the International just as it was coming into existence through the initiative of English and French workers. Like the cuckoo he fluttered in to lay his egg in a strange nest. His plan from the very first was to make the large workers' organization into a tool of his personal views" (*Karl Marx Pangermaniste*, ii). Not even the motto of the International originated with Marx. Jean Meslier (1664–1733) had already written: "Proletarians, unite! Unite, if you have the heart to free yourselves from your common misery! Take heart from each other for a noble and significant undertaking. . . . United, the peoples will succeed. . . . The nations must suppress all mutual disputes, turning all resentment against the common enemy, against the arrogant, the vain . . . men who make them suffer and who rob them of the best fruits of their labor" (*Jahrbuch der Freien Generation für 1914* [Zurich], ed. Pierre Ramus, 5:30).

47. Mehring, *Geschichte*, 1:216.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Mehring, 1:325. Marx contra Proudhon.

50. Franz Mehring, *Sozialistische Lyrik*, ed. Karl Grünberg, *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* (Leipzig, 1913), 4:112.

51. Marx, *Das Kommunistische Manifest*, foreword by Karl Kautsky (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1917), p. 45.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

53. In the preface to the 1872 edition (!) the authors of the *Communist Manifesto* explained that they no longer put any particular emphasis on the practical demands, wanting rather to content themselves "by and large with *general principles*," and in the 1883 edition Engels explained that the "pervasive, basic idea of the *Manifesto*" was historical materialism. Not until the preface of 1890 (at the time of Bismarck's dismissal and the Eisenach program) is one able to read once again that Marx believed in the ultimate victory of the "principles" laid down in the *Manifesto*. At that point the conflict between the two social democratic tendencies rallying behind the names Marx and Lassalle was then resolved (Erfurt party convention, 1891). The Halle convention (1890) had concluded that "methodology and knowledge" was to attain full status in the program. Methodology and knowledge—in fact that was the *Communist Manifesto*: the elaborations of a German scholar—confused, utopian, and doctrinaire.

54. This fact has been little heeded and is underestimated even today. Before the war the German "proletariat" differed markedly from every other proletariat, not only in terms of economic thinking and ideology, but particularly with respect to its position vis-à-vis the Prussian-Protestant

conception of the state, and that is just as true today. In fact, this difference is so great that only the general use of the red flag unites the German proletariat with an international social democratic movement and with proletarian factions in other countries. The German concept of the state (against which I would like this book to serve as warning) cannot be compared to the ideas of the state held in any other country, with respect to its cruelty, severity, and inhumanity. But since it is indeed the sense of social democracy that its universal, social concepts do relate to national concepts of the *state*, thus even scant knowledge of the antisocial character of our own state would have forced one to conclude quite reasonably that a social democratic International with a large German faction is simply not possible and would be destined to fail in times of crisis. As long as there exists no world republic *organized according to common points of view*, every common international undertaking absolutely excludes social democracy. In Germany, Prussianism succeeded in making social democracy thoroughly harmless as a party of revolution. German social democracy, right down to a dwindling minority, is a petty bourgeois, militaristic organization, raising only the hope that it will be destroyed by some new moral concept. There has never arisen in Germany even a general *democratic* party that could have created the necessary basis and the prerequisite for socialism, as was the case in the other cultured nations.

55. The Russian Bolsheviki, the most thoroughgoing and enthusiastic of Marx's followers, are establishing monuments to honor their master and appointing earlier agents of *Orkana* to their Marx university, and have made it only too clear. (Marx's utopia and his Machiavellianism, his amorality and his Jacobinism could not have been taken to more definitively absurd extremes than they were in the unpatriotic, antisocial, and traitorous activities of Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, and their accomplices. That corruptibility is only a consequence of the philosophy of commodities and of materialism is shown by documents that reveal the connections between the Bolsheviki and the leadership of the German army, heavy industry, and finance—documents that were published a few months ago by the American Committee on Public Information in Washington and that have also appeared as a brochure (Bern, Freie Verlag). It is symptomatic that in France the party of Jean Longuets, a grandson of Karl Marx, still supports the communism of coercive force despite the unmasking of the German fiction.)

56. Hence, in the case of war "international capital" bears the responsibility, according to Marxists. In Marx's view feudalism was indeed "crushed" as early as 1847. But the German "Internationalists" will by no means admit in 1870 and 1914 that this blow did knock the ground out from under feudalism. However comically their supremely national pride protects the caste of Junkers, it is even more comical that they succeeded in finding proselytes and supporters in all adjoining nations.

57. Proof of this is to be found in Marx's early writings, particularly in

the essay "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie" in the *Deutsch-Französischen Jahrbücher*, which I cite in this chapter.

(58. The rise of the Bolsheviki in Russia ought to be a warning to us: while the Zimmerwald delegates dealt with international ideology, the Bolsheviks were working on national destruction as if they were possessed—on betrayal of the *nation*, on the expropriation of the *nation*, on the liberation of *national* criminality. What went on at Zimmerwald was a front and the public show with which they concealed their national atrocities.)

59. Nettlau, *Michael Bakunin*, 2:246ff. That Marx read this letter is shown by the misrepresentations of it he cites in his alliance brochure ("L'Alliance de la Démocratie socialiste . . .," p. 85), and Nettlau writes that these distortions in fact drew his own attention to the original source. Marx tried to use this letter to prove Bakunin's support of electoral action, while under "political intervention" the latter understood something very different, to wit, *the fall of the empire*.

Ch. L. Chassin was a member of the "Fraternité internationale" founded by Bakunin in 1864, and *Démocratie européenne* was also actually established by Bakunin. Among other things the relevant issue contains letters of Victor Hugo, Michelet, Jules Barni, Aristide Rey; of Garibaldi, Garrido, Albert Richard.

60. Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 1:169–70.

61. *Ibid.*, 1:315.

62. Cf. Mehring, 3:235: "Bucher wrote to Marx in October 1865 offering him a position on the official state register. When he had no success, he turned to the university lecturer Eugen Dühring with the same offer. Dühring accepted, only to have a falling out with the editorial powers. Nevertheless, in April 1866 Wagener contacted him and ordered a memorandum 'for the internal use' of the state ministry dealing with the issue how 'something' might be done 'for the worker.' Dühring thus completed the assignment. Then Schweitzer was released from custody on May 9."

63. Cf. Otto Hamann, *Der neue Kurs* (Berlin: Hobbing, 1918), pp. 3 and 131ff. Hamann was press chief under Caprivi, Hohenlohe, Bülow, and Bethmann. Here is a significant fact: he was displeased with "the Marxist world of ideas built on nothing but gross categories 'working class,' and 'capitalist class,' 'state' and 'society,' 'humanity' and 'mankind' "; but yet "as an example of Marx's slippery language and the unparalleled, abstract dialectic proceeding with nothing but shrill contradictions," he did cite a lengthy passage from the *Communist Manifesto* wherein we read that "the bourgeoisie have ruthlessly *torn* the promiscuous feudal band that ties man to his *natural masters*, leaving no other tie between men than that of *naked interest*, than *coldly calculating payment*"; wherein the bourgeois is charged with "having drowned the divine awe of pious fanaticism, of *gallant enthusiasm*, of common melancholy in the icy waters of egoistic calculations" (etc.). The book appeared in spring of 1918, before the great

offensive against Paris, at a time when the Bolsheviks, as systematic Marxists, were in agreement with the "shifting" leadership of the Prussian army regarding the "bourgeois" Western democracies.

64. *How well* Lassalle informed Marx about Prussia is brought forth in this passage from Eduard Bernstein's Lassalle biography: "It is not impossible that Lassalle, by way of the far-reaching connections of Countess Hatzfeld, was informed of a new wind blowing somewhere in upper Prussia. How far these connections extended is indicated by information Lassalle had got to *Marx in London* as early as 1854 at the outbreak of the Crimean War. Thus, on February 10, 1854, he communicated to Marx the text of a declaration that had gone off a few days earlier from the Berlin cabinet to Paris and London and that describes situations in the Berlin cabinet—the king and almost all ministers supported *Russia*, only Manteuffel and the Prince of Prussia supported England—and the *measures decided on for certain eventualities of the same nature*. And Lassalle added: 'You can take all the enclosed news as if you had got it straight from Manteuffel and Aberdeen themselves!' A month later he again provided all manner of information on the intended steps of the cabinet, drawing on material received 'to be sure not from my *official* source, but from a reasonably credible one.' On May 20, 1854, he complained that his 'diplomatic source' had gone on a long journey. 'To have such a splendid *source of information about cabinet affairs*, and then to lose it for such a long time is highly annoying.' But he always had auxiliary sources to keep him abreast of the inner workings of the Berlin cabinet. Among other things, he 'had been informed of Bonin's dismissal well in advance.' " (p. 27) Accordingly, there can hardly be any doubt that the Berlin cabinet was expecting much from its good connections to Herr Lassalle, and sometime one should investigate how Marx evaluated the information. In 1849 Lassalle was still hotly indignant over the "disgraceful and unbearable despotism" that "had broken over Prussia": "Why so much force, yet so much hypocrisy? But that is Prussia." And: "Let us forget nothing, ever, ever again. Let us guard these memories with great care, like the remains of murdered parents whose only legacy is the oath of revenge bound to their bones." In 1854, however, he had his "supplies of cabinet news." And in 1857, through the mediation of Alexander von Humboldt (that same Humboldt who in Paris had the democrats of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* expelled), Lassalle obtained permission *from the king of Prussia* to live in Berlin. It takes a good dose of naivety to find all this only "interesting" and not duplicitous and compromising. "He thirsted for recognition, fame, deeds, and he needed the capital city for that," as Bernstein writes. And now Scheidemann, Radek, Parvus, and their ilk likewise thirst for recognition, for fame and deeds! But in view of Lassalle's sources of information during the Crimean War, even Marx's anti-Slav politics appear in a new light.

65. Marx, *Kommunistisches Manifest*, p. 56.

66. Bakunin, "Aufruf an die Slaven," published by the author in 1848:

“The revolution proclaims the despot nations to be dissolved of their authority . . . the Prussian kingdom, dissolved . . . Austria, dissolved . . . the Turkish kingdom, dissolved . . . the Russian empire, dissolved . . . thus dissolved, overthrown, and newly formed the entirety of north and east Europe . . . and the goal of it all: the general federation of European republics, all in the name of the freedom, equality, and brotherhood of all nations.”

67. See pp. 178–79 above, and note 90 below. And it is significant that in no other country has the concept of the state emerged with such force and omnipotence as it has in Prusso-Germany, and yet produced so little opposition from any anarchistic, extra-governmental faction dedicated to combating this concept of the state.

68. Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin*, p. 16.

69. What Marx’s “politics” had in view is revealed by a letter to Engels (September 11, 1868): “Our association [the International Workers Association, General Council London, Director Karl Marx] has made great strides. . . . For the next revolution, which is perhaps closer than it may seem, we (that means you and I) will have this powerful instrument in our hands. Compare that situation to the results of operations by Mazzini and others over a span of thirty years! And we did it all without money and in the face of intrigues by the Proudhonists in Paris, Mazzini in Italy, and Odger, Cremer, and Potter in London, all of whom envy us, and even though we had Schultze-Delitzsch and the followers of Lassalle in Germany against us. We can really be very satisfied!” (James Guillaume, p. 54; retranslated.)

70. Guillaume, *Karl Marx Pangermaniste*, p. 34. The motivation behind calling the French “toads” is extraordinarily informative, and the recipe as to how they have to act toward Germany, even if they are carrying on with a revolution, is even more brazen than what is cited here. The popular educational effect of Marx and Engels is easily judged by such strong language.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 85. On July 12, 1870, the French working class had sent an open letter to the German working class, that began with these words: “Brothers of Germany, in the name of peace, do not listen to the hired or servile voices seeking to deceive you about the true spirit of France. Close your ears to the senseless provocations, because any war between us would be a fratricidal war.” The Commune proved that this communique was sincere; it was signed by Tolain, Murat, Avrial, Pindy, Theisz, Camelinat, Chauvrière, Langevin, Landrin, Malon, and others. The Marx letter cited here refers specifically to this address; it begins: “I am sending you the *Réveil*.” It was the July 12 issue in which the letter had appeared. (James Guillaume, p. 84.)

72. Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin*, p. 8.

73. It is evident that this paragraph initially held something quite different for Marx and Engels than they were to interpret into it later. In 1864 it was incumbent on them to *subordinate* political intervention in the affairs

of national politics to economic emancipation, that is, to leave Bismarckian politics alone where possible. But at the London conference in 1871, in the wake of brilliant victories by Bismarck, they feared missing out on annexation. Thus, they forced the means of political action into the foreground and interpreted it in the manner of a parliamentary reform party.

74. It need not be mentioned that Alexander Herzen never demanded or prophesied anything of the sort. Herzen believed in the rejuvenating strength of the Russian rural parish, the *Mir*, in the regenerative peasant strength of Russia—as opposed to western “decadence.” He believed in the unbroken, naive idealism of Russian folk life. But in no fashion did he demand “rejuvenation of Europe . . . by means of terrorism and the forced infusion with the blood of Kalmucks.” That was only Marx’s unscrupulous exaggeration and one of the malicious distortions in his witch hunt of the “Pan-Slavists.”

75. Michael Bakunin, “Aux compagnons de la Fédération jurassienne” ms. 1873 (in Nettlau, *Michael Bakunin*). Bakunin has this to say on the matter: “If Herr von Bismarck had wanted to send an agent to the Geneva conference—could he have given a different speech? At the point where he was preparing with awesome means the fall of French hegemony and the foundation of German mastery on its ruins—would it not have been splendid politics from his standpoint to divert public attention from his own mobilization and German ambition to the much more distant dangers of a Russian threat? Was it not pan-Germanism that was recommending itself to Europe under the pious pretext of the justified and shared hatred of Pan-Slavism? Was it not the same as cleansing Germany of all the political and social disaster it is causing [1873] and putting the blame on Russia, unfortunately its all too pliable and devoted student?” The peace and freedom congresses of Geneva and Bern (1867–68) were in the main initiated and brought about by the western Swiss and the French. Squarely in the center of their undertaking stood the Russian Michael Bakunin.

76. In addition to Marx and Engels, Lassalle, Bebel, and Wilhelm Liebknecht were also embittered anti-Slavists. In 1914 almost the whole of German social democracy came to grief over the fairy tale of Russian military aggression. It had been skillfully prepared—for over half a century.

77. Cf. the excellent presentation by S. Brumbach, *Der Irrtum von Zimmerwald-Kienthal* (Bümplitz-Bern: Benteli, 1916) that confirms that it was the doctrinaire renunciation of home defense and the *Marxist ideology of domestic economics* that delivered Russia over to the supreme German army command. The germanophile Swiss socialist Robert Grimm was the president of the Zimmerwald-Kienthal organization; chief spokesman, Comrade Radek; and the grand inquisitor of the “bourgeoisied” International, Ulianov Lenin, whose overestimation of the revolutionary inclinations of the German proletariat revealed itself to be far more utopian than was his attempt “to actualize” Marxism. Lenin, as well as his Russian comrades Trotsky and Zinoviev, call themselves “*revolutionary Marxists*.” The crass errors of Lenin with respect to the German mentality are part

and parcel of his Marxism. Like Marx, he, too, until the fall of Napoleon held the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to be a “war of liberation”: “Germany robbed France in the German-French war, but this fact does not alter its basic character, for the war did liberate many millions of Germans from the feudal disunity and repression caused by two despots, the Roman czar and Napoleon III” (Lenin and Trotsky, *Krieg und Revolution*, ed. Eugen Levin-Dorsch [Zurich: Grütli, 1918], p. 102). Invoking Marx, he sought as late as April 8, 1917, to convince the international working class that the German proletariat was “the most loyal and reliable confederate ally of the Russian and the international revolution” (Ibid., “Abschiedsbrief an die Schweizer Arbeiter,” p. 159). And, although he still seems to be convinced of the “living revolutionary soul” of Marxism, he has comprehended Marxism too poorly, more poorly than the Prussian General Staff; otherwise, he would not have been able to write these words: “In reality this [German] bourgeoisie together with the Junkers will exert all their strengths without regard to the outcome of the war in order to protect the czarist monarchy against the revolution in Russia” (p. 137). Indeed not! This General Staff (to mention neither the anti-Slav bourgeois nor the social democratic bourgeois) knew full well that it was better by far to work with “revolutionary Marxists” than with a monarchy borne on by religious hostility. And events show that the General Staff succeeded in ruining Russia more basically by exploiting its Marxists than it could have done by using ten terrible Ivans.

78. From Bakunin’s “Abschiedsbrief an die jurassische Föderation,” following the congress of the anti-authoritarian internationalists in 1873: “Thus your victory, the victory of freedom and the International against authoritarian intrigue is complete. But before we part, permit me to give some final, brotherly advice: My friends, international reactionism no longer has its center in this poor country of France—this country so quaintly dedicated to the Sacré-Coeur by the Versailles convention—it is in Germany, in Berlin; and its two manifestations are just as readily the *socialism of Marx* as the diplomacy of Bismarck. This reaction has set as its end goal the *Germanization of Europe* and threatens at this hour to engulf and reverse everything. It has declared war to the knife against an International that still only consists of autonomous and free federations. Like the proletarians of all other nations, even you, though you belong today to a republic that is still free, should combat reactionism, for it stands between you and the end goal—the emancipation of the proletariat of the entire world” (Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin*, p. 160).

79. Rathenau, *Von kommenden Dingen*, p. 263. This citation begins, verbatim: “This self-sacrificing consciousness of lower classification and subordination fills millions of souls in Prussia and permeates right up to the freer [!] middle class where it assuredly assumes depraved and ethically dangerous forms. In its purest form it shows beautiful, childlike features [!] and accords with that *happy patriarchal attitude* that touches us in the

youth of any nation. These features are of *great value* in terms of national psychology; they create masses unrivalled in their capacity to be disciplined and organized to the highest degree [etc.]" And the author of such balderdash, in the roles of "leader of the nation" and chairman of the public electric works, issues proclamations to the youth and in other ways is well versed in manipulating the "speculative" German tradition to best advantage.

80. Opposition to this Junker ideology demands a *purified nationalism* that views the salvation of mankind not in the evasion of the nation and in ignoring its specific resources and traditions, but in the fulfillment and sublimation of the national conception, in the delineation and conscientious exaltation of its truly human achievements. To bear the nation's heart toward mankind is the task of responsible thinkers.

81. The chief advocates of this Junker heroism are Dr. Max Scheler and Professor Werner Sombart—the latter in his book *Händler und Helden*, which lays claim to taking Nietzsche's attack on "the philosophical mind in general" as its own sleazy argumentation and thus attempts to destroy the "shallow English commercial morality," the "common sense" [in English, trans.] of Bentham, Spencer, Godwin, Owen, and Hume. "Being German means being a hero!"

82. Franz Mehring, *Die Lessinglegende: Zur Geschichte und Kritik des preußischen Despotismus und der klassischen Literatur*, p. 76.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

84. Quotations from Emil Ludwig, *Bismarck* (Berlin: Fischer, 1917), pp. 70-73, 58.

85. Cf. chapter 2, pp. 75-76 above.

86. Quotations from Hermann Fernau, *Das Königtum ist der Krieg* (Bümpliz-Bern: Benteli, 1918), pp. 27-29.

87. Mehring, *Die Lessinglegende*, p. 340. Lessing was not the only person to have expressed such views concerning freedom of thought under Friedrich II. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams wrote the following observation in a similar vein from Berlin: "It is unbelievable how this *pater patriae* worries about his subjects; he in fact permits them only freedom of thought. I think Hamlet says somewhere that Denmark is a prison. The entire Prussian region is just that in the literal sense of the word." And the Italian poet Alfieri, describing a 1770 sojourn in Prussia in his autobiography, claims that Berlin impressed him like "a single great prison inspiring disgust," and the entire Prussian nation "with its thousands of hired satellites" struck him as being "one enormous perpetual guard post." Or Lord Malmesbury, writing in 1772: "Berlin is a city where there is no such thing as an honorable man or a chaste woman. A total moral depravity rules both sexes in all classes. The men are perpetually involved in leading a very extravagant life on limited means, and the women are harpies who are ignorant of delicacy of feeling and true love and who surrender themselves to anyone who pays them enough" (p. 250).

88. It is typical of Prussia that “revolutions” take place there from time to time when the despotism is in need of a new supply of power. Revolution is a kind of simplified form of election of officials and careers. We should take warning now, December 1918, when once again, as in 1848, a national assembly is at hand and a political confusion is reigning that is no different from the situation of 1848, neither in the lack of energy on the side of the rebels nor in the lack of boldness on the side of reactionism. Germany appears to be incapable of having revolutions, even if they are forced upon the country, and carrying them out in ways that are beneficial to the people.

89. Mehring, *Lessinglegende*, p. 421.

90. Fernau describes this most insane Prussian monarch: “Of great piety and yet apparently liberal, crammed full of medieval conceptions and yet a ‘modern man,’ as he called himself in contrast to his father, he sought to unite the majesty of a romantic, Teutonic Middle Ages and the splendor of a Roman sovereign church with Protestant and nineteenth-century concepts of freedom [!]. He detested ‘the caste of writers.’ And thus the Junkers were satisfied with this ruler. They surrounded him with ‘saints and knights,’ alienated him completely from his people and his times, and lulled him with incense and the eloquent phrasings of the theories of the divine right of kings” (*Das Königtum ist der Krieg*, p. 45).

91. Dmitri Merezhkovsky, “Von der religiösen Lüge des Nationalismus,” *Vom Krieg zur Revolution* (Munich: Piper, 1918), p. 96.

92. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, “Bismarck der Deutsche,” *Deutsches Wesen* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1916), p. 40.

93. It was the replacement of ideology by the practical mentality of business that elevated Bismarck so swiftly to the stature of hero. Abstract, unpopular ideology (the German dreamer) had neglected the nation so frightfully that the business minds that emerged at that time far surpassed in immorality the “capitalism” of every other nation. The Pan-German alliances (Junkers and heavy industry), merchants and heroes in intimate alliance, grew in short order to that enormous power that controlled German politics and commerce almost without limitation—a power working since the 1880s consciously toward a new and blessed war, toward the World War. Luther provided the religious consecration of this alliance. “As soon as Luther becomes lofty, he becomes practical,” Chamberlain wrote, and he himself underscored this sentence and added that, in his view, practicality indeed “constitutes the crux of this powerful personality” (“Martin Luther,” supp. to “Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts,” *Deutsches Wesen*, p. 51).

94. Fernau, *Das Königtum ist der Krieg*, p. 54.

95. Mehring, from a letter from Bismarck to Wagener, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 2:217.

96. The political dead end into which Bismarck’s centralistic romanticism of power led has been systematically attacked among Germans since

Konstantin Frantz, particularly by Professor Friedrich W. Förster. See "Bismarcks Werk im Lichte der großdeutschen Kritik," *Friedenswarte* (Bern), January 1916: "The purely individualistic, great power theory is only a short phase, an aberration; it could only arise in that interregnum in which the medieval conception of the *civitas humana* had fallen into ruin, without there being any new, great ideas of world organization to take its place. . . . This development can of course not be set in motion by political proposals alone. It depends to a much greater extent on the young generations in Germany, on their essentially freeing themselves from the spell the false romanticism of the new Empire has worked on the older generation, whose entire thinking on national political problems has grown increasingly narrow and has cut off Germany in the name of *Realpolitik* from the most pressing realities and needs of more recent world developments."

97. Quotations from Ludwig, *Bismarck*, pp. 19, 28.

98. The parallels between young Bismarck and young Rimbaud are quite evident. In his youth Rimbaud was also a "desperado of instinct"; he got his "idolatry and love of sacrilege" from his Gallic ancestors. To him Christ is an "eternal thief of energy"; morals, "a feeble-mindedness." [Ball quotes these phrases in French: "*éternel voleur des énergies*" and "*une faiblesse de cervelle*," respectively.] It was said of him that his verse broke into French culture barbarically, Germanically. "I was never of these people, never a Christian. I belong to the race who sang at the death sentence; I do not understand laws, have no morals, am a barbarous person." (Thus Rimbaud, and nearly the same can be said of Bismarck.) But yet—and here these two related personalities part company—Rimbaud discovered this: "The inferior race has hidden it all from view—nationality, as one says, reason, nation, knowledge." And he drew this conclusion: "The most evil thing is to desert this continent where madness roves at random to administer these poor people with whips." He becomes a saint, a god, and the benevolent medicine man of lost Negro tribes in the darkest Sudan. "I am an animal, a Negro; yet perhaps I am saved. You are false Negroes, savages, misers." He died in ardent prayer on November 10, 1891. Which of these two men is the greater hero? My question is directed to the people and to the youth.

99. Ludwig, *Bismarck*, pp. 65, 193, 195.

100. Hans Blum, *Fürst Bismarck und seine Zeit* (Munich: Beck, 1895), 5:293. The letter is dated December 18, 1879, and it refers to the "final outcome of our efforts" (the treaty of October 7, 1879). It is well worth noting that Bismarck had apprised the French ambassador in Vienna, M. Teisserance de Bort, of the preceding negotiations, but in doing so had stressed the *peaceful* nature of the Austro-German alliance. Bismarck went to Vienna on September 21, 1879, and negotiated with Andrassy, Baron Haymerle, and the Hungarian ministry president Tisza, as well as with Kaiser Franz Joseph himself. This alliance *parabellum* was the seed of the war in 1914. Its preparation signifies a betrayal with respect to France.

101. Emil Ludwig, p. 133, ideals, piety.

102. Ibid., pp. 130–32: “Bismarck was Protestant through and through. Rome was eternally alien to him. His knowledge of worldly forces, his strong mind, his independence, and above all *his belief in individual abolition, which went far beyond the confines of religion*, impelled him toward Protestantism. It seems as if Luther himself had done the writing, as we see him reading a song in the songbook on the eve of those decisive events in July 1870, making an entry about this significant day, with this addition in Low German, ‘Dat walt Gott und dat kolt Isen’ (God rules and the sword).” Herr Emil Ludwig ((Cohn from Breslau)), continuing: “Bismarck’s Protestantism had a particular coloring; one could almost call it Prussian. He referred to himself as God’s soldier; he would do his duty; ‘that God gives me the understanding to do so is his affair.’”

103. Ibid., pp. 131, 132.

104. On Luther’s birthday, November 10, 1888, Bismarck was granted an honorary doctorate in theology by the University of Gießen. The Latin encomium dedicates this honor to “the well-tested, most eminent adviser of the Protestant kings of Prussia, the illustrious guardian of Protestant interests throughout all the world, who watches that the Protestant church is governed with regard to its own nature and not according to foreign, destructive models; to the statesman with *profound vision* who has recognized that (the Christian religion alone can bring salvation to the social world;) the Christian religion, which for him is the religion of energetic love, not of words, of the heart and the will, *not of empty speculation*; to the perceptive friend of all German universities *who has become particularly dear to the Protestant faculties* through the decisiveness with which he has defended that freedom without which they could not serve the gospel and the church.” And Bismarck expressed his appreciation (November 22): “I owe this honor to my support of tolerant and *practical* Christianity [etc.]” (Hans Blum, *Bismarck und seine Zeit*, 6:323).

105. Quotations from a most interesting little work, *Ist Deutschland anti-katholisch?* (London: Burns and Oates, 1918). So that humor may not be lacking, let us recall these words of Prince Heinrich of Prussia on the evening of his departure for China in 1897: “Only one thing motivates me: to announce abroad the gospel of Your Majesty’s Christian presence, to preach to them who will listen, and to them who will not.” Wilhelm II as Jesus and Prince Heinrich, his brother, as an apostle! When will we begin to wage the reversed *Kulturkampf* against Prussia?

106. Quotations from Emil Ludwig, *Bismarck*, pp. 57, 77. Ludwig draws on Bismarck’s speeches, letters, his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, the memoirs of Booth, Busch, P. Hahn, Hofmann, Kendell, etc., as well as the recently collected reflections of Brauer, Marcks, and von Müller.

107. Ibid., p. 82. See also Moritz Busch, *Tagebuchblätter* (Leipzig, 1899) 3 vols., from which the following comments by Bismarck deserve to be cited: “France is a nation of zeros, a herd. . . . There were thirty million

obedient little clumps, each one of them of no account and value—not even to be put on the same footing with the Russians and Italians, not to mention with us Germans" (1:200). Or this: "If we are unable to garrison all of our districts, then from time to time we will send flying columns to such locations as behave recalcitrantly, to shoot, hang, and burn." And this: "For each day in arrears, an additional five per cent of the amount due is to be exacted from the communities. Flying columns armed with guns are to move up before those villages, have the taxes brought out, and in case there is any delay, proceed with shooting and burning." And finally: "I [Bismarck] think it will work, if the French are first given essential supplies and then are put on half rations and are forced to starve again. It works the same way with the flogging bench. It does little good if numerous strokes are administered in succession. But if the flogging is stopped and started again at intervals, it is most difficult to bear" (2:57-58, 81-82, 84).

108. See the documents of Pan-German war frenzy inspired by the Prussian General Staff and appearing in O. Nippold's renowned book, *Der deutsche Chauvinismus* (Bern: Wyss, 1913, 1917), in particular the irrefutable corroboration of the facts that is offered by the statement of one medical commissioner, Dr. W. Fuchs, on January 12, 1912: "Which men tower highest in the history of the nation, for whom does the German heart throb with most ardent love? Perhaps Goethe, Schiller, Wagner, Marx? No. It is Barbarossa, the great Friedrich, Blücher, Moltke, Bismarck—the tough men of blood. Those who have sacrificed thousands of lives, they are the ones for whom the most delicate emotion—a truly reverent thankfulness—flows from the soul of the people. Because they have done what we now must do. Because they were so brave, so open to responsibility as few others have been." "But now, however," the medical commissioner continues, "bourgeois morality is compelled to condemn those great men, for the compatriot guards nothing more scrupulously than he guards his middle-class morals—and *nonetheless his most divine awe* pays homage to the titans of bloody deeds" (etc.). Hail to the great psychoanalyst Fuchs! He has spoken the truth, the purest truth, and disclosed the riddle. The bad conscience of the German people is its . . . morals. Crime is its nature, but rebels are those who restore the natural right of acts of blood! Here is the enigma in the history of the German mentality.

109. Léon Bloy, *Sueur du sang* (1870-71), extract from the ms. from *L'Exégèse des lieux communs* (Paris: Crès, 1914), pp. 186-88.

110. Bismarck's comment from his address (February 9, 1872) on the compulsory education law (cf. Hans Blum, 5:49-56).

111. From Windthorst's address (February 8, 1872).

112. Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 4:5.

113. After Bismarck there is no more talk of ideas. There is only the philosophy of the state and the industry of war. Gobineau, Treitschke, and Chamberlain control the machinery of thought. See Dr. H. Roesemeier,

Die Wurzeln der neudeutschen Mentalität (Bern: Der Freie Verlag, 1918): "Heinrich von Treitschke became the leading intellect of the new Germany—furthermore its single literary figure of original power and amplitude of personality—this historian who saw the pinnacle of world development in the Prussian-German kingdom of the Bismarckian nation, who converted the *Hegelian deification of the state* from the spheres of abstract thought into the realities of practical politics, who laid the foundation for the terrible animosity toward England as it animates the current generation of the German intelligentsia. Heinrich von Treitschke's influence on the contemporary German mentality cannot be overestimated" (p. 25).

114. Schopenhauer says of happiness that it certainly is "to be recognized as frustrated or as an illusion." And he characterizes life as a "continuing deception in matters large and small" (*Werke*, ed. Eduard Griesbach [Leipzig, Reclam], 1:674). The comment of the biographer, Johannes Volkelt, is interesting in this context: "How long has Schopenhauer's rejection of the world and his denial of life been recognized as mere whimsy! The contemporary youth in particular are filled with thirst for *happiness lived to the hilt*, for *pleasurable* sensations that far exceed in variety, novelty, and exhaustive depths all desires felt by earlier peoples; and at the same time they are filled with the bold belief that such happiness can be achieved" (Johannes Volkelt, *Arthur Schopenhauer: Seine Persönlichkeit, seine Lehre, sein Glaube* [Stuttgart: Frommann, 1900], p. 1).

115. Mehring, *Lessinglegende*, p. 442: "Bourgeois philosophy in Germany has been a thing of the past since the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto* in the year 1848. Its appointed representatives in the colleges and universities have cooked up all manner of watery, eclectic stews that have become more sour by the decade. But a series of *modish philosophers* was busy worrying about the philosophical needs of the bourgeois, and one replaced the other according to the shifting development of capitalism. From the beginning of the 1850s up to about the mid-60s, Schopenhauer was *the man of the hour* [!], the philosopher of anxious philistinism, the raging hater of Hegel, the dissenting voice of every historical development, a writer not without paradoxical wit [!], not without a richness of knowledge, even if it was more desultory than penetrating and comprehensive, not without a certain splendor of the classical tradition, which he had in part even lived through beneath Goethe's radiant gaze. Yet in his *cowardly, egotistical, and slandering fashion*, he was quite appropriately the spiritual image of the middle class, which retreated to its revenues in horror at the sound of weapons, to quake like an aspen grove and renounce the ideals of its greatest epoch like the plague." Truly a classical judgment! The raging hater of Hegel—that is indeed the point! Hegelian philosophy with its belief in the rationality that progressively realizes itself in history through its own activity, the Hegel-Marx evolutionism that indeed impressed Schopenhauer as "half insane"!

116. Volkelt, *Arthur Schopenhauer*, p. 250: "But then we suddenly hear

that the world in itself has a moral meaning. The strongest expressions are never quite strong enough for Schopenhauer when he sets out to brand the naturalistic world view. He maintains that it is the 'fundamental' and 'most destructive error,' indeed, 'an actual perversity of mind,' to give the world 'purely a physical, but no moral significance.' 'The essential element of human existence is its ethical value, a value valid for eternity.' Even in his youth Schopenhauer, in opposition to Schelling, noted that morality is the *supreme reality* in comparison to which everything else that appears to be real sinks away into nothingness." Compare the subsequent expositions on sins, guilt, and penitence (pp. 251–56): "We may now speak of a divine moral order of the world—indeed it is of a fearful kind. The suffering of the world is justified by fundamental guilt. We can deduce the good sense from what we have read in Schopenhauer: affirmation of life is the same as *greedy, unconscious* affirmation of primal guilt."

117. Schopenhauer's "guilt-ridden will" reached sublime expression as the essence of the world in Wagner's *Nibelungen* and particularly in the figure of Wotan (the god of war and conflict). (See Arthur Prüfer, *Die Bühnenfestspiele in Bayreuth* [Leipzig, 1899], pp. 110ff.)

118. See the discussion in chapter 2 (pp. 66–67) above.

119. Note this aphorism by Nietzsche (1874): "Profound appetite for rebirth as saint and genius. Insight into the common pain and delusion. Sharpened sense for the homogeneous and for those who suffer similarly. Profound gratitude for the few redeemers" ("Schopenhauer als Erzieher," *Werke* 10:319).

120. Nietzsche, "Gedanken über Richard Wagner aus dem Januar 1874," *Werke* 10:449.

121. Nietzsche, *Werke* 10:302.

122. Nietzsche had already said this of Richard Wagner: "He discovered the German spirit over against the Roman one" (*Werke* 10:446). And: "Wagner came upon a colossal period of time where the effects of the dogmatic idols and fetishes in all earlier religions were wavering; he is the tragic poet present at the demise of religion, the twilight of the gods" (*Ibid.*, p. 457). Soon, however, he *himself* was emphatic: "Whoever is tempted to claim that *the Teuton* is prepared and predetermined for Christianity shows no lack of insolence. For the opposite is not only true, it is obvious. And why should the contrivance of two exemplary Jews, Jesus and Saul, the two most Jewish of Jews who perhaps have existed, make the Teutons feel more at home here than other people? Both believed that the fate of every human being and all epochs previous and following, together with the fate of the earth, the sun, and the stars, depended on an event in Jewish history: this belief is the Jewish *non plus ultra*. This supreme moral subtlety, which has so sharply honed a rabbi's powers of reasoning, but not those of some mentality clothed in bear skins . . . this priestly hierarchy and national asceticism, this permeating and palpable proximity to the desert, and not to primeval forests—can these factors be reconciled with the indolent, but

bellicose and rapacious, Teuton, with the cold-blooded hunter and beer drinker who has raised it all no higher than the level of the religion of Indians, and who ten centuries ago still sacrificed human beings on slabs of stone" (*Werke*, vol. 11).

123. "I had already taken leave of Wagner in the summer of 1876, in the middle of the first series of festival performances. I suffer no second thoughts; since Wagner has been in Germany, he has condescended step by step to everything I despise, even to anti-Semitism. Richard Wagner, from appearances victorious in all things, but in truth a desperate decadent gone bad, suddenly sank down helpless and broken before the Christian cross" ("Nietzsche contra Wagner" [1888], p. 246). And why not helpless? Why not broken? Why did he not dare to do that?

124. "Have I been understood?" reads the final statement of *Ecce Homo* (1888), "Dionysus versus the Crucified One." And he wrote to Georg Brandes (November 20, 1888): "The book is called *Ecce Homo*, and is a ruthless attack on the crucified Christ; it ends by hurling such thunders and lightnings at everything Christian or infected by Christianity that one swoons. I am, after all, the foremost psychologist of Christianity" [Christopher Middleton, ed. and trans., *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), letter no. 187, p. 326].

125. And almost with identical words: "I perceive religion to be a *narcotic*." The final clause reads: "but if it is given to such people as the *Teutons*, it becomes pure poison" (*Werke*, 10:407).

126. "My departure point is the Prussian soldier: there is a real convention here, control, earnestness, and discipline, even in questions of form. It has arisen out of need. Indeed, far removed from the 'simple and the natural'! Its relationship to history is empirical and, therefore, certainly vital, not acquired. For some, it is almost mythic [!]. It is based on the discipline of the body and on the painstaking demands of devotion to duty. Goethe in this instance is exemplary: the rampant naturalism [!] that gradually becomes an austere dignity. . . ." ("Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben" [1873], *Werke*, 10:279.)

127. "I have the curse of Pascal and Schopenhauer upon me! And can anyone be more devoted to them than I?" (From the period of "Menschliches, Allzumenschliches" [1875–79], *Werke*, vol. 11.)

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