

ROMANTICISM AND IDEALISM: THEIR EFFECT ON GERMAN NAZISM

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1961

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
August, 1962

NOV 6 1962

ROMANTICISM AND IDEALISM: THEIR EFFECT ON GERMAN NAZISM

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PREFACE

The first half of the nineteenth century is often called the Age of Romanticism and Idealism. Historians generally agree that the existence of romanticism and idealism is a fact and there the agreement stops. Primarily influential in the realm of philosophy, literature, and the fine arts; romanticism and idealism held considerable power in the field of politics. Although all people did not subscribe to these ways of thinking, and may even have met them in a negative manner, they were compelled to recognize them as a reality. This study will attempt to give a brief description of the romantic and idealistic outlooks, specifically in relation to political thought, with intent to trace these two movements through the rise of nationalism and ultimately determine their effect upon the National Socialist Party in Germany. The character of these movements included many varied concepts and often even conflicting elements. As in most historical divisions, other powerful forces are found at work in Germany during this period. For this reason, it will be necessary to limit the scope of this inquiry to only those factors affecting the evolution of the two movements and the essentially political connection between these forces and nationalism. It may be well to specify here that romanticism and idealism are only two components of the several that make up nationalism; however, they became the cultural background of most thought in the era with which

we are to be concerned.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Alfred Levin for his time, encouragement, and excellent guidance in the preparation of this paper. In addition, I wish to thank Dr. Homer L. Knight and Dr. Sidney D. Brown, who gave their prompt and special consideration to the reading of this study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The diversity of the characteristics which can be assigned to the movements of romanticism and idealism has given rise to the practice of using the terms in a very general sense. They will, in most cases, be used in that sense throughout this investigation. Nevertheless, to clarify somewhat their use here, a definition employed in selecting and portraying the examples found in this study should be given.

Idealism is essentially reflection upon the great questions concerning the universe, the Ultimate Power, and man's purpose and relation to them. The principal nature of romanticism is revolt against the ethical and aesthetic standards received from the preceding epoch. The tenets of romanticism and idealism are particularly complementary to each other. The movements, and adherents of these systems, tend to confuse and intermingle the principles of both into one complex philosophy. Therefore, when referring to romanticism and idealism together, the meaning is a combination of the romanticist's theory of beauty and truth with the idealist's theory of the ideal and the universal.

Romanticism and idealism, in the broad sense, were reactions against the conventions of the eighteenth century, particularly as they were found in the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the aesthetics of

classicism. The classical restraint, intellect rigidity, and artificial standards lost favor to a desire for freedom of interpretation and the appreciation of the unique.¹ The break was not complete, however, since romanticism and idealism came out of the preceding age and, therefore, retained some similarities.

In general, throughout the period, the doctrines of intellectual conservatives enjoyed supremacy in idealism and romanticism. Order was exalted above liberty. The interests of groups, of society, and especially of the state were given precedence over those of the individual. An emphasis upon faith, authority, and tradition superseded the eighteenth century belief in the primacy of reason and science. The doctrines of the Enlightenment had run their course and done well their job of throwing off the middle ages and preparing Europe for the modern age. The inability of certain institutions to keep pace called forth the relatively conservative movements of romanticism and idealism. Various factors were responsible for this ascendancy of conservative patterns. There was above all the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, with his denial of the competence of reason and his stress upon emotions and feelings.

Often considered the founder of modern democracy, the father of romanticism and idealism, and by many the originator of collectivism, Rousseau was more than anything else an influence upon the generations

¹Veit Valentin, The German People (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), pp. 362-363.

after him. Rousseau is important as the inventor of the basic doctrines adopted and expanded by later philosophers of romanticism and idealism.

As a forefather of romanticism, we can expect that sentiment should have deeply colored his political as well as social judgments. Rousseau initiated systems of thought that infer non-human concepts from human emotions. He invented the political philosophy of pseudo-democratic dictatorships as differentiated from the traditional absolute monarchies. In addition, he preached educational reform as the basis for reforming and founding the state.²

Rousseau extolled the virtue of the life of the "noble savage" even more fervently than did his contemporaries and disciples. The perfect state for human existence is the paradise of the original state of nature. No one, in this phase of life, suffered inconvenience from maintaining his own rights against others. Indeed, there were very few chances for conflict of any sort because private property did not exist in primitive life and every man was equal to his neighbor. Eventually, however, evils arose due primarily to the fact that some men staked off plots of land and said to themselves, "This is mine". It was in such a manner that various degrees of inequality developed. The only hope for man was the return to a state of nature which, in essence, set the stage for the reaction that was to arise out of his doctrines.³

²Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourses on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality Among Men (Everyman Library, ed., 1913), p. 162.

³Ibid., p. 207.

The same principle in slight variation is found in The Social Contract. This work offered the theory that allows Rousseau to be classed with the absolutists. The plan for the salvation of society rests, in The Social Contract, in the establishment of a civil organization and surrender of all individual rights to the community. This surrender of rights was accomplished by the means of a social contract, in which each individual agreed with the whole body of persons to submit to the will of the majority. Thus the state was brought into existence.⁴

Rousseau primarily believes in democracy; but, democracy can exist only in the form of the city-state found among the Greeks. He grants that participation of every individual in government is impossible in a larger state. In the middle-sized states "elective aristocracy" is best. Very large states must rely upon monarchy.⁵

Rousseau developed an altogether different conception of sovereignty from that of the liberals. Whereas Locke and his followers had taught that only a portion of sovereign power is surrendered to the state and the rest retained by the people, Rousseau contended that sovereignty is indivisible and that all of it became vested in the community when the civil unit was formed. He insisted that each individual, in becoming a party to the social contract, gave up all of his rights to the people collectively and agreed to submit absolutely to the general will. Rousseau

⁴Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract (Everyman Library, ed., 1913) p. 15.

⁵Ibid., pp. 1-5.

leaves the sovereign power of the state subject to no limitations whatever. Rousseau states: ". . . the rights which are taken as being part of Sovereignty are really subordinate" ⁶ "The state, in relation to its members, is master of all their goods." ⁷ The individual, by giving of his possessions and self to the state, does not detract from his original liberty. Instead, the individual gains from mere increased mathematical proportion of the state. Moreover, the community, or sovereign, can set up the government or pull it down "whenever it likes." ⁸

Rousseau aims in The Social Contract to unite justice with practical application, and to that end he is concerned with the defense of civil society. It is this defense that became the trumpet call for revolutionaries and the many other movements coming out of his romantic writings. He throws out the idealistic challenge that: "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they." ⁹ Thus we find him also the champion of individual freedom.

Rousseau's appeal to the middle class set the stage for enlisting the support of the rapidly growing bourgeois force of society. From his doctrine, contending that the state is legally omnipotent and that true liberty consists in submission to the "general will", it was not a very

⁶ Ibid., p. 25.

⁷ Ibid., p. 107.

⁸ Ibid., p. 88.

⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

difficult step to exalt the state as an object of worship and reduce the individual to a mere part of the political machine. And, finally, his slogan, "back to nature", and his contempt for reason and science furnished the foundation for the philosophies of many of his disciples.

CHAPTER II

ROMANTICISM AND IDEALISM

The Enlightenment was not alien to Germany, but rather a movement that swept over all Europe and that each one of the culturally great nations adapted according to its needs. In Germany the offshoots of the Enlightenment soon took the forms known as romanticism and idealism. Idealism we will consider first as separate from romanticism, with which it soon merged, and by which it was superseded.

Idealism

Essential to the rise of idealism was a distaste for religious strife, which was especially marked in Germany, and the rejection of the churchly culture that resulted from classicism. The intellectual tradition of Europe had its foundation as much in the culture of antiquity as in the more recent Christianity. The German tradition displayed itself in opposition to the discipline and formalism of classical antiquity, asserting instead the irrational and mystical impulses of its own racial heritage.¹

In Germany, theology lost its traditional place of supremacy among

¹Kurt Reinhardt, Germany 2000 Years (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1950), p. 391.

the sciences and philosophy inherited the throne. Rousseau's struggle for liberty and against dogmatism, pedantry and hypocrisy all made a deep impression on German philosophers. The "return to nature" waked like-minded thinking in other fields, as well as philosophy. There was an abundance of material in the fatherland to aid the great thinkers in keying the German mind to humanitarian tolerance, freedom of thought, and the abrogation of every moral constraint. The generation that was growing up was hungry for education and the giants of genius offered them what they wanted. The old traditions of European corporate life, carried forward by the German spirit, were exchanged for antiquarian humanism, critical philosophy, and comprehension through world literature.²

Idealism believed in the intrinsic goodness of the human soul and in the possibility of successful education. It distinguished ethics from revealed religion and preached a virtue rooted in nature and corresponding to the facts of nature. It sprang from deep feeling, from passionate indignation against the brutal, vengeful, irrational forces of which there were numerous examples on every hand. The emotional excitement and the joy of combat were characteristics arising from the secular and nature-based views of post-Reformation religion.

Idealism never lost its pronounced scholarly tone. The Storm and Stress, the first period of purposeful revolutionary thinking, was above all an intellectual outlook. It interpreted instincts as the actual driving force of human will and action, and even brought forth the first

²Ibid., p. xv.

speculations concerning the subconscious.³

The idealistic movement was a fundamental part of the German culture. Though slower to take hold in the Prussian north, idealism found its best and purest form in the universities of northern Germany. To the contrary, the development of poetry, art, and music generally remained in the south, centering in the Swabian areas or Vienna.

One of the northern personalities was Immanuel Kant, the father of German idealism and founder of the dominant system of thought throughout the nineteenth century. Sympathetic with the ideals of the French Revolution, Kant owed much to Rousseau. Unlike most of his contemporaries and disciples, Kant, taking his cue from Rousseau, believed in the natural right of man and even defended the separation of powers as a necessary protection for the liberty of the citizen. Kant tells us to "act as if the maxim of our action were to become by our will a universal law of nature".⁴ It is not by reason, but by feeling that we know good from bad. Reason might allow deception to escape punishment. But, "while I can will the lie, I can by no means will that lying should be a universal law. For with such a law there would be no promises at all".⁵ Thus we see Kant fears Rousseau's lack of order.

It is not from Kant, a firm believer in God, that his disciples took

³Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), pp. 656-657.

⁴Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, Ltd., 1927), p. 41.

⁵
Ibid., p. 43.

the Godless view. The parallel between Rousseau and Kant in religion is so close that their words concerning the validity of conviction and feeling as instruments of knowledge and logic are almost identical. This doctrine was misinterpreted by many of Kant's followers, in some cases intentionally, to justify their actions and deeds as convictions and feelings too strong to be illusions.

Kant created the concept of the constitutional state as the acme of moral and aesthetic human culture over and above the ties of class, of nation, of society, and of race. Here he leaves Rousseau; Kant's state, like his life, was one of order with its duty and limit well defined.

"The civil constitution of every state should be republican", writes Kant, "and war shall not be declared except by plebiscite of all citizens".⁶

Kant feels his conceived state is well based, for he says:

The history of the human race, viewed as a whole, may be regarded as the realization of a hidden plan of nature to bring about a political constitution, internally and externally perfect, as the only state in which all the capacities implanted by her in mankind can be fully developed.⁷

The wisdom that has revealed this very sound state to Kant has also given him the knowledge that all men may not want to use the power of the state as they should to be the most beneficial to society. His apprehensions caused him to warn:

. . . in a constitution where the subject is not a voting member of the state, and which is therefore not republican,

⁶ Kant, Perpetual Peace and Other Essays (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, Ltd., 1914), p. 77.

⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

the resolution to go to war is a matter of the smallest concern in the world. For in this case the ruler, who, as such, is not a mere citizen, but the owner of the state, need not in the least suffer personally by war, nor has he to sacrifice his pleasures of the table or the chase, or his pleasant palaces, court festivals, or the life. He can, therefore, resolve for war from insignificant reasons, as if it were but a hunting expedition; and as regards its propriety, he may leave the justification of it without concern to the diplomatic corps, who are always too ready to give their services for that purpose.⁸

Kant's concern with the government is not only in regard to its relations with other states, but he is anxious about its bearing upon the individual. He says: "Every man is to be respected as an absolute end in himself; and it is a crime against the dignity that belongs to him as a human being, to use him as a mere means for some external purpose."⁹

Kant's republican form of government is a unique example of the type generally considered republican. He is not adverse to having a monarch or king; in fact, it is easiest to get a perfect government that way. It is a conservative and aristocratic doctrine which found junction between idealism and the Prussian view of the state.

The intellectual predominance of Germany begins with Kant; and German Idealism after Kant, as well as later German philosophy, was profoundly influenced by his use of history as basis for his writings. His influence upon his successors was so great that it is virtually impossible to understand them without knowing where they found some of their

⁸Ibid., pp. 76-77.

⁹Ibid., p. 21.

basic ideas. The Kantian movement was to become a part of the German culture, and many of his followers took for granted the doctrines he had presented.

The two major literary figures of the idealistic movement were Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Friedrich Schiller. Both were, in their early years, romanticists of the Storm and Stress school. Vastly influential during their own lives, their major contributions to the later romantic movement lies in the misinterpretation that has no consistently plagued their work. Works that were mistaken for nationalistic writings were intended to portray the humanism, universalism, and individual freedom that both men felt necessary to save Germany from chaos.

Coming from two social extremes, their monumental friendship was founded upon the need of each for the complementary personality of the other. A thorough devotee of Kant and Rousseau, Schiller's William Tell was a masterpiece of humanitarianism, but has been constantly transformed into a cry for nationalism.¹⁰

Goethe's unfailing portrayal of the frustrated and defeated superman caused his works to be classed with the advocates of the genius-leader school, which is an injustice to his attempt to show the value of the individual as a world citizen as opposed to a tool of the nation.¹¹ It is unfortunate that the Storm and Stress period of both Schiller and Goethe had more influence on future generations than did their much

¹⁰Hans Kohn, The Mind of Germany, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), pp. 18-48.

¹¹Ibid.

longer period of universal idealism.

Contemporary to Goethe and Shiller, and without their universal bent toward idealism, was Kant's immediate successor, both in the chair at the University of Berlin and as the leading German philosopher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Fichte picked up the subjectivism of Kant and carried it to its extreme. He maintained that the Ego is the only ultimate reality, and that it exists only because it assumes that it exists. The non-Ego, which is the opposing force and subordinate to the Ego, exists only because the Ego assumes that a conflicting element exists. This Ego became, through channels of reasoning so peculiar to Fichte, the absolute of existence. This absolute Ego was, in turn, worked into being the essence of the German character, which thus made the German the absolute. Using this absolute, the German, Fichte developed his ideas to the premise that all Germans were superior to all other national peoples.¹² "To have character and to be a German", says Fichte, "undoubtedly mean the same thing."¹³

There is recognizable in the Egoes of Fichte, his interpretation of the "antinomies" of Kant, though, of course, they have undergone some evolution. Kant maintains there are four antinomies, or four sets of propositions, mutually contradictory, each of which can be proven by logic. Each set of antinomies consists of thesis and antithesis.¹⁴

¹²Reinhardt, op. cit., pp. 500-501.

¹³Johann Fichte, Addresses to the German Nation (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1922), p. 208.

¹⁴cf. Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907), p. 215 ff.

Fichte and Hegel both adopted Kant's opposing propositions without substantial change. Under Fichte the element of Ego grew into a kind of spiritual pantheism with a world-spirit directing all life and activity toward a final goal of perfection. On this basis Fichte worked out a whole philosophy of nationalistic statism, which had great influence upon later generations in Germany.

Fichte's idealistic views of the German character as the sublime being of creation and the most important revelation in the history of humanity may have been exaggerated for emphasis. If so, they achieved their goal, at least with Hegel.¹⁵

Fichte's position at the University of Berlin gave him the opportunity he needed to expand and preach his ideas. He proclaimed to his countrymen the ideal of a united and powerful Germany with a mission to carry to the civilized world. It should assume its place readily, therefore, as leader-nation.¹⁶

Fichte constantly stressed the necessity of adhering to a concept of moral law as the guiding principle of actions for individuals and nations. Here again we see Kant. But, he also demanded that the individual's desires should at all times be subordinated to the best interests of the nation, and this was very foreign to Kant. Fichte taught that the state should rule with an eye to justice and prosperity for all

¹⁵cf. Edward Caird, Hegel (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1883), pp. 5-8.

¹⁶Fichte, op. cit., p. 248.

its subjects. It should, therefore, regulate prices and insure to each individual his proportionate share of the national wealth.¹⁷ The state should be a self-contained economic unit and foreign trade should be carried on through the government since it was the indifference and selfishness of individuals that caused the downfall of strong states.¹⁸ In Fichte, then, we begin to see the seeds of state socialism.

Fichte's ultimate goal was the perfect state, which he felt could be achieved through the superior nature of the Germans. His belief in the perfect state was to be founded on the solid basis of a perfect people. In his increasingly bold praise of the German as the universal absolute, Fichte could see the essence of a sublime people. He felt that by proper training the German could fulfill his goal. In his Addresses to the German Nation he uses the phrase "national education" which is to create "a nation which first of all must have fulfilled the task of educating perfect human beings."¹⁹

William von Humboldt became Minister of Education before the death of Fichte and implanted within the system his own idea of idealistic humanism. Although Humboldt's educational reforms pleased Fichte, they were not intended for the creation of a great master race in the sense which Fichte had preached.²⁰

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 4-6.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 40 ff.

²⁰Reinhardt, op. cit., p. 439.

Fichte shared with Kant, Goethe, and Schiller the distinction of being much misinterpreted. The obscurity and objectivity, which was characteristic of Fichte's works, allowed his followers much leeway for variation, though he was in his own interpretation very positive and accepted only his own views of humanity and history's prophecy for humanity.

To place Fichte in the school of idealism is not difficult; he may equally be called romantic, nationalistic, or absolutistic. It is of little consequence that Fichte was unable to create his perfect state during his own life; his greatest importance is his legacy to the German nation. Paramount to history and other nations is the evolution of Kant's ideas through Fichte and on to other idealists and romantics. Especially was this influence seen in Fichte's successor as leading German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Hegel.

Hegel was much more the true disciple of Kant than was Fichte, though not slavishly. Although Hegel was younger than Fichte, it was Hegel's interpretation of Kant, culminating in the theory of the real as rational, rather than Kant himself, that Fichte used to justify his absolute political obedience. Generally, however, the debt seems to be balanced.

Hegel's philosophic process followed Kant so closely that he even accepted Kant's categories, which may explain the statement that to understand Hegel it is first necessary to read Kant.²¹ Hegel is considered

²¹Caird, op. cit., p. 11.

to be the most difficult to understand of all the great philosophers.²² It may be true that the maze of extravagant phraseology has in every case been misinterpreted. Nevertheless, it is the interpretation that is important. In spite of his obscurity, Hegel won a great number of adherents and through them exerted tremendous force upon later intellectual currents. Especially potent was his influence in Germany during the nineteenth century, the early stages of which he lived to enjoy.

Two things distinguish Hegel from his contemporaries and his predecessors: his logic and his dialectic. In his contradictory forces we readily find the influence of Kant. He did not begin with Kant, however; much of his foundation can be found in Rousseau. Hegel selects for special praise the distinction between the general will and the will of all that was invented by Rousseau. He says, "when the will wills rationally it is, ipso facto, not merely the individual will, it is then in itself the universal will".²³

Hegel follows Kant with his "Absolute Idea" and Fichte with the Absolute always being in conflict with its opposite. To the thesis and antithesis, Hegel added synthesis. Synthesis was the resulting product reached by evolution through the opposition of thesis and antithesis.²⁴

²²Russell, op. cit., p. 730.

²³Quoted in W. T. Stace, Philosophy of Hegel (Dover Publications, Inc., n. d.) p. 403.

²⁴G. F. W. Hegel, Fragments, tr. T. M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 260 ff.

He regarded the universe as in a condition of flux with everything tending to pass into its opposite. This process is repeated over and over again with each new creation representing an improvement in the state of civilization and the universe. But Hegel's conception of evolution was not just automatic. He believed the whole process to be guided by the universal reason of God. Evolution, he maintains, is the unfolding of God in history. In the introduction to the Philosophy of History, he states:

The only thought which philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of history is the simple conception of Reason; that Reason is the sovereign of the world; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process. This conviction and intuition is a hypothesis in the domain of history as such. In that of philosophy it is no hypothesis. It is there proved by speculative cognition, and Reason--and this term may here suffice us, without investigating the relation sustained by the universe to the Divine Being--is Substance, as well as Infinite Power; its own infinite material underlying all the natural and spiritual life which it originates, as also the Infinite Form, that which sets the material in motion. Reason is the Substance of the universe.²⁵

History, then, is the unfolding of the will of God; therefore, history discloses God's purpose to humanity.

The war of opposites, he argued, would ultimately lead to a beneficent goal. This goal he described as the perfect state, in which the interests of every citizen would be perfectly blended with the interests of Society. In fact, Hegel worshipped the state in a much more rapturous fashion than did any other idealist. He held that true liberty consists in subjection to political society, and that the individual has no rights which the state is bound to respect; for without the state the

²⁵G. W. F. Hegel, Philosophy of History (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1906), p. 9.

individual would be nothing but animal. There is no softening of his statement, "The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth".²⁶

The most noticeable object of Hegel's political philosophy is also an adoption from Rousseau. He borrowed the word freedom, and along with the word he took the misuse that Rousseau had attributed to it. This most peculiar brand of freedom arises from his belief that there is no freedom without law. He says:

In the history of the World, only those peoples can come under our notice which form a state. For it must be understood that this latter is the realization of Freedom, i.e. of the absolute final aim, and that it exists for its own sake. It must further be understood that all the worth which the human being possesses--all spiritual reality, he possesses only through the State We have in it, therefore, the object of History in a more definite shape than before; that in which Freedom obtains objectivity, and lives in the enjoyment of this objectivity. For Law is the objectivity of Spirit; volition in its true form. Only that will which obeys law, is free; for it obeys itself--it is independent and so free.²⁷

Freedom, then, seems merely to be the right to obey the law.

There is nothing liberal in the doctrine of Hegel; freedom is the right of the state, and any recipient is qualified only so far as the state feels the individual deserves his freedom. It is not odd that Hegel feels that life is not made for happiness; rather, life is for achievement. "The history of the world is not the theatre of happiness"; he says, "periods of happiness are blank pages in it, for they

²⁶ Ibid., p. 87.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 39.

are periods of harmony".²⁸ It can be no other way since all is determined by contradiction. Contradiction is conflict, and conflict is not peace and happiness. Here we see the hint to those who follow that in order to have happiness with the inevitable conflict he predicts, they will have to identify war with happiness and make it noble. It is a very easy step with dialectic.

Like Fichte, Hegel called for a hero to bring unity and greatness upon the German nation. He never failed in his admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte.²⁹ Germany, too, needed a great personality to lead them to their rightful position as leaders of the world. Destiny would provide the leader with all the required traits. Hegel said:

Such individuals had no consciousness of the general Idea they were unfolding; . . . but they had an insight into the requirements of the time--what was ripe for development. This was the very Truth for their age, for their world; the species next in order, so to speak, and which was already formed in the womb of time.³⁰

This genius was confirmation of the direction of the Absolute Idea which transcends the limitations of the individual while holding steady to the universal harmony of all things.

In his later years Hegel became increasingly more conservative, denouncing the radicals as dreamers and proclaiming the Prussian the latest expression of his Absolute. The gift of this great prophet was

²⁸Ibid., p. 26.

²⁹Kohn, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

³⁰Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 30.

that he taught Germany how to feel, think and dream.

Romanticism

Notwithstanding the vigor of the idealists in art, the force of the romantic influence began to dominate the channels of literature and philosophy. Not to be denied, romanticism quickly supplanted idealism at its first weakening in order to have its day before the coming nationalism.

Inherent in romanticism was the glorification of the instincts and emotions as opposed to a worship of the intellect. Perhaps the most notable difference between the ideologies of romanticism and idealism is in the sentimental nature of romanticism. Included in romanticism were such elements as a deep veneration for nature, a contempt for formalism, a sentimental love for humble folk, and often a flaming zeal to remake the world.

After the beginning of the nineteenth century romanticism flourished, attaining the zenith of its growth just before the middle of the century. It was not confined to literature but was, as well, a vital force in painting and music. Romanticism still had to compete in some fields with idealism, especially in the early stages of the movement, but it was by far the more vigorous literary and artistic influence in the mid-1800's.

The romantic movement appealed to a greater portion of the population than had ever been reached by idealism. Caught in the fast moving events and excited by the growing nationalism, the emotional Germans longed above all to know themselves, to know their own past and

their mission in the world. Imbued with the idea of their mission preached by the idealists, they cherished the bonds of home and the age-old customs of their own people. Along with growth of a feeling of cultural importance for their nation, romanticism taught them to believe in the unique, to doubt the absolute, and to question the finality of conceptual knowledge and a definite system of rules and laws.

Romanticism had a tendency to be hostile to reason and science. The adoration of nature, the old, the grand, and especially the medieval were features of romanticism especially pleasing to its German adherents. Protestantism, lack of national unity, entrenched feudalism and enduring vestiges of the Middle Ages may have affected the ascendancy of romanticism in Germany. Whatever the cause, Germany was always more susceptible to romanticism than any other country, and led in providing a governmental outlet for the anti-rational philosophy of naked will.³¹ In practical politics, romanticism is most important as an ally of nationalism.

Romanticism served to pull together many of the tenets of the coming nationalism. Belief in the power of the soul and spirit, as it appears in religion and among the people, in tradition and an affinity with the soil and in personal worth and genius were all part of the growing organism. A movement so diverse could produce any kind of thesis and antithesis: an attitude entirely unpolitical, turned away from the world and its doings, dedicated to the reflective and metaphysical, and the exact opposite of this--a pronounced nationalism rooted in a people

³¹ Russell, op. cit., pp. 678-679.

inspired by history.³²

Some of the leading personalities of the romantic movement were odd to the point of being fanatics, others seem to have merely been nationalistic, willing to accept the concept that the means justifies the end. This intensity may have had much to do with their ability to fire the people to a point of higher emotionalism than idealism had ever attained.

Common to all ages, there was the tendency of many writers and thinkers to take their cue from the dominant political trend, which in this period was relatively conservative. Romanticism reconciled, in the minds of its adherents, the great contradiction of individuality and strong rule.

One of the most complete romantics, albeit an ultra-pessimist, was Arthur Schopenhauer. The middle class seeking to find a channel of expression was defeated on every hand. The educated middle class soon began to look upon the ideals of human well-being and freedom as absurd. The reactionary suspicion begot the usual attitudes of resignation or pessimism. Schopenhauer is the embodiment of this pessimism. His philosophy supplied the appropriate interpretation for the middle class. In his philosophy, irrational forces triumphed over the reasonable and the good.³³

Schopenhauer, like Nietzsche, is in many ways peculiar among philosophers. Unlike Kant, Fichte and Hegel, he dislikes Christianity,

³² Reinhardt, op. cit., p. 468 ff.

³³ cf Valentin, op. cit., p. 439.

preferring both Hinduism and Buddhism. A man of wide-ranging interests, he is usually free from nationalism. Schopenhauer does not maintain the scholarly tone of Kant and Hegel; yet, as a professor, he was not completely anti-academic. His special appeal was less to the professional philosophers than to the literary and artistic realms.³⁴

Schopenhauer begins the emphasis upon Will which is characteristic of much nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy. Going out of his way to antagonize the university teachers, he is especially acid toward Hegel. "I cannot see", says Schopenhauer, "that between Kant and myself anything has been done in philosophy."³⁵ What is this philosophy that was second only to Kant's? It is Will. Schopenhauer leaves no doubts as to the interpretation he wishes to follow in his writing. He is emphatic:

I hold this thought--that the world is will--to be that which has long been sought for under the name of philosophy, and the discovery of which is therefore regarded, by those who are familiar with history, as quite as impossible as the discovery of the philosopher's stone.³⁶

Will, then, is the essence of man, the essence of life in all its forms, and even of inanimate matter. It is the long-sought-after "thing-in-itself"--the ultimate inner reality and secret of all things, and force is a form of this will.³⁷ The will, of course, is a will to live, and a

³⁴Russell, op. cit., p. 751.

³⁵Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will Idea (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, Ltd., 1907-1909), Vol. II, p. 5.

³⁶Ibid., Vol. I, p. vii.

³⁷Ibid., Vol. I, p. 144.

will to maximum life. The eternal enemy of the will to live must be death. Like Hegel and Fichte, Schopenhauer has opposing forces.³⁸

Schopenhauer's will, as a whole, is free, because it is the only will; therefore, there is no higher will to limit it. Freedom is involuntarily subject to control, " . . . each part of the Universal Will --each species, each organism, each organ--is irrevocably determined by the whole".³⁹

Schopenhauer's will is not a benevolent will. It leads the strong to devour the weak. Selfishness, pain, and misery are inseparable from life, and therefore, the only road to happiness for him consists in complete denial of life, or as much of it as is possible. Finally, and above all, life is evil because life is war. Everywhere in nature we see strife, competition, conflict, and a suicidal alternation of victory and defeat. Every species fights for the matter, space, and time of the others. " . . . even the human race . . . reveals in itself with most terrible distinctness this conflict, this variance of the will with itself; and we find homo homini lupus (Man is a wolf to man)."⁴⁰

Perhaps the most important legacy Schopenhauer left to the German people is his preaching anew the ennobling worship of heroes. On genius he writes: "genius holds up to us the magic glass in which all that is

³⁸ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 192.

³⁹ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 147.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 191.

essential and significant appears to us collected and placed in the clearest light, and what is accidental and foreign is left out".⁴¹ Schopenhauer's views on genius are virtually a restatement of Hegel's "Absolute Idea". However, regardless of his dislike for the latter, he gives to Hegel's genius the ability of the personality to wield some control over the exercise of his unusual power. Schopenhauer says:

Genius is simply the completest objectivity,--i.e., the objective tendency of the mind Genius is the power of leaving one's own interests, wishes and aims entirely out of sight, of entirely renouncing one's own personality for a time, so as to remain pure knowing subject, clear vision of the world /results/. . . .⁴²

In his lifetime, Schopenhauer remained virtually unheard and unheard due to the ascendancy of Hegel. In the succeeding generation, however, his philosophy displaced Hegel's and all faith in world reason. In spite of all its material successes and greater opportunity, the educated German middle class took Schopenhauer's depressing philosophy of fate.⁴³ Schopenhauer's "naked will" became a cry for all the nation supporting their willingness to impose their culture upon others. Schopenhauer gave a new emphasis to Kant's and Hegel's freedom of will, limited by the function of the whole. His will, and his views on war and heroes, were left for others to develop in their own way.

In attempting to judge the importance of literary romanticism as

⁴¹Ibid., Vol. I, p. 321.

⁴²Ibid., Vol. I, p. 240.

⁴³Cf. Konrad Heiden, Der Fuehrer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1944), p. 223.

a factor of national progress, it should be noted that there are many limitations. The disdain for reason and scientific analysis by even the most moderate of the romantics was certainly a serious handicap. The exaggerated emotionalism occasionally made a mockery of some of the most laudable intentions. Excesses of sentimentality are not easily controlled. To allow free reign to the emotions in one direction is to run the risk of an impairment of judgment in others. It was, perhaps, for this reason also that the liberalism of such a great number of the romantics eventually gave way to nationalism, as in the case of Joseph von Eichhorn and Savigny. Being both political philosophers and law teachers, they set out to prove that the laws of the state were cultural. They sought to restore Roman Law through the romantic process of presenting law as firmly rooted in the folk spirit of German history.

One of the most important religious writers of the romantic movement was the Lutheran Reformist, Friedrich Schleiermacher. An eminent theologian in his time, using feeling as the basis for moral law, his writings attempted to reconcile religion with the demands of a strong state.⁴⁴

As romanticism became more infused with nationalism in the minds of certain personalities, it adopted increasingly varied connotations which added to its characteristic of diversity. Schopenhauer, one of the giants of the romantic movement, was a fervent admirer of Napoleon. Ernest Moritz Arndt, who was as strong in the field of literature as Schopenhauer

⁴⁴Valentin, op. cit., pp. 341, 378.

was in philosophy, was an avid hater of Bonaparte and made him the center of much of his nationalistically inclined poetry. Arndt was the voice of the lower class and knew how to express the need of the Germans, their dreams and their faith, in words that they understood. His appeal to the lower and middle classes gave him a vast influence over public opinion.

In union with Heinrich von Treitschke, the Pan-Prussian historian, Arndt found that history proved the ascendancy of the Germans inevitable because of their common descent and common language. Unlike in other nations, the German language had been passed down without being adulterated by conquerors; instead, the dominant nature of the German had caused its spread in pure form.⁴⁵ The highest form of religion, according to Arndt, was the love for the fatherland, a love that was stronger than the love for laws, rulers, parents, wives or children. In Arndt we find the beginnings of the nationalism that is founded upon a hatred of anything foreign or non-German. Again we see language as the basis for differentiation between what is German and what is alien. Language was the basis of culture, for Arndt, and culture determined the nation. Only through the state can the full inherited greatness of a people be attained. He felt that all great things which a man does, forms, thinks, and invents, as a hero, an artist or a lawgiver must come from the nation.⁴⁶ To Arndt, love for the romantic beauty of the German cultural heritage was more than a political belief. In him we can find the signs of nationalism

⁴⁵Kohn, op. cit., pp. 75-80.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 77.

that is to become a religion which displaces any other loyalties.

Government was not based on any new concepts for Arndt; like all else, history demonstrated that the German people were, by culture and heritage, monarchical. Further, any attempts to set up representative types of government had resulted in a reversion to monarchy due to a national preference for monarchy.⁴⁷

Arndt was able to carry in his philosophy a belief in universalism. Although it would seem utterly contradictory to such a strongly nationalistic person, Arndt was true to his own doctrines. His universalism was strictly a German universalism. God had given to the supreme being, the German, the whole world. The will of God would assert itself by making the greatest world-nation conceivable a German reality.⁴⁸

Concurring with Arndt, Treitschke took the purity of race and language as basis for his mixture of romanticism and nationalism. Their difference lay in the fact that Treitschke had a love that was as strong or superior to that for the whole German state--Prussia. Strongly anti-semitic and anti-socialistic, his two contemporaries, Marx and Lassalle, may have contributed to his animosity. The romantic Treitschke, who idolized the state, felt that government should be organized to diffuse the national civilization of the aristocratic ruling class. Although he coined the phrase "national liberals", the amount of liberalism he really

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 79.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 80.

felt seems to have been minute.⁴⁹

Fundamentally a worshipper of everything Prussian, Treitschke shows the romantic belief in the superiority of the German race and mission to the world. His romantic bent led him to find a basis for all his doctrines in history, and he claims history not only demonstrates German predominance, but that Prussia will be the leading element in unifying Germany so that she may fulfill her mission.

For Treitschke only monarchical power afforded adequate scope for human development. Only the mighty state could offer proper protection for the flowering of culture and intellectual life.

Treitschke demanded not liberty from the state, but liberty in the state, limited only by the aims of the state. He says: ". . . what thrills us . . . even more in the Ordensland than its romantic charm, is the profound doctrine of the supreme value of the State, and of civic subordination to the purposes of the State"⁵⁰ History had also revealed to him that the German, as Hegel had contended was strong and capable of ruling; for "Kindliness . . . is wrongfully declared to be an essential virtue of the Germans".⁵¹ He was so sure of the powerful, harsh vitality of the German, that in comparison he felt that Bismarck's boast of iron and blood was shallow Junkerdom.⁵² Treitschke is able to

⁴⁹Heinrich von Treitschke, Origins of Prussianism, (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1942), p. 8.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 21.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 22.

⁵²See Kohn, op. cit., p. 147.

declare as glorious and uplifting the war in which Hegel could find neither happiness nor anything noble. He felt he had proven positively the indestructible and blissful necessity of war. He could even justify it with history. He states: "In the unhappy clash between races inspired by fierce mutual enmity, the blood-stained savagery of a quick war of annihilation is more humane, less revolting, than the specious clemency of sloth;" ⁵³

A contemporary of Treitschke who was able to accomplish far more in the way of practical politics was Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. Founder of the Turnerschaft, physical education was only one product of Jahn's ideas. In accord with Arndt and Treitschke, Jahn found the basis for his romantic views in history. His personality included much that was idealistic. He set up a new ideal in language, morals, manners, and the concept of the duties of the state. ⁵⁴

The Turnerschaft was consciously German and strove to inspire within the youth loyalty to the nation which was to be created by the willpower, discipline, unity and vigilant watchfulness of the members.

The philosophy of Fichte, and the educational theories of Humboldt, were to become a reality in the Turnerschaft of Jahn. The soul of the gymnastic society was the cultural spirit itself and was to build the German in his true tradition without the adulteration of soft and cosmopolitan life brought about by the growth of city life. The gymnastic

⁵³Treitschke, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

⁵⁴Valentin, op. cit., p. 346.

movement did not attempt to hide its desire to shape a potentially potent military force which was to fight to carry out the mission of the German nation.

The romanticists regarded music in a somewhat different light than had been true under the idealists. Its essential nature was no longer beauty, but mainly the expression of man's inner moods. It must not just please but must stir a sympathetic vibration in the listener. The masters of music were well able to accomplish this excitement of the listener. To a great extent, the romantic composers, as in the other fields of the arts, responded to the exciting political drama about them. They were particularly successful in fanning the mounting flames of nationalism within the music-loving German. It was Franz Schubert, under the influence of romanticism, who created the German Lied, which Wagner was to transform into the very essence of nationalism.

The outstanding musical figure of the late nineteenth century was the strongly racialistic Richard Wagner. The romantic movement in German music reached its culminating point in Wagner, who made Bayreuth a center for nationalistic intellectuals. Wagner concurred with the romanticists in their high regard for philosophy, mythology, and religion. Like them, he was in love with the German past and intensely interested in the national destiny of the fatherland as the natural conclusion to their cultural fertility. Wagner partly continued and partly initiated a number of beliefs associated with his Music-Drama, which were derived from his love of history, contemporaries and personal bias.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Leon Stein, The Racial Thinking of Richard Wagner (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1950), p. viii.

In Wagner a rebelliousness was turned into a driving force in the behalf of the German tradition. Much under the influence of Schopenhauer's writings, Wagner was able to spread the philosophy of the romantic pessimist to the listening world as well as the literary and professional realms.⁵⁶ Wagner's lust for power, closely akin to Nietzsche's ideas, made him the perfect medium for transmitting the more nationalistic doctrines of romanticism.

Wagner, drawing, perhaps, from his friend Gobineau, gave the first strong impetus to the doctrine of race in Germany. The philosophy of race mingled linguistic, ethnical, and sociological factors with a hatred that was in close accord with the teachings of romanticism and idealism. Wagner was to use the romantic teachings with a deliberate purpose.⁵⁷

The romantic sense of life, so much a part of his early years, matured with the romance of battle and the atmosphere of class struggle that accompanied the founding of nationalism. Wagner and his followers began to apply their efforts beyond the musical world. They constituted a school of rigid dogma, a propaganda group, in Bayreuth, and they developed into a coterie of prophets who labored untiringly as agitators. Wagner's following, at first no more than a fanatical sect, consisted of academicians, artists and critics. Their influence soon extended itself into virtually a political and social community. Wagner, his followers

⁵⁶Richard Wagner, Letters of Richard Wagner, ed. Wilhelm Altmann (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1936), Vol. II, p. 107.

⁵⁷Stein, op. cit., p. xi, 143.

and his work, became a nationalistic organ with only the traces of romanticism bent on sowing the seeds of anti-Semitism.⁵⁸

The most portent-laden legacy of Wagner was the thorough founding of the anti-Semitism that became the focal point of most Germany nationalists. It is in Wagner's late writings that we begin to see the Jew blamed for any form of degradation and decay that had taken place in Germany. This doctrine was quickly seized by his body of followers and spread throughout the nation, growing in intensity along with the increasing nationalism.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 118. See also The Letters of Richard Wagner, Vol. I, pp. 237, 251.

⁵⁹ Richard Wagner, My Life (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1936), pp. 564-565, 600.

CHAPTER III

REFLECTIONS OF IDEALISM AND ROMANTICISM IN NATIONALISM

As we have seen the German people first became aware of itself as a nation with a uniquely German mind and soul from the ideals proclaimed by the romanticists and idealists. Through each medium of expression ran the influence of these forces. There were a few cases of advocates of universal concepts; but as idealism and romanticism progressed, their followers increasingly satisfied themselves with the smaller unit of the nation. The feeling of a consciousness of nationhood may arise because of many different factors. In most cases the factors which weld diverse groups together are a common history and common aspirations for the future of the unit, both of which were ends of romanticism and idealism. In addition, a feeling of particular oneness may be the result of peculiarities of race, language, religion, culture, or economy and, no doubt, many other factors. Although nationalism in proper amounts is often a beneficent force, particularly in those instances when it takes the form of struggles for liberty, more often it is a force so intense that it leads to destruction. To build such a force is to run the risk of over-creation and explosion. It is one of the major factors of influence found in jingoism, militarism, and in ambitions to conquer and dominate. All too often the leading personalities or groups recognize

the potential impact of such patriotism and gamble upon their ability to ride the crest to power. The inherent danger of such a gamble is usually accepted.

The extremes to which the idealistic and romantic philosophies were carried by some of their more original thinkers allowed every fanatic to find some doctrine to which he could consent. As the heat of nationalism became more intense, the extremism of the zealots found its element. From a vague sentiment during the mid-century decades, it grew into a force stronger than religion.¹

Co-existent with democracy and liberalism, militant nationalism was more powerful than either in Germany and frequently thwarted or stifled both. German nationalism had developed into an aggressive movement for the right of its people, united by cultural and ethnic ties, to determine its own destinies. Its more extreme manifestations were exemplified by a frenzied worship of political power and a slavish devotion to doctrines of racial superiority strongly bolstered by illusions of national worth. German nationalism took the character of "Germany over all", whether right or wrong. In most minds, however, there was no doubt that it was wholly right.

We have looked briefly at the major personalities of the romantic and idealistic movements that led to the glorification and cultural unity of the German people. We will now look at the leaders of the nationalistic movement, leaders who embodied the principles of one or the other,

¹Valentin, op. cit., p. 363.

or both, of the schools of romanticism and idealism.

Perhaps the most unique doctrine of consequence in the German scene after 1850 comes from Friedrich Nietzsche. To put Nietzsche among either the romantics or the nationalists would have incurred his wrath. He denounced both often and with fervor. This seems to have been his way of covering up his debts, for he was accustomed to denouncing those who most influenced him. His outlook of aristocratic anarchism is very similar to both romanticism and nationalism. He follows many of them in his attempts to maintain an equilibrium while preaching ruthlessness, war, and aristocratic pride, and at the same time glorifying philosophy, literature, and the arts.² Nevertheless, Nietzsche is the perfect example of both romanticism and idealism, having within his works most of the wide-ranging elements of both. He exemplifies both schools carried to their ultimate, and whether or not he intended to ally himself to nationalism, the resulting philosophy became the tool of German nationalists.

The most important influences on Nietzsche's ideas, which he often seems to have merely reshaped, were Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Gobineau. The first two he acknowledged with a volume of his writing.

The cardinal idea of most of Nietzsche's work is the notion of natural selection. He felt men should harden themselves against feeling pity for the "botched weak". "The most spiritual men, as the strongest, find their happiness where others would find their destruction",

²Russell, op. cit., p. 761.

Nietzsche writes, "in the labyrinth, in hardness against themselves and others, in experiments: their joy is self-conquest; asceticism becomes in them nature, need and instinct They are the most venerable kind of man; that does not preclude their being the most cheerful and kindest."³ Natural selection may prove too slow, and Nietzsche has no objection to the state helping rid itself of those that are not excellent stock.⁴ He believed that such a weeding out of the unfit would eventually produce a race of supermen--not merely a race of physical giants, but men distinguished above all for their moral courage and their strength of character. Those who should be allowed to perish in nature's struggle are the moral weaklings, the ineffective and craven ones, who have neither the strength nor the courage to battle nobly for a place in the sun.⁵

The reason, according to Nietzsche, for the diluted state of the human race is Christianity. Christianity is "more harmful than any vice" because it sympathizes with the weak instead of the higher type of man.

He states:

The fact that the strong races of Northern Europe did not repudiate the Christian God, certainly does not do any credit to their religious power, not to speak of their taste. They ought to have been able successfully to cope with such a morbid and decrepit offshoot of decadence. And a curse lies on their heads; because they were unable to cope with him: they made illness, decrepitude and contradiction a part

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, The Complete Works, ed., O. Levy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), Vol. XVI, pp. 218-219.

⁴Ibid., p. 132.

⁵Ibid., p. 144.

of all their instincts,--since then they have not created any other God! Two thousand years have passed and not a single new God! But still there exists, and as if by right,--like an ultimum and maximum of god-creating power,--the creator spiritus in man, this miserable God of Christian monotonotheism! This hybrid creature of decay, monotony, concept and contradiction, in which all the instincts of decadence, all the cowardices and languors of the soul find their sanction!--⁶

This plague of religion would have to be removed before the laws of natural selection could be allowed to work.

In Nietzsche can be found traces of the anti-Semitism that was so strong in his friend Wagner. Nietzsche, however, was no more the anti-Semite than he was the anti-Christian. The Jew was at fault only because he had brought Christianity upon the earth in an effort to gain revenge upon other races. This connection of the two religions demanded that the moral supremacy of Christianity and Judaism should be overthrown. Both of these religions, he alleged, were Oriental cults glorifying the virtues of slaves and other downtrodden folk. They exalted into virtues qualities which ought to be considered vices--humility, nonresistance, mortification of the flesh, and pity for the weak and incompetent.⁷ By supporting these qualities the state prevents the elimination of the unfit and preserves them to pour degenerate blood into the veins of the race.

After the hindrance of religion is removed, the way is clear for the creation of the "Superman". Nietzsche's superman displays his debt

⁶Ibid., p. 146.

⁷Ibid., Vol. XII, p. 117.

to his predecessors, whether or not he admitted the debt. Schopenhauer's genius, Schiller's Karl Moor, Goethe's Gotz, and Wagner's Siegfried seem to all be put into the one Zarathustra. Less clear, but equally similar, are the "Absolute" of Kant, the "Absolute Ego" of Fichte and the "Absolute Idea" of Hegel. Nietzsche pays his tribute to the great Kant in a manner other than just imitation. He takes it for granted in his The Will to Power that Kant is considered the basis of philosophy of consequence.⁸

Nietzsche's superman or "blond beast" is found in his work Thus Spake Zarathustra, a work full of portent and prophecy, however much misinterpreted. This man that Nietzsche calls forth as his new God, his disciples tried to bring to reality upon the earth. In this epic Nietzsche says: "Dead are all Gods; now do we desire the superman to live"⁹ He goes on to give the characteristics that this new God most admires. Nietzsche writes: "I teach you superman. Man is a something that shall be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass him? What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal: What can be loved in man is that he is a transition and a destruction."¹⁰ And what does this superman think should be the feelings of the great men? He says:

I love those who do not know how to live except in perishing, for they are those going beyond.

⁸Ibid, Vol. XIV, p. 3.

⁹Ibid., Vol. XI, p. 91.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 6.

I love the great despisers because they are the great adorers, they are arrows of longing for the other shore.

I love those who do not seek beyond the stars for a reason to perish and be sacrificed, but who sacrifice themselves to earth in order that earth may some day become superman's¹¹

This superman became so important to Nietzsche that all of his writings centered around this theme. It is not difficult to follow in Nietzsche much of the evil that characterized Schopenhauer's world. Unlike Schopenhauer, Nietzsche felt that there was ample reason to expect the best and he could not resign himself to a doctrine of fate. This may be all the more reason why his doctrines were more potent; they offered hope.

The impact of Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas was like that of an earthquake. Their effect increased steadily as the decades passed. A whole generation of young Germans learned from him how to feel, to think, and to write. In Nietzsche, more than any other single German philosopher, we see the preparation of the nihilism in which the beast of prey was to triumph over the morality of the Christianized Western civilization.¹²

It is only logical that Nietzsche, who followed Schopenhauer so closely, should feel that monarchy is the highest form of government. Democracy, as an outcome of Christianity, was the very acme of corruption. His hate for democracy, like that for the Jewish ideology, was

¹¹Ibid., pp. 9-12.

¹²William Ebenstein, Man and the State (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1947), p. 263 ff.

because it had brought about the destruction of the aristocratic loyalty and friendship that can be found only in the ruling class. In democracy "resentful" little men whose "souls squint" were the slaves ruling the masters.¹³ Nietzsche's views are characteristic of the romanticist and nationalist position toward democracy--a conception prevalent with members of a society that has had no experience in democracy. Concerning democracy he says:

Parliaments may be very useful to a strong and versatile statesman; he has something there to rely upon (every such thing must, however, be able to resist!)--upon which he can throw a great deal of responsibility. On the whole, however, I could wish that the counting mania and the superstitious belief in majorities were not established in Germany, as with the Latin races, and that one could finally invent something new even in politics! It is senseless and dangerous to let the custom of universal suffrage--which is still but a short time under cultivation, and could easily be uprooted--take a deeper root: whilst, of course, its introduction was merely an expedient to steer clear of temporary difficulties.¹⁴

In this we see much of what was basic to Nietzsche. He was disgusted with all men, who had degenerated into craven nonentities, incapable of anything worthy of respect. Democracy was a sham brought on as a result of the complete lack of a leader with sufficient genius to master the art of ruling. Nietzsche distrusted the conventional monarchies because everywhere they were floundering. He wanted strong rulers, aristocratic geniuses with new innovations to show the world. Nietzsche's society would be a society of Gods where Zarathustra would have colleagues

¹³ Nietzsche, op. cit., Vol. XIII, p. 37.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 223.

of his own stature (and Nietzsche too).¹⁵ The fact that Nietzsche wanted to create something new was the call for those who were willing to try. He called for a man willing to go against all conventions and become Zarathustra. The offerings which Nietzsche made for new creation were so radical that it is hard to determine whether they were more creative or destructive. His bent for exaggeration was mistaken for sincerity by many and the resulting chaos was definitely destructive.

Nietzsche's opposition to conventions was able to make a vast impression. Much of its force lies in its unprecedented passion. When he attacked, nothing survived. He was equally relentless whether serious or ironical. The rising generation of that period could never forget, especially when oppression or confusion were ripe, what Nietzsche had said--about university professors, the organs of the state, the churches, and democratic-Christian forms of life. They remembered his opening statements in the Antichrist: "What is good?--All that enhances the feeling of power, the Will to Power, and power itself in man. What is bad?--All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness?--The feeling that power is increasing,--that resistance has been over-come."¹⁶

Saint to his followers, heretic to his enemies, the ultimate prey of literal interpretation, overwhelmed with horror of the rising masses and their brutal instincts, he fled the world to isolation and insanity.

¹⁵Ibid., Vol. XI, pp. 60, 94, 104.

¹⁶Ibid., Vol. XVI, p. 128.

Nietzsche supplied his hated mass with the very tools with which to tear down the whole heritage of idealistic and humanitarian views of the world which had been the basis of all German culture up to this time. Unwittingly, and certainly against his will, he fostered the passions of militarism, nationalism, and left the creation of his superman to other men.

One of the strangest advocates of the German people as the superior peoples of the world was the English born Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Naturalized a German citizen at the age of twenty-seven, he became a confidant of Wilhelm II and a strong nationalist supporter.

As with Treitschke and Wagner, Chamberlain found the key to history and civilization in the racial heritage. In fact, "the importance of each nation as a living power is dependent upon the proportion of genuinely Teutonic blood in its population True history begins at the moment when the Teuton, with his masterful hand, lays grip upon the legacy of antiquity".¹⁷ The strongly anti-Semitic racial doctrines of Chamberlain were odd and baseless; however, their acceptance by the German people was no more difficult than the acceptance of much else that nationalism brought to them. Unable to deny Christ, Chamberlain set out to prove that Jesus was not a Jew.¹⁸ Chamberlain has been accused of taking his view from his father-in-law, Richard Wagner, and

¹⁷Houston Chamberlain, Foundations of the Nineteenth Century (New York: J. M. Dent and Company, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott Company, 1960), p. 33.

¹⁸Ibid., Intro. pp. vi-vii, p. 491.

merely exploiting the theory.¹⁹

Taking his cue from Nietzsche, who used the term first, Chamberlain firmly implants in the German vocabulary the term non-Aryan. Though somewhat indefinite, he determined that Jesus was Aryan.²⁰ Although not willing to admit his inspiration, it appears evident that much that came from the pen of Chamberlain could be found in Nietzsche. Kant, about whom Chamberlain wrote a book, bequeathed to him the practice of backing all his arguments with history, however false.

Not satisfied to have revealed that the Jew was adulterating the blood of the Teuton, Chamberlain worked out a program to purify the race. His plan consisted essentially of the four points. First, good material must be available for the race to be created. Second, the best material must be sought-out from the bulk of the population. Third, this material must be prevented from adulterating itself by mixed breeding with inferior blood. The final step, very unlike Nietzsche, was not to attain pure blood. He did not want inferior blood, but he did not want pure blood. For Chamberlain, the superman quality could be attained only by mixed breeding, controlled and selected from superior bloods. Chamberlain even felt that the proper mixture was very nearly attained in the Prussian.²¹

¹⁹Ibid., pp. vi-vii. See also Stein, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

²⁰Ibid., p. 254.

²¹Heiden, op. cit., p. 236.

It is not surprising that so many of the notable personalities of the romantic-tinted nationalism should have been historians. The university was the center for dissemination for the culture and political thought in Germany. As the rise of nationalism gained momentum, Leopold von Ranke, one of Germany's greatest historians, began to give the movement support. For Ranke, the state was a living thing, a growing organism as it was for Fichte. As with Hegel, Ranke's state was "Supreme", and could not be a member of a large international unit. Ranke says the state is not a

. . . subdivision of something more general, but a living thing, an individual, a unique self The position of the state in the world depends on the degree of independence it has attained. It is obliged therefore to organize all its internal resources for the purpose of self preservation. This is the supreme law of the state.²²

Each state, then, must grow in its own unique way, to its own end.

Much of Ranke's colleague Treitschke's views are very evident in his theory of history and history's prophecies for the state. And both Hegel and Fichte had preached that individual rights can come only after the welfare of the state. To Ranke, domestic cares were too trivial and burdensome for the effective state to be disturbed.

Ranke's philosophy was characteristic of the nationalistic period in that it was anti-Western. He wanted a strong centralized government that would not be bothered with the duty of vying for the favor of internal divisions. His theory of a dictatorial government "relegates

²²Leopold von Ranke, Dialogue on Politics (New York: John Lane Company, 1913-14), p. 12.

politics to the field of power and of foreign affairs where it belongs".²³

Following the First World War, which the Germans failed to accept as defeat, nationalism's anti-Western tendencies were intensified. The policy of blaming others for their problems could not cure the depression or stabilize the crumbling republic. As conditions grew worse, new elements and groups of unrest began to spring up throughout Germany. Romanticism and Idealism were to be seen in the philosophies of many of these nationalistic bodies of reaction. Some of these organizations merged; some died a natural death. One of those that merged with other small groups and lingered until it could find strength was the National Socialist Party.

²³Ibid., p. 6.

CHAPTER IV

NATIONAL SOCIALISM AS ONE END PRODUCT OF NATIONALISM

In line with the precedents of German cultural history, the National Socialist Party was to arise from traditional impulses. From the main currents of the Storm and Stress, idealism and romanticism, evolved such attitudes as the social-revolutionary, liberal and conservative. Aside from the ideals of culture, the shift of social classes, brought about by industrialization, was to play a major role in the rise of parties. The position taken by the German people toward the heritage of romanticism and idealism and their part in the rise of nationalism was influenced by section, social strata, and individual interests. The wide influence of the class motive among the various schools was due, in some respect, to the anti-revolutionary attitude of German nationalism.¹

The philosophies of liberalism and nationalism had sprung from the same fertile minds, but inevitably pulled in different directions. The more liberalism was disappointed by the reactionary attitudes of political powers, the more radical it was to become. Nationalism opposed everything foreign and credited all evils to Jews, revolutionaries, and universalists, thereby tending to remain anti-revolutionary.

The development of nationalism had entrenched several important

¹cf. Kohn, op. cit., p. 277 ff.

elements into the political philosophy of Germany. Those that correspond very closely to the idealistic and romantic heritage were particularly important since they could easily become an asset to the most practical power seekers. The National Socialist Party was to incorporate most of these tenets. Some of the general principles that mark the National Socialist thought will be examined before attempting to show in more detail their correlation to the romantic and idealistic movements.

The totalitarian or authoritarian concepts that came to bear important impact on elements in the theory of the National Socialist Party were chiefly centered around the theme of the sovereignty of the state. The state incorporates every interest and every loyalty of its members. Since the state can get nowhere unless its members identify themselves with a common purpose, there can be only one party, one press, one education.² The citizen has no rights but simply duties. What nations need is not liberty, but work, order, prosperity. The state should be governed by an elite, which has demonstrated its right to rule by its strength and by its superior understanding of the national ideals.³

The general principles of militarism and nationalism were important for their appeal to fringe areas allowing any person with pride in the nation to find a place within the party. The nation is the highest form

²Frederick L. Schuman, The Nazi Dictatorship (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 244.

³Ibid., p. 267.

of society ever evolved by the human race. It has a life and a soul of its own, apart from the lives and the souls of the individuals who compose it. Internationalism is a gross perversion of human progress. Nations which do not expand eventually wither and die. War exalts and ennobles man and regenerates sluggish and decadent peoples. The nation must be made strong and great through self sufficiency, a powerful army, and a rapidly increasing birth rate.⁴

Cultural and traditional background played a strong role in the philosophy and practice of the party. The nation could not accept the materialistic interpretation of history. The nation, through its leaders, could become anything it willed to become; its fate was not sealed by geographic position. A nation had a right to acquire "elbow room". Reason can never be an adequate instrument for the solution of great national problems. Intellect needs to be supplemented by mystic faith, by self-sacrifice, and by worship of heroism and strength. The German spirit is Will, not intellect.⁵

Before any dissection of the policies of the National Socialist Party is made we should determine where the policies originated. They came from Adolf Hitler. His philosophy and interpretation of history can be found in his book Mein Kampf. Although Hitler's policies deviated in a few cases from those in his book (notably in regard to

⁴Ibid., p. 340.

⁵The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, Apr. 1922-Aug. 1939, ed. Norman Baynes (Oxford University Press, 1942), Vol. I, p. 903-905, Vol. II, p. 1551.

conflict with the Church), there appears to be little reason to doubt that they were his sincere thoughts, at least at the time of writing. Often characterized as a megalomaniac, Hitler doubtless exaggerated. A master of propaganda and persuasion, a genius in practical power-politics and a personality of vastly diverse characteristics, he could be expected to be highly plastic in his actions. Hitler took pains, however, to explain the necessity of duping the people, of propaganda, of "the big lie" and other somewhat shady methods of gaining power. He is very frank and explains the best means of accomplishing these aims. With this complexity of personality in mind, it is only with hesitation that an analysis of his particular qualities or his interpretation of the philosophy can be attempted.

Some of the individuals that Hitler credits with influence upon him were to remain admirers and friends throughout his life. Two such men were Alfred Rosenberg and Dietrich Eckart. Hitler found in Eckart the confirmation of his anti-Jewish and anti-Marxian ideas. In Mein Kampf Hitler describes him as "one of the best, who devoted his life to the awakening of our people, in his writings and his thoughts and finally in his deeds".⁶ Rosenberg was to remain a friend at least until near the end of the Third Reich. Regarded as the party philosopher, a writer, publisher of the party paper, the Voelkischer Beobachter, and a co-founder of the National Socialist Party, Rosenberg was a firm believer

⁶ Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943), p. 193.

in Hitlerism and Aryanism.⁷

Apparently much of the formative thinking of Adolf Hitler was undergoing serious change or confirmation during his vagabond years in Vienna. This center of the romantic musicians and artists was always to be a favorite spot for Hitler. It was in Vienna that he fell under the more nationalistic influences of the Wagner group. Perhaps even more important, at least in realistic politics, was the influence of Karl Lueger, the mayor of Vienna and leader of the Christian Social Party. Lueger was Catholic, anti-Jewish and all powerful in Vienna.⁸ Lueger, according to Hitler, "was quick to make use of all available means for winning the support of long-established institutions, so as to be able to derive the greatest possible advantage for his movement from those old sources of power".⁹ Two other parts of his lasting practical philosophy came to Hitler from Vienna. While carefully studying the tactics of Leuger, Hitler developed a strong Pan-Germanism and a thorough knowledge of the use of the mass.

Pan-Germanism, or nationalism, became a driving force for Hitler the rest of his life. What was the basis of this national pride? What is its value? Hitler states:

Does our bourgeoisie not often rise in moral indignation when it learns from the mouth of some wretched tramp that he

⁷Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny (London: Odhams Press, Ltd., 1960), pp. 69-71.

⁸Heiden, op. cit., pp. 62-72.

⁹Hitler, op. cit., p. 100.

does not care whether he is a German or not, . . . ? They at once protest loudly at much want of "national pride", and their horror at such sentiments finds strong expression.

But how many really ask themselves why they themselves have a better sentiment? How many understand the many reminders of the greatness of their Fatherland, their nation, in all domains of cultural and artistic life, which combine to give them legitimate pride in being members of a nation so highly favored? How many of them are aware how greatly pride in the Fatherland depends on knowledge of its greatness in all these domains?

. . . . For only when a man has learned through education and schooling to know the cultural, economic, and above all the political greatness of his own Fatherland can he and will he gain that inner pride in being permitted to be a member of such a nation.¹⁰

We see, then, that a knowledge of history, of cultural background, and of national worth are necessary parts of any people with pride; and pride in one's nation is a virtue. Hitler says that it was while he was in Vienna that he gained the background for his understanding of history as well as for practical politics. He states: "At that time I read enormously and thoroughly. All the free time my work left me was employed in my studies. In this way I forged in a few years' time the foundations of knowledge from which I still draw nourishment today". What were these foundations that he never forgot? They were anti-Marxism, anti-Judaism, anti-liberalism and nationalism. He says:

Like a woman whose sensibilities are influenced less by abstract reasoning than by an indefinite longing and respect for superior strength, and who would rather bow to the strong man than dominate the weakling, the people love a stern ruler more than a suppliant and feel more inwardly satisfied by doctrines which suffer no rival than by an admission of liberal freedom Weak natures have to be told that it is a case of "to be or not to be".¹¹

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 17-18.

Hitler's nation cannot be democratic, for democratic forms of government are the ultimate in corruption and swindling. He says the people "must arrive at this conclusion: we will no longer submit to a State which is built on the swindling idea of the majority. We want a dictatorship"¹² It is the economic interests, according to Hitler, that bring on the majority governments, the labor unions, the confusion of petty politicians and too many heads making decisions. Hitler, in a reaction to Marxism, says: "The state is a racial organism and not an economic organization".¹³ Instead, monarchic Prussia offers the better example of the proper state. "Prussia", he asserts, "demonstrates with marvelous sharpness that not material qualities but ideal virtues alone make possible the formation of a state". Indeed, economic upsurges invariably "stifle the ideal virtue".¹⁴ One thing we must and may never forget, says Hitler,

. . . a majority can never be a substitute for the Man. It is always the advocate, not only of stupid, but also of cowardly policies; and just as a hundred fools do not make one wise man, an heroic decision is not likely to come from a hundred cowards None but a Jew can value an institution which is as dirty and false as he is himself.¹⁵

Monarchy, then, is the ideal type of state and one "Man" is to be the

¹²Quoted in Heiden, op. cit., pp. 131-33.

¹³Hitler, op. cit., p. 151.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 152-53.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 55-56.

supreme power. The spirit of Germany is Will--"One Will".¹⁶

Hitler's leadership principle, widely referred to as Fuehrer-prinzip, is denoted in detail in Mein Kampf. The leader is the genius among the statesmen and has a right to rule according to his own dictates, even if these decisions are contrary to the wishes of the mass. He asks: "Isn't every deed of genius in this world a visible protest of genius against the inertia of the mass? In view of the stupidity of his fellow citizens, should he renounce the execution of the tasks which he has recognized to be vital necessities?"¹⁷ In the event that a man of "personal integrity" should acquiesce to the mass, then every gangster must be qualified political material. Hitler feels that no one could believe, with any understanding of history, that the progress of the world has come from majority decision or the mass. He states:

By rejecting the authority of the individual and replacing it by numbers of some momentary mob, the parliamentary principle of majority rule sins against the basic aristocratic principle of Nature, though it must be said that this view is not necessarily embodied in the present-day decadence of our upper ten thousand.¹⁸

Thus, we are not to build upon the idea of majority but upon the idea of personality--that is, the highest humanity. "The best state constitution and state form is that which, with the most unquestioned certainty, raises the best minds in the national community to leading position and

¹⁶The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, op. cit., p. 125, 435.

¹⁷Mein Kampf, p. 363.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 364.

leading influence!"¹⁹ The state must have the personality leadership principle anchored firmly in its political organization. One man makes the decision and the Prussian conception of the state shall be the basis of the whole state: "authority of every leader downward and responsibility upward".²⁰

The state is not the highest aim of the government, however, but rather the conservation of the cultural national character, the heritage of a pure culture left to them by their ancestors of superior blood. The great danger to this supreme legacy was the hated Jew, this non-entity of all races, who was plotting to ruin the culture of the superior German by adulterating his blood.

Again, it was at Vienna that his understanding of the fundamental element of decay became apparent to Hitler. At Vienna he began to notice the workings of the Jews and, as before, turned to his books to find the reason they were held with contempt. His study told him only that they were non-Aryan and that the German was Aryan and a relatively pure stock. It was observation coupled with the study, according to Hitler, that finally revealed the true nature of the Jew to him.

One thing now became clear to me; the leadership of the party with whose minor supporters I had been fighting hard for months was almost entirely in the hands of a foreign race; for to my inward satisfaction I knew finally that the Jew was no German. It was only now that I thoroughly understood the

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 378.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

corrupter of our nation I gradually began to hate them.²¹

It was at this juncture that the greatest change took place in Hitler's life. He became a fanatical anti-Semite. Almost every utterance that Hitler makes from this time on can be found to hinge upon this hate. Generally, his doctrine was to follow three classifications: anti-Semitism, anti-liberalism and anti-Marxism and the last two elements were attributed by Hitler to the Jewish element. It was the Jew who wanted democracy, or majority government. It was the Jewish plot to corrupt the world that had moved Marx. Nationalism, to Hitler, was the effective agent for combating these forces. In addition, nationalism was anti-liberal, therefore anti-Marxian and was the most probable vehicle to lift Hitler out of the dregs of society. It was the only channel whereby he could accomplish his mission; for he had already come to realize that he had genius in his soul. On several occasions he speaks of an ability that was peculiar to him, and that was merely confirmed by its appeal to the people. He had known it somewhere deep inside him all along. He says: " . . . All at once I was offered an opportunity of speaking before a larger audience; and the thing that I had always presumed from pure feeling without knowing it was now corroborated: I could 'speak' ".²²

Most of the program of the National Socialist Party (though changed

²¹Ibid., pp. 46-47.

²²Ibid., pp. 216-217.

at Hitler's will and when the need arose) can be found in the general propositions set up in Mein Kampf. He told the world what he would do if he ever reached power--and he left very little of it undone.

The government set up by the National Socialist Party was essentially military in structure. This enabled Hitler to enforce all his desires as well as inaugurate sweeping campaigns to cure the ills brought on by Judaism, Marxism, Liberalism and Christianity. The last element contradicted the doctrines stated in Mein Kampf. Though amazingly slight at first, eventual opposition from the churches, coupled with the military organization was to prove too much in need of constant diplomacy for Hitler's inclinations. Needless to say, the church was the loser. Much of the opposition that arose from the ecclesiastical quarters was brought about by the regulations for citizenship and education. These required that:

The young subject of German nationality is bound to undergo the school education which is laid down for every German. Later on he must consent to undergo the bodily exercises as laid down by the State, and finally he enters the army. Military training is universal. After his military service is over, the healthy young man with a blameless record will be solemnly invested with the rights of State citizenship In the case of every State subject race and nationality have to be proved. The subject is free at any time to cease being a subject and become a citizen in the country corresponding with his nationality. The foreigner is only different from the subject in that he is a subject in a foreign state.²³

This, of course, did not hold true for the Jewish peoples.

²³Ibid., p. 182.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In an effort to show the similarities between the great minds of the romantic and idealistic movements and that of Adolf Hitler, and, therefore, the policies of the National Socialist Party, it is understood that Hitler did not pick certain principles from one or the other of these minds. It is felt, by students of German political and cultural thought, that the basic trends of these men and the movements of romanticism and idealism were integral parts of the culture of Germany. The ideas of some of the personalities noted throughout this investigation seem to have come to the National Socialists by direct route, as in the cases of Chamberlain, Wagner and Rosenberg. In spite of Hitler's claims that he read widely while seeking his calling in Vienna, many of the writers, thinkers and doers mentioned in this paper were probably, at best, vaguely known to him. Much of his knowledge of the philosophy, coming out of the German past, was, from all indications, second hand.¹ Nevertheless, the correlation is the goal, and we will attempt to find the significance of the Fuehrer compared with that of his predecessors.

The Enlightenment generated the revolt of Rousseau, who gave

¹Heiden, op. cit., pp. 60 ff.; Bullock, op. cit., pp. 28-30.

impetus to concepts of the "general will", "back to nature", and an emotional stress upon interactions of man. He also limited the freedom of the individual, by contract, to the will of the majority. In turn, this will of the majority becomes sovereign and unlimited. Adolf Hitler preached often that emotion was more important than reason. He, in turn, was fond of referring to the "basic aristocratic nature" of man. Hitler, characteristically calling forth historically eminent men, gives Rousseau responsibility for anti-Jewish doctrines as well as for the superiority of will and feeling over reason. In one of his early speeches Hitler says:

Voltaire, as well as Rousseau, together with our German Fichte and many another--they are all without exception united in their recognition that the Jew is not only a foreign element differing in his essential character, which is utterly harmful to the nature of the Aryan, but that the Jewish people in itself stands against us as our deadly foe and so will stand against us always and for all time.²

Certainly, though far removed from Rousseau's concept, Hitler felt Rousseau had given birth to some elements he regarded highly.

Immanuel Kant cast German thought into a new mold. His earnestness and profoundness were far removed from the Nazi program. In Kant's philosophy, justice, freedom and humaneness were necessary for the fulfillment of Germany's true destiny. These were alien to the practices of the National Socialist Party of the Third Reich, if not their protestations. Nevertheless, the idea of a destiny or mission for the German people, however universal, was found in both Kant and Nazism.

²The Speeches of Hitler, op. cit., p. 26.

Again, we find the stress upon conviction and feeling common to both. However different, the Prussianism, aristocratic monarchy, and "superior absolute" of Kant found counterparts in the aristocratic ruling element, respect for Prussian statism, and the leader concept of Hitler.

Goethe and Schiller, unique universalists, literary geniuses and with penetrating minds cast upon the problems of man, make the comparison almost a mockery. But it must be remembered that, rightly or wrongly, Schiller was considered an imposing figure for his "nationalism" and Goethe, along with Schiller, was celebrated for his contribution to the cultural ascendancy of Germany. Both of these great minds gave the concept of the genius-leader to their writing. The poet Eckart gave Hitler much of his knowledge of Goethe and Schiller.³

Fichte's philosophy may have been intended for other purposes than the creation of Nazi Germany, but it is doubtful if he would have been too displeased with the general theories expressed by Adolf Hitler. For Fichte, the German was superior to all other nationalities. The German nation had a mission to fulfill and was to be led by a hero corresponding to his "Absolute Ego". Fichte preached that the state should be self contained, economically independent, and the unit of all trade with other nations. For him it was the individual selfishness and economic interests that caused the downfall of a nation. This individual economic interest Hitler decided was Fichte's confirmation of his own

³Alfred Rosenberg, Memoirs, tr. Eric Posselt (New York: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1949), p. 38.

anti-Jewish feelings.⁴ In addition, a striking similarity exists between the belief in education of the people for their role in the German mission and training of the perfect human to make a still greater Germany. Fichte called for absolute political obedience of the individual to the state. It is hardly necessary, in this respect, to emphasize the analogy between the ideas of Fichte and the principles of Adolf Hitler.

Hegel, of all the idealists, was the most notable for his complete worship of the state. His absolute will covered the subjection of other nations and peoples to that of the strong state. His "Absolute Idea" added strength to the genius-leader premise.⁵ In words very similar to those used by Adolf Hitler, Hegel held that true liberty was to be found in the political subservience of the people to the state. Freedom was the right to obey.⁶ Although Hegel was far too universal and too humanitarian for Hitler, they were connected by culture and tradition.

The pessimistic Schopenhauer laid chief stress upon Will, and connected the will to force. His "naked will" became the cry of all Germany under National Socialism, supporting their right to impose their superior culture upon other nations. Hitler, like Schopenhauer, felt that the world was a world of "strong devouring the weak" and would

⁴The Speeches of Hitler, op. cit., p. 26.

⁵See Bullock, op. cit., pp. 351-352, 368.

⁶Ibid., p. 370.

gladly accept Schopenhauer's "will to power". Two of the more direct sources of Hitler's concepts, Wagner and Rosenberg, claimed Schopenhauer as a favorite among philosophers.⁷

Schleiermacher provided a precedent for the ecclesiastical elements to follow. Stressing feeling and emotion, his reconciliation between church and a strong state was fully in evidence in Nazi Germany. The anti-Christian policies of the late National Socialist era were much less burdensome if Schleiermacher could be accepted.⁸

Arndt and Treitschke both bequeathed to Germany a strong anti-Western attitude. Together, in their views of racial and linguistic superiority of the German, they propagated the element of racial hatred that was the central theme of Hitler's dictatorship. Arndt offered the concept that a love for the nation was the strongest love of all. Hitler transformed this into his goal for mankind. For Hitler all love was second to the love of national heritage. Hitler also leaned toward Arndt's hero. The personality became a hero only through the nation and national greatness. Then Hitler concurred with Treitschke in anti-Semitism, anti-Marxism, Prussianism, and monarchistic form of government. Treitschke, like Hitler, found war inevitable and noble.

Jahn gave to National Socialism the precedent upon which to build its youth training and educational program, just as Chamberlain, with

⁷Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 12 ff.; Letters of Richard Wagner, op. cit., p. 107.

⁸Cf. Valentin, op. cit., p. 644.

his peculiar brand of anti-Semitism, set up the racial program for the Third Reich.

The correlation between Hitler and Richard Wagner is considerably easier to substantiate, if we are willing to accept Hitler's word for it. "Whoever wants to understand National Socialist Germany must know Wagner."⁹ In Mein Kampf Hitler pays tribute to those who have understood Germany's destiny: "Side by side with Frederick the Great stands a Martin Luther as well as a Richard Wagner."¹⁰ It has been pointed out that Wagner organized a group of agitators. Hitler says his days at the Bayreuth were always an inspiration to him.¹¹ Certainly the anti-Marxist, anti-liberal, nationalistic tendencies of Wagner and his craving for power were echoed in Hitler. The similarity between the two men in their love for the cultural background of the German people was paralleled by their blaming the Jew for the degradation and decay of this culture. Here, again, we find Chamberlain, who belonged to the group of revolutionaries founded by Wagner. In turn, Chamberlain was to join the National Socialist Party, and his interpretation of the Aryan question allowed both Hitler and him to claim Aryan kinship.

The genius of Friedrich Nietzsche was, perhaps, one of the most potent forces upon the National Socialists and German nationalism in

⁹Quoted in Otto D. Tolischus, They Wanted War (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1940), p. 11.

¹⁰Hitler, op. cit., p. 600.

¹¹Bullock, op. cit., p. 352-354.

general. No doubt he would have been insulted to have found his doctrines embodied in the philosophy and program of such an organization. Nietzsche's purpose was far greater and more universal than the special concerns of a nation or of one person. Nevertheless, he yearned for something new and different in politics; Hitler tried "that something new". Nietzsche was made into one of the official ancestors of the National Socialist Party. The party philosopher, Rosenberg, accepted Nietzsche's views of change as revolt of the aristocratic virtues against the baseness of the herd.¹² It was Nietzsche that found the Jew responsible for Christianity, democracy, liberalism and the pity of the weak. The will to power of Nietzsche, his warrior spirit and leadership principle have their counterparts in the national will, Fuehrerprinzip and expansion by force of Hitler. Nietzsche's most notable philosophical contribution to the policies of Hitler is his Superman. The master race and genius-leader concepts of Hitler owe much to the Zarathustra of Nietzsche.

The historian Leopold von Ranke gave historical support to the anti-Westernism and the Supreme state and cultural heritage claimed by the National Socialists. Eckart, Leuger, and Rosenberg all bolstered the nationalistic, romantic and racial views of Adolf Hitler. They were equally as helpful in the field of practical politics.

The cultural heritage and right to conquer as a mission of the German people became obsessions with Hitler. His Lebensraum (living

¹² Rosenberg, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

space) and Weltanschauung (world ideology) plagued him throughout his writing and his career.

The importance of Hitler's concepts lies in the fact that they were embraced to the point of distraction by millions of Germans. Although the media and process whereby he acquired his views and philosophy may be vague, the coincidence between his views and the views of his romantic and idealistic forefathers is, nonetheless, remarkable. That romanticism and idealism became part of the German historical culture is evident. Equally evident is the strength of culture and national heritage in the personality of Adolf Hitler. That they were only a part of a complex nature is granted. But they were a part, and a sizeable part, of his ideology. Hitler's personality lay deeply colored by German experience and thought. Nazism and the Third Reich, as he led them, were in many ways only a logical continuation of German history and thought.

Romanticism, particularly as conceived by Rousseau, emerged as a system of thought relying upon emotion and will as guides for human conduct. His disciples applied these forces to the state, and the state became the ultimate product of evolution displaying the origins of German culture, the validity of race superiority and the national mission. Kant provided the idealistic movement with the concept of ultimate and fundamental reality conceived in thought as opposed to perception through experience. Fichte and Hegel led Kant's followers in asserting that the origins and natural sequence of fundamental relations of man revolved about the worship of the state. With these

ideas, the idealists advocated a perfect state composed of perfect people, and found in the cultural heritage of the Germans evidence of superiority. Notably in such thinkers as Nietzsche and Wagner, idealism and romanticism merged and were subordinated by the growing nationalism. Their doctrines combined with tradition the compulsion of genius, the will for something new in aristocratic government, and the rightful exploitation of the weak by the strong, thereby linking romanticism and idealism with nationalism. Hitler, and therefore Nazism, was influenced by these movements of German culture. Romanticism is manifested in his philosophy of events and destiny based upon heritage, tradition, national will, and superiority of certain races and individuals. Idealism contributed to Hitler's professed belief in the nation as the highest form of social development, in a genius leader, and in a cultural mission of the German nation. For Hitler the nationalistic creeds of Aryanism, dictatorship and anti-liberalism were substantiated by the German past.

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Schopenhauer, Arthur, The Essays of Schopenhauer. Tr. T. Bailey Saunders, New York: Witley Book Company, n. d.

These essays show a much broader picture of Schopenhauer than can be gained from his other writings. He is much more lucid here than in additional achievements.

_____, The World as Will and Idea. Tr. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, 3 vols., London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, Ltd., 1907-1909.

This treatment explains Schopenhauer's attitude toward the state and universe, and displays most clearly his pessimism and antagonism.

Treitschke, Heinrich von, Origins of Prussianism. Tr. George H. Putnam, London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1942.

This book alone is enough to give the reader a full conception of Treitschke's concentration on matters Prussian.

_____, Politics. Tr. Blanche Dugdale and Tarben de Belle, London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1916.

The views of Treitschke concerning the state, Prussia and the German as a superior people can be found in this publication.

Wagner, Richard, The Letters of Richard Wagner. Ed. Wilhelm Altmann, tr. M. M. Bozman, 2 vols., New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1936.

A prolific writer, Wagner incorporates in his correspondence his bias and peculiarities that are helpful to a study of his thought.

_____, My Life. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1936.

Wagner's autobiography attempts to justify his life and works in view of his music and explanation of culture through the Music-Drama. There are many examples of Wagner's nationalistic doctrines in this book.

BIOGRAPHICAL

Brandt, Richard B., The Philosophy of Schleiermacher. New York: Harpers and Bros., 1941.

This biography is scholarly and portrays an objective picture of the nationalistic Schleiermacher.

Bullock, Alan, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny. London: Odhams Press, Ltd., 1960.

This study of Hitler appeals to the historian due to its excellent documentation. Bullock's evaluation of material covered, the sources he used and of opposing theories adds to the thoroughness of his biography.

Caird, Edward, Hegel. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1883.

This critical study of Hegel points out many of the weaknesses of his philosophy as well as many of the peculiarities of his life. The author gives a moral interpretation to Hegel's philosophy.

Cassirer, Ernst, The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau Tr. and ed., Peter Gay, New York: Columbia University Press, 1954.

This review is a series of lectures evaluating and explaining the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Though composed as criticism of Rousseau, Cassirer's views of his life and work are an asset to a student of Rousseau.

Clark, Robert T., Jr., Herder: His Life and Thought. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955.

This is a dissection of Herder's thought as influenced by his life and social environment.

Heiden, Konrad, Der Fuehrer. Tr. Ralph Manheim, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1944.

Any author writing on the life, thought, or action of Adolf Hitler is indebted to Heiden for his book. A friend of Hitler in his younger years and an observer of the Nazi leader throughout his life, Heiden's biography is accepted as one of the basic sources by later biographers.

Stace, W. T., Philosophy of Hegel, Dover: Dover Publications, Inc., n.d.

This work is twofold in purpose; it is a biography and a collection of portions of Hegel's most important writings. Stacy condenses Hegel's elaborate writing into concise and lucid sentences used to connect selected quotes from Hegel.

Stein, Leon, The Racial Thinking of Richard Wagner. New York: Philosophical Library, 1950.

This investigation of Wagner by a philosopher and musician considers all aspects of his life that show signs of racial bias. Stein compares Wagner with other racial antagonists and the nationalists that adopted his racial views.

GENERAL

Ebenstein, William, Man and the State. New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1947.

Ebenstein has collected portions of the works of leading writers from all the major movements in government affecting Western civilization. He frequently compares the doctrines of the thinkers treated.

_____, The Nazi State. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1943.

In this book Ebenstein gives a clear picture, if somewhat simplified, of the Nazi state.

Kohn, Hans, The Mind of Germany. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960.

This investigation of the cultural and social life of Germany is an unusually comprehensive study of the cultural heritage of the German nation.

Reinhardt, Kurt F., Germany 2000 Years. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1950.

Reinhardt's history contains much bibliographical material throughout the text. A factual report of chronological information, it offers sources pertinent to the various subjects treated.

Russell, Bertrand, A History of Western Philosophy. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1945.

A biographical and expository study of the great minds in the philosophy of Western civilization, this work is an aid to understanding the method of these philosophers. The lack of documentation leaves something to be desired.

Schuman, Frederick L., The Nazi Dictatorship. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956.

This presentation of political and economic materials leaves the interpretation of evidence presented to the reader. Much documentation is written into the text, and though not always complete, the sources are helpful.

Shirer, William L., The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1962.

This critical treatment of the Third Reich contains many of the latest sources and documents available. The journalistic viewpoint detracts from the worth to historians, however, there is a large collection of primary source material.

Tolischus, Otto D., They Wanted War. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1940.

The author's remembrances and evaluation of the Nazi state, made during the time of the Third Reich, Tolischus's history is valuable for his knowledge of contemporary events and personages of the National Socialist Party.

Valentin, Veit, The German People. Tr. Olga Marx, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946.

Valentin records and traces the origin, growth, maturity and collapse of Germany from first recorded history to the end of the Third Reich. Strictly a study of the cultural background of Germany, this book is useful for its treatment of all cultural forces.

VITA

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