Germany's Third Empire

Arthur Moeller van den Bruck

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This work is often referred to in passing, but seldom read. Moeller appeared in the period after the First World War as one of the theorists of the broad Conservative Revolution in Germany. Internationally renowned for his translations of Dostoyevsky, this text is also a literary feast. However, the present book may be read for its analysis of civilization-crisis and visionary alternatives. In that sense it passes into the heritage of all who struggle against the international capitalist ascendency of our times.

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PREFATORY LETTER TO HEINRICH VON GLEICHEN

Dear Gleichen,

This book contains an analysis of the political parties. It is addressed to Germans of every party. It discusses their ideologies, and their party types.

The attempt this books makes was not possible from any party standpoint; it ranges over all our political problems, from the extreme Left to the extreme Right. It is written from the standpoint of a Third Party, which is already in being. Only such an attempt could address itself to the nation while attacking all the parties; could reveal the disorder and discord into which the parties have long since fatefully fallen and which has spread from them through our whole political life; could reach that lofty spiritual plane of political philosophy which the parties have forsaken, but which must for the nation's sake be maintained, which the conservative must preserve and the revolutionary must take by storm.

Instead of government by party we offer the ideal of the THIRD EMPIRE. It is an old German conception and a great one. It arose when our First Empire fell; it was early quickened by the thought of a millennium; but its underlying thought has always been a future which should be not the end of all things but the dawn of a German age in which the German People would for the first time fulfil their destiny on earth.

In the years which followed the collapse of our Second Empire, we have had experience of Germans; we have seen that the nation's worst enemy is herself: her trustfulness, her casualness, her credulity, her inborn, fate-fraught, apparently unshakable, optimism. The German people were scarcely defeated—as never a people was defeated before in history—than the mood asserted itself: "We shall come up again all right!" We heard German fools saying: "We have no fears for Germany!" We saw German dreamers nod their heads in assent: "Nothing can happen to me!"

We must be careful to remember that the thought of the Third Empire is a philosophical idea; that the conceptions which the words "Third Empire" arouse—and the book which bears the title—are misty, indeterminate, charged with feeling; not of this world but of the next. Germans are only too prone to abandon themselves to self-deception. The thought of a THIRD EMPIRE might well be the most fatal of all the illusions to which they have ever yielded; it would be thoroughly German if they contented themselves with day-dreaming about it. Germany might perish of her Third Empire dream.

Let us be perfectly explicit: the thought of the Third Empire—to which we must cling as our last and highest philosophy—can only bear fruit if it is translated into concrete reality. It must quit the world of dreams and step into the political world. It must be as realist as the problems of our constitutional and national life; it must be as sceptical and pessimistic as beseems the times.

There are Germans who assure us that the Empire which rose out of the ruins on the Ninth of November is already the Third Empire, democratic, republican, logically complete. These are our opportunists and eudaemonists. There are other Germans who confess their disappointment but trust to the "reasonableness" of history. These are our rationalists and pacifists. They all draw their conclusions from the premisses of their party-political or utopian wishes, but not from the premisses of the reality which surrounds us. They will not realize that we are a fettered and maltreated nation, perhaps on the very verge of dissolution. Our reality connotes the triumph of all the nations of the earth over the German nation; the primacy in our country of parliamentism after the western model—and party rule. If the THIRD EMPIRE is ever to come it will not beneficently fall from heaven. If the THIRD EMPIRE is to put an end to strife it will not be born in a peace of philosophic dreaming. The THIRD EMPIRE will be an empire of organization in the midst of European chaos. The occupation of the Ruhr and its consequences worked a change in the minds of men. It was the first thing that made the nation think. It opened up the possibility of liberation for a betrayed people. It seemed about to put an end to the "policy of fulfilment" which had been merely party politics disguised as foreign policy. It threw us back on our own power of decision. It restored our will. Parliamentism has become an institution of our public life, whose chief function would appear to be—in the name of the people—to enfeeble all political demands and all national passions.

When the Revolution overwhelmed the War, burying all prospects and all hopes, we asked ourselves the inner meaning of these events. Amidst all the insanity we found a meaning in the thought that the German nation would be driven into becoming politically-minded: now, at last, belatedly.

We said to ourselves then that this war was going to be our education.

Today we ask in despair: Has it, in fact, been so?

In bitterness we venture to hope: It will prove to have been so.

In this faith,

Yours,

MOELLER VAN DEN BRUCK

Berlin

December, 1922

Germany's Third Empire

I. REVOLUTIONARY

Let us win the Revolution!

1

A war may be lost. The most ill-fated war is never irretrievable. The worst peace is never final.

But a Revolution must be won.

A revolution occurs once only. It is not a matter which a nation negotiates with other nations. It is the most private, intimate concern of a people, which that people must handle for itself and by itself. According to the direction in which the people voluntarily guides a revolution, its outcome determines that people's future fate.

We Germans have never yet had a political revolution in our history. This may be taken as an indication that our history is in mid-course. The English have behind them their religious revolution and their glorious political revolution. The French have had their Revolution. Both these nations are older than we. Their people are experienced, tried, matured. Their revolutions have made political nations of them. The national upheaval wrecked their normal life; but they were able to salvage enough to lay the foundations of their further political development. We know to our cost with what unerring assurance and self-command they met the world-crisis, with what shrewd self-calculation they, who had engineered the War, met all its vicissitudes with the single-hearted determination of ultimately winning it. We know to our cost the cold intellectual scorn with which they exploited their victory to devise a peace-treaty whose conditions should supply them with new means to new ends; to reap fresh advantage from the altered world-situation.

The War was won by the conscious political spirit of Britain, which dates from the English Revolution, and by the conscious political spirit of France, which the French owe to the French Revolution. We are younger than either of these peoples. We have an advantage over them: we are an immature people, but we are also an unexhausted people, which has not yet evolved its political "ego," not even yet its national "ego." We have at the moment no Present, and we have been cut off from our Past, so that we are drifting in uncertainty. But we have reached a turning-point. We must make a decision: shall we remain a child-like people, giving little thought to our Future, till some day we find that we have none? Or are we able and willing to learn from our recent experience of our own political temperament and character? Are we prepared to give to our political existence a national form?

A revolution is an opportunity in the life-history of a people which never recurs. Our Revolution is such an opportunity. Shall we seize it? Or shall we let it slip? Years have passed since our collapse. We have spent these years comforting ourselves about our fate; but in these years we done nothing to alter our fate.

The Revolution proceeds. It continues in the spirit. We do not yet know whether, not having gone deep enough at first, it will again break out in action. One thing, however, we *do* know: the movement cannot come finally to rest until the forces it released have attained some goal. This is our opportunity: our last: still open to us—to win by the Revolution what by the War we lost. The opportunity to recognize why we lost in the political field the World War which on the battlefield we won—and to take steps accordingly.

2

The Revolution has three aspects: a socialist, an economic, a Marxist-millennial aspect. These we shall presently discuss.

Above all, it has a German aspect. While our volcano spews out only catch-words, dogmas and slogans from its crater, we get glimpses into the depths where a subterranean river flows, which is striving to change direction: the mighty river of German history which seeks to regain its bed, which to our undoing it had quitted.

Our history had lost its way. Nothing of ours of late has been succeeding. Nothing today: nothing yesterday: nothing—if we think back—for the last generation. The last success we had was the foundation of the Second German Empire. It is more than a mere impulse of self-preservation that makes us concentrate our thoughts on this Empire as the sole possession we can still boast. We cherish it from political conviction: a conviction shared even by those revolutionaries who are in every other point radically opposed to all that is German, but who cling to the thought of that Empire as our sheet-anchor.

All great ideas are simple, though their realization may be difficult. So it was with the founding of the Second German Empire. We had, however, a statesmen in those days. One who dared to play the role of Fate. Bismarck bore down all resistance: the resistances of the *status quo* in Europe, considerations of the Holy Alliance and of the Confederation of Rhine, many and various inheritances from 1848, resistances in our own perverse German temperament which is often hostile to our best interests. Bismarck waited for the propitious moment: when it did not come, he created it. He needed pretexts; when they did not present themselves, he created them. He compelled circumstances to serve him. The time was ripe for the Empire; Bismarck brought it to birth. He translated into fact the schemes of the theorists and the visions of the romantics. He had the eye to see the power and quality of the German people: their efficiency, their docility, their devotion—a people too good, it seemed to him, to live in political inferiority, to belong to the less-fortunate among the nations. He conceived the ambition to make Germany again a great people. The unification of Germany had the inevitability of a convulsion of nature. The world—though later it was to turn against us—recognized it with sympathy and without reserve. Bismarck had done his work.

Yet the work of Bismarck failed. He did not find the men able to carry it on. His pace had been so swift that lesser men could not keep up. Since our collapse we have realized the truth: that Bismarck crowded into one man's lifetime a series of changes which would have needed a century apiece, if the ideas underlying them were to ripen and mature: the German Alliance, the Customs Union, the North German Confederation, the German Federal Empire. We perceive this too late; we see too late that he left behind him no successor either in politics or diplomacy. The reason of this must be sought. The fault lay not with Bismarck, but with the German people who were no Bismarcks. Signs of exhaustion were evident even in the hour of the Empire's birth. Our decline had its origin in a spiritual exhaustion.

Germany was now without a dream. She *had had* the dream: of future unity. This was now fulfilled; and fulfilled dreams tend to beget an anti-climax, a certain slackness, unless there is some spur to further achievement. We strove no more. We rested on our oars. We became materialists in a materialistic age. As a nation we took no share in the spiritual and political movements of the century. We left the dreaming of political dreams to other peoples, whether they wove a national mysticism out of thoughts of *revanche*, or fell victims to a morbid irredentism, or to an Anglo-Saxon creed of their own superiority, or to visions of Pan-slavism. Against all these we had only our outworn dream: the conviction of victory already won. We rested content with our present, and with our achievements in world economics. We borrowed a romantic idealism and developed it into an imperialism which had no roots in a dream of our own. We gave this imperialism no national basis in the claim of a united nation to space for its growing population; we did not justify it by pointing to the value of our work and gradually accustoming the world to recognize that political power must follow as a consequence. We talked loudly of our achievements, but were content to remain amateurs in world-politics, half-hearted, inefficient, inconsequent dilettanti. Meanwhile we allowed the dreams of our opponents to grow, and we did not, or would not, perceive that they were building up a system against us which was preparing to encircle and baulk and crush us. What a set of men we had become in those last generations before our collapse! Still, fossilized men lacking all resilience; over-disciplined, entangled in red tape, all adaptability lost! What an age it was, that of William II: mechanized, bureaucrat-ridden and yet boastful, poor for all its wealth, ugly for all its display: an age doomed to shipwreck, doomed to see the day that swept away all its successes.

The foundation of the Empire fulfilled our dreams. But under the Empire everything went wrong. Only one of the our traditions was preserved unspoiled: the military and strategic tradition. To that fact we owe it that we were victorious on every battlefield in the World War. But in the political field we let slip things which could never be recaptured. The spiritual slackness of the preceding generations did its work. The greatest ability of our greatest generals failed us during the War, because it lacked a foundation: imagination, experience, tact, decision, the power of handling circumstance. Similarly, after the Revolution we remained under the spell of William II's age, inefficient amateurs at once arrogant and timorous. The politicians who directed our affairs after the Revolution suffered from the same defects, socialists and democrats alike. The same evil spell clung to the Chancellor of the Armistice and to the Chancellor of the Peace. All have been a prey to the same destroying spirit. Whatever they undertake: we know it will be in vain. However deeply they were convinced that they were doing the right thing: they infallibly did the wrong. Their good intentions availed nothing.

Something has gone wrong with everything; and when we put our hand to anything to set it straight, it breaks to pieces in our fingers. We never find the right word in a political crisis. We let our decisions be forced from us always too soon or too late, never at the opportune moment. So it was before the War, and during the War; so it has been since the Revolution. The whole nation lies under an evil spell, which, it would seem, only the passage of time can lift, from which only the dying-off of that last generation can set us free, the death of every single person who belonged to it. Every new German statesman who has come to the fore has brought us disillusion. But when he disappears and vanishes from history, one more obstacle is gone. We have had such a dread succession of them in these last years! Time has not been granted us, however, to let this tedious procedure run its natural course. Before the elimination of that responsible generation has been complete, before the new generation has been able to seize the reins, the whole nation is faced with the need for new decisions. When will circumstances permit the great renewal of the German nation? That Ninth of November did not accomplish it; at most the Revolution paved the way. The renewal, when it comes, must draw from deeper, from more truly German springs. Shall we then find again Germans of talent, of decision, of action?

Someone, sometime, somewhere, pronounced our doom: "This whole generation is accused!" This formula explains why everything, alike what we do and what we leave undone, is blasted. The curse has clung.

It has at least cured us of the illusions in which we have ever been prone to indulge, of the opportunism which was fain to acquiesce in things as they were, of the optimism which sought to see this most miserable German world as "the best of all worlds possible." It has been a challenge. Cutting us off from false hopes, it has offered us one opportunity, one way out: not, however, to be found in specious phrases. One thing, and one only, can save us: a human, spiritual renewal: the evolution of a new race of Germans who shall make good all that we have wrecked.

The man who already belongs to this new race is the true revolutionary. The man who still speaks of "fulfilment" of "mutual-understanding," who still recognizes the Treaty of Versailles, is not of it. He is of the transition between the generation which is passing and the generation which is to come. The true revolutionary spirit which bursts asunder the bonds of fate is found not in transitions but in beginnings.

This true revolutionary spirit that we are waiting for has no link with the Insurrection which lies behind us; it has to do with a spiritual revolution in ourselves and directed against ourselves: which lies before us.

Our revolution is only beginning. The Insurrection which overthrew the state was only its herald; our revolution begins with a Resurrection in the souls of men. It is the dawn of a new mentality and a new self-knowledge. It is this; or—it is our doom.

3

Our present situation forces epoch-making decisions on us: decisions which seek to hasten the hour of our emancipation, even to anticipate it.

Yet all our active measures must be firmly based in political principle. We cannot act as politically-minded men until we have a politically-minded nation behind us.

The political situation is so delicate that it must be handled with the utmost care and skill. We cannot yet be sure that we are not heading for national annihilation. We shall certainly perish as a European people—and Europe will perish with us—unless we learn to utilize, with a political wisdom learnt from our revolutionary experiences, the possibilities that still lie open before us. Whatever Germany attempts in order to compass our salvation, men and measures must be well prepared in advance, the measures must be well matured, and must be fully carried out. Otherwise her attempt will plunge us once more into impotence, into disintegration, into a non-existence which will last this time not for decades but for centuries.

The November revolutionaries had not this wisdom. Politically their insurrection remains an immortal stupidity. Looking back we realize how inadequate, how unoriginal, how "German" it was: as if we had wanted to make good the old proverb: "when God is bent on destroying Germans, He takes a German for His instrument." The instruments He chose for the Ninth of November were the German social-democrats, who had never given a thought to foreign politics, German pacifists who took on themselves the responsibility for disarming the German people, German doctrinaires who were simple-minded enough to entrust their country to the tender mercies of its enemies, to rely on their promises, to count on their disinterestedness. Their policy was drift: they took no bearings, they carried neither compass nor anchor. The nation is now enduring the consequences of this negation of all policy. The German people believed what they were told. They were not a politically-minded people. They followed their demagogue leaders. The leaders assured them that if the slaughter was to have an end some nation must lead the way. The German people ran a red flag up to their mast-head—understanding it to be really a white one—and were amazed when the other ships did not follow with red streamers. Instead, they saw each proudly flying its national flag as a flag of victory. The German people had intended to do the wise thing. They had done the unwise one.

Our scorn must be reserved for the intellectuals who had persuaded the German people to this folly. These revolutionary literati, with their "spiritual politics" had had no thought beyond such trivialities as suffrages and ballot-boxes. Their Heinrich Mann had promised us "a world set free" and we were confronted with a "world enslaved." These intellectual blockheads still maintain the eternal validity of their principles: World-Democracy, the League of Nations, International Arbitration, the End of War, the Reign of Peace. They will neither see, nor hear, nor confess that they bear the blame for the fact that all round us men are suffering under foreign domination, that four peace-treaties have created a host of plundered, homeless men, while wars continue. They still do not perceive the gulf between a "reason" which represents things as men would wish them, and an "understanding" which investigates and inexorably represents things as they are.

Revolution is self-help. The Revolution of the Ninth of November was directed—so they told us—against a backward state, against a system that was behind the times and was working mischief. Taking the words out of the mouths of our opponents, they told us that our Revolution was directed against a criminal government which was not only guilty of the outbreak of the World War, but guilty of unnecessarily and wantonly prolonging the War in order to bolster its tottering power. All this they told us. All this we believed. We had good reason to mistrust our rulers, those officials who had stood face to face with fate and in the hour of tragedy had never been able to rise above being mere "officials." But we might with even better reason have mistrusted ourselves, mistrusted our own credulity, mistrusted our dangerous readiness to take advice without critically examining the credentials of our advisers. The Revolution will have significance only if it is able to suck the entire people into its vortex and from the underlying strata bring to the top burning, fluid forces to displace the cold, petrified upper stratum of our ruling classes. The Revolution has disappointed many expectations, socialist and other. Its greatest disillusionment has been, however, that the People has thrown up no leaders, Democracy no statesmen. If the Revolution is to effect the necessary renewal of the nation it can only be by turning its back on all that for the last generation has been, and still is, considered most specifically "German."

Our political situation is terrible to contemplate. We owe it to the impotence of Revolution. We have been encaged, and the Allies strut up and down outside our bars. We sought ignominious refuge in a peace which left us only an empire's rump, which dismembered our father' inheritance, laid hands on our rivers and even forbade to us the air. We were presented with a Republic, whose basis is not the Constitution of Weimar but the Treaty of Versailles. We were made serfs. We have even acquired the servile spirit; there are among us francophils in love with our enemies and with their modes of thought. We witnesses of that most abhorred scene in the Pariser Platz: our army, after four years of fighting, after a hundred battles, was returning home. A Jew, a lawyer, a pacifist, a "people's representative," civilian of the civilians, a man who had helped to engineer the collapse behind the front, was the man who offered to our soldiers in the name of the Republic greeting and thanks. In flattering, patronizing words he spoke. . . . We were witnesses of this most shameful, most shameless scene of all. . . .

Yet there is something in us, not resigned to events as they have happened and yet prepared to consider them from another point of view. What would have happened if we had won? The William of Second spirit would have celebrated its utmost outward triumph. Yet our people would still have been the same who reacted with so much unwisdom to the Ninth of November. Would this people have been better able to endure victory? Who knows? We should have witnessed a different scene at the Brandenburg Gate: an inevitable scene: the Kaiser riding at the head of his paladins, posing like an equestrian statue to receive the congratulations of his grateful people. Or perhaps a repetition of that most distressing scene between the old Emperor and Bismarck in Versailles. And if the conduct of William I was not above human weakness, what might have been expected from his self-sufficient grandson?

Yes. There is a stirring in us which will not be stilled. It poses a question. It demands an answer. . . . And we reflect on the words which a great general addressed to his humiliated people: "Who knows? There may be some good in it."

4

The people did not want the Revolution. But they made it. So we got our revolutionary state; and we got our revolutionary statesmen, and we got our revolutionary Peace.

And now the inevitable consequences follow; and no man and foresee whether this life can ever be changed. Unless indeed the German people, under the yoke of foreign domination which it has accepted, is able to transform itself into a nationally-minded, into a politically-minded people, determined to be free. Meantime we must bear our life as best we may and grimly await the moment when present friction, intolerable circumstance, and the ignominy of our existence shall set the genius of our nation afire, when a political spirit shall awake among us to claim the reversion of the future—of which no one can rob us. Unless the nation itself renounces its reversion and its future.

Like every breach with the past, the German Revolution was pregnant with great possibilities, possibilities in domestic politics, possibilities in foreign politics. When the fraud was understood which the Entente had perpetrated, in which Wilson had acquiesced, the people was offered the greatest of all opportunities which is open to a nation betrayed. An immense indignation might have stirred the deluded nation to its depths. With a passionate gesture we might have flung in our enemies' teeth their breach of faith, we might have repudiated the Peace which they offered us in Versailles, together with the confession of war-guilt on which they based it. But the revolutionaries thought themselves particularly clever in accepting the perjury of the Entente—obvious though it already was—without serious protest. They thought it better to placate our enemies than to irritate them, and they gratified our enemies and themselves by loading the guilt for the outbreak of the War on to the government they had overthrown, thereby exonerating themselves for overthrowing it. We might have taken up the battle for our future German existence in the name of the admirable principles with which the American President had decoyed us; we might have taken the Entente at its word and insisted that the Treaty should honour these principles. With this politico-ethical background for our battle we could have sprung on the world a completed union with Austria, we could with one revolutionary stroke have solved the problem of a Greater Germany and thus have initiated a Central-European policy: all of which omissions must now be made good in an ever more distant future. We failed to grasp the decisive moment. We did not seize the decisive day. We left the decisive year to pass by. Everything happened as—considering the calibre of the men we had to deal with—it was bound to happen. Events took their fateful course. We were not free in our decisions; we were entangled in this false and half-hearted Revolution. There was no talk of introducing a new economic system. Though this Revolution thought it was a socialist revolution, Socialism was one of the things that it bungled. Our remarkable socialists made even more remarkable politicians. They decided in favour of western parliamentism, shrinking back from eastern terror-dictatorship. As soon as it ceased to be a question of theoretical discussion (which was always our strong suit) and became a question of practical application (in which we were always weak) we produced no original German revolutionary principles or ideas. We were true to one idea only: to give ourselves away.

The German revolutionaries will say in their own defence that they took over an inheritance. The answer to that is: if the old system bears the blame of the collapse, the new system bears the onus of the Peace. The new regime began its rule with the declaration that from henceforth all paths were open to the best man. As was seemly in a democracy, each man would owe his position not to his birth but to his gifts. We are entitled to ask the Revolution, and her child the Republic, that they should show us these "best men." Revolution and Republic have begotten no geniuses but only compromisers: wait-and-see men, not men of action: anvils not hammers: they have shown patience, not daring, *laissez-faire*, not enterprise—in no case creativeness. The Republic born of the Revolution echoed the outworn ideas of the nineteenth century; it produced no German thought. To find even a suggestion of original German ideas we have to turn to Communism and hunt among the welter of syndicalistic, anarchistic, mediaeval trains of thought inherited from the Peasants' War, or from Thomas Münzer, while German democracy remained enslaved by demagogues. To the lack of genius displayed by the republicans of the Revolution we owe the fate so banal, yet so tragic, that has been our lot in these last years.

The German democrats of the Revolution go so far as to be proud of this lack of genius. They boast that they put an end to the Revolution by their readiness to give way in every direction. They consider it a merit to have said "Yes" to every demand. We cringed from one fulfilment to another. We placated and placated. We issued warnings against passion, we made appeals to German patience. We could not deny that the demands made by our enemies under the terms of the Treaty we had signed, were impossible of fulfilment, but we tried to face total impossibility by some fraction of possibility. We procrastinated from day to day where we should have begun with a "No." We acquiesced in every suggestion. We let pressure be brought to bear, and not until we had our backs against the last wall, till no more evasion was possible, did we turn to our enemies as they presented their bill and show them our pockets—empty of cash, empty of ideas.

The democracy of the Revolution did not admit that they policy had been mistaken. They stifled every voice raised in protest. They persecuted the national and radical oppositions instead of rallying them against the common foe. If they ever ventured one step forward, their next step was a retreat. They pinned their hope to an awakening of world-wisdom, to some regenerated League of Nations, to TIME, instead of themselves compelling Time.

We continued to do our duty, as we are accustomed to do. We organized machinery. We issued propaganda. We wrote note after note. We acted courageously. We acted correctly. We acted under a political bureaucracy. We acted, as we seem for ever doomed to act, as political dilettanti.

Where was the Genius of the nation? Where was her *Daimón*?

5

The Revolution can never be un-made.

A revolution may be combated while there is yet time, while there is yet faith that help may be found for the nation in its need. Such help will most readily be found in the government which has hitherto been the nation's best protector. But once a revolution has become a fact, there is nothing left for the thinking man but to accept it as a new datum, a new starting-point.

Nothing can unmake the Revolution, nothing can make things be as if the Revolution had never been.

We believed before the War—and we thought we had grounds for the belief—that there could never be a revolution in Germany. A "German Revolution" was a contradiction in terms. German history was a non-revolutionary history, a history of reforms, renewals, reconstructions, which exercised an intellectual and spiritual influence on German and European life far greater than could have been exercised by a revolutionary break with the past. Whatever question arose, whether it was the relation between spiritual and temporal power, whether secular administration or theological principle, whether matters of faith or matters of knowledge, we liked to get down to fundamentals. Here we associated, there we disassociated, but we never really overthrew. All revolutionary paroxysms passed off, leaving little permanent trace. Our greatest revolutionary movement was in Luther's day, which was, however, also the day of Franz von Sickingen. But the passionate fire of the Reformation "died out in darkness" as Ulrich von Hutten expressed it, and was lost to the nation. The Peasants' War, begotten of the Reformation, was not lacking in genius, but it had no policy. Its consequences were conservative rather than revolutionary. The Thirty Years' War was the greatest event of our later history, but it was neither a French Revolution nor an English Revolution. Our later political battles were fought not on constitutional issues but on the question of the predominance in Germany of Austria or Prussia. Even the men of 1848 sought reform rather than revolution, though the existence among them of some revolutionary elements prevented their being the authors of such changes as took place in the Germany of their day. The foundation of Bismarck's Empire, a state that was the personification of order, seemed to put all revolution beyond the bounds of possibility.

Fate decreed otherwise. We were doomed to have our Revolution after all. And we chose for it the most inopportune moment conceivable, a moment when we were threatened from without as never yet a nation has been threatened. We sought to escape this foreign menace by domestic upheaval; we hoped to evade it by overthrowing the state. And now we are face to face with ruin, a ruin which even those who caused it cannot deny. There is nothing left to us but to try whether this luckless Revolution cannot be transformed from an episode of domestic politics into an episode of foreign politics, from a German event into a world event—transformed, and rendered fruitful.

The authors of the Revolution themselves can do nothing. They have failed us. There is nothing for us to do but to take the Revolution out of the hands of the revolutionaries. Shall we pursue it further? No. We must weave it into our history. A revolution is always a turning-point. The inevitable element in it cannot pass away. That must remain and modify the thought of a people for all time. The German Insurrection of the Ninth of November will never this exercise the force of a tradition. It will remain for ever an unsightly blot on German history, which deserves the silence in which we shall endeavour to shroud it. If the German nation is to learn through its sufferings to become politically-minded, it must see the Ninth of November in the light of all the terrible experiences of the four preceding years.

The revolutionaries sedulously endeavoured to make the German people forget those experiences. To a superficial observer it might we have seemed that these experiences had left no memory at all. A time came when we appeared to court forgetfulness. We had victories behind us; we made no attempt to celebrate them. As a nation we had done the utmost that our country demanded of us. Now we did not want to recall the fact; it was too painful. Whatever the reason, we erected no symbolic memorial of gratitude to our Unknown Soldier. Two millions of our dead, on the Marne, on the Somme, in Flanders, in Russia, Finland, Poland, in Italy, Rumania, Asia Minor and in all the seas, seemed to have died for their country in vain: and to have been forgotten. We did not meet the taunts of our enemies, nor counter their self-laudations, by pointing out, simply, proudly—a shade contemptuously—that WE are the people of the World War, as history will in due course record. We failed to repeat, and to repeat again, that we had held our own: One against Ten. We failed to reiterate that we had been decoyed by the lure of international ideals into a Revolution to which alone the Ten owed their final triumph. On the contrary; we allowed our German intellectuals, our pacifists, to chant us their insane hymn of *Gloria Victis*, in most cynical mockery of an unpolitical people whom they had deluded for once into political action.

After 1918 there were many men, their names unknown to fame, officers of the old army, officials of the old state, who voluntarily quitted a country and an epoch in which life for them was void of purpose. We have yet to hear of any revolutionary, any democrat, any pacifist—whose ideologies had brought the Revolution on us—who refused to survive the Betrayal of Versailles, because for him the empire of his dreams had set in treachery and self-deception.

Let us not compare what we Germans were in 1914 and are since 1918. Let us rather take note of a curious, present fact: on every side, on the Right no less than on the Left, a conviction is growing, a conviction which is one of the few held in common by our disintegrated nation, that we have turned our backs for ever on everything connected with the age of William II. Restorations are futile things, valued only by *émigrés* who have cut loose from patriotism but are willing enough to return to their own armchairs. Of all restorations, that of William II would be the most futile. History will do him justice. He is the type and figurehead and representative of an epoch to which his name is given. He was the most significant expression of an insignificant background. He led his age, a capricious and irresponsible leader. The future will judge him more leniently than the present. We have seen the verification of Hermann Conradi's prophecy, written one year after the last Kaiser's accession: "The future will rain wars and revolutions on us. What will the upshot be? We know only that property will be at stake, civilization will be at stake. One thing is certain: the Hohenzollerns will march at our head into the mists of this mystery-enshrouded future. Will a new age still have use for them? . . . That we cannot foresee."

If we were to bring William II back to this mutilated empire which he had once ruled as a German World-Empire, we should feel the contrasts of our life even more painfully than we do.

We are an immature people. We have perhaps a long history ahead of us. We have always taken round-about roads to find ourselves. World history did not end with our Revolution, as utopian dreamers, believers in world-justice, assured us that it would. They promised us an earthly paradise in which all peoples and nations and tongues would enjoy their lives in perpetual peace. With the Revolution, with the disillusionment that followed the Revolution, a new epoch in our history begins: a decisive epoch in which we are faced by a supreme and final test. We must as a people complete our transformation into a politically-minded nation: or as a nation we shall cease to exist. From our critical scrutiny of the Revolution we can gain something: from the uttermost humiliation with which these last eight years—and how many more to come?—have been overfilled, we can learn to distinguish what things have been our real loss, and what our real gain, and what perhaps both gain and loss.

One thing we have gained by the Revolution, which can, however, be only emotionally perceived. Yet it is unmistakably there. A subtle change has come over us all. A decision has been reached. The people are faced by problems which cannot be solved *for* them, problems which they themselves must solve. This change must not be confused with democracy which passes so easily over into demagogy. This change has since the Revolution dominated our public life, and the private life of each individuals. It has brought people nearer together, brought them into all sorts of relationships which would before have been socially impossible. It has given them *esprit de corps*. The War obliterated many distinctions which had existed, based for the most part on prejudices. In spite of hatreds, of hostilities, of class distinctions, of party politics, every German in Germany feels a fate-fraught sense of cohesion, which suggests that our people is a nation in the making.

When we come to think it out, we realize that the burden that has fallen from us was the incubus of amateurishness which lay like a curse over the nation during the epoch of William II. If he had won the War we might perhaps ultimately have overcome it by our own efforts. Returning triumphant from the battlefields where it had proved its prowess, our Youth might have set us free. But we have lost the World War which was to have opened the gates of the world to us. The Revolution has flung a people of sixty millions back into prison behind guarded boundaries. Yet these events have worked a spiritual conversion and made the German—who had become a slave to his dream of perfection, to his traditions and to his wealth—a man again.

We are a people with no actual present. We possess nothing but possibilities, distant and difficult of attainment. Yet we believe that the Revolution has opened up a path to these distant goals: a path which without the Revolution would not have been open: if the nation itself does not close it to itself once more.

6

The Revolutionaries of 1918 lost the War of 1914 because their Revolution was not a German revolution. They thought they had done all that was required of them when they imitated what the west had done before. They were far indeed from grasping, as the Russian Revolutionaries had done—more and more clearly with each passing year—that a people's revolution must be a national revolution, and acting consistently with this in mind.

The German revolutionaries made the German Revolution a western-parliamentary one, a constitutional and political revolution on the English and French model. But centuries have passed since 1689 and 1789. Meantime the west has accustomed itself to liberalism. Liberalism has taught the west to turn its principles into tactics to deceive the people. The west dubs this "democracy," though it has become evident enough how ill men thrive on a political diet of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

Thus it came about that the German Revolution developed into a liberal revolution. The revolutionaries of 1918 called themselves socialists, yet they did not seek to prevent this development.

Socialism which grew up beneath and alongside liberalism, demands justice. But the German revolutionaries' fateful Revolution did not realize justice between man and man, and had to look on while justice between nations was trampled under foot. We shall see that the fault lay in their socialism itself, which had always taken heed of classes, but never of nations. There can be no justice for men if there is not justice for nations first. For men can only live if their nations live also.

The problems of socialism remain with us. They include the problem of a new world-order which shall supersede the institutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: democracy, liberalism, and parliamentism, in an age of technical efficiency, of over-population, an age in which all participants lost the War.

We can only hope to solve this problem for Germany from a German starting-point, and perhaps in so doing we shall solve it also for Central Europe and the young states of Eastern Europe. If we cannot abjure our regrettable habit of thinking of the advantage of other nations before our own, we can take comfort in the thought that the solutions we arrive at will certainly benefit these other countries. But we must be prepared to find that there will be nations in the west who will offer the most strenuous opposition to any solution propounded by Germany, who will dispute with us every inch of the ground. In these intellectual matters, as in all others, we must be prepared to contest the ground. The Revolutionary of today is the Conservative of tomorrow. Let us not push the Revolution further, but let us develop the ideas which were dormant in the Revolution. Let us combine revolutionary and conservative ideas till we attain a set of condition under which we can hope to live again.

Let us win the Revolution!

What does that imply?

The Revolution set the seal on our collapse; let it set the seal on our resurrection.

What does that imply?

We had reached a point in our history when a detour and a new path were necessary. The War was such a detour, so was the collapse which ended the War. Let the Revolution prove to have been the opening up of a new path.

What does that imply?

There were problems in our history which would never have been soluble without a war and without a revolution. Let us make the War and the Revolution the means of solving them.

Germany's Third Empire

II. SOCIALIST

Each People has its own Socialism

1

The whole error of socialism is latent in one sentence of Karl Marx: "Hence men set themselves only such tasks as they can fulfil."

This is untrue. Men set themselves only such tasks as they cannot fulfil. It is their genius who inspired them. It is their *daimón* who spurs them on.

The essence of Utopia is that it is never realized. The essence of Christian hope is that it is never fulfilled. The essence of the millennium is that it lives in prophecy, but never in the present.

Marx did not offer any proofs of his assertion. If he had attempted to corroborate it from the history of the past, he would have had to bow to facts. He would have had to perceive that every future proved to be far indeed from what its preceding present had dreamed. Marx, however, amplified his assertion: "For if we look into the matter closely we find that a task is set only when material conditions are ripe for its fulfilment, or are in the process of ripening." But who is it who sets the task? For we cannot suppose that tasks set themselves. Who is it who formulates them and then avails himself of the existing material and spiritual conditions for their fulfilment? Apart from whether they are feasible or not, who sets them?

Marx was a penetrating materialist. But he did not rise above materialism. Marxism has explored all the metamorphoses of matter, but has not enquired about causes. Marx's materialistic dialectic has pushed to its utmost limit a creed which is content to explain everything that is, as the result of action and reaction. But his dogma is inadequate. He ignored the question of the underlying cause. He amassed material: concrete material, statistical material, rationalist material. The Marxists claim that herein lies his achievement, herein his title to fame. But the question remains: Who animates the material?

Marx believed that development is the result of a series of consequences, each one of which follows inevitably from the one before. He believed that not only was their direction predictable, but that the goal was also known: in his case the direction of the proletarian movement of the nineteenth century and the socialist goal of a near future. He did not perceive that things must be called into existence before they can develop, that their existence depends on a process of evolution which goes forward by leaps and bounds, the consequences of which are completely unpredictable. He failed to grasp that amongst things thus evolving and thus developing, a task does not necessarily evoke its own fulfilment, but evokes a counter-task which neutralizes and cancels it.

We men are perpetually setting sail for the Indies hoping to find some America *en route*. Our goals are realms not yet sighted, whose conditions—material and spiritual—we do not know. Only when we have paced these shores, can we look back over our course and point out the relation of cause and effect.

Till that time comes we have to depend on our will and our courage and the voice of our inspiration. Our fate is forged without our knowledge. We speak of the foresight of Providence, because we ourselves cannot foresee what is foreseen for us.

2

Marx was always uttering warnings against social utopias. But he spoke with the over-emphasis with which people repudiate the very qualities they themselves possess.

Marxism has in fact all the symptoms of a materialistic utopia. Marx credited the proletariat with the power to create a *perpetuum mobile*. Provided it was logically conceived it ought to be feasible. But the world itself is the *perpetuum mobile*. And Demiurgos allows no meddling with his job.

Rationalist logic bears the same relation to truth as statistics bear to reality. It embraces everything except what is vital. Logic convinces us of progress, but history refutes it. Men have always been setting out on fresh adventures without being sure of the way, or even of the goal. To this spirit of enterprise, that sets itself tasks without any certainty of being able to fulfil them, we owe all the values and achievements of history.

We owe these values, these achievements, to anything but calculation. The clever thinker would like to reduce life to a sum in arithmetic the answer to which must come out correctly. The role which calculation plays in history is in fact extremely small. We are bounded on every side by the incalculable. The shrewdest calculations have always been those which look beyond the obvious factors that can be weighed and measured, and reckon with the distant imponderabilia. Calculation can be best be valid for a short space of time where the measure of persons and circumstances can be taken. The calculator must always be prepared for unforeseen phenomena to upset his most careful reckonings and fling them on the scrapheap.

The Marxist calculations held good for some seventy-five years or so. They have now been smashed to smithereens, and the doctrinaire does not exist who can seccotine together the fragments of Karl Marx's vision. He saw that neither the positivist religion of Comte and Saint Simon, nor the phantasies of Cabet, Fourier and Father Enfantin, nor yet the social criticisms of Proudhon had availed to bring about a radical alteration in communal human life. He studies the history of revolutions and perceived that the "modern mythologies," as he called them, of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity had indeed revolutionized political institutions, but had left social institutions as they were before.

Christianity has failed to realize Christ, or to convey His message to men, and has allowed His redeeming power to be frittered away in a war of creeds. And what of the virtue on which Plato built his philosophers' state? It was a state founded on slavery. Plato's virtue has proved even more impotent than Christian faith. For uncounted millennia men have lived on the earth, and always some have been fortunate and some unfortunate. No religion, no humanitarianism, no statecraft has been able to abolish this injustice. No spiritual, moral or political influence has yet persuaded man to establish social justice. The fault lies with men themselves. They have not been able to rise to the conception. The flesh is weak, and man always thinks first of his "I." Marx conceived the idea of getting hold of man by his "I" and luring him by the weakness of the flesh.

How would it work to set up a mass-state in which each should have his place and his prosperity guaranteed? How would it work to turn to organize a social revolution from below? To appeal to the modern slave to organize a new, popular, economic, Spartacus rebellion? Marx envisaged the problem only from the outside. He attempted no preliminary conversion of individual men, he based his calculation on their common human nature and their all-too-human greed. He made his appeal, not to their strength but to their weakness, and gave no thought to the "loss of their soul" as he displayed before their eyes the "whole world" which they were invited to gain. The founders of all great religions had extolled an eternal life beside which this temporal life was negligible. Marx took the other course, he appealed crudely, sensually, to men's economic interest. His achievement was a ruse.

Some prophecies come true. There are some men gifted with a sensitivity towards the present, so acute, so penetrating, so far beyond the normal that they become, as it were, confidants of the future, and they possess powers enabling them to help to mould the future. Such men may be allowed to prophesy, but they must be men physically and mentally at one with the people. Marx was not such a one. He was a Jew, a stranger in Europe who nevertheless dared to meddle in the affairs of European peoples. He was not intimately in touch with their history; their past was not his past, and the traditions which had determined their present, were not his. He had not lived through the centuries with them, his feelings were different. Marx is only comprehensible through his Jewish origins. It is no accident that he displays Mosaic, Maccabean traits, traits of the Talmud—and the Ghetto. He is poles apart from Jesus, yet he stands at his side like a Judas who would fain make good his treachery to his Master. In all his writing there is not one word of love for men. Against a background of sinister passion there flame through his words the fires of hate, retaliation and revenge. Christ's message was supernational, therefore it could reach even the peoples of the north. Marx's message was international, therefore it was able to mislead Europe and set Europe by the ears. He addressed his message to the proletariat because he thought that amongst them national distinctions were non-existent. Jew that he was, national feeling was incomprehensible to him; rationalist that he was, national feeling was for him out of date. He ignored the upper strata of Europe because he did not belong to them and had no clue to the values that they had created through the centuries and had handed on as a precious heritage to their children, a heritage in which he and his forefathers had no share. He felt his affinity with the proletariat. He bade them abjure any national feeling they had had and learn to feel themselves a class apart. It did not occur to him that perhaps national socialism might be a condition of universal socialism; that men can only live if their nations live also.

Here lay his grave miscalculation. Marxism had proclaimed a blessing; it saw the coming of a curse. Marx set mankind a task in the belief that "the material conditions were ripe for its fulfilment, or were in process of ripening." But the World War overthrew his reckoning, and the Revolution that followed wiped it out. Marxism reckoned with men as an international proletariat, but it did not reckon with the world as it was, with the nations and the conflict between nations. Marxism counted on a highly-developed system of economics under which a socialist should replace a capitalist order of society. But a doctrine that thought in terms of economics only, was powerless in face of primary political exigencies which history cannot ignore.

Every tree is known by its fruits. So is Marxism. The secret of Christ's influence has lain in the eternal validity of His eternally unattainable perfection. Marx exercised a certain influence on the proletariat of Europe, but an influence limited in extent and short in duration. The whole spirit of Europe was against him, the spirit of two thousand years which the stroke of a pen cannot abolish. Marxism made headway only amongst the young nations who were aimless and unsure of themselves, amongst such Germans as had thrown overboard their political tradition, amongst the Russians who had broken loose from theirs. But even here Marxism ultimately failed. It seemed triumphant in the early days of revolution, but it was not long before it found itself at odds with ineffaceable national characteristics, and with the local economic conditions of each country. In Russia Marxism was compelled to compromise with world-capitalism; in Germany it was compelled to compromise with the Republic, with democracy and with parliamentism which are German—for the moment.

Instead of progress there came retrogression. The War left behind victorious and conquered nations, but both alike had to readjust themselves to conditions the very opposite of what the Marxist had foreseen. Marx had prophesied: "in proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another ceases, the exploitation of one nation by another will also cease." The War saw the establishment of that state pictured by Thomas More, whose pacific citizens arrange for mercenaries to do their fighting—whose statesmen corrupt the leaders of the enemy country and undermine its morale by propaganda—whose inhabitants exploit victory to introduce slavery, and enjoy themselves in peace without the necessity of work by compelling their conquered neighbour to work for them.

Such is the world in which we live today: not Karl Marx's world. We are the more bound to expose the miscalculations of Marxism that—

Socialism is unwilling to acknowledge them. To do so would be to demonstrate all too unmistakably why the Socialist Revolution failed both politically and economically.

3

The Revolution does not lack its own philosophy.

A materialist philosophy, and a materialist conception of history were well adapted to a materialist revolution.

When the Revolution broke out—in Russia, in Germany—it seemed as if the Year 1 of the new era had dawned which should prove the Marxist thesis to be valid: namely, that far from man's existence being rooted in man's consciousness, man's consciousness is on the other hand rooted in man's economic existence.

The materialist outlook is anthropomorphic. It does not lift man metaphysically above and beyond himself, but rationalistically drags him down to what it conceives to be his real self. It was the rationalist age of enlightenment that saw the birth of this philosophy. Up to that time man's thought had always been cosmic; it had found its justification in the divine justice and the divine holiness. It was conscious of a spiritual immanence. The rationalist's pride was to see only the animal in man. The humanist had stressed the mystic tie that binds the creature to the Creator. The rationalist created *l'homme machine*, a living automaton, a miracle of mud. Creation was explained not through the Creator but through the creature, and the creature was reduced to the sum of the matter of which he was composed and on which he was nourished. Rousseau's vegetative ideal, which aimed at being philanthropic, only added a sentimental touch. The French Revolution put these theories politically to the test and demanded "rights" for the enlightened man, expressly based on his "physical needs."

German thought rebelled against this degradation of man. German minds took heed of the spiritual as well as the bodily needs of man and evolved the conception of the "education of the Human Race," by which all that had been lost might be re-won. Their interpretation of universal history had nothing to do with a mechanical "Progress," but passionately sought to recapture for man the ideals he had abandoned. Our escape from rationalism to idealism was signalized by the attention's being directed not to human rights but to human dignity. More than a hundred years ago Kant said: "Man cannot think too highly of Mankind."

But this idea was too lofty for us. Kant's successors lived up to Kant's ideas as best they could, and in the period immediately following him they succeeded in maintaining themselves on a fairly high spiritual level. But they were too easily satisfied with the height they had attained. The idealist conception of history became too familiar, was too easily taken for granted and lost its force. Thus the field was again left open to the materialist conception of history which sought to explain man's historical existence from his economic circumstances. This tendency set in immediately after Hegel. The idealist idea of evolution was now interpreted biologically, and Marx was entirely logical when he took over Hegel's dialectic, turned it "upside down," as he expressed it, and discovered the "rational kernel" in the "mystic shell," proceeding then to fill the shell with materialist and revolutionary content.

Social institutions were in those days being exposed to far-reaching changes. Large-scale industry was developing. A working-class was being evolved, the contractor was becoming the capitalist. The age of world-economics began in England. These sociological phenomena challenged attention. The materialists brought to the task clear-sightedness, experience, empiric observation, socialist insistence and, to a certain extent, also a practical scientific method. In this lay their strength, in this their limitation. They accumulated facts but they did not interpret them. The disciples of Saint Simon re-interpreted Christianity preaching the rehabilitation of the flesh and happiness on earth to mankind in the mass. But positivism devoted so much thought to mankind in the mass that it ignored the individual man. Comte even went so far as to explain that for him "individual man" simply did not exist; "only mankind exists, for we owe all our development to society."

The materialist conception of history made its début as a science of sociology, directed towards the future, but applicable to the present and explanatory of the past. Hegel had intentionally confined history to the history of states. The materialist now confined it to economics. Marx denied later that he had ever considered the "economic factor" as the "sole decisive factor," and Marxists have pointed out that amongst the subject deserving of future attention he had made headlines such as "nations, races, etc." But these afterthoughts have been tacked on to the materialist conception of history without in any way modifying or correcting it. It was superfluous for Marx and Engels to try to patch their doctrines in order to "avoid misunderstandings." The materialist conception of history admits of no misunderstanding. Its significance lies in the consistent one-sidedness with which it has been thought out to the very end. It is one massive unified structure erected in the field of historical thought. It cannot be tampered with. It can only be overthrown. If Marx and Engels had seriously pursued their belated lines of thought they would have been compelled to recognize that their whole thought-structure was erected on a foundation of preconceptions. We must judge their building by its foundation. It is one system amongst many others—not the only system, as Marx and Engels contended—a system essentially of its own day, as ephemeral as the period that gave it birth. Its authors conceived that they had built for all time: that they were the prophets of Tomorrow, the sociological critics of Today and the philosophical historians of Yesterday.

Marx's examination of Hegel's thought convinced him that "legal institutions and state constitutions cannot be understood by themselves, nor yet explained by the so-called general development of the human mind, but they have their roots in material human circumstances." Marx saw the "economic movement" not indeed as the sole human movement, but as "by far the strongest," the "most decisive," the "most original." Following him, the Marxists assumed that the State, Law, Power, the whole complex of ideas which the non-materialist interprets as man's adaptation to reality, were in fact a "superstructure" which man had built on the foundation of his "economics." The "sum of the circumstances of production" determined, Marx asserted, the economic structure of society, and formed "the real basis on which a legal and political superstructure is reared." Summing up, he said: "the methods of production condition all the social, political and intellectual processes of life." Nothing could be more explicit.

Marx endeavoured to corroborate his theses by reference to history. This imprudence exposes the weakness of his case. History is for Marx solely the "history of class war." He fine-combed successive centuries to see whether their most heroic episodes might not prove to have some subtle connection with money or "the acquisition of wealth," or at least "the acquisition of power." He convinced himself that such connection underlay the relations of serfs to their masters, of the towns to their feudal lords, and of monarchs to their barons. The German nobles of the Wars of Liberation are for him "the hired mercenaries of England," while the Tory's passion for "King and Constitution" is a cloak for devotion to his "ground-rents."

It is of course undeniable that every period has its materialistic phenomena; that the most sacred of causes is accompanied by less sacred manifestations, that there have always been men, parties and classes actuated by base motives of self-interest. The economic factor can never be eliminated from human affairs; we must certainly not overlook it, but neither must we forget that it is a factor only and not the whole.

The materialist conception of history cannot go outside its own domain: the material. When Marx invades the intellectual and spiritual domain, which he had not observed, because as a materialist it was foreign to him, he had recourse to theories of action and reaction and interaction between the material and the spiritual. Marx enquired: "What does the history of ideas prove, but that intellectual production varied with material production?" This is unquestionably true. The question is which alters which? Does the material alter the intellectuals? or does the intellectual alter the material? Marx assumed the former. But which comes first: man himself? or man's power of action, his power to make things happen and his power to let things slide? Our opinion is that man came first. Marx opined that it needed no profound reflection to see that "according to the circumstances of his life, according to his social relations, according to his social existence, his ideas, views, and conceptions, in short his consciousness, are altered." It is our opinion that consciousness came first and that consciousness altered life. Man himself made an alteration of conditions possible. It is man who makes history, not history man. In the economic sphere therefore it is not the new economic order which radically alters life, but the radically altered life which creates a new economic order. The ideas of Power, Law and State are not a "superstructure" reared by man on an economic basis, as Marx postulated. The exact opposite is the case: the ideas of Power, Law and State are the foundations on which the structure of economics is reared. History is not independent of economics, but she first creates economics, and hence economics are dependent on history. The primary laws of history are political laws; economic laws are secondary. Marx was so obsessed with economics that he ignored nations, and individuals he ignored more completely still. Marx seriously believe that the State was doomed, that history would dissolve in economics.

The materialist conception of history made its first mistake when it assumed that once upon a time, when conditions were patriarchal, a state-less human society had existed. History opens with the hostility of groups, which cling together for their own defence. The materialist conception of history made its second mistake when it conceived that the future would restore a state-less human society. Economics can never replace the state, not even in domestic politics, still less in foreign politics. A people could not even be fed without a government. How can the impulses, the passions, the will, the ambition, the gifts, the enterprise of the nations be regulated and directed except by the state? Socialism demands a state-less society, but it ignores the necessity of government, and it shuts its eyes to the existence of nations. To renounce the state is to renounce national history.

Marx once remarked that: man must "prove in practice" the validity of his thought. The materialist conception of history had had this opportunity of putting its thinking to a practical test. We have had a World War; amongst the motives for the War the foremost were political motives, motives of State, of Power, or Justice—or Injustice, as the case may be—and, secondarily, economic motives. The consequence was that we have had to experience a Peace which was first and foremost a Peace of State, Power, and Injustice, and that we have experienced a Revolution which set out to be a Socialist Revolution but ended by leaving the states still in existence: powerful states for the conquerors, impotent states for the conquered. History gave her verdict for the state, while the shattered economic system, far from leading to a new economic order, was abandoned to its fate and proved wholly unable to help itself. History gave the verdict, not for Marx but for Hegel. Napoleon once said: *la politique c'est le destin*; and he was right. In so far as we had been "economic men" we sank to the lowest level of human thought, that most contemptible plane on which the dread sentence is pronounced: "fate is economics." Here German thought—or, to be more exact, thought expressed in German—reached its nadir.

Let us here note that to think according to laws which have again and again proved their validity, is to be reputed "conservative," while to abandon oneself to expectations which are never fulfilled, is to be reputed "progressive."

4

The materialist conception of history boasted itself a science of experience. The socialist here saddled himself with a paradox since he is speculating about a hypothetical future of which in the nature of things experience can know nothing.

The socialist was nevertheless uncritical enough to summon natural science to his aid, hoping to get reinforcements for his theories of the future. He therefore called Darwin as a witness in the case. Marx had announced that "natural selection" although "coarsely expounded in English fashion" might be taken "as the scientific basis of our theories." Following him, Engels assured his disciples that the fundamental economic thought underlying the Communist Manifesto was "to base the science of history on the same law of progress that Darwin had shown to be valid for natural science."

Someone should have at once called the socialist's attention to the fact that Darwin's evidence proved the case for the other side. The socialist, however, was determined to have his science of sociology at any price, and would not be instructed. The German socialist democrat next seized on the principle of natural adaptability and good old Bebel, ever full of scientific zeal, hastened to draw the deduction: since Darwin has proved that organisms adapt themselves to their environment, all the socialist need do is to provide man with the desired social conditions and the human animal will immediately modify its character to match. It is only necessary to substitute "mankind" for "nations" and all national sentiment will be eradicated. It was left to the natural scientists to point out to Bebel that his new social organization would have passed away centuries before mankind had had time to adapt itself. The socialist assumed that new social conditions could forthwith create a new human animal. But history cannot so easily be blotted out, nor a people with its country and its language. There exist pre-prehistoric factors and eternal forces which unfailingly reassert themselves and make a mockery of abstract calculation.

Thus the materialist conception of history has every natural science against it, and in its favour nothing but the popular pamphleteering of bogus "science." Eager as the socialist professes to be for education and enlightenment, he lent no ear to the teaching of Ernst von Baer, though from him he might have learned that evolution begs the question of origins, and that we can only explain evolution when we postulate an original act of creation to which all life, not excepting man's, owes its existence. The socialist was equally deaf to the teaching of Moritz Wagner, whose theory of separation supplemented the theory of selection. This might have taught him something valuable about the origin of nations, since separation in space is the compelling cause of the differentiation of species, and the socialist has got after all to reckon with the existence of nations in the present, even if he pictures a future without them. The social democrat has been equally deaf to the researches of Ludwig Wolkmann, who examined and refuted the Marxist position from the standpoints of anthropology, morphology and genealogy. The socialist refuses to take heed either of nations or of individuals; he abhors dualism and takes refuge in the commonplaces of monism. He denies that the existence of opposites is a principle of nature, that there can be a dualism of mind and matter, and that inside this dualism the human mind has the organizing initiative. He will not acknowledge that man has himself evolved his body; that man's brain dictated the upright attitude; that man's history has been his own and greatest achievement.

Schiller long ago formulated the idealist conception of history, which sees in man a free moral agent, controlling nature. The materialists never got beyond the positivist point of view which confines history to an attempt to understand conditions, describe their phenomena and analyse their components. There is, however, another point of view possible: a metaphysical, which includes the physical, an intellectual, which includes the scientific: a point of view which recognizes the sublimity and rises above the degradation of man: the only point of view from which an answer is possible to the question: Who created the circumstances? It is no answer to reply that the circumstances created themselves. Marx never allowed himself to speculate whether perhaps materialism might not be merely a transition to some greater principle behind. He clung to the assertion that men make their own history, not as free agents, but under the compulsion of given circumstances. Again we ask: but who created the circumstances? There can only be one answer: Man himself is the datum.

Materialism would be vindicated if mankind had produced nothing but matter. But mankind has produced values, a whole hierarchy of values, amongst which material values take the lowest place. Material conditions are easily observed, easily examined, easily calculated, easily reduced to statistics. They readily tempt a rough-and-ready thinker, and still more readily tempt the masses who never think—though as we saw in our own Revolution they can on occasion act—to give an *a priori* position to the physical forces and to give at most an *a posteriori* position to the metaphysical, if not to deny the latter altogether. But the course of history is not determined by material forces, but by imponderabilia.

The materialist conception of history, which gives economics greater weight than man, is a denial of history; it denies all spiritual values and takes as its political ideal a socialist order of society after the establishment of which the only task left to man will be to regulate his own digestion. The materialist conception of history is an expression of the nineteenth century and of the twentieth century to date. Its materialist historians judge other periods by their own. It would have been true and straightforward if the Marxist was content to say: this is a picture of us men as we are today—poor and unhappy and exploited, in our age of factories and stock exchanges; mean-minded also, and realist, and fallen far from the glory of greater generations. But the Marxist has not been content to say this. On the contrary he has taken pride in reducing the spiritual achievements of all time to hypothetical material motives. He has allied himself with the psycho-analytic method—a natural product of materialist thought—which takes more pleasure in exploring man's shame than his glory. Man revolts against the merely animal in himself; he is filled with the determination not to live for bread alone—or, at a later stage, not alone for economics—he achieves consciousness of his human dignity.

The materialist conception of history has never taken cognizance of these things. It has concentrated on half man's history: and the less creditable half. The one-sidedness of the socialist's philosophy has brought disaster on the socialist; he has thought economically but not politically. The high economic development of a materialistic age brought in its train, not socialism, as Marx had hoped, but: the World War. Its outbreak brought other historical forces into play than class contrasts and class war. Even if economic rivalries had been the sole causes of the War, the War would still not have been possible without the preceding national rivalries and the ideas of justice or injustice that accompanied them. National passions, transcending economics, caused the War; and love of injustice—posing as love of justice—inspired the Peace. The Marxist and the Socialist had reckoned without these forces. The World War restored history to her due place, and among the most mighty lessons of history is this: that politics, not economics, determine the course of history. Hence it comes that the socialist, who for one brief moment hoped that he would come to power and be able to dissolve capitalist society, and establish a glorified economic regime, finds himself confronted instead with a chaos of sick, shattered, insane economics.

When the Revolution first broke out the socialists were full of good hope. True, the party began to feel a slight shiver of nervousness as they reflected on the possible effect on foreign politics of their Ninth of November; a slight uneasiness in the face of history, to which they had never given a thought, and by which they would now be held responsible. The revolutionary ideologue, however, Robert Müller, an outsider of Marxism, coined the formula of "Durchwirtschaftung" ("Super-economics"). Socialism should bring release from matter. The super-economics which socialism should bring to birth would be hailed as an act of human emancipation. A super-economic constitution should set man free from all anxiety about his daily bread. Rational economics should give man the key of paradise. Instead of achieving economic emancipation we have been plunged into an aggravated economic slavery that beggars all previous experience. We thought only of economics, of bills of exchange, of reparations. We thought of today's prices, and yesterday's prices, and the prices of tomorrow. We thought of tariffs and index figures, of strikes and a rise in wages. The morning's dollar level became the substitute for morning prayer. We are still thinking of nothing but the miseries of today: the capitalist and proletarian think of nothing else. We have sunk to a depth which man never reached before: the materialist conception of history has reached its zenith.

Can this last forever? We know that it cannot. Disgust at materialism, at ourselves, has seized us. Reaction has set in, a reaction against socialism itself. Socialism can only help if it can purge itself of its materialism, its rationalism and—what has been the most fatal thing of all—its liberalism.

The socialist party cannot take this line; it is tied up with opportunism, whether it remains radical, as in Russia, or only poses as being radical, as in Germany. But the individual socialist can take it, socialist youth can take it, the socialist working man can take it. They can turn their backs on intellectual socialism which has deceived them and adopt an emotional socialism which opens wider vistas than Marxist calculations.

The German communist feels he has the Marxist logic behind him; and so he has; he would have to give up utopia if he gave up Marxism. But if he will give it up, he gains much in exchange for a doctrine that has been exploded and the chaos in which he is at present plunged. Marxism is most logical; but for sheer logic it entirely missed reality, when the World War brought it face to face with facts which had not been on the agenda.

The one fact of the Marxist programme that remains is the proletariat. But the outcome of the World War had revealed the fact that the problems of the proletariat are not class problems but national problems.

The Third International still feeds out of the hand of the Bolshevists. Socialism has tottered across the floor and taken refuge under the wing of democracy. The proletariat remains, but from a party point of view it is now the case that socialist and proletarian are no longer synonymous terms.

The socialist was unable to give an answer to proletarian problems. The question of the proletariat remains an open question, vast, obscure, alarming—but a question apart.

5

The socialist catastrophe goes back to the Marxist dogmas. It goes back the disciples, hangers-on, and pioneers of Marxism. It goes back to what used to enjoy a European fame as classic socialism: the German Socialism of the German Social Democrat.

Marx had expressly urged the German proletarian to be "the theorist of the European proletariat," and Engels boasted that the German socialist was proud to claim descent not only from Saint Simon, Fourier and Owen, but also from Kant, Hegel and Fichte. The seventy-five years of German socialism from its birth to the outbreak of the World War showed little enough trace of this august descent. It would seem that the "inversion" of Hegelian philosophy which Marx had effected, and buried German socialism under such a mass of matter that it had lost all power to think historically or act politically. It relied wholly on Marxian logic, and in the belief that logic was eternally unchangeable, abstained from applying to it the tests of continually-changing reality. Among the exegetists of Marxism who sought scientific corroboration for the socialist creed Kautsky must never be forgotten, for he succeeded in writing books distinguished by a complete absence of thought. These pamphlets, for they deserve no more dignified title, lowered the standard which people had begun to demand of socialist literature. Materialism has produced no classic, while the idealism of philosophic history has influenced historians of the calibre of Ranke and Jakob Burckhardt, beside whom there exists no materialist historian worthy of mention.

The German socialist was a good party man. His Marxian faith was of so orthodox a quality that his mind was closed to all the demands of political reality. The German social democrats were ruined by the combination of agitation and enlightenment. They accepted uncritically everything which lent itself to propaganda, everything which seemed "radical," everything which seemed "new." This was their undoing. The German socialist believed that he thought internationally, while not attempting to inform himself about foreign affairs. The pride of the party was in its organization, which was masterly. Even the anti-militarism of the Social Democrats' programme did not prevent them feeling flattered when their organization was compared with that of the Prussian army and the discipline of both was held up as a proof of German practical efficiency. But they avoided the question: in what contingency would this socialist organization be called upon for service—and would this contingency possibly be one of foreign politics—and under what colours would the organization march? Meanwhile the honest German working man was made to learn all the clauses of the communist manifesto by heart, especially the last which summoned the proletariat of all nations to unite. A non-existent International was lauded, and at congresses the International Song was sung to the delegates of other countries. The foreigners were greeted by the strains of the Marseillaise sung with great cordiality and with that odd reverence which the domestically-minded German *petit bourgeois* loves to accord to everything exotic. All this contributed, as it was bound to do, to the misleading and ultimately to the ruin of our own people.

It was easy to detect traces of the English origin of the system that Marx and Engels left; its originators had evidently been students of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. We need not stress the fact that the German social democrats did not take up the lines of thought that had been at least sketched out by Marx and Engels, bearing on the political and economic inter-relations of the nations, nor even attempt to pursue the more serious domestic trains of thought of Freiherr von Stein. The most valuable of all studies for them would have been the works of the great German political economist, Friedrich List, who superseded the English maxims by his national system and sketched for Central Europe a continental economic plan centred on Germany. In a period dominated by the Manchester and later by the imperialist school of thought, he was observant of the changes in the relative strengths of the nations and the rise of those tensions which precipitated the World War. But the socialists left Friedrich List out of their curriculum. The German socialist who was all for Marxist class warfare, and ignored Darwin's nature warfare, felt that his pacifism demanded of him that he should close his eyes to the possibility of any war between the European nations. He preferred indeed to combat German militarism, and thus to act against the interests of his own people. It would have been perhaps too much to expect that the German socialist should take account of current imperialist ideals. These were not allowed for in the Marxist doctrine, but they were evidence that there were some Germans, at home or abroad, who had a mental picture of the real world we lived in.

Amongst his other omissions the socialist omitted to pay attention to the most serious of all the problems that confront civilized states: the problem of over-population. Marx had of course been guilty of the same omission. There are nations who possess land and space and food supplies and raw materials and freedom to move and expand: and there are nations who do not. There are therefore nations who have no proletariat, or only a negligible one on the fringes of an economic system built up on national self-sufficiency and colonial exploitation, and who can find a place for their small excess population in industry. There are other nations whose natural agrarian economy is superseded by artificial industrial economy, within whose borders the population is tightly packed, and chafes and jars and jostles seeking an outlet in vain. The countries with a declining population can live in comfort, the over-populated countries cannot. Marxism is powerless in face of these laws of population. The socialist is in love with justice; but there can be no justice for individuals until there is justice for nations.

In the early days of socialism it was recognized that the inequalities of national possessions constituted a problem. Proudhon had perceived that the question of property was a question of land, and had spoken of an equal distribution of the world, and suggested that where inequalities had arisen they should be met by a redistribution in every generation. Marx, however, dismissed Proudhon as a brilliant sophist who dealt in paradoxes and accused him of "scientific charlatanism and political opportunism." Marx himself spoke of a "law of population," but he referred to private property and not to national property, to the consequence and not the cause. Marx spoke of the "over-population amongst the working classes" as "an inevitable product of the development of wealth on a capitalistic basis," the product of the accumulation of capital under industrial conditions. He considered this surplus mass of "easily exploited human material" as "independent of the actual increase in population." Marxism here argues in defiance of its own theories, for it is not industry which has caused over-population, but over-population which has made industry possible.

The German social democrat has clung to the concentration theory and to the accumulation theory and to the theory of catastrophe. He is only now beginning to direct his attention to nations and not to classes alone. He has at last—most reluctantly, be it admitted,—given some thought to agrarian socialism. He was unwilling to confess that there existed a class of manual labourers who did not feel themselves proletarians, but he is now at least approaching the problems of the national food supply. At no time has he, however, ventured to face the question of over-population, the most urgent of all social problems which began to call for attention in the '80's when large-scale emigration proved that we were, as Hans Grimm phrased it, "a people without room." This same German social democrat who contrived to reconcile Darwinism with pacifism—undisturbed by the reflection that Nature represents a fight for existence in which the victor is the survivor—never appears to have contemplated the possibility of a struggle between the nations in which the German nation might be defeated, though an increasing and industrious population had a right to victory. The German social democrat would not see that the solution of the over-population problem *is* socialism. He would not ask whether the true system for regulating the production and consumption of an excess population might not be found in imperialism. He repeated parrot-wise that imperialism was a system for the exploitation of foreign countries and, like capital, a matter of profit only.

Yet the thesis might well have been maintained—and brought home to the proletariat—that the possession of the earth is the means indicated for an over-populated country to find means of livelihood: a practical, living, politically workable thesis. By an irony of fate the truth of this has been revealed to the working classes of two countries, France and England, whose populations are decreasing, and has been concealed from the German working man, the inhabitant of an over-populated country. In England every stratum of the people is aware that power takes precedence of economics. The trusting German proletariat believed what its social democrat leaders preached: that a day was coming when states and nations would be no more, when all men would possess the earth in common, and providential economics would care for the well-being of the masses.

It would have required socialists of vision to disentangle preconceived ideas from political realities. Such men were not forthcoming. No wonder that our people were unprepared for the World War, when their socialist leaders were so unprepared.

Neither the outbreak nor the issue of the War has availed to alter this mental attitude of the German social democrats. Some of them it is true now wail: "Too Late" when they see our colonies snatched from us, whose acquisition they so bitterly opposed. With our colonies we have lost our supplies of raw material and our openings for emigration. But still the German socialist will not face the population question, because he suspects that the problem is one of national warfare transcending class warfare.

The German socialist has been told that there twenty million souls too many in Germany. He does not let himself realize that these are his own proletarians—for Germany has become a proletarian people, and anyone may now belong to the proletariat. He tries to talk us out of all anxiety, and assures the German working man that there is room in Germany for all Germans. In proof whereof he quotes the fact that before the War we were welcoming among us hundreds of thousands of Poles and Italians. He does not see that the population problem is here crossed by a cultural problem. Thanks to the widespread technical ability of our people, to our national education, to our admirable military service and to our defence training, our excess population, whether on the land or in the town, is qualified for higher-grade work. We were able to hand over "lower-grade" tasks to illiterate Poles, Italians and what not. The twenty million of our excess population are a mentally superior proletariat; they are too good for coolie work. The problem that they present is emphasized, not solved, by pointing out that we used to have room for coolie labour from other countries.

The population problem is THE problem of Germany: a socialist problem if you will, but more exactly a German problem. Since access to the outer world is forbidden us we must look for its solution within our own borders; and since it cannot there be solved, a day must come when we shall burst our frontiers and seek and find it outside.

6

The immediate result of the War is that the declining populations have won and the growing populations have lost.

A just peace was promised to the conquered, and solemnly guaranteed. But the victors exploited the peace to give to those who already had.

The victors have no population problems. Their countries give a home to all who speak their tongue. In addition they possess other lands to which their people may migrate. They have divided up the globe between them. Since the word "annexation" has acquired an ugly ring, and "sphere of influence" is no less suspect, they have invented the idea of the mandate and conferred it on themselves through the League of Nations. They have now not enough people to take possession of these countries and administer them to full advantage, or to bring them up to that level of progress which they consider it their peculiar privilege to promote. The population problem of the victors is that of declining populations.

It must be conceded that the British are a nation of enterprising people with a great colonial and dominion tradition. They comprise some fifty million English, Scotch and Irish on whom they draw for the whole Anglo-Saxon empire. And though they are nowadays in difficulties—difficulties primarily of numbers;—though they are now withdrawing from their remoter outposts in Murman and Persia and have stooped to various concessions in Egypt, India and Turkey, yet they will certainly find some expedient, by judicious redistribution or by admitting others to partnership, unless insurrection or loss of territory puts an end to their domination of the world.

The French on the other hand are helpless in face of their depopulation problems. They have been striving in vain for the last forty years to maintain their forty million. They have the greatest difficulty in producing enough white French citizens to break in their black French population for purposes of robbery. Yet they also possess half the world which the British awarded them as the price of the World War. The self-centred Frenchman, however, never willingly lives outside France. His preference is for Paris, where he encourages people from other countries to come and admire him. He is unaware how much behind the times his empty country is, with its sparse population and its little houses in which the rentier can thrive but not the pioneer. France has not enough people to meet the demands of her own old country, still less enough to bear the burden of work in new and distant countries. The Frenchman is no colonizer, no imperialist; he is merely a slave-driver wherever he happens to have power. His neglected colonies are simply plundering-stations which he defends with a Foreign Legion recruited from the unfortunates of Europe. On the Rhine he maintains African troops for a thrust against Germany, so that the least-populous country in Europe may politically dominate the most densely populated. Surely the day will come—must come—when this living paradox which Versailles created shall have an end.

The population problem lifts its head wherever there is a people which has not living room proportionate to its numbers and lacks the opportunity for its people to earn their living outside, wherever a growing population is forced to draw from abroad its food supplies and the raw or half-raw materials for its industry. The population problem cannot be isolated; it develops into an economic and then into a political problem: the problem of all blockaded states. The problem prevails amongst all nations who as a result of the War have lost the power to dispose freely of their human resources. Russia is another victim; for though she has room enough for her millions, she lacks free access to her nearest and most important neighbours. She is driven to barter with the capitalist powers, offering economic concessions that imperil her national independence in exchange for freedom of trade. Even Italy is a victim; for she is driven to divert her emigration to South America, though Tunis and Algiers lie at her doors obviously destined to absorb her surplus population, did they not belong to underpopulated France.

The population problem unites all conquered peoples in a common cause; and wherever it remains unsolved the nation is in effect a conquered people. Will the German socialist not at least grasp the fact that German pre-war imperialism was a valiant attempt to solve the population problem? It put an end to the leakage from Germany. Though it was only a temporary and imperfect attempt at solution, it at least enabled considerable sections of our people to continue to live in Germany whom we should otherwise have had to lose. It developed industry and trade to the point that over sixty million people were able to find work in a country naturally able to support only forty million. It perfected labour-saving technique which paradoxically gave more employment. Our colonial possession were for the moment modest enough, but our imperialism was taking thought for their increase and extension: it was thinking of the future.

When our imperialism lost the War, our socialism lost it also. Before the social problem of classes can be solved, the national problems must be solved, and the chief of these is the German problem. The English working man can live because his country possesses the power to cater for its nationals; the French can live because they have more space than people. But the Russians cannot live because they do not know what they can work with or what they can live on; and the German, Italian and Central European peoples cannot live because they do not know either where they can work or how they can exist.

The age of enlightenment enlightened us about everything except the vital conditions of human life. Its omissions are now being repaired by belated advice. Neo-Malthusianism is teaching us that human numbers can be brought into relation to available space. With a characteristically German lack of political insight Wilhelm Dons—who was obsessed by the problem of over-population—evolved the idea of deliberate population restriction as a cultural achievement, and found aesthetic grounds for his crusade against "numerical expansion." Hatred for mankind in the mass made him go so far as to state that it mattered far less whom the earth ultimately belonged to, than what it looked like. Could anything be more abhorrent than his picture of the world as a sort of nature sanctuary whose language is Esperanto? German imperialism might have made our world mighty also in its outward forms. But the outcome of the War compels the artist modestly to turn to handicraft. He has ceased to be one of the luxuries of a luxury-civilization. He need not indulge in the vain hope that he, who is only a bye-product of history, can exercise a formative influence on history itself.

It is in vain to study statistics, to found scientific institutes for research into population problems to regulate the relations between nations. It is in vain to hope that international pacifism will be able to teach the nations to have a population conscience. Since Versailles we know that such hopes are German illusions. The efforts that have been made to solve our economic difficulties by founding settlements for ex-soldiers and for unemployed, and thus by intensive small-scale agriculture to make room for ourselves, deserve more serious attention. Ex-servicemen's settlements are a natural post-war phenomenon, but they are only possible on a large scale for a victorious people, not for a conquered people, whose territory has been curtailed. Land-settlement makes no appeal to the multitude. It is a private, at most a corporative solution of the population problem, but not a socialist solution. At best it offers a solution to the individual, but not to the nation.

The experience of these land-settlements has proved that we cannot meet the population problem by partial palliatives. The issue at stake is the nation's freedom of movement which we have forfeited. It has been calculated that there is still room in Germany for another five million. Even if this maximum figure were theoretically correct, it is practically false and psychologically false. It reckons with men of sedentary, not with men of enterprising disposition. It offers no solution to the emigrant and the adventurer. The man who finds no place for him in the home country wants to travel and see the world before deciding where to settle down. Land-settlements within Germany are a counsel of despair. Even if we succeeded in planting people in every corner of Germany we should only create a China-in-Europe. And if we succeeded in making this China-in-Europe into one immense market garden, we should do so only at the sacrifice of our deepest instincts: the urge to dare, to undertake, to conquer. Nothing chafed us so much before the War as the fact that large-scale thinking was forbidden us. Are we now to moulder in pettiness?

Neo-Malthusianism offers us counsel: to restrict our birth-rate. This is no heroic solution. Over-population is part of Nature's design. Nature must solve the problem. Malthus' maxim was: prosperity limits the number of offspring. There is no prospect of prosperity for us today. We are a country with a surplus population of twenty million. Emigration is forbidden to the proletariat; it is forbidden to the nation. There is nothing for us but forcibly to break forth. Our last hope centres in our people, they constitute the only power that we still possess. Our race totals some hundred millions. It may be that the future will see fifty million Germans in distant lands and foreign parts, and only the second fifty in Germany itself. But this distribution presupposes an immense shift of population, the least obstacle of which is the Treaty of Versailles. Meantime Germans are coming to us from every direction. They are returning from the confiscated and conquered territories; they are returning from overseas. A multitude is assembling which cannot be numbered. A new migration of the peoples is preparing which will be irresistible.

The German nation is astir. Its path is blocked. It has lost its bearings. It seeks space. It seeks work: and fails to find it. We are becoming a nation of proletarians.

The conditions of life thus imposed press hardly on the most intelligent, but they have the power and the will to resist. They take the lead, they indicate political solutions, national solutions. They have no thought for class, their only thoughts are for the nation, for this people of sixty million in Germany. The masses for their part are becoming politically-minded, nationally-minded. They are rebelling more and more against the pressure of their fetters; and the more they realize the true cause of their bondage the more powerfully they rebel against their gaolers. Their first revolt is directed against the oppressor, real or imaginary, in their own country. No one can foresee whether a civil war of thirty millions against thirty may not be necessary to clear our path to freedom. In spite of all internal conflicts, however, underlying them, interpenetrating them, the human pressure of our over-populated land is exerted in one direction only: outwards towards the spaces we require.

It is no negligible fact that our blood flows in veins of all the world, in the veins of the under-populated as well as of the over-populated countries. It spreads our thought abroad, it spreads the unrest which is our fate. It will end by breaking the spell which the older nations—who would fain take their ease at our expense—have cast on us.

We are no people of the dispersion. We are a cramped, imprisoned people. And the straitness of the space into which we have been herded is the measure of the danger that we constitute.

Shall we not base our policy on the existence of this danger?

7

Every people has its own socialism.

Marx disturbed German socialism at the very root. He stifled the seeds of a national socialism which were beginning to shoot in Wilhelm Weitling and, in another form, in Rodbertus. Marx's influence was characteristic: he was the ruthless dissector of the European economic system. A homeless man. He had no roots in the past yet he took upon himself to mould the future. We must now set about making good the mischief he effected.

Every people has its own socialism.

The Russians have demonstrated it. The Russian socialism of the Revolution gave birth to the new militarism of the Soviets. Those same millions who broke off the War because they wanted peace and only peace, allowed themselves to be formed into a new red army. There came a moment when the only factories in the country that were still at work were the munition factories. The Russian bowed his head in patient acceptance of the severe militarism of a new autocracy. He had shaken off the bureaucrats and police of the Tsar's autocracy which smacked of St. Petersburg and the West, and which had come to seem foreign and hostile. But he welcomed the autocracy of socialism; he had asked for it; he accepted it, Bolshevism is Russian, and could be nothing else.

Every people has its own socialism. The German working man does not believe it even yet. That is very German of him. Before the War he had listed so gladly and so long to the comforting gospel of a union of the proletariats of all countries. He really believed it when they told him that proletarians everywhere have the same class interests, that they have more in common with each other than with the other classes in their own country. The German working man marched to the War because he obeyed the dictates of his own sound nature and the wholesome discipline in which he had been reared. That was also very German of him. He ended the War in his own way because he thought it was lost and the voice of the tempter came over to him, promising him that a just peace would be granted to his people. That was also very German of him. Then he lost his head. He believed nothing. He did not believe his leaders. He has kept nothing but an idealism which will not admit that he has been betrayed. He must learn to admit it. He must learn to recognize that he has never been so enslaved as he is now by the capitalists of foreign nations. Having recognized this he must act accordingly.

Every people has its own socialism.

Remembering the statements made at pre-War international Socialist Congresses we see in what illusions the German working man indulged. Hervé was in those days the mouthpiece of the fiercest anti-militarism. He addressed an audience in a German town and assured them of the progress of anti-militarism in France. He asserted that the French General Staff was morally disarmed, he assured them that the outbreak of a war would be the signal for a rising of the French proletariat. This did not prevent this same Hervé from becoming the most violent patriot; this did not prevent the French proletariat from holding out to the last in the War against Germany. That was very French.

In the very same German town the English socialists rejected a resolution intended to torpedo any future war by a military strike of the proletariat, on the grounds that England did not come into the question at all, because no English government could possibly carry on a war without the support of the English working classes. But it was the English working classes who made it possible for their government to prepare the War, to declare the War, and to win the War. That was very English.

Every people has its own socialism.

German socialism took a pride in blending well-thought-out theory with practical application to create an equilibrium of justice. But the German socialist had no eye for foreign politics; he never thought of nations. He never thought of demanding the possibility of existence for young nations, for over-populated countries. He did not realize that it is even more important to attain a balance between nations than between classes. He never enquired what the crowded nations, who had not the same scope as the sated nations enjoyed, were to do with the product of their increasing industry. He would not see that it might be the role of a socialist-imperialism to procure them new markets and thus provide work for the worker. Today the German people is deprived all such possibilities. Today this nation counts twenty million too many, twenty million who cannot live. It may be that German socialism has a new national mission: prescribed not by Marx but by the World War: to place itself at the head of the oppressed nations and show them what are the conditions under which alone they can live.

When we talk of a German socialism, we do not of course mean the socialism of the social democrat in which the party took refuge after our collapse; neither do we mean the logical Marxist socialism which refuses to abandon the class war of the Internationals. We mean rather a corporative conception of state and economics, which must perhaps have a revolutionary foundation, but will then seek conservative stability. We call Friedrich List a German socialist because his view of foreign politics was based on political economy. In domestic politics the idea of organization by trade and profession points us back to Frieherr von Stein; the idea of guilds to the Middle Ages. Everything points to a new conception of socialism. Youth demands a leader who will march in the van: a leader who will make decisions, not the typical westerner who only sums up. Socialism for us means uprooting, re-organization, gradation.

International socialism does not exist. It did not exist before the War, still less after the War. The German working man has been the martyr of his Marxist faith. He must reconcile himself to the fact that the promise of "the world for the proletariat" has been unfulfilled. He must realize that the proletarians of each country thought only of their own country. The victorious nations applied Marx's principle of "enlightened self-interest"—which that sceptic thought he had discovered to be the basis of all morality—only to the advantage of their own countries. They concluded a peace which was most deliberately designed to exploit Germany. The problems of socialism are still unsolved.

The Revolution which aimed at realizing the democratic state did not succeed in its intentions. The German socialist has nothing now left for him to do, but to ponder retrospectively on what it was in himself which prevented his solving his problems along Marxian lines. If he does so, he will perceive that it was the taint of liberalism in his socialism which was disastrous to him: an inelastic, dogmatic, rationalist liberalism that for sheer "reason" could not see reality. We do not yet know who will solve the problems that remain for socialism. We cannot believe that German communism which still clings faithfully to Marx will contribute to the solution, though German communism has about it something that is savagely and obstinately German. In any case we know—and we must believe—that the German socialism which we have in mind must and will solve its problems on a higher plane than Marx's: on a plane where the problems are not those of a class but of the nation.

We have one advantage over our enemies in the existence of the problems set us by our defeat and unsolved by our Revolution. It is a purely intellectual advantage: but it is a great one. We have only to think of the complete absence of ideas which our enemies display: their victory brought them complacency, satiety—in spite of the economic and political peril which threatens their countries.

It will be a tragedy, a catastrophe, it will be our destruction, if we do not rise to the solution of the problems before us. But if we succeed in winning through to a solution of our problems, a genuine and permanent solution for all time, then the example of the new state and the new economic order which we will have created will give us an immense prestige, which will have a powerful influence on other countries, a prestige against which our enemies will be powerless.

Socialism begins where Marxism ends. German socialism is called to play a part in the spiritual and intellectual history of mankind by purging itself of every trace of liberalism. Liberalism was the unholy power of the nineteenth century which undermined and destroyed the very basis of socialism, as it undermined and destroyed the very basis of every political philosophy and of every world-order. Liberalism is a product of occidentalism which still lurks in parliaments and calls itself democracy.

To bring this German socialism to birth is not the task of Germany's Third Empire.

This New Socialism must be the foundation of Germany's Third Empire.

Germany's Third Empire

III. LIBERAL

Liberalism is the Death of Nations

1

A suspicion broods over the country that the nation has suffered betrayal.

Not the betrayal of Versailles. That is sufficiently self-evident: the Fourteen Points became the four hundred and forty articles of the Peace Treaty, signed and sealed by the Founder of Peace himself.

These other betrayals arose from the abuse of ideals for a selfish end. Our enemies saw that they could not do better for themselves than be persuading us to abandon, in the cause of peace, a war which we had not yet won; they saw that it would be best of all if they could induce some Germans themselves to persuade us into accepting these ideals. Whether we concentrate attention on the betrayers or the betrayed, we find ourselves in a peculiar atmosphere where high-falutin' principles are talked of: while a deal is being put through.

Our opponents exploited this peculiar atmosphere for their own advantage and to our injury. The atmosphere to which we allude is charged with a dangerous mental infection, the carriers of which enjoy an immunity which enables them to ruin their victim. It is the disintegrating atmosphere of liberalism, which spreads moral disease amongst nations, and ruins the nation whom it dominates. This deadly liberalism is not to be conceived as being the prerogative of any one political party. It originated in a general European party to which it owes its name, but it subsequently exercised its baneful influence on all parties and blurred the distinctions between them: it created the familiar figure of the professional party leader.

The principle of liberalism is to have no fixed principle and to contend that this is in itself a principle.

2

When the World War broke out, the western newspapers blazed with the headline: *la liberté est en jeu*! This misled world opinion. The particular cause became a general cause and acquired a halo. What our enemies sought was not liberty but power. Anyone who had examined the question with an open mind would have made the discovery that in liberal countries political freedom is not enjoyed by the people, who on the contrary are carefully shepherded by certain ruling classes. What these ruling classes mean by liberty, is freedom and scope for their own intrigues. This they attain by means of parliamentism which secures them power under cover of the constitution and the so-called representation of the people. Such is the specious mask which liberalism wears when it shouts "liberty": the mask it wore at the outbreak of the War. This was the first betrayal.

When our enemies were not able to break our resistance in the first clash of arms, they then proceeded to decoy the German people. They trotted out the idea of progress, which is so easily confused with the idea of liberty. If the nations had been compared in respect of their achievement, Germany would have come brilliantly out of the comparison, and the western powers would have been put to shame. But from the standpoint of parliamentary institutions Germany could be made to appear behind the times. The German people were assured that they were oppressed under their constitution. Pacifist and anti-military questions were dragged into the foreground—since no one could pretend that we were suffering economically—and foreign politics were skilfully confused with domestic affairs, with the German constitution and even the Prussian suffrage. Our enemies had too bad a conscience to touch, except with the utmost caution, on the question of the origin of the War. They obscured the real *causa causans*—their policy of encirclement—with the irrelevant and accidental facts of the actual declaration of war, and they ignored as far as possible that their Russian ally bore the responsibility for the first mobilization. Their eloquence grew greater when they pointed out, as one war-year succeeded another and the end was not yet in sight, that Germany would be the greatest sufferer by a prolongation of the War. The intoxicating message reached us in solemn words from the White House: "There must be Peace without Victory."

This message reached a people who had not wanted the War and who did not realize that their whole future was at stake. The German people were not at one on the question of their War aims, which we could only formulate as the War progressed, whereas our enemies had all along been clear about theirs, and had reached secret understandings amongst themselves and spoke openly to their public, treating their aims as self-evident. The conduct of Germany demonstrated at every turn how utterly unprepared she was for this War, the guilt of which has been laid at her door. She now saw the opportunity of regaining that peace in which she had been before so well content. "Peace without Victory" sounded acceptable to a people who with an heroic constancy and a quiet sense of duty had hitherto endured the privation, suffering and sacrifice that had been heaped upon it. They welcomed the idea with that innate credulity and good faith which makes us always ready to accept what our advisers—outside advisers in this case—recommend as the wise thing, be it never so unwise.

The senseless war would retrospectively acquire a meaning if it lead to a reconciliation of the nations which would accord to each nation its due and would rob none. Our German democrats and the liberal elements in the nation were the first to be lured by this snare, and thus the way was paved for those intrigues which led to our overtures for peace in 1917. This same credulity offered fruitful soil to Northcliffe's propaganda, which was directed to all malcontents, traitors and revolutionaries, to all would-be socialist, progressive, parliamentarian elements: liberals all, but now not merely over-credulous liberals, but criminal liberals. Credulity and treachery prepared the ground for the events of 1918 and 1919: these things inevitably brought about the Insurrection, the conditions of the Armistice, the surrender of the battle fleet, the decoying away of our mercantile marine; and the most grievous of our deceptions: that we had only to confess ourselves guilty of the outbreak of the War to win for ourselves by this easy lie more favourable peace conditions. That was the second betrayal.

A little time passed before the Founder of Peace himself stood revealed as the liberal that he was. The words "Peace without Victory" were spoken before our peace overtures of 1917. When we had once been guided into the path our enemies wished us to take, these words were never repeated to us. Still less were they fulfilled after our collapse in 1918, when our enemies had reached their goal. Today it is almost a matter of indifference whether Wilson ever believed his own words, or whether he only pronounced them at a moment when he thought those powers to whom he wished success would prove unable to achieve for themselves a "Peace *with* Victory." But no. It is not a matter of indifference, because it involves the whole liberal attitude of mind. It is peculiarly characteristic of the liberal to indulge in mental reservations; retrospectively to formulate his goal when he has ascertained what he is likely to be able to attain. Wilson brought with him to Europe a sensitive personal ambition and a most remarkable obstinacy. When he once fell amongst statesmen, his chosen role of arbitrator proved as galling to them as his previous support had been welcome. It then became manifest that he was by no means the great, well-founded, impregnable tower of strength that he had seemed. He was not the man who will see the heavens fall before he will abate one tittle of his plighted word: such a man saves the world. Wilson was aware that ideals as well as political interests were at stake, that liberalism in his person and in the person of the American people was being tried in the balance. He must endeavour to make good . . . or . . . perhaps . . . to compromise. If liberalism was to stand by its own pronouncements, if Wilson—who had rejected the Pope's proffered arbitration in favour of his own League of Nations folly—was to stand by his, the World War must be made a means to the pacification of the nations. But there was now no further talk of the promises to Germany that if she would put an end to the War by a Revolution she would be received into the elect company of the "free peoples" as an "emancipated nation." Liberalism was talking less and less about ideals. In Versailles the chaffering was about anise and cummin seed. Wilson prevented a certain amount of grab. We almost regret it today. He only postponed developments that are bound to come.

In some respects Wilson proved even more "liberal" than his French and English colleagues. He insisted on one thing only: that all interpretations, evasions and transgressions of his stipulations should be considered as—applications of his principles. Liberalism always bemuses the liberal; he would fain perhaps take his liberal principles seriously, but when this is not possible, he is content so long as appearances are kept up. The moment always come when the liberal shows his true colours and with a cold unscrupulousness takes the most advantageous short cut to his goal. As Clemenceau did. His whole life long, his liberalism was merely a matter of tactics; by the end he had become the tough old bull-dog who will not loose his prey. Similarly Lloyd George. His liberalism is rooted in a native opportunism which qualifies him to play the mediator and enables him to trim his sails to every breeze. His light-heartedness waved every difficulty aside, subordinated everything to England's advantage and permitted him to return home triumphant. Against two such men Wilson had no chance. He could not prevent their winning. His dishonesty consisted in complacently posing as being himself the winner. That was the third betrayal.

The Peace brought the world not liberty, but enslavement: and not even peace.

Yet the statesmen of Versailles had the effrontery to boast of their work as an achievement of progress and justice.

It was the effrontery of men deceived. The explanation of deceivers detected. The statesmen of Versailles owed their political power to the lack of principle that poses as principle, to that accursed gift the liberal has of employing ideals as means to an end, and using ideals to camouflage his ends.

3

Liberalism in Germany today is suspect. This suspicion is directed against a system of nets and snares set throughout the world in whose toils Germany is believed to have been caught.

In the same connection Freemasonry lies under a cloud. We observe that it was masonic forces which stimulated the anti-German pre-War combinations that united during the War to compass Germany's annihilation. We observe further that the statesmen assembled at Versailles, were one and all freemasons. These things set us turning the pages of history to get behind the veil of mystery that enshrouds freemasonry. Why should the lodges divide their members into initiates and non-initiates? May some political motive lie behind this? It has been suggested that the origins of freemasonry go back perhaps to the Egyptian and Eleusinian mysteries, or to the Druids or to the Assassins. The clue that led from the knightly orders to the Rosicrucians and the Illuminati and from these to the mason's lodges was followed up: the mysterious activities which set in with the formation of the new English Grand Lodge in 1717, and those which were precursors of the French Revolution of 1789, of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the German Revolution of 1918.

Such genealogical excursions, however, provide no clue to any common underlying aim. The most superficial reflection shows that there must always have been secret societies, and that such societies will always have tended to take something the same form: but this does not imply that their aims will have been identical. The very reverse is, in fact, the case. Freemasonry itself has been marked by the most chameleon quality. This would cause no surprise, were it not that the changeability of freemasonry suggests a question. May not the speed, the irresponsibility, the suspicious ease with which freemasonry has carried out its opportunist adaptations point to a mental peculiarity which it shares with liberalism? Freemason and liberal alike, appear to be men who either possess no principles, or are ever ready to set them aside; men who are always prepared—for a price—to abandon any principle, and indeed feel most at home in such barterings. We note that the lodges were at first intended to be strictly non-political; it was not long until their first and favourite pursuit was politics. Early freemasonry declared for a policy of rationalism and enlightenment yet the grey Scotch brothers who introduced it into France were Roman Catholics and Jacobites. During the long Whig tenure of power, which coincided with the first period of parliamentary corruption, the lodges adopted a policy to which they expressly gave the name of liberalism and thus made themselves constitutionally acceptable to the powers that were. Such a change of attitude appeared only wise. Freemasons justify every deviation from principle by an appeal to "the circumstances." Here are doctrinaires whose doctrines mean nothing to them; here are criminals who elaborate in advance an opportunist philosophy in case they should ever be called to account.

So freemasonry evolved a bogus rationalism which taught that whatever is advantageous must of necessity be logical. The lodges had begun as upholders of the Christian philosophy. Why should they refuse to admit the non-Christian to membership, especially if intercourse with the non-Christian could be turned to the advantage of the cause? The English Grand Lodge led the way by admitting, in exceptional cases, Jewish members: out of commercial considerations. The Englishman, though he might confess the New Testament, felt much in tune with the materialist, practical spirit of the Old. Similarly the French Grand Orient soon ceased to distinguish between deists and atheists. Was not positivism also a religion, or at least a faith, a rationalist faith that superseded the faiths of revelation? In reality the French freemasons accepted these new members because they all moved in the same society and speculated on the same stock exchange; pursued with a same opportunism the same political aims, and possessed a community of interests.

The very politicians of the Grand Orient who passed the Vatican Laws have no scruples about crossing the Pope's threshold to worship Foch's new saint, the Maid of Orleans, whom they have hitherto spat upon as the harlot of Voltaire's *Pucelle*. In any case it was quite worth the while of liberals, who are so cosmopolitan in word and so chauvinist in deed, to forget their hereditary feud with the Vatican, if they could gain the papal support for their plans, whether in Poland or on the Rhine.

The history of the peace negotiations is the tale of the surrender of one principle after another; the invention of one pretext after another to represent as right every injustice that could be done to the enemy.

The liberals needed for their purpose a man who could pose as the spokesman of a humane philosophy, and who at the same time should be self-righteous and dogmatic enough to uphold before the world the morality of whatever sacrifices of principle he made. They found the very man for their purpose, who prated continually of "impartial justice" but allowed his own flow of words to impair his power of judgment: President Wilson. Wilson, who would hear nothing of a War-indemnity, but acquiesced in reparations, which the victors interpreted into meaning payment for the entire War; Wilson, who repudiated all annexation of colonies, but distributed "mandates"; Wilson, who sacrificed the "freedom of the seas," and "trade equality" and "disarmament" in order to carry home safe in his pocket his "League of Nations": only to find that his countrymen would have none of it. When Brother Woodrow embarked on the *George Washington* he left behind not the God-given peace he had dreamt of, but a peace which was the joy of liberalism; at least an actual peace drawn up by the victors and signed by the vanquished.

The Jesuits hold that the end sanctifies the means; the liberal holds that the ideal sanctifies the interpretation—and the interpretation in turn sanctifies the ideal.

4

To get behind a system we must discover the psychology of it.

All the humbug about ideals leads us to the humbug of the plan which underlay the origins of the War and the exploitation of the peace. We need not go so far as to suppose that the plan was thought-out and agreed on beforehand: but it was certainly existent and effective. The liberals had left themselves every liberty of action, but when the opportune moment had arrived they speedily reached a practical understanding, as the policy of encirclement and the cordial co-operation of the western powers abundantly prove.

The plan depended on the men; it depended on the liberal; it depended on a human, psychological, almost physiological affinity which was easily translated into a political affinity: a coincidence of impulse and a coincidence of aim.

Freemasonry is only a clue. It points on to liberalism. The activity of the one passes over imperceptibly into the activity of the other, so that foreground and background are indistinguishable. White magic wages incessant warfare with black, the one is the obverse of the other. Freemasonry, which likes to affect an air of harmless purity, is neither white magic nor black; it is a blend: the grey magic of reason, born of grey theory. Or rather, since an alliance is no more possible between magic and reason than between mysticism and rationalism, freemasonry is an attempt to substitute for a world from which God has been driven, a world in which all men are brothers. Liberalism has no magic to offer: it leads either to stupidity or crime. Sometimes it does not distinguish the two. Sometimes it does.

The age of reason wanted her mysteries; she took refuge in freemasonry. What she created was a mystery of banality. Those who pose as initiates are wholly uninitiated in the great, essential, decisive things. The lodges insist that freemasonry consists in a personal experience which cannot be communicated; they talk of their "royal craft."

The freemasons feel the inadequacy of all this. The pettier among them cling together in little cliques and pour scorn on every revelation, and cherish a childish hatred for all tradition which they stigmatize as hostile to their lauded "progress," and foster hostility not only to the Church but to every vital spiritual inheritance of the past, and to everything that forms the basis of the state. The more serious and more cultivated among them, though narrow-minded still, hail all humane thinkers, whether it be Jesus or St. Francis, Dante or Goethe, as original free-thinkers, and claim them for their lodges.

All this is to supply the lack of a great personality, such as freemasonry itself has never brought to birth. With all the elaborate grading of their members they have never yet produced a Grand Master of any spiritual power who has become a historical personage. These grades lend importance to the nobodies and satisfy the vanity of the ambitious. The German lodges protest that they know nothing about international intrigue. They are entirely honest; they can now divine what the game was, and how little they were accounted of.

The whole of freemasonry is anonymous. This is psychologically characteristic. Freemasonry welcomes intelligence; it has no use for character or genius. They have no Founder; their history is associated with no great names; they have no heroes, no pioneers, no martyrs. If freemasonry is to be measured by the values it has created, it is the most poverty-stricken of all spiritual movements. The Encyclopaedists could at least point to their three and thirty folio volumes: an effective deed of negation. They at least showed their mettle in the fight against clericalism and absolutism. The Jesuits can point to the spiritual achievements of their Basque founder, Ignatius Loyola; the Puritans can boast their Milton; the Pietists the *Confessions* of many a *Beautiful Soul*. The freemasons have nothing and nobody. They attracted the masses with their talk of "humanity" and "progress" and, above all, of "liberty." They said little about "equality"—which would not have suited them—but, in compensation, a lot about "brotherhood," for brotherhood amongst brothers costs little and repays itself. Hence the lodges have become the refuge of the mediocre.

The cliquishness of the freemasons turns among the liberals to a political clannishness; the difference is that the liberal does not seek good fellowship, but power. No one in the caucus would venture to strive for power if left to himself. But why should not the many get together and by their numbers supplement each other? Why not call the room they require for their activities "liberty"? President Wilson spoke of the relatively small number of men who control a country economically; someone in Germany spoke of three hundred financiers who control the world today. This suggests that there exists a small group of secret leaders—a group which includes freemasons and Jesuits and probably bolshevists—who make history.

The liberal is inspired by the ambition of the world-be great man who does not want to take the lower seat, the anxiety of the inadequate person to miss nothing. Jealousy of power explains this hate of genius, of anyone who is great, who does, singlehanded, things which can never be done by the many. Jealousy of power explains this hate of the dynasties with their hereditary prestige and privilege; this hate of the Papacy with its traditional authority transmitted to the wearer of the tiara; the hostility to Louis XIV's and to Pius IX's doctrines of infallibility. This jealousy of power explains no less that passion for constitutions which make power dependent on elections; this craze for parliaments to take control of the state; this mania for republics in which the parties divide the power and party leaders draw the pay and the electors enjoy the party patronage; or the preferences for a limited monarchy that has resigned all real power but still lays claim to grace. This diverts attention from the real rulers and sometimes allows a king—not as a king but as private individual—to further the designs of his business friends, as Edward VII loved to do.

This rise to power of the liberal, the man who delegates responsibility and introduces disintegration just where cohesion is most needed, becomes possible only where the instinct of conservatism has become weakened. The history of liberalism is therefore the history of enfeebled dynasties whose representatives have become emasculated and effeminate, or middle-class: like the Louis of the House of Bourbon, or the Georges of the House of Hanover. The freebooters of the French Revolution slunk away before the face of Napoleon; the most adaptable of them, Talleyrand and Fouché, crept under his wing and later found a refuge even under a new legitimist regime. The German liberals wilted similarly before Bismarck. The romanticism of William II had nothing conservative about it, and his dilettantism had so strong a liberal taint that liberals quickly swarmed about him to claim a share in his power for their own ends. At the court of, and under the favour of, William II, they were able to pursue their liberal machinations, which, however, brought them into rivalry with French and English liberals.

It was again this jealousy of power which devised the scheme of encirclement to which the stupid liberalism of Germany fell a prey. Jealousy of power conspired against a throne and smote a people: under the skilful manipulations of Edward VII, German statesmen were taught to be jealous of the Kaiser and to intrigue against his power. Finally the other nations grew jealous of a people whose economic efficiency—in spite of political unreadiness—threatened to win for it a position of power. The driving force of liberalism came here again into play, inciting the petty and the many against the One. On the plane of domestic politics the liberal had hitherto been relatively innocuous; he now transferred his activities, with the greatest mustering of forces that recent history has ever seen, to the plane of foreign politics with intent to exploit an entire people.

The liberal professes to do all he does for the sake of the people; but he destroys the sense of community that should bind outstanding men to the people from which they spring. The people should naturally regard the outstanding man, not as an enemy but as a representative sample of themselves.

Liberalism is the party of upstarts who have insinuated themselves between the people and its big men. Liberals feel themselves as isolated individuals, responsible to nobody. They do not share the nation's traditions, they are indifferent to its past and have no ambition for its future. They seek only their own personal advantage in the present. Their dream is the great International, in which the differences of peoples and languages, races and cultures will be obliterated. To promote this they are willing to make use, now of nationalism, now of pacificism, now of militarism, according to the expediency of the moment. Sceptically they ask: "What are we living for?" Cynically they answer: "Just for the sake of living!"

It was this denationalized, irresponsible liberalism that successfully let loose the horrors of the World War. It devised a watchword—LIBERTY—to entrap the imagination of men and nations.

The liberal has flourished at all periods. The nobody is always eager to imagine himself a somebody. The man who is a misfit in his own society is always a liberal out of *amour propre*. The disinterestedness of the conservative cherishes the sacredness of a cause that shall not die with him; the liberal says: *après moi le déluge*. Conservatism is rooted in the strength of man; liberalism battens on his weakness. The liberal's conjuring trick consists in turning others' weakness to his own account, living at other men's expense, and concealing his art with patter about ideals. This is the accusation against him. He has always been a source of gravest danger.

5

Liberalism has undermined civilization, has destroyed religions, has ruined nations. Primitive peoples know no liberalism. The world is for them a simple place where one man shares with another. Instinctively they conceive existence as a struggle in which all those who belong in any way to one group must defend themselves against those who threaten them.

Great states have always held liberalism in check. When a great individual arose amongst them who gave the course of their history a new direction, they have been able to incorporate him into their tradition, to make his achievements contribute to their continuity.

Nations who had ceased to feel themselves a people, who had lost the state-instinct, gave liberalism its opportunity. The masses allowed an upper crust to form on the surface of the nation. Not the old natural aristocracy whose example had created the state; but a secondary stratum, a dangerous, irresponsible, ruthless, intermediate stratum which had thrust itself between. The result was the rule of a clique united only by self-interest who liked to style themselves the pick of the population, to conceal the fact that they consisted of immigrants and nouveaux riches, of freedmen and upstarts. They did not care whether their arrogance and new-won privilege was decked out with the conceptions of feudal or of radical ideology, though they preferred a delicate suggestion of aristocracy. But they found it most effective and successful to style themselves democrats.

Liberalism was the ruin of Greece. The decay of hellenic freedom was preceded by the rise of the liberal. He was begotten of Greek "enlightenment." From the philosophers' theory of the atom, the sophist drew the inference of the individual. Protagoras, the Sophist, was the founder of individualism and also the apostle of relativity. He proclaimed that: "Opposite propositions are equally true." Nothing immoral was intended. He meant that there are no general but only particular truths: according to the standpoint of the perceiver. But what happens when the same man has two standpoints? When he is ready to shift his standpoint as his advantage may dictate? This same Protagoras proclaimed that rhetoric could make the weaker cause victorious. Still nothing immoral was intended. He meant that the better cause was sometimes the weaker and should then be helped to victory. But the practice soon arose of using rhetoric to make the worse cause victorious. It is no accident that the sophists were the first Greek philosophers to accept pay, and were the most highly paid. A materialist outlook leads always to a materialist mode of thought. This is very human: but true.

All this was hailed as progress: but it spelt decay. The same process continues: the disciples of reason, the apostles of enlightenment, the heralds of progress are usually in the first generation great idealists, high-principled men, convinced of the importance of their discoveries and of the benefit these confer on man. But no later than the second generation the peculiar and unholy connection betrays itself which exists between materialist philosophy and nihilist interpretation. As at the touch of a conjuror's wand the scientific theory of the atom reduces society to atoms.

The sophist was not originally a politician. As far as state affairs were concerned his sympathies were aristocratic rather than democratic. He was first and foremost a cosmopolitan whose favourite home was Athens, the town of culture, of mental and physical delight: the town also of great illusions, of political obtuseness, of the final national betrayal. A straight line leads from the sophists to the epicureans till finally the philosophers disappear in the hellenic dispersion in which the Hellene was as much despised for his present as honoured for his past.

The Stoa at length re-established human dignity. The stoics restored to man his responsibility for thought and act.

The town of stoic philosophy was Rome. The sense of responsibility accompanied every Roman officer; it inspired even the latest Roman emperors. Rome was a State.

6

Modern liberalism had its roots where the individual shook off the conventions of the middle ages. The liberal afterwards claimed to have freed himself from them. This freedom of his was an illusion.

The conventions of the middle ages were achievements, the achievements of Church and State, the constructive Gothic achievements which for ten centuries prevented the disintegration of the ancient world. These were the mighty achievements which denoted what—on an immensely smaller scale and applied to far more trivial things—is now styled "progress." The men to whom these achievements were due, were rooted in these conventions, which also were of their creation. The conventions of the middle ages were the mighty foundations of mighty activities. No one prated of liberty, because everyone creatively possessed it: as will in action.

A disintegrating generation succeeded to this great inheritance. Humanism brought men the consciousness of human dignity. The renaissance imposed on individualism moderation, form, a classic attitude. The men of the renaissance drew from the literature of classical antiquity the forces which they felt they required as models. In the certain assurance that life must have a firm foundation if it was not to fall asunder, the men of the renaissance made a last effort at linking up with the past.

Men retain their creative power, however, only as long as the nations are creative. The nations were now developing a society which was divorced from the people. Monumental art was yielding its place to mere decoration. Recent centuries have achieved results in chemistry, mathematics, astronomy and most lately in sociology. But they have not produced men with the insight to see that all these are only partial glimpses into nature. They have made scientific research an end in itself, which is to turn an imaginary searchlight on to an imagined truth. This they called enlightenment.

Man was committed to his reason, and reason was self-sufficient. Revelation was replaced by experiment. Men no longer perceived and felt; they only observed. They no longer drew dogmatic conclusions as faith had done. They no longer drew visionary conclusions like the mystic. They drew no idealist conclusions like the humanists; they drew critical conclusions: "there are no inborn ideas"—"there is no God"—"man is not free." Negatives all! "What discoveries!" they cried. They failed to see that they were tilting only against nomenclature, while the phenomena remained. They did not dream that all their speculations dealt only with the foreground of things while the background remained more and more incomprehensible. In the pride of his reason the man of enlightenment claimed the right to cast adrift from all conventions. He did so, regardless of the consequence. He committed life to a reason abandoned to her own devices. He knew what he was doing. Or did he not? He did the reasonable thing. Or not? We must ask of the liberals who as the party of enlightenment took over the justification of the age of reason.

Amongst the discoveries which reason made, the most fateful was this: that man is not free. It might well have seemed the most obviously reasonable thing to hedge this unfree man with state conventions. Instead, the liberals demanded that this man—who was biologically unfree—should have perfect individual and political freedom.

This curious logic showed a deliberate intention to mislead. It bore, in fact, all the characteristic signs of liberalism, which is prepared to endorse any contradiction and to look on at any destruction with which the magic word liberty can by any means be associated.

Liberalism began with a false idea of liberty, which it misunderstood even as it formulated it; and it ended with a false idea of liberty which it employed no longer to defend liberty but to pursue advantage.

All human error lies here, and many a crime.

7

The Age of Reason was an affair of the West.

The affair more particularly of England and France, and, in spite of the contradiction, the affair also of Germany.

The English always talked of freedom. They always sought their own freedom at the expense of everyone else's. They early developed a peculiar mode of thought based on a confusion of ideas, which gave precedence not to a cause for its own sake but to the advantage they themselves derived from it. There was no hypocrisy in this: though it looked like hypocrisy. It was merely an incredible *naïveté* combined with a natural brutality of approach. The English were perfectly unconscious of these things. Their trump card was their stupidity, and in their stupidity lay their highest shrewdness.

The power to change the point of view according to whose aims were in question—one's own or another's—the firm intention always to pursue what was expedient, led the English to develop ultimately a most practical logic of their own. The renaissance introduced Machiavellianism into English thought. Machiavelli had given passionate expression to a despairing, almost hopeless, love of country. The practical Englishman's first thought was to make sure that the means lay to hand for putting his doctrines into practice. When the question arose: "What is freedom?" Hobbes answered: "Freedom is power." Here spoke the practical politician, the positivist, the first tory. Hobbes protected England against the dangers of the age of reason. Henceforth the English thinker could safely indulge in liberal thought. When the question arose: "What is power?" the Englishman, who is a blend of the liberal moralist and the political immoralist, answered comfortingly: "Power is right." Without this assurance no whig could have slept with an easy conscience; with it, he slept admirably. Power even is so surely right that it can take precedence of right, without right's ceasing to be right. Hence the Englishman was free to assert his own right and trample on everyone else's. The logic of this has always been perfectly clear to every English mind. Right or wrong: it was ultimately always a question of the welfare of the country, for whose sake its people required political power.

If a link was missing in this chain, it was supplied by the English method of concentrating thought on utility. Utilitarianism became the English national philosophy. Progress, which was the favourite conception of the rationalist, could find its obvious justification in utility; and progress became particularly valuable when it marched with the Englishman's advantage and the disadvantage of the foreigner. From the standpoint of utility, every opportunism can be justified and every lack of principle. Not the least virtue of the English party system lay in the fact that it permitted individuals or groups to shift from one standpoint to another whenever it seemed momentarily useful or necessary, without an overt sacrifice of principle which was stoutly maintained throughout. Parliamentism, to which the party system accommodated itself with a power of adaptation that has never yet failed in England, would seem to have been invented solely in order to make it constitutionally possible to temper drastic measures with liberal ambiguities.

English liberalism started by being very clean, honest and law-abiding. An English freethinker once summed up the very spirit of England in the formula: Freedom, Truth and Health! The ideas of equality and fraternity would never have occurred to an Englishman. English liberalism, however, lived up to these three watchwords only to a very limited degree. The practical English mind was hard and pitiless. England has tolerated many encroachments on freedom; she tolerates truth so long as society is not exposed. She is the land of the pauper and shuts her eyes to poverty and the uncleanness it brings in its train, so long as these things only affect strata of the population who constitute no danger to the state. The English liberals were credulous, well-meaning fellows, but fools: children who liked to cultivate illusions. When Bentham formulated his utilitarianism he genuinely deceived himself into thinking that self-interest, if only rightly understood, would lead to the welfare of all. A certain slovenliness pervades liberal thought: everything is good if it can be termed "free" and twice good if it can be called "useful" as well. Bentham interpreted the psychology of English utilitarianism fairly exactly when he explained duty, conscience and unselfishness on a basis of man's self-interest and claimed for his own doctrine that it aimed at "regulating egotism." He followed the epicurean tendency which has always co-existed with the stoic.

This philosophy supplied a self-confidence which became the sober virtue of the whole nation. Every political Englishman took an almost sadistic pleasure in "regulating" English interests throughout the world. This philosophy supplied also a sense of strength, cold, calm and tenacious, taking itself for granted, mindful always of its own limitations but by its concentration on the useful, potent to protect the nation against injury and against effeminacy.

The English did not observe how gravely they gave themselves away by so exclusive a devotion to utilitarianism. A certain sense of justice still survived amongst them, however, which on occasion looked to the cause and not to the advantage. During the American war Burke had the courage to speak in Parliament in favour of the Americans. But Burke was a conservative. The English sense of justice survived more amongst the tories than the whigs. We must also point out that the English liberals of today who condemn the Peace of Versailles cannot be taken seriously until they express themselves in something more than words. Asquith movingly and eloquently regretted that the Peace had turned out as it had, and that his party had not known in time the line it would take, so that they might have worked towards another result. But this liberal eloquence proves nothing unless it sets afoot serious effort to alter the result instead of quietly acquiescing in it. In the meantime it is content to register emotion—and accept advantage.

8

French rationalism had deeper roots. It sprang from the rationalism of the middle ages and the casuist philosophy of the Paris scholastics with their doctrine of a dual theological and philosophic truth. As a philosophy of life it sprang from the renaissance. And as long as the French sceptic clung to the cultured grace of Montaigne and the harmlessness of Rabelais, French thought continued to move and make its own observations on a superficial plane of wit and wisdom. Humanism brought with it, however, a misunderstanding that proved fateful in the Revolution: the dignity of man merged in the rights of man! German, Prussian rationalism subsequently had no little difficulty in getting back to the line that leads from Luther to Kant and reinstating duty in the consciousness of man.

The renaissance throbbed with passion; mighty men lived their lives to the full and their policies were determined by the instincts to which they gave rein. Machiavelli wrote his great and ruthless textbook; he was a criminal from sheer patriotism, a man full of ambition for Italy, a thoroughly unliberal man in his fearless honesty. At this point weariness overtook mankind. The renaissance had revealed man as a microcosm; the age of reason revealed him as matter. Next the discovery was made that man is not free, and the memorably illogical conclusion was drawn that he must therefore be made politically free. It was also discovered that this unfree man does all he does from self-interest. Voltaire expressly declared that self-interest "is the means to self-preservation" and further said of it: "it is necessary, it is dear to us, it gives us pleasure and we must take pains to conceal it." The liberal faithfully obeyed this last injunction. In all cases where the liberal had good reason to wish to conceal things he has taken refuge in the principle: *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*.

The Englishman interpreted the dignity of man as self-reliance; the Frenchman as self-complacency. By an adroit application of liberal principles the Englishman secured modest, calculable advantages, and harvested them the more certainly that he did so in silence. The livelier and more passionate Frenchman was not content to do the same; he wanted to boast of them too. The French were to be the nation to give the new ideas their historical importance. The material might be dry; their wit could lend it charm. Montesquieu and Voltaire therefore took the conceptions of the English rationalists very seriously, and on their return from London trumpeted them aloud for all the world to hear, that France might be the centre of men's talk, and all men's eyes might turn to Paris.

The rationalists finally fell victims to their age of reason. The nobility and the clergy, the court and the salons, finally the king himself, were the sacrifice. These circles, which had long since exhausted all the delights that life can given, found a new thrill; they discovered the simple man, and they acclaimed him as better than themselves. The finances of the country were flagging, so they took up popular economics. Their personal finances were in a bad way so they went in for speculation. They even neglected classic for economic studies. The state set about fulfilling all the demands that Voltaire and Montesquieu had made on it: freedom of the corn trade was introduced, freedom of the press was granted. The *tiers état* was flattered on every hand, though it had never sought this treatment, nor done anything to deserve it. Reason surely never wrought more havoc than in the rationalist circles of France. Everything they did recoiled on themselves. They did it because it was liberal: in the name of the rights of man and the ideal of a liberal state—now transformed into the ideal of a revolutionary state—they were persecuted, dispossessed, exterminated by the *tiers état*, to whom they had been the first to preach its peculiar claim to the rights of man.

The number of aristocrats who continued to lead the people along progressive lives of thought—from the Duke of La Rochefoucauld to the Duke of Saint Simon—is practically negligible. The greater number of them lapsed into inanity. The courtier did homage to the man of letters; the officer yielded pride of place to the scholar. The proud aristocracy of France grew effeminate and fatuous in true rococo style. They gave up their knightly virtues to become delicate, lady-like, artificial. This was the aristocracy which ran away after the shameful defeat of Rossbach and later behaved so unworthily at Coblenz.

France had certainly reached a point at which she needed a Revolution to provide her with new men. Montesquieu had still been able to speak of the forefathers of the nation who lived beyond the Rhine, though Voltaire cynically asked whether Frenchmen might not possibly be sprung from some humble Gallic stock. Sieyès demanded that the descendants of the Frankish conquerors should be hunted back into the German forests whence they had emerged. Caesar's strictures on the Gallic character were now fully vindicated. The Revolution brought again to light the Gaul's incalculability, his fickleness, his vanity. A new national feeling arose: bestial and cruel. The sovereign people ran about the streets seizing everyone who did not acquiesce in the will of the people and "compelling him to be free." "The people cannot err." It is one of the ironies of history that the first victims of the sovereign people should have been the Girondins, the liberals of the Revolution who had dreamt of establishing a Republic of Virtue.

To the seventeen articles proclaiming the rights of man and of the citizen, which had been copied from the American constitution, there stood, in addition to the oddly-interpreted "freedom," a new clause, not easily to be misunderstood, a clause regarding the sanctity of property. This is a conception which the Frenchman has never surrendered and which can never become out of date in France. It did not relate so much to inherited as to acquired possessions. It referred to the property of the new rich who in the sacred names of liberty, equality and fraternity had divided the wealth of France between them. The security of this property was the sole preoccupation of French liberalism.

The French have never honestly confessed their attachment to possession, as the Englishman has confessed his to utility. They have never developed a philosophy of dividends nor the psychology of the rentier. As a nation they are the incarnation of the pettiest lust for possession, but they need to clothe it with fairer words. For a while "virtue" sufficed them, but finally they decided in favour of "liberty." In the manifesto of 1791 Condorcet wrote: "The French nation abjures wars of conquest for all time: she will never employ her strength against the liberties of another nation; this is the sacred vow which makes our happiness the happiness of other nations." Boutroux and Bergson used similar phrases during the World War. But Napoleon instead of liberté, egalité and fraternité, gave the nation: la gloire. He gave his Frenchmen Europe and the wealth of other lands, and the intoxicated nation followed him: "the people cannot err." When the intoxicating dream was over, a sobered nation welcomed its Bourbons back again.

Then they welcomed the House of Orleans, and lastly the Napoleonids. For a while it seemed as if *le roi bourgeois* was the monarchy they needed, the kindly man with his round hat and under the umbrella of *le juste milieu*, who counted lawyers and bankers his friends. Liberalism, however, had still to be reckoned with. The political battles of the next decade revolved around the electoral law, which was to secure to the middle classes the right to vote and the right to be elected. So the liberal employed the years of the restoration to stabilize his power. Then he engineered the July Revolution and the February Revolution and the Third Republic. The aim was always the same: to secure political power for an ever-widening circle; to achieve it, the liberal allied himself with clericals; to achieve it, the liberal became an nationalist. He never lacked *raison oratoire* to conceal the real motives of French politics. Gambetta, Boulanger, Clemenceau, they all employed the same liberal rhetoric, resonant with justice and freedom, and concealing the while the one thought of advantage. Poincaré used the same phrases: the man with the empty face of a grand bourgeois, who caused the outbreak of war, fled from its dangers to Bordeaux, and afterwards played the role of the imperturbable. He used these phrases, knowing that he lied. But the end justifies the means, and ideals serve as means to an end.

9

Liberalism in Europe is one thing, liberalism in Germany another.

When two augurs of the west are met together, they both know what liberalism is: a political trick: the trick with which the upstart society of the *tiers état* was able to swindle the tiresome, remaining plebs out of the promises of 1789. The augurs know what "liberty" means, that most seductive of the three catchwords with which the champions of the rights of man lured the deluded masses away from their dangerous barricades and shepherded them to the innocuous ballot-box. When the Germans decry themselves as backward, they overlook the fact that this is what gives them in Europe their strength, their advantage, their future. An illusion used to pervade Germany that we must introduce all the new western ideas as well as all the new western institutions, before we should deserve to share on equal terms in civilized history and be received in the society of liberalized nations. So we also set foot on the path of liberalism, not to our advantage, not to our credit, but to our doom—as the consequences of our collapse have shown. The westerners triumphed once more. England has got rid of her rival. France lives at our expense. Instead of "progress" we reaped ruin. Could we ask, simpletons that we are, a more terrible proof that the ways of liberalism are not ours? But we took the path, logically, inevitably, in harmony as we imagined, with the general trend of human civilization: we took it with German thoroughness. It seemed the only path for a man of the twentieth century—or even of the nineteenth. Socialists and liberals alike, turned their eyes to the west—not perceiving that socialism and liberalism are mutually exclusive—and even allied themselves in common opposition to the German state. For over a century we strayed amongst the errors, illusions and fallacies of democracy, under the impression that whatever a people wanted must be for its good as a nation—not realizing the danger that it might be the nation's death warrant.

The opportunity was open to us of choosing another path: the path of conservatism, inspired by the national spirit, based on our own values and on all the living and vital institutions of our past. Freiherr von Stein powerfully advocated this course to us at the beginning of the century. Following him we might have made a stand against liberalism, opposing religion to reason, society to the individual, cohesion to disintegration, growth to "progress." Just as our conservatives turned their backs on Stein, they also failed to join forces with Rodbertus. They did not of course repudiate Stein—for had he not been a "patriot"?—but they failed to realize all it meant that here was a man who in the revolutionary present would not snap the links that bound us to the past, a man who for the sake of the future would fain have forged these links the faster. The post-revolutionary conservatives, however, were outsiders, whose fate it was—from the disciples of Adam Müller down to Paul de Lagarde and Langbehn—to be unrecognized, unheeded or forgotten by the nation.

The conservative party, instead of inscribing the ideas of these men on its banner and bearing it aloft before the people, concentrated what thought it had left, on slogans like "for Throne and Altar" or "for Church and State." It produced no single politician of note, and in the intellectual and spiritual barrenness that had overtaken it, was reduced to delegating the philosophic, legal and political leadership to Stahl. The party in its simplicity even rejoiced in this strange auxiliary and there are still conservatives, constitutional lawyers even, who see in Stahl the founder of conservatism in Germany. Stahl was in fact not the founder, but the destroyer of German conservatism. He tried to rescue conservatism, to analyse it into a new synthesis. One of his recent apologists pleads: "if Stahl was a man of compromises, he compromised on principle" without realizing that this plea is the condemnation of Stahl as a conservative politician. Conservatism can tolerate no compromise, the food on which liberalism battens. Bismarck's *Realpolitik* showed no trace of compromise and its eternal see-sawing: "on the one hand . . . on the other hand. . . ." Stahl, both as man and politician, belonged essentially to the liberalism which he attacked, rather than to the conservatism for which he fought. His dogma of the Third Empire of a Christian State was an amalgam of protestant and catholic, professional and constitutional, mediaeval and modern ingredients. It is highly characteristic that the idea which weighed least in his system was that of nationality, which had been the corner stone of Freiherr von Stein's. Stahl the rationalist possessed no mystic experience, no nationalist experience, no vision—only a conception of painstaking construction. His saying that we need not fear revolution but only disintegration, nevertheless remains memorable.

It would be unfair to say that Stahl disintegrated the conservative party, but he did disintegrate the conservative philosophy. The party remained a reactionary party, and a time came when the more reactionary a politicians was, the more the conservatives welcomed him. Instead of the natural, organic, national basis which conservative philosophy had possessed in Stein and Bismarck, Stahl introduced an eclectic, formal, utilitarian basis. Conservatism lost the battle against revolution and became more and more helpless, while it made more and more concessions to liberalism. Bismarck had observed that the conservative party was beginning to lack an inner *raison d'être* and commended to it the conception of "conservative progress." This rudderless drift of the conservatives led to the foundation of a new "free-conservative" party, a makeshift which strove to unite two incompatibles, liberalism and conservatism.

The century in Germany was the century of liberalism, not the loud-voiced, national-liberalism that made itself so vocal after the foundation of the Empire, but the free-thinking, rational liberalism of the earlier days. It was this which undermined all parties and principles, and which destroyed our unity in the War. Its vice was opportunism and lack of principle; its peculiarity was that its adherents always fell victims to their own liberalism because their logic ended in theory and was never effectively translated into practice. Then they gazed in mute amazement at the broken crockery round their feet and fled from the scene as betrayers betrayed. Such was German liberalism. Its greatest crime was its crass stupidity. Stupidity passed into crime when liberalism ceased to be the toy of idealists, students and worthy democrats—as it had been from 1814–1818—and fell into the hands of publicists. Then the intellectual knight errants broke loose, trampled in their inky warfare on the German language—which has never been so badly mauled as by Young Germany—and finally knocked those breaches in our classical inheritance which for half a century allowed the floods of a vulgar materialism to pour in. To add a political to their literary misdeeds they withdrew the support they owed to Friedrich List and tormented that great man to death with their petty persecutions. Finally it was they who opposed every conceivable obstacle to Bismarck's efforts to unite the nation. It was their political economists again who just before the outbreak of the World War preached their comforting doctrine of free trade, assuring us that in the case of war Germany was the most happily situated of all the nations, surrounded by friendly neutral countries from whom she could easily provision and supply herself. Now, when tragedy has overtaken us, and the hopes held out by President Wilson have deceived us—and no one believed so firmly in these as our liberals—they raise the most illogical whine (for by hypothesis the democrat is necessarily a pacifist) that the German government should have seized the unique opportunity of the Russo-Japanese war to eliminate for ever the enemy on our eastern frontier! It is of course more than doubtful whether the Government, had it been ever so inclined, could at that time have persuaded a Reichstag riddled with liberalism to adopt so un-liberal and imperialist a policy!

Our enemies were very differently situated. Their reason proved an admirable guide: by lying (of course), by a most cunning propaganda based on the crafty distortion of fact, by foul means if not by fair, they at any rate reached their goal. Their outward success is so brilliant that it tends to mask their moral failure. Disillusionment exists only on our side. We are the only people to enquire: what has become of the ideas of 1789: liberty, equality, fraternity?

Fraternity? Versailles dealt a blow to the brotherhood of nations from which it will not readily recover. We realize too late that the imperialism we opposed is still the best social scheme for an overpopulated country and that we were the nation in Europe which most had need of it. After a peace which robs the German working man of the chance to work, there can exist only one foreign policy for us: one which shall secure us freedom of movement, one which shall burst the gates of the prison house in which otherwise we are doomed to perish. Equality? Before the War, Germany was ahead of other countries in social reform; her social-democrat party seemed the socialist group in Europe which was most likely consistently to think socialist doctrines to their conclusions, and put them to a practical test as soon as it attained to power. We know today how slow and heavy-footed our socialist thought has been. The Revolution would have brought us at least one advantage if it had convinced us that the problems confronting socialism is not the conflicting interests of classes, but the unity of the nation as a whole, assuring to each class its right to live, treating as superfluous only the profiteers of war and revolution. The greatest war-profiteers are our enemies, who nation by nation carried off the spoils of war.

Liberty? Before the War we were the freest people on the earth; we have since become the most enslaved: enslaved within, enslaved without. Our sole freedom consists in the paper constitution we have given ourselves; and in exercising this freedom we are wholly dependent on the will of our enemies. We were told that we could safely trust ourselves to the liberality of our enemies, who were willing to conclude peace with a democratic Germany. It would be another gain from our Revolution though not the one the Revolution aimed at—if it taught us to revise our whole idea of liberalism. Our enemies interpreted freedom differently from us. They found that it produced most excellent results. There was no need to define the term, the magic of the word sufficed. There was no party, in any of the countries boasting enlightenment, that did not shrewdly dub itself liberal. In France, radical and clerical, socialist and royalist are liberal. Whigs and tories are liberal in England; in America both the parties. In all parties the simple-minded are liberal in good faith, the schemers with evil intent. No party, however, can forgo the advantage of calling itself liberal; yet their idea of freedom precludes no intolerance, no persecution of others, no slavery; it coexists with extension of territory and the strangulation of border states. The German liberal looks on with embarrassment and often with righteous indignation when he sees the old, lofty ideals betrayed: nationality, self-determination, protection of minorities; when he sees the casuistry which is used to throw an appearance of justice over all the injustice that is being wrought at the expense of one nationality. The German freemason (who is always a liberal) protests, when he is reproached with all the proved intrigues of the German lodges before the War, that he knew nothing of all this, that he had nothing to do with it. We believe him. The German lodges were the victims of the everlasting German credulity. We took as sacred gospel whatever yarns our enemies chose to spin: we believed in the great watchwords for which the War was waged. Our enemies gave them the interpretation that happened to suit them. Our German liberals were obliged enough to act as intermediaries, to such good effect that every liberal in Germany turned his back on the German cause. This suited the plans that underlay the World War. The War was not a conspiracy timed for a given day and hour. It was something much more dangerous. Germany was safely left to suffer the effects of German liberalism. The Allies had no better ally than simple human stupidity.

10

German youth is conscious of the cause of the betrayal; for us it was a betrayal, that the west did not grant us the promised liberty. German youth is exercising the immemorial privilege of youth, when, without formulating a definite political creed, but clearly seeing that it has been betrayed, it turns its back on what it can no longer trust: on the liberalism of all parties, circles and classes, the liberalism which had made us what we are: a fallen nation.

It is the immemorial privilege of youth to fight for freedom. If liberalism spelt freedom, then our youth would not abandon it. But liberalism bears nowadays no relation to freedom. The liberal is a mediocre fellow. Freedom means for him simply scope for his own egotism, and this he secures by means of the political devices which he has elaborated for the purpose: parliamentism and so-called democracy. Liberalism is only self-interest protectively coloured.

To German youth all parties are equally suspect. They are all equally guilty, they are all tainted with liberal ideas, the conservatives were untrue to their principles, the radicals to their logic. Why did Bethmann-Hollweg fail? Because as a statesman he was a liberal. Why did German socialism fail? Because it was infected with liberalism. It is foreign liberalism, especially French liberalism, which with cold-blooded calculation and deliberate intent makes today the German working man the bond-slave of Versailles. The greatest suspicion attaches, however, to that party which more particularly labelled itself the liberal party, which posed as being free-thinking, progressive, above all democratic. Turning over the pages of history we find the liberal party associated with every sort of credulity of which Germans are capable, with all the missed opportunities and belated decisions which have been the cause of our inferiority; and finally we discover the reason why we lost the War. Only a new generation can set us free from the consequences of this fate—a generation less credulous, but more enthusiastic—a generation that from its earliest days sees itself faced with an heroic task, though no man can yet foretell when or how that task can be performed: if at all.

The only thing youth can yet do is to prepare itself. It can skilfully diagnose the causes of its country's weakness. It can stress those values which are still the sources of her strength. Meantime it can purge itself of any guilt that clings to the nation. German youth is doing this today: thoroughly, ruthlessly, as beseems youth. There are no young liberals in Germany today; there are young revolutionaries; there are young conservatives. But who would be a liberal? There are scarcely any young democrats in the proper sense of the term, and such as there are—who a few years ago were still obsessed by yearnings towards the League of Nations and World Peace—are being swiftly nationalized. The formal democracy that posed as our state is now so discredited that nothing can save it. The young conservative needs no fresh proof of the disastrous results that would follow a mechanical, uninspired parliamentism in Germany; the young revolutionary who has mentally outlived the collapse of Marxism but has retained his labour sympathies, has long since been disillusioned about the Revolution which has led only to a reactionary, sham democracy that is content with the opportunist enjoyment of apparent power.

If we seek to discover the reasons why the young conservative and the young revolutionary have so unanimously come to the same conclusion about the principles, points of view and lines of policy that have led to present conditions, we shall find that they share a common contempt and distrust for the liberal ingredient in political thought. This was the one common factor that Germany possessed after the Revolution, the one common link between the forces of the Right and of the Left.

When once the change of generation is complete, there will not survive in Germany one single individual who will attempt a justification of the liberal achievements to which we owe not only the loss of a war, but the loss of the Revolution; which we must now set out to win.

Liberalism is the philosophy of life from which German youth now turns with nausea, with wrath, and with a quite peculiar scorn, for there is none more foreign, more repugnant, more opposed to its own philosophy.

German youth today recognizes the liberal as THE ENEMY.

11

Liberalism is the death of nations. What? Was it not the liberal nations who won the War? Are not these the nations who in 1918–20 (or at any rate by 1988, if they succeed in receiving the last instalment of our debt payment) would seem to have attained everything in respect of Germany that they had longed for secretly—or openly, if they were imprudent enough to voice their wishes—before 1914?

For the moment we can only answer that there is a hope that the destruction that they prepared for us will recoil on their own heads; a hope that the Peace of Versailles will result in such an exposure of liberalism to the eyes of all the word that liberalism will be unable to survive.

Our enemies have their present success. The moment is in their favour, but everything else is against them. The secret, however, must not be revealed before its time. What we can, however, already detect is a regrouping of men and nations. All anti-liberal forces are combining against everything that is liberal. We are living in the time of this transition. The change is taking place most logically from below and attacking the enemy where his power began. There is a revolt against the age of reason.

The value of a philosophy of life must be measured by its effects: does it raise men or lower them? Reason turned thinking man into calculating man. It corrupted Europe. The World War was the shipwreck of the age of reason. It exposed the cunning of that practical calculation that is the national philosophy of England, which gives a moral justification to an immoral conduct of life and state and to the tutelage of other nations; which invented the word utilitarianism to cover egotism. It exposed the bankruptcy of the rights of man with which the French Revolution in the name of democracy cheated the nations of their nationality, while it reserved for a political caste at the top the exploitation of the people. The fight against the age of reason which we are entering on, is a fight against liberalism all along the line.

In the course of this fight we shall realize how brief an epoch the Age of Reason has been; how circumscribed, unimportant and feeble its creation; how ephemeral its legacy. In England it produced some practical things, in France some witty ones. But all great achievements on our side of the border were produced in the teeth of the age of reason. All eminent men with us, whether we think of Goethe or of Bismarck, were un-liberal men. Every decisive even, the rise of Napoleon's power, the foundation of the German Empire, were un-liberal events. The only achievement of the liberal was the skill with which he exploited each turn of events and sought to claim the credit for it.

The calculations of the liberal have been false. The moment always come when the individual realizes his own impotence, when the man who liked to consider himself as independent of society, realizes that if he is to be of any use on earth, if he is to be of any use to his country, he can only be so in alliance with his fellow-countrymen.

The moment has come in which men and nations alike seek cohesion once more, that cohesion which the age of reason thought it could dispense with, sacrificing understanding to reason. The moment has come only after a severe testing-time which has tried the betrayer no less than the betrayed.

But come it has.

Germany's Third Empire

IV. DEMOCRAT

Democracy exists where the people take a share in determining their own Fate

1

Democracy discloses whether a people knows its own mind or not.

After the Ninth of November German democracy was obliged to be of the same mind as our enemies. Such was the fate its own guilt brought down on it.

But will the German people continue to wish in the long run what its democracy wishes? Will this democracy be content to remain what it was yesterday and still is today: the fulfiller of the Treaty of Versailles? Will not the moment come when the people will protest? And will our democracy then take over the leadership and govern according to the people's will, having so long governed as a tool according to the will of our enemies?

The justification of our democrats—the democrats of every party—depends on their answer: and on it depends also the fate of a nation responsible for and to itself.

2

The Revolution brought us no true democracy because the people came to power in such circumstances that we could neither respect ourselves nor command the respect of others.

A Revolution stands or falls by its ideals. The German Revolutionaries were determined to have a democratic Revolution. They began by promising the people a democracy. After the Ninth of November they accordingly set in motion all the machinery of democracy. They introduced all the apparatus, all the democratic inventions that liberals and socialists had thought out and foreseen: parliaments, the widest possible suffrage, the freest of all possible constitutions (as they called it). Their method sought to be very radical: it was at any rate very German. The constitution was thorough and doctrinaire, it was finicky and programme-ridden, it was literal and logical; we may think it ended by being rationalist, pettifogging, un-German—but at least it was democratic.

Nevertheless, within a few years we find that no ideal has worn so threadbare as the democratic. We must not be deceived by the fact that the masses still cling to their Republic. Whenever the republican constitution appears threatened, the proletariat rallies in its defence with unanimity, the only unanimity they have displayed since the Revolution, a unanimity which the nation so conspicuously lacked when faced by graver issues.

This attachment to the Republic has greater psychological than political significance. The people have long since recognized that their Revolution was a folly: the kind of folly only Germans would be guilty of! Germans admit this to each other when they are alone; pretty nearly everyone admits it, even those with the most radical leanings. At first everyone inclined to regard this folly with the usual superficial optimism. "We'll soon be on top again all right!" and the like, were the phrases heard. But gradually it dawned on us all, that the folly into which we had been decoyed was more than one of our harmless Swabian blunders, it was a crisis of the utmost danger ushering in a long period of suffering; and no one can foresee when it will end, or be sure that it may not culminate in the nation's ruin, dissolution, annihilation. People were reluctant to believe that all they had done had been in vain. They had thrown off their old form of government because they were told it must be changed. They had not foreseen the consequences, but had let the Revolution take its course. In a mood, compounded of more despair than is realized and of considerable dignity, they were determined to justify the Revolution, and make the best of the new constitution for which they had cast off the old. Hence their loyalty to the Republic.

This loyalty to the Republic has nothing to do with democracy. The people are perfectly aware that if "things" are ever to be "better," this can only be if individual leaders will show the masses the way to "better things." If once the people feel that they have found a real leader in the country, they will joyfully accept his leadership and send to the devil all the democratic and socialist party-leaders whose impotence and selfishness they have long suspected. So far, however, the people look for these individual leaders in vain. They feel deserted, leaderless, almost hopeless. They realize and admit that the path they entered on on the Ninth of November has proved a *cul de sac*. But might it not prove to be after all a way round? Meantime they continued to try the republican, the so-called democratic, road. The Republic seemed the only chance that remained; it seemed to promise at least a possibility of attaining political freedom at home, even if it did not guarantee political freedom abroad. The people considered the Republic as a framework which could be filled in later: perhaps with some totally different content. Meantime, since for the time being no other framework seems possible in Germany, we must make the best of the one we call the Republic.

This does not, however, alter the fact that the people may some day demand measures, republican measures, that will be totally undemocratic.

3

Democracy does not depend on the form of the state but on the share which the people take in the working of the state.

The German people feel today that they have been cheated of this share. They are beginning to distinguish between the Republic and democracy.

Apart from the insignificant group that calls themselves the "democratic party," apart from the democrats whom the socialists reckon in their ranks, the only people who avow themselves "democrats" are the political exploiters of our collapse. These types exist in all parties which admitted liberal elements. They are the people whom the Revolution brought to the top: the new rich, the opportunist parliamentarians, the party-leaders, the publicists. These are the people who acquiesce in the present state of affairs. After the War they abandoned all thought of Germany as a great and free Empire. They were ready for every renunciation except that of their own enjoyment. They worked to earn the cheap money which the democratic state was printing, and they upheld the state not because they honoured what it stood for, but because they wanted to keep their jobs.

Everywhere else—in conservative circles and amongst the proletarian masses—anger began to rise against democracy. However daring the idea of beginning all over again, however dark and uncertain the issue, the people began to clamour for a fresh start and an end to this whitewashing of democracy. Youth rightly craves for the romantic, and youth resented the banalities of democracy even more than its corruption. Youth's judgments were passionate and stern. The working classes too—the other bulwark of our people—were disappointed at the course the Revolution had taken, and began to turn against democracy. The proletarian masses are socialist not democrat, even when they incline to imagine that socialism means democracy. They are never thinking of the democracy which we have got: they are dreaming of another, new, distant, future,—perhaps impossible—democracy. In every stratum of the people reaction against democracy began to set in, similar to the reaction which a man feels when in the cold light of day he contemplates what he committed overnight.

There is no use comparing what we were before 1914 with what we have been since 1918. These retrospective comparisons are prompted to a large extent by economic rather than political reflections. But beyond these practical preoccupations, retrospective thought posed other questions: about the meaning of this great historical experience we had lived through, about the honour, the conduct, the destiny of a nation. The German people learnt at last—they learnt very slow, but they did learn—to grasp the causes and the effects of the fate that had overtaken them. They learned to despise other peoples who had posed as democrats and had betrayed German democracy. The point of view thus arrived at ultimately led the people to take stock of the democracy which had become their own form of government.

Who, in the name of . . . constituted this democracy? Ye gods! They were the liberals. Of course they were not so rash to call themselves liberals. In Germany they now styled themselves progressives. Liberalism had promised both freedom and progress. Germany now had neither: but Germany had a democracy. The question is: who has this democracy? When the people came to look into the matter they realized that there existed between the people and the state a stratum of persons not the bureaucrats of the old system (though these remained) but a new stratum of persons who now constituted the state, who formed the government and staffed the offices, the press and the organizations: persons who professed to act for the people, but who kept the people at arm's length. It is true that since 1918 the people themselves had elected these persons, the people in the widest sense—men, women and half-grown adolescents—this was a revolutionary procedure and was supposed to be very democratic. But this "electing business" seemed to crown the people's dissatisfaction with a state of affairs that was even less to their mind than the old. The people's understanding told them that it was humbug to assure the individual elector that the vote which he cast gave him a voice in the history of his country. His voting had no influence on the results of the election which produced a number of unknown representatives, each of them tied down from the start by allegiance to his party, and provided with rule-of-thumb instructions for any contingency. This parliamentary business fettered a nation's policy. The people did not theorize about it: but they were perfectly aware that it was humbug.

The Reichstag has always been despised in Germany. People remembered Bismarck the statesman, who accomplished what other people only talked about, and was more often than not opposed by the Reichstag. Under William II the Reichstag exercised very sparingly such controlling powers as it possessed, and then for the most part obstructively. The revolutionary parliaments, however, which the Weimar Constitution gave us after the Ninth of November are even more heartily despised than the old Reichstag. They may pass laws or reject laws; the people pay not the slightest attention. Their debates awaken no interest. The people expect nothing from them; they have lost all faith.

How complete the divorce is between the life of the parliaments and the life of the people, is clear from the contrast that is constantly observable between the party-leader and the elector. When an elector is asked his opinion, it often appears that this is the opposite of the policy his party is voting for. And the parties on their side often vote one way and think another. The whole thing is humbug; some are dupers, some are dupes, but in the end it is always the people who are sacrificed. Only when a party is in opposition does it acquire unity and a will. Only the fighting parties, whether of the Right or of the Left, have any convictions. Only they have any driving power.

But these are the parties that oppose parliaments—and democracy.

4

Who is the liberal chameleon: democracy?

Who is this moloch who devours the masses and the classes and the trades and the professions and all human distinctions?

Who is this Leviathan? We must not let either the rhetoric or the bonhomie of the democrat deceive us about the true nature of the monster.

Democracy exists where the people take a share in determining their own fate. And the fate of the people is the people's affair—at least so one would imagine. The question is: how is it possible for the people to take a share?

Nations like individuals make their own fate. But in the case of minors someone else must make decisions for them. There is a great difference between nations; some attain maturity early, some late, some never attain it at all. Some again achieve only an apparent maturity, and allow themselves to be lured into democracy not for sound political reasons but by their literati, their theorists, their demagogues; and find in democracy their undoing.

None of these cases entirely covers ours. We lack the basis of democracy. No inner craving for democracy has run like a guiding thread through the course of our history. We cannot contend that only in democracy can our history find its fulfilment. For many a long day we left "democracy" alone. Fate was kind and favourable; our government had many constitutional features, but monarchy seemed our fore-ordained destiny for the future as for the past. Only the political opposition wasted time on barren conjectures as to whether our monarchy should not adopt a more democratic form, and ultimately perhaps merge in a democracy. The whole question of German democracy is a tangled one and to unravel it we must hark back to its distant origin.

We were originally a democratic people. When we first stepped out of the twilight of prehistory we had already solved the question of how a people can take a share in its own government. The answer had nothing to do with the theoretic rights of man; it was utterly simple: the democracy *was* the people. There was no social contract, but there was the bond of blood. The unit of society was the family, on this rested the constitution of the tribes, on the tribes rested the community of the people. Confederations of the tribes held the people together, they enjoyed the comradeship of their fields in peace and of their tents in war. The democracy of those days was the self-government of the people in a manner suited to the conditions of their life. The distribution of rights and duties implied by these conditions, which was a feature of the law of the confederations, was based on the practice of self-government. This law recognized the right of the tribes to assert their power inside or outside the tribe, as might seem necessary to them for their own self-preservation. This was the origin of leadership: the free choice of free men who chose them a "duke" to conduct their forces to victory. As the various German races distributed themselves over a larger and larger area, the next step was to elect themselves a king to secure a consistent and continuous policy, and to this end it was natural that the office of king should be vested in one particular and well-tried stock. All this was democracy pure. The people in their confederations established the law; and the leader, whoever he might be, put the law into effect as executor of the people's will. The German state was the commonwealth of the people, and its unwritten constitution—if we may be allowed the world in so early a context—was the sum of the people's habits, morals and customs: traditionally expressed in the popular assemblies in which every member of the nation appeared in person and took his share in the decisions that determined his fate.

The unity of the German state was based on the divisions of races and tribes, and the subdivisions of clan and family: in contrast to the states of antiquity which were based on power and law and state-right. German democracy had been begotten and conceived, born and reared. It formed a body, all members of which stood in vital relation to each other, and none thought of disputing its own position or its own function. This unity in diversity gave the state the firm foundation it preserved into historic times, until that greatest of periods when the idea of an empire arose, and the narrow domain of national policy was exchanged for the wider domain of international policy.

A danger, however, was inherent in this diversity. As the various members became more widely divided in space they tended to become less and less conscious of their essential unity, and more and more inclined to seek independence. The tribal constitution had all along been one centrifugal factor. Another was added when the knightly order began to claim precedence over the other estates. In the original feudal organization the leader and the led were bound together in mutual loyalty, but gradually the greater nobility began to differentiate itself from the lesser nobility, and both left out of their calculations the peasant population who had originally constituted the democratic power of the nation. The peasantry were despised, ill-treated, poor and impotent. This neglect led to the reactions of the Peasants' War. These internal dissensions would have had no more than a domestic importance, if they had not resulted in external weakness. As early as the Middle Ages the German people had shown how un-politically-minded they were, when confronted with problems of foreign politics. They had put power into the hands of the kind, but had given him no means of supporting that power. The kings, who were destined later to be the emperors, had no alternative but to build up private power and private estates of their own. Even this expedient did not prevent the loss of Italy, of Switzerland, of Holland, and ultimately of Alsace: it did not prevent the empire having the greatest difficulty in defending itself against the Turks, and finally the story of the private Habsburg patrimony ends with the dissolution of the Austrian Empire.

The development of these private demesnes led also to disastrous rivalries amongst the princes, to the conception of territorial states, and finally, during the period of absolutism, to the establishment of small independent kingdoms. Despite all these developments, however, the idea of national unity was never wholly lost. The towns which were becoming more and more the centres of German culture owed their wonderful mediaeval achievements to its unifying influence. The idea of unity led to associations amongst the towns by which the citizens sought to assure for themselves the power and security which the weakness of the empire denied them. Thus arose the Swabian and the Hanseatic Leagues. Even under absolutism the idea of unity was not dead; if it did not survive in governments, it was cherished by individuals. Prussia was much more democratic than the reputation of its rulers would imply. With sword and scaffold the Prussian kings put an end to the feudal system; the only duty of the nobility was towards the crown: but through the crown towards the people also. The royal motto "ich dien" (*I serve*) indicates the attitude of these Prussian monarchs to their people, in striking contrast to the divine pretensions of the kings of France: it represents an attempt to restore through a human intermediary the vital bond between state and people which absolutism had severed.

Such was the course we pursued in Germany, but not thoroughly or logically enough. We did not sufficiently strengthen the foundations of the empire. We failed adequately to support the admirable project of Freiherr von Stein to make the foundation of the state at once conservative and democratic, unified by a wide system of self-government.

Bismarck had to fight his whole life against the consequences of this failure, and his work was finally wrecked on the same rock. We failed to think our most characteristic thoughts to their final conclusion; instead, we welcomed other people's most foreign thoughts. Instead of a state built up on estates, we based our state on a parliament, which was a conception imported from the west. The parliamentary state in England had always remained a state built on the three estates; it was an aristocratic creation of the great families, who had devised it in a period when their monarchs were ineffective in order to protect their own power and therewith the power of the people. Montesquieu, who somewhat indiscriminately admired this tyrannical and corrupt institution, recognized its essentially Germanic quality, and said that this "beautiful system," as he called it, had "been evolved in the forests." He seized on the idea of "representation," and recognized as the chief advantage of the system the fact that the representatives were "qualified to discuss affairs of state," while the great drawback to democracy was that the people were quite unqualified to do so. Rousseau was the first to teach that all power emanated from the people. He strove unsuccessfully to distinguish between "the general will" and "the will of all." The conception of the state as the result of a *Contrat Social* was characteristic of an age when the peoples had lost touch with that "nature" which was talked so much about. It was characteristic of such an age that the state was to depend on a mere counting of heads amongst an electorate that had lost all roots, and that such a state should be called a democracy. The English and the French, however, were quick in their different ways to discover protective measures against the dangers of such a system. The English invented the cabinet and the prime minister, to whom they gave precedence over their lower house, and to whom they equipped with almost sovereign powers. The French invented the political clique which manipulated the chambers for its own private ends, which were, however, also the ends of France. It was reserved for the Germans to interpret parliamentism literally, to endow parliament with real powers of control which it then exercised only negatively and obstructively. Görres was still able to say that German had now become "one body in all its members," but we did not even seriously attempt to build up the state on the basis of its component members by following out Stein's scheme of self-government for town and country, from which a representative system could have been developed that would have enabled us as a nation to select our best in the political field. We based our state on a mechanical counting of votes, instead of an organic union of its members. We spent a century over the discussion of various suffrage systems. We wanted votes merely for the sake of having votes. We thought we had found a mean between the two principles of monarchy and democracy: we had found only mediocrity. The vigorous economic life of the nation ran parallel to its political life, as if there were no connection between the two. This was one fatal fact; another was that under William II the monarchy ultimately lost all touch with the people; in view of the kind of people who sat in the parliaments and the kind of man who sat on the throne this was inevitable. The political parties took over the function of the estates, but the parties suffered, like the parliaments, from complete lack of inspiration. The subdivision of the nation into political parties had become a system, and the parliaments—in particular the Reichstag, which is obviously the foremost of the representative bodies—became merely institutions for the public dissemination of political platitudes. Wisdom based on inheritance, knowledge of men, personal experience, were only to be found in the upper houses which still remained the preserves of one estate. The intellectual representatives of the nation, the great capitalists and employers of labour, all who were in any way creatively active, realized that the nation's salvation did not lie in debating-matches, and consequently held more and more aloof from parliaments. Thus the parliaments fell deeper into disrepute and people went about their daily business ignoring them. Party programmes, in spite of all the care given to formulating them, never contained an ideal capable of inspiring the people. We need scarcely add that at a time when the course of world history looked most ominous, matters of foreign politics received consideration only in so far as they might have a bearing on internal party politics. This must be emphasized. Much has changed in Germany, but in one thing our fate remains unchanged: our national vice is our exclusive preoccupation with domestic politics.

Our collapse, therefore, which brought us "the freest of republics" brought also the purest form of parliamentism. The pair of them together we call our "Democracy": and many still call this "progress." We must discuss parliamentism in relation to our democracy, not because the two are identical, but because they are erroneously supposed to be so. Mommsen's observation about ancient Rome appears to be justified: "Democracy has brought about its own destruction, by pursuing its own principle to extremes,"—which, however, did not prevent Mommsen as a German from being a democrat. The reaction against parliamentism that set in immediately after the Revolution, seems, however, of greater moment than even the self-destructive power of the democratic principle. Throughout the length and breadth of the land we see the German races stirring; they want to preserve the Empire, they want it more consciously, more passionately, than ever before, but they cannot believe that its unity will be secured by the sixty million atoms of the population. They believe this unity must be based on the independence of the individual kingdoms, united in their feelings of mutual loyalty and of loyalty to the whole, through some kind of centralisation or federalisation. A similar development is taking place in the economic sphere. Karl Renner, himself a Marxist, was led by the outcome of the War to examine anew the postulates of Marxism; he has evolved the idea of economic spheres. We have been further reflecting on the relation between "community and society" and attempting to construct the state and constitution on the corporative principle which Max Hilderbert Boehm has set forth in: *The Corporative Body and the Commonwealth* (Körperschaft und Gemeinwesen).

It was only to be expected that the attack on parliamentism should be led by two sides: by the revolutionaries with their ideal of councils, by the conservatives with their ideal of estates of the realm. The idea of "estates" is the idea of an organic structure completely incompatible with the idea of "party." The conservative's object then is to bring the estates to their rights again, not as romantic historical conceptions but as active, modern bodies with definite political rights and duties which should entitle them to claim incorporation in state and constitution. Economics was again the starting-point of a new line of thought, leading from the idea of economic self-government to that of productive communities which Brauweiler developed out of the "productive family." Corporative and syndicalist ideas were taken into account and councils were not forgotten in thinking out the plan of a state based on estates. This by no means excludes the ideas of popular representation, but it keeps at bay the party system which reduced the monarchy to being the mere plaything of political parties. It would put an end to the humbug by which a German, by the mere casting of a vote, deprives himself for a long series of years of all political freedom; the nonsense which gives a party or coalition government the formal right until the next elections to decide all questions on which the fate of the country depends, even if in the meantime new circumstances have arisen which had not been foreseen at the time of the last election. In such a case the only possibility is the referendum for which the Constitution of Weimar made provision, but which the parties in Weimar later found to be highly inconvenient because it was "an unparliamentary expedient"—and thoroughly democratic. But even the referendum, if applied, could only supply an immediate, and no permanent solution, of an individual question. We need a representation of the people which shall remain in constant touch with the people, by being part of its natural organic structure and not a mere mechanical device; we need a system of representation based on the estates which shall assure us security and permanence; we need a system by which we can stand and not fall.

The feeling that some such system is necessary has gradually become widespread, not only among conservatives but amongst the public at large. It is not only communists who declaim against the tutelage of a so-called democracy that keeps the people in leading-strings. A socialist paper recently asked: "Why had the parliamentary system failed?" "We are living," it said, "in a state of transition. The Revolution gave us what is legally and technically a democracy, but we lack the democratic spirit, the devotion to and interest in the state that is the essence of true democracy."

"Why have we," it went on to ask, no "politically active proletariat?" Why have we not "the right sort of men" to give us a "better selection"? Why do the "party members," the socialist critic continued, show no "understanding of the nature and duties of a parliamentary system"? The answer is simple: Because in Germany the parliamentary system has no tradition! The German social-democrat betrays how backward, how inadequate, how politically uneducated he is, by the way he shies off at the mere sound of the word "tradition." "Tradition" for him means reaction, the old system, the accursed past: everything with which he wants to break for good and all. But tradition is in actual fact the security guaranteed by the past political experience of a people. The memory of the German Reichstag is associated with no great events in which it bore a part; but the memory of its blunders is inexhaustible. It is impotent because it is despised. Our friend the socialist, already quoted, asked: "May not a day be coming when the people will have lost faith in parliaments?" The day has long since come. There is not a man in the country who does not call parliament "the chatter-house." The feeling is universal that no help is to be found there. Our socialist opined that "every people has the parliamentary system it deserves." True. But our conclusion differs from his. We believe that the day of parliaments is over. We believe that Germany will lead the way in thought and deed. The parliamentary system has failed more gravely in Germany than in any other country; we have therefore greater reason than any other country to cast it from us and to create a new, worthier, more suitable form of government representative of the people. Let us rejoice that Germany has proved TOO GOOD for parliaments.

The German people took historically the opposite course from the peoples of the west. France and England began as national states, they progressed as monarchies and after they had by their Revolution got rid of, or limited their monarchies, they established their parliamentary system which they called democracy and which served as a cover for their nationalism. We on the other hand began as a democratic people, maintained ourselves by our monarchy and finally broke our history off with a Revolution which was not so much a national revolution as an international revolution, supposed to be aiming at universal brotherhood and eternal peace.

Our international hopes were deceived. The democrats of the west had no mind to show mercy, still less justice, to the young democracy of our Empire. German democracy is thrown back on her own resources, and if she wants to maintain herself in Germany and *vis-à-vis* the outside world she must tread the same path as all western democracies have trodden: she must become a nation. She must fling all the ideological rubbish and pacifist assurances on the same dustheap as all the other catchwords that were scrapped at Versailles.

Democracy is the political self-consciousness of a people: and its self-assertion as a nation.

Democracy is the expression of a people's self-respect—or it is no democracy at all.

5

The question of democracy is not the question of the Republic.

It would from a historical point of view be quite conceivable that Germany was now entering its republican era. It depends however, on how the democracy as a Republic lends itself to nationalization, whether the Republic will last or not, or whether it would be succeeded by a dictatorship, or by an imperial or some variety of monarchical state.

We were well served by our monarchy for centuries. That made us a monarchical people. Then came a generation in which we were ill served by our monarchy. That made us democratic. The change had no logic in it; it was merely a reaction—from one mood into its opposite. Another change would now be possible; having experiment with democracy, we might now change back to monarchy again, reflecting that the good experience of it in the past should carry more weight than the bad, and that many centuries rightly outweigh a couple of decades.

A revolution never remains revolutionary; it has a tendency to become conservative. If there was less confusion of political ideals, the conception of a conservative democracy would be familiar. A democracy would be perfectly conceivable in Germany if its first aim was to shield the life of the people, to root the Republic in the characteristic conditions of the country, to base it on the differences of the component races and the acquiescence of the people. Democracy does not consist in the form of government but in the spirit of the citizens; its foundation is the people.

The German democracy which received its constitution in Weimar is slow to recognize that it can only win a right to endure if it is able to make itself the continuation of the monarchy, not its negation. We repeat: it can only survive if it succeeds in being for the nation what the monarchy was of old: a democracy with a leader—not parliamentism.

The reactionary, of course, sees things differently. He has been untouched by revolutionary thought. For him the age of William II was faultlessly splendid; he thinks that on principle a monarchy is the best of all possible forms of government.

The conservative on the other hand studies the relation of cause and effect; he is not afraid to state that the monarchy itself was the cause of its own downfall. We must explain:

The monarchy has always acted for the people. It took over this duty when the German nation had lost its mediaeval maturity. Nothing but the absolute monarchy saved the German people from the extreme weakness that resulted from the Thirty Years' War. Without the absolute monarchy there would have been no power to represent the Empire in the eyes of Europe; the Empire would have fallen to pieces. The monarchy saved the nation, and the people loyally followed their dynasties in Austria and Prussia. A patriarchal relationship existed between princes and people. The great princes of the eighteenth century lived for the fame of the German nation; they had the strength of the people behind them and thus foreign politics were possible for them.

These advantages were counterbalanced by a disadvantage which became more evident as time went on. The monarchy taught the people to look to the state to act on their behalf; and the people became unaccustomed to act for themselves. In time monarchy and nation ceased to form a unity, and in moments of danger and years of trial this unity had to be restored by the people's initiative. This was evident during the Wars of Liberation; and when the Second German Empire was being founded Bismarck had to act as intermediary now on behalf of the monarchy, now on behalf of the people. In the days of William II the bonds between ruler and ruled grew looser and looser, though the pretence of unity was still kept up, by tradition, by convention, by a disciplined patriotism.

The revolutionaries imagined that their intention of ending the war would best be fulfilled by sacrificing the idea of nationality. They maintained that the introduction of democracy would by itself suffice to ensure the benevolence of our enemies. They gave up territory; they struck the imperial flag; they renounced the union of Austria and Germany; they signed a Peace Treaty in which against their conscience they acknowledged Germany's guilt in causing the World War.

Our present democracy is no longer the democracy of the revolution. We have long since realized that our enemies have betrayed us, and in betraying us have betrayed their own democracy. But our present democracy has one feature in common with the democracy of the revolution: it is equally incapable of taking really democratic decisions—of acting for the people.

Liberalism was the ruin of the German democrat, as a man and as a democrat. If we wish to rescue democracy for Germany, we must turn to quarters where uncorrupted men and Germans are still to be found: we must look to the people. Perhaps we shall be able some day to declare once more our faith in German democracy—some day: when there are no more "democrats."

There have been peoples who flourished under democracy; there have been peoples who perished under democracy. Democracy may imply stoicism, republicanism and inexorable severity; or it may imply liberalism, parliamentary chatter and self-indulgence. Were the German democrats never seized by a paralysing fear that a liberal democracy might be the fateful instrument of the German people's ruin?

6

We have explained what we mean by democracy: the share of the people in determining its own fate.

German democracy attempted at first to withhold this share from the people and demanded their approval when she "acted" on their behalf: by inaction. The people woke up to realize that the reward their revolution had brought them was to work unremittingly to satisfy the terms of the Peace Treaty which their pacifist and liberal and democratic illusions had fastened on them.

German democracy will plead in excuse that she was only the heir of the Revolution, that fate and circumstances tied her hands, that she was compelled to barter concessions on every side in exchange for the possibility of mere existence. Only the invertebrate pleads force of circumstances; only the fatalist talks of fate. We can imagine a democracy who seeing that good behaviour resulted only in ill-treatment, and finding her back against the wall, would have set about defending with all the power of sixty million people behind her. Our democracy could have called these sixty millions to her aid, an immense, dangerous, threatening force: but she never did.

There is only one way of salvation for the sixty million. The man-power of sixty millions must be transformed into the will-power of sixty millions and the people must make a first and last and only effort at self-defence. This will is the only thing we can surely count on; it is a matter of complete indifference whether this will is called democratic or not, so long as the whole people is behind it. It is, however, vital that it should be a national will: the will of a nation that knows what it wants, and does what it must, to regain its freedom.

Looking back we can see the sequence of cause and effect; we can see that even the democratic policy of inaction is a necessary link in the chain. It makes a great difference whether the MUST of things leaves men unmoved, or impels them to original and creative effort. The imperative must not hold us back; the imperative must set us free. If salvation does not come from democracy, it will come catastrophically from the people.

The German people have often in the past been wellnigh imprisoned in despair. They have never found a way out except through their proverbial *furor*: perhaps it has sometimes been a barbaric way—perhaps it will tomorrow be a proletarian way.

7

The Ninth of November was not the only consequence of the First of August. It was preceded by that disastrous day on which in the middle of the World War the Reichstag broke the will of the people.

It is possible that we have other disastrous days ahead, days on which German from weakness will again give way to self-deception and deceive the people with false hopes; days on which parties will again fail us and parliaments stood to negotiations which our politically-stronger enemies force on us against the better judgment of the people, negotiations which prevent us from making a clean sweep of the slavery of Versailles, smashing it and ending it once for all.

But we can hope for better things. For in such a case our democracy will not only have the Right against it this time, but will have the Left against it as well: the same proletariat, which at that time made the Revolution: not only the conservatives this time, but this time the classes, the masses, THE PEOPLE.

Germany's Third Empire

V. PROLETARIAN

The Proletarian is such by his own desire

1

The problem of the masses grows urgent.

It clamours not from the Left only. We find the liberal—who lives on the produce of human labour, or on the produce of trade or on dividends—in full retreat before the proletarian who claims that it is he who does the work. The liberal is now doing his best to stem the tide of the masses—which he himself set in motion—by eloquently assuring them that they also belong to the nation; that the great mother, democracy, will welcome them to her bosom and will undertake the care of the proletarian with the rest. The nation, with its demagogue leaders and parliamentary leading-strings, has the pace of a mollusc; but the masses are pressing on from behind. They are thrusting froward, they are dragging others with them. They are action!

The Right is beginning to recognize the pressure and the weight of the masses. The Right consists not only of men who defend property and the enjoyment of property, but men who defend values and the indestructibility of values, men who are of the considered opinion that values have not been created merely to be again destroyed. The conservative is the guardian of these values and feels it his natural mission to prevent their falling victims to the levelling forces of democracy or proletariat: to oppose the force of personality to the forces of the masses. The position of the conserving man has been undermined. The things for which he stands have outwardly lost their value in the Revolution. They were all subtly related to the question of personality, the personality of individuals and the personality of the nation, to questions of distinction and difference, of rank and order. The people who traditionally stood for these values all proved their political incompetence during the century of the democrat and the proletarian. They proved themselves weak on each and every occasion where it behoved them to be strong. Personality is at a discount and cannot easily reassert itself against the masses. The champions of these depreciated values are indeed themselves threatened with proletarianization. Respected ranks, honourable and reserved professions, are sinking down into the proletariat, however desperately the individual may seek to avert such a fate from himself. It looks as if the whole nation was doomed to become proletarian. The problem of the masses becomes urgent therefore on the Right also. It is the problem of men who seem destined to become, though they are not yet, proletarians. The problem becomes urgent of a nation of men destined to be masters, but doomed by the outcome of the World War to become a nation of serfs.

The masses continue to envisage the whole problem as an economic one. The proletarian does not dream of a higher, more spiritual standpoint. He does not perceive that there are still people in Germany who neither wish to become proletarians themselves nor to belong to a nation of proletarians, Germans whose conception of human and national dignity is based on a system of values unknown to the proletariat.

The proletarian is dimly aware that there are things which some people possess as by hereditary right, which confer a peculiar superiority unaffected by personal, social or political status.

But he does not in the last realize the inner nature of these things; he attributes them to arrogance, to ancient privilege or to wealth; he fails to distinguish spiritual values from material values which can be dealt with by confiscation.

The proletariat, however, is beginning vaguely to reflect over the relationship of the fourth estate to the other strata of the nation. If in the course of the next generation the proletarian develops national consciousness, he may be won for the nation. The fathers have been told that they possess no country; the sons are beginning to prick up their ears when they hear talk of a country of their fathers which the sons must conquer if it is to become the possession of their children. The proletarian is developing into the young-socialist.

He is toying with communist modes of thought. He is beginning to think in terms of corporate communities and is therefore becoming more accessible to conceptions of home and country and nation. The younger working men and boys are evolving a proletarian idealism. The proletarian on the other hand who still harps on class war has no thought for the nation. He thinks first and last and only of himself. He does not yet suspect this; and it is the fact that he does not that stamps him as a proletarian. He was promised a world that should be his world. He wants to see the fulfilment of this promise which set the masses on the move. The actual world round him is a hateful, bourgeois world which he is determined radically to alter. He advances to overthrow it; no one can yet foretell whether his toilworn hand will rend it asunder, or whether his powerful shoulder will uplift it.

The masses are moving upwards from below; the problem is urgent.

The proletariat needs leaders for its advance. The masses do not know what to make of their own leaders. Did they not preach and prophesy a world democracy? The proletarian contemplates the upshot of the Revolution which was to have been *his* revolution. He takes note and is determined on no account to work off the Treaty of Versailles. He does what he never did before: he begins to take thought about foreign politics. Perhaps in all Germany there is no one who condemns more severely, more unreservedly, more wrathfully than the proletarian, a democracy which sought the issue out of oppression and affliction in the fulfilment of the impossible. Bitterly he begins to suspect that the democracy has selected him to bear the burden of fulfilment. This is the natural reaction from the promise of the Revolution.

Not one single leader of weight, personality or political repute was thrown up by the ranks of the proletariat. The masses were therefore reduced to following the opposition upstarts and exploiters of the Revolution. The intellectuals of 1918 used the strength of the masses to put themselves in power! They called their power democracy. The masses remained unredeemed. The proletariat has no mind to renounce the unique opportunity offered by the Revolution—the one thing that justified the Revolution—the opportunity of being the masses in action! The masses are perfectly aware that no one of themselves has got the vocation, the gift, the call to leadership. They know that the proletariat cannot lead itself. They are questioned: is it possible that leadership is a hereditary superiority, perhaps the inalienable privilege of the non-proletarian?—a gift not of the democrat but of the conservative? Little as the masses love the classes, the question quietly persists, alongside a gnawing consciousness of impotence, alongside a touching yearning to be loyal followers of someone.

The temper of the masses is still proletarian, but as the hopeless, intolerable circumstances under which we are doomed to live becomes increasingly recognized as not domestic oppression merely, but foreign oppression, the more probable a change of temper becomes; but then mass-consciousness assets itself again as class-consciousness and forms a barrier.

Trust is lacking; and leadership can be based only on mutual trust between the leader and the led. The Ninth of November was the shipwreck of leadership. Since then the secret of leadership appears to have been lost.

To be successful, a leader of today will need to persuade the masses to permit him to act for the whole nation, to preserve or win the values that are essential: first and foremost among which is the reconquest of our freedom. If he is to give the masses the opportunity of making the Revolution—grave political failure that it was—ultimately fruitful for the nation, he will require the superiority that springs of an exact knowledge of proletarian problems and persons. He must rejoice at being called to lead the proletarian masses, to direct their will into national channels—for ultimately the fate of the nation and the fate of the proletariat are inseparable. A whole people is straining at the leash—awaiting only the signal for the start.

Everywhere there are prejudices, hostilities, misunderstanding, rancours. It looks as if we should have to pass through some crisis before the proletariat learns to recognize the value of nationality. The masses are embittered and disillusioned; they are not sure what they need. But there they are!

Marx called the proletarian revolution "the independent movement of the overwhelming majority." Lenin talked of the "forward-movement of the masses," in which according to him the European proletariat was already engaged. The proletarian masses have the ponderous force of a steamroller. The Russian proletariat drove out the Constituent Assembly, but then speedily surrendered itself to a dictatorship which still directs it. The German proletariat, lacking other leadership than that of its independent party organizations, clings to the class-war idea and finds nothing better to do that to go on tilting against capitalism—naively imagining that in smiting German capitalism it is also smiting the capitalism of the world, and that presently communism will be established everywhere.

The masses are making themselves felt.

2

When the masses advanced in 1918 their movement came from the depths.

They called their movement a proletarian one. They spoke of a socialist revolution. They invoked the name of Marx. But their revolution was only an insurrection. The only watchword that issued from the throats of the demonstrators was "DOWN!" They could pour out into the streets. They could tear down a flag. They could snatch epaulettes from people's shoulders. But that was all they were able to do—yet it was able to destroy a nation, a country and an empire.

Weitling once prophesied: "I see a second Messias coming with a sword to enforce the teaching of the first." But this annunciation of an approaching reign of justice was obscured by the later calculations of Marx whose reckoning took no heed of Man or the Son of Man, but only of the method of production, and whose political hypothesis depended on a fraternal International, materialist and rationalist, which was to usher socialism in. And now a nation which has been suckled on the Marxist creed had surrendered its sword and put its hope in the masses instead of the Messias. Suddenly released from the terror of war our foes fell on each other's necks for sheer malicious delight that a credulous people had abandoned a world war for the sake of an eternity of world peace. They fell on each other's necks, prince and pauper, soldier and civilian, for joy over the unbelievable ingenuousness of the German people.

The hullabaloo of the Tenth of November passed. The tribune with the inflated cheeks and the hanging curls was able to announce to the Reichstag: "The German people has been victorious all along the line!" The days of irresponsibility passed, proclamations fluttered down through the fog and the independents, handsomely paid with bolshevist gold, their sapping work accomplished, were able to announce with satisfaction: "Party comrades, we address you with joy and pride!" The consequences followed: even before the Armistice, negotiations had been carried through by this same carefree, unscrupulous, easily-swayed, light-hearted individual, who with his usual obliging promptitude set his hand to the unpleasant task. Reality overtook those who had now assumed responsibility not only for the state but for the nation: though never before had their thoughts been occupied with the nation. They had been preparing the proletariat for a class war; in the meantime it had lost the war of nations.

It was a clique of petty persons who now met in the offices of the fallen government. When they crossed the threshold they were entering the scene not only of William II's glory but of Bismarck's. To the end of time the German Revolution will be characterized by the total lack of personality amongst those who carried it out; not a man of them stood out by his stature above the mediocrity usual among German politicians.

There were decent well-meaning folk amongst them, who had spent their lives serving their party. They tackled the tasks that crowded in on them with the best intentions. But there were also among them embittered fanatics whose lives had been one long campaign of agitation, whose meat and drink was opposition. The former group, would fain have avoided a revolution if they could, the later regretted only that there was not something yet more revolutionary than a revolution. The majority-socialists were recruited mainly from the petty proletarian bourgeoisie. Their representatives felt themselves to be German, though they had never attached very much importance to their nationality. This latent patriotism of theirs made it possible for them to arrive at a political conception of the nation such as the German social democrats, with their absolute blindness to foreign politics, had never approached. The majority-socialist now found himself a responsible representative of the nation.

The independent-socialists on the other hand were recruited from the radicals and the literary-proletarian semi-intellectuals. If any party could be called the party of the rabble—whether well- or ill-dressed—it was this one which called itself "independent" and was in fact so very much the opposite. Its leaders were disgruntled, embittered men charged with hate: the liberals of socialism, whose activities were everywhere destructive. In the midst of our collapse they remained cosmopolitans who on every occasion drank a toast to the socialist International.

These were the sort of people to whom the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils had entrusted the fate of the German nation, behind the back of the long-enduring fighting forces. One and all were denizens of a narrow party-world whether they called themselves majority-socialists or independent-socialists. These men were now called upon to find their bearings in the open world of power and politics, and to conduct negotiations with the allied democracies of the world. Six of them sat together in council as the People's Commissioners. Their helpless perplexity was only too evident; they were reluctant to realize what had been perpetrated. "What is to be done?" they asked. "What is it still possible to do?"

They could themselves do nothing—they were proletarians after all. They were obliged to have recourse of the services of renegades from the non-socialist parties, dubious adventurers bent on exploiting the situation, such as are found in every revolution. They were justly thankful when a professional diplomat was willing—for his country's sake—to master his repugnance and represent the impotent government in foreign affairs with a last remnant of dignity. We saw our ambassador in Versailles sitting, pale, trembling, despairing, self-controlled, amongst unfeeling statesmen who scarcely sought to mask their triumph. Finally we lived to see our enemies, in that same pretentious Salle des Glaces that had witnessed the birth of the Second German Empire, coldly and scornfully following the movements of the pen with which another German signed the Treaty of Versailles on behalf of the National Assembly of Weimar. This man with the expressionless face might well have retired into obscurity after such a deed; far from it, he was not ashamed to become Bismarck's successor as Imperial Chancellor, and he continues today the head of a political party. The German humiliation had begun. The German proletariat scarcely observed it. The humiliation was disguised in the eyes of the people as a policy of fulfilment: this had been forced on us unjustly it was true, but still our duty was clear.

The anxieties of these years centred in domestic rather than in foreign politics; foreign disillusionment could be laid at the door of the Allies, but at home the government begotten of the Revolution betrayed its perpetual anxiety, its bad conscience, its embarrassment. The home government had to answer for the domestic disillusionment. The immediate end of the Revolution had been peace; incidentally it had introduced a new system of government; it had paid no heed to a new system of economics. The revolutionaries were socialists. For seventy-five years the proletariat had been promised socialism. The masses now demanded it! But socialism was not seriously to be thought of. There was some hitch in Marx's economic postulates. It was true that the proletariat now held "political power in its hand"—Marx's condition precedent to a "new organization of labour." But the capitalist possessed not only capital but intelligence, technical mastery, organizing ability, commercial efficiency; he had in fine the power of experience behind him; the proletariat had only the weight of numbers. It was useless for the proletariat to attempt to take over businesses which though dependant on his labour owed nothing to his initiative. We get down to a natural difference between two human types—the director and the workman—each of which is complementary to the other but neither of which can play the other's role. The political revolution was unable to give birth to a socialist revolution because the proletarian was intellectual unripe for a socialist revolution; because it is the distinguishing mark of a proletarian to be intellectual unripe.

The Spartacists did not recognize this cleavage. The cleavage of classes with its corollary of class warfare bulked so large in their mind that they had no eye for differences or distinctions of any other sort. They saw nothing but a perverse economic system. They knew and cared nothing for its origin, its limitations, its data, the conditions of its growth, the motives of the working economists. Marx had taught them to see everything from his point of view of surplus value and they had learnt nothing but this dogma of his. Liebknecht saw everything red. He was a man of precipitate thought, of bitter passions, of rancorous temperament incapable of perceiving realities. Liebknecht remained faithful to Marx. He was the unique, last and inadequate representative of an inadequate system, an unpolitically-minded man who sought to govern revolutionary politics by a *coup d'état*. His pathetic phrase about the proletariat's "craving for happiness" related only to material goods and not to higher human happiness. When he was shot the deathblow was dealt not only to a turbulent fanatic, but to a dangerous illusion. This Jew and internationalist, this pacifist and would-be terrorist was not the victim of his accidental and indifferent murderer. He fell because there was one man left in Germany who could look reality in the face, a man who, though he was a socialist, was a soldier too: Noske.

We were left with the querulous Lebedour and the shirker Breitscheide. We were left also with revolutionary democracy's fear of the masses. The communist manifesto was worthless; so was the Erfurt Programme. The social-democrat was proud to boast to the people of the "achievements" of a few points in his programme: a stereotyped eight-hour day (misinterpreted) and a few other so-called world-ideas to justify the triumph and the enlightened ideology of the Ninth of November. Meanwhile the Commissioners of the People were compelled to break to the people "the painful truth" that the "lot of the people" must now be one of "poverty and privation." They did not yet admit this was "the consequence of a lost war"; they preferred to call it "the consequence of four years of a criminal war-policy." They still maintained that the Revolution had been a political and socialist accomplishment, the benefits of which would presently be apparent.

In the same breath they warned the proletariat against "strikes"; implored them to renounce this trusty weapon of class war, pointing out that its employment after the Revolution was a wholly different matter from its employment before. They appealed to the people—and the trade unions joined in the appeal—not to allow the Revolution to develop into a mere "wages question." From walls and fences, from houses and street corners, from buildings and hoardings, posters proclaimed that "Socialism means Work." Socialization was the comfort of the present and the comfort of the future. Meantime amid torrents of eloquence they quietly abandoned socialism. The idea of an economic plan remained enshrined in books and only occasionally provoked someone to reflect that it was an ancient inheritance of the people and that Fichte and Stein and List had been great popular economists.

So that socialist thought should find some voice they pushed Kautsky to the fore. This nimble fool was to re-interpret Marx: and to stultify himself. The moment the red ink of his books threatened to flow as real red blood this Marxist stabbed Marxism in the back. Socialism claimed to have taken a step "from Utopia to knowledge," a more radical line of thought now demanded that the further step be taken "from knowledge to action." Communism was prepared to take this step. But when the masses, who for seventy-five years had been fed by his political party on promises of a proletarian millennium, now came clamouring for the fulfilment of these promises, Kautsky—whose Marxism was a thing of theory and not of practice—found nothing better to say than this: "Only experience can show in any given case whether the proletariat is really ripe for socialism." This famous "authority" could say "with certainty" only that: "The proletariat is steadily increasing in numbers, in strength and in intelligence; it is steadily approaching the moment of its maturity." Thus Kautsky paved the way for the German socialist retreat, a retreat in the direction of democracy, inspired by the fear of socialism. In his cowardice his first anxiety was to talk the workers out of all idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." He assured them that Marx had not intended this phrase to denote a dictatorship "in the literal sense of the term." "So let us hold fast—as indeed we must—to the universal, direct and secret suffrage which we won for ourselves half a century ago." He sought to make democracy palatable and reasonable by harping on the ballot box and showing that it was system of government which permitted each party to carry due weight. "Democracy denotes the rule of the majority; it denotes no less the protection of the minority." He was even condescending enough to hold out to the two anti-democratic parties of the Right and the Left the hope that they also would come to their just political rights: "In a democracy," he explained, "it is the political parties which rule. No party is secure of remaining at the helm, but no party is condemned to remain a permanent minority." Incredible but true: the lifelong champion of class war was shameless enough to betray the cause—for the sake of democracy!

Thus the labour movement, by way of a Marxism that denied the class and set up the polling booth, arrived at the opportunism of the west. The form of organization which Kautsky recommended, by which the people should rule and be ruled, was the social-democratic Republic. No communist age succeeded the age of capitalism, as Marx had promised. Instead of the favourites' regime which monarchy gave us, instead of the bureaucrats' regime which constitutionalism gave us, we have now got the party politics of parliament, cabinet and caucus. Scarcely a whisper was now heard of the economic power which the proletariat was to have seized; and, as a consequence, the political power, which it had secured in the days of the insurrection, slipped through its fingers. Democracy was turned loose on us. The Spartacists were not slow to see that the people had been betrayed; but however deeply the hounds of revolution might bay—the rule of mediocrity had begun in Germany. And it persisted. It seemed admirably to suit the mentality of a nation who had bartered its ambition to be a world power for an inglorious peace, and was now left with its mutilated empire.

While the communists raged over their disillusionment, there were other Germans who mourned: not the betrayal of a dogma, but the self-betrayal of a nation. They saw the Revolution only as the finale of German history. Had not a nation shattered its empire instead of defending it? Had it not permitted its proletariat to commit a folly such as nations in later times are wont in retrospect to rue? Had not the nation flung away its traditions, its memories, its destiny, and its claim to greatness—things which had hitherto given it prestige among the nations—in favour of that vulgar institution that calls itself democracy? Would it not now perish slowly and ignominiously amidst its intriguers, profiteers and swollen-headed semi-demi-intellectuals?

3

Faced by such a prospect, many a German who in a mass-age had remained, or liked to think himself, an individualist, found his thought involuntarily turning to Nietzsche who stood at the opposite pole of thought to Marx. Marx had offered to men accustomed for tens of centuries to live for and by ideas, the lure of his materialist thought and his materialist conception of history. Movements, however, beget counter-movements. When Marxism was swamped in democratic chaos, Nietzsche with his conception of aristocracy came again to the fore.

Nietzsche foresaw an age of intense reflection that would set in after the "terrible earthquake." But he warned us that it would be an age of "new questions," eternal questions as he wished them heroically understood, conservative questions as we should rather call them. And amongst these questions he reckoned the proletarian movement. Nietzsche was of course the enemy of everything that was amorphous mass and not subordination, order, organization. He felt himself to be the rehabilitation of rank amongst men in an age "of universal suffrage, that is to say where everyone has the right to sit in judgment on everybody and everything." He spoke of "the terrible consequences of equality" and said "our whole sociology recognizes no instinct but that of the herd: that is to say the sum total of cyphers where every cypher has an equal right, nay a duty, to be a cypher."

Nietzsche knew that democracy is only the superficial phenomenon of a dying society. The proletariat on the other hand was intimately related to the problem of the renewal of the human race from below. He said of the German people that they had no Today, but only a Yesterday and a Tomorrow. He saw that this future must somehow include the proletariat and he recognized that socialism (not the mere doctrine of socialism, but a vital socialism that is the expression of an uplift of humanity) was an elemental problem that could neither be evaded nor ignored.

There are two sides to socialism: on the negative side a complete levelling of human values would lead to their complete devaluation; on the positive side it might form the substructure of a new system of new values. Nietzsche saw first the negative side when he explained the nihilist movement (in which he included the socialistic) as the moral, ascetic legacy of Christianity; Christianity being for him "the will to deny life." On its other side, however, socialism is the will to accept life. Its demand is: a real place in the world for the proletariat—a material place of course, for as yet the proletariat knows nothing of ideals—a place in an economically-regulated world, since the proletariat as yet lives a merely animal existence. But Nietzsche's final thought is of a millennium. He envisages not the abrogation of law but its fulfilment; and he sees the state as the guarantor of law. "That the feeling for social values should for the moment predominate," he notes, "is natural and right: a substructure must be established which will ultimately make a stronger race possible. . . . The lower species must be conceived as the humble basis on which a higher species can take its stand and can live for its own tasks."

The history of every revolution, whether Roman, English or French, shows that it ultimately meant a recruiting of new men and new human forces for the strengthening of the nation. So it will prove with the German Revolution—unless German history ends with the Revolution.

It is intolerable that the nation should have permanently under its feet a proletariat that shares its speech, its history and its fate, without forming an integral part of it. The masses are quick to perceive that they cannot fend for themselves, that someone must take charge of them. But individuals rise from the masses and raise the masses with them. These new individuals—and still more their sons and their sons' sons—bring to the nation proletarian forces, at first materialist and amorphous enough, but which later, as they become incorporated into the life of the nation and absorb its spirit, are shaped and spiritualized. Such was Nietzsche's conception of the proletariat. He thought of its duties as well as its rights. He was thinking of human dignity when he adjured the working man to remember: "Workmen must learn to feel as soldiers do. A regular salary, but no wages." Or, as he expresses it elsewhere: "There must be no relation between pay and accomplishment. Each individual, according to his gifts, must be so placed that he does the best that it is in him to do." Himself an aristocrat, he gave a nobler interpretation to communism when he foresaw a future "in which the highest good and the highest happiness is common to the hearts of all," when he prophesied and extolled "a time when the word 'common' shall cease to bear a stigma." For equality—with the terrible levelling-down that it implies—Nietzsche thus substituted equality of rights on a higher, and more moral plane. He demanded that the proletarian should be given the right of entry into that kingdom of values which had hitherto been barred to him. He recognized only one measure for human values and he demanded that the proletarian also should attain it.

The German Revolution put the proletariat in possession of power but forthwith snatched it away and handed it over to democracy. The proletarian is, however, again pressing for power. He will attain it only in proportion as the realizes that it is not a question of capturing and distributing material wealth, but of taking an intellectual and spiritual share in immaterial values; a question not of grasping but of deserving, not of arrogantly demanding but of proving himself of equal worth.

The problem of the proletariat is not that of its outward existence but of its inner quality.

4

Marx set out to solve the problem of the masses but never asked—still less answered—the preliminary question: what is the origin of the proletariat? Instead of recognizing that the capitalist method of production provided in the beginning a solution for the population problem—a point which he always passed over in haste—he sought as an agitator to gain power over men and the masses by political clamour, by prejudiced assumptions, by the cry of: class war.

As a man of mere intellect he stood aloof from all national ties. As a Jew he had no country. So he assured the proletarians that they had no country either. He persuaded them that there was no such thing as a unity of land and nation; that the only common tie between man and man was economic interest and that this tie—disregarding the barriers of nation and language—united them with the proletariat of all other countries. He sought to rob the working classes of all those values which were theirs by right of birth; values which had been won for them by their forefathers, and which were their inheritance also, since, though proletarians, they had not ceased to form a part of the nation.

Industrial developments, by segregating the proletarian more and more, tended to weaken his sense of these values. It never occurred to Marx that it would have been the duty of socialism to strengthen the consciousness of these values instead of dissolving it. A homeless rationalist like Marx failed to realize how gravely he was impoverishing the people who believed in him. He belonged to a race whose members were wont to exploit the fatherlands of other peoples. But while his Jewish race-brothers were usually the successful exploiters of their hosts of whatever country, Marx considered himself one of those whom his own people exploited and oppressed: one of the proletariat. Logically he should then have directed his attack against capitalism, which Jewry had introduced into Europe, and thus have expiated the guilt of his race. Instead, he attacked European industrialism and confused, in true Jewish fashion, capitalist enterprise with business. From this mistaken starting-point, Marx, the member of a socially-oppressed race, set out to help the socially-oppressed, the unfortunate, the misfits of other races. He saw this as his personal mission—though as an internationalist he remained unaware of his own race-limitations. These worked destructively. He thrust himself forward, as Jews are wont to do, without shame, without scruple, preaching the laws of a science of economics which was merely a cash transaction. He, a guest, forced himself into the life of the people who were his hosts, peoples of whose traditional, physical, psychical make-up he knew nothing. He ignored the imponderabilia that were the foundation of their existence. With the cold logic of his reason he shattered this foundation, robbed their inheritance of its value, rendered it suspect to them, snatched it from them. As a material compensation, suited to their material ambitions, he turned them into conscious proletarians, offered them the idea of "class" as their sole home and refuge and hope, from which they might conquer everything which this life offers.

On this artificial and abstract idea of class he reared the colossal structure of his thought and on the topmost turret he displayed the garish flag with the wrathful inscription: "Let the ruling classes tremble before a communist revolution! Proletarians, you have a world to win! You have nothing to lose but your chains!"

Marx's doctrine, however, broke down through its failure to take cognizance of the evolution of the proletariat. Engels, who was a German and no rationalist, touched the truth when he once spoke of the proletariat as "a working class attracted from the country to the town, from agriculture to industry, removed from stable circumstances and pitchforked into the uncertain, ever-changing conditions of city life." He remained far more alive that Marx to European history, though he declared himself prepared, for the sake of socialism to break its continuity. Nevertheless he devoted attention to the social institutions of the past, and shrewdly noted that in the middle ages the guild apprentices and journeymen worked less for the sake of pay than for the training that was to qualify them to become "masters"—a pertinent, non-materialist observation. He did not pursue the question of what happened to those who failed to qualify as masters. Yet this was a vital reflection which might have led him to observe that in all ages the working classes tend to increase proportionately more rapidly than the employers, that not every man can rise to be a master in his trade; this might have led him on to consider the problem of excess labour with which each age has been burdened and which each age hands on in aggravated form to its successor. The superfluous human being is always with us. Below the lowest grade that is able to make good, there is always a lower stratum still, into which those sink who are finally superfluous. In the age of industry these formed the industrial proletariat. The superfluous individual used to be able to fend for himself somehow. He now became a whole class. He always used to have at least space enough. Now space is limited. To the problem of the surplus population is now superadded the problem of space-shortage.

Marx concerned himself with none of these things. His sociological research was ended when he traced the origin of the industrial proletariat to the invention of machinery and the building of factories. He did not reflect that the growth of industry and the capitalist mode of production must have been preceded by a population problem. The question was never raised: where did these masses of men come from? On the imperfect, inadequate and self-contradictory conception of class war Marx and Engels based their theory of "surplus value," without a thought for the surplus human material, which in varying densities had accumulated in the various countries. Having discovered that a proletariat existed in all countries, these economic theorists took a world-proletariat as a common factor. Their conception of this class, which existed in all countries, and which was in all countries to assert its claim to the surplus values, led to their propaganda for the International. If they had subjected their theories to a test they would have seen that the International conception broke down before a national conception. The last thing that occurred to the was to investigate the genesis, the dynamics, the psychology of the capitalist method of production before calling on the proletarians of every country to invoke a curse upon it.

Marx ignored the fact that the man who originally invented a machine had been studying technical problems for their own sake, quite regardless of whether the new processes when introduced into factories would yield results beneficial to employers or to workmen or to both. Marx the agitator deliberately misinterpreted the motives of the enterprising, manufacturing class. He did not see that factories had in fact arisen at the moment of an acute and menacing population crisis, and had come to the rescue of a proletariat whom the country could no longer absorb and who must otherwise have emigrated or perished.

Marx never even attempted to understand the psychology of the enterprising capitalist. The phenomenon of enterprise was for him always a materialist one; he left entirely out of account the psychological factors: initiative, energy, imagination. He stereotyped a coarse, contemptuous caricature of a slaveowner which would be sure to appeal to the multitude. He dared not admit that surplus value is an expression of the power to create values, and is inherent in the machines discovered and in the factories erected and in the employment of capital for enterprise and the extension of enterprise. Neither as a theorist nor as an agitator dare he confess that the relation between management-value and surplus value is not absolute but incommensurable, like many other relations in the economic sphere. He dared not point out that after the recompense has been paid to the manual worker for his work, there is other labour to be rewarded, that of the mental worker, of the inventor, of the manufacturer, of the engineer, of the manager, of the large and small capitalist, all of whom contribute to creating the possibility of work for the manual labourer and the opportunity of turning his work into value. The point, in our opinion, from which socialism should start, is not the distribution of the surplus value, but the sharing-out of the management-value.

Marx kept his eye firmly fixed on the surplus value only, which he claimed in its entirety for the proletariat; he assured the members of this class that the places of production belonged of right to them, as if the masses had invented the machines, erected the factories and built up the business enterprises. In Marx's view the accumulation of property was more vital than the accumulation of the human beings who were massed in the factories and served the machines. Even where he spoke of "over-population" he did so expressly only "in relation to the immediate necessity for the employment of capital." Even Engels started from the thesis that "the introduction and increase of machinery" had had the direct result of "replacing millions of manual labourers by a few machine workers." He passed over the fact that the human masses displaced were already in existence. He only saw that these masses were seeking an opportunity for work and a place where they could remain, and he hoped to meet the case of their being unable to find work by enlisting them in his "industrial reserve army." He did not realize that he was studying a late phase of capitalist production and that he was studying it moreover under specifically English conditions.

He mistook transition phenomena for general phenomena and failed to see that the class-war standpoint (which he never forsook) offered no solution for the problem of over-population of which he had caught at least a glimpse. Engels had evolved a theory of "progressive misery"; Marx had maintained that a collapse of capitalism was imminent and inevitable; both these theories proved untenable. Intelligent capitalist enterprise took the direction of constructive reorganization instead of the line of collapse. Even before the War, trusts and cartels and mergers had been formed to stabilize capitalism, and after the War capitalism seized on the idea of zones and provinces on which to base a system of planned economics.

Neither Marx nor Marxists foresaw these developments. The socialists left this, their own peculiar domain, to outsiders to work. It was outsiders who brought forward these new economic ideas which the socialists had been impotent to evolve. They left constructive economic thought to men like List or Constantin Frantz, though indeed it was Nietzsche again who first used the expression "world economics," and saw ahead the "inevitable economic administration of the world." Engels occasionally spoke of the "necessity for expansion" and thus unconsciously approached the imperialist problem. For reasons of tactics and party politics, socialism had always refused to consider imperialism as anything but a problem of power, whereas it is essentially a population problem and as such the most urgently socialist question conceivable. Socialists have always pointed with particular pride to Engels as the one political thinker they had who possessed historical knowledge and even strategic gifts! But even Engels was unable to give up his class war for a world policy.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that a socialism which had never concerned itself with foreign politics should have been overwhelmed by the crisis caused by the outbreak of war which belied all Marxist preconceptions. This socialism which, according to its favourite doctrine, was expecting the imminent downfall of capitalism, lived to see the triumph of capitalism in the land of the victors, and its ruin in the lands of the vanquished, and both alike from political causes, not from economic causes. The programme of the International went aground on the rock of nationalism, whose existence had been denied by the signatories of the communist manifesto, and had been deliberately overlooked by their disciples in Germany.

The proletariat is learning that if oppressed classes suffer in body, oppressed nations suffer in soul. A third popular uprising is following on War and Revolution, an awakening of the masses. The question is becoming insistent: Can the proletariat ever emancipate itself save in connection with the fight for freedom of the nation of which it forms a part? Marx challenged the working class to set itself free. We believe that only the nation as a whole can set itself free. We repeat the question: Can the working class as such achieve emancipation alone?

Marxism misinterpreted the origin of the proletariat, its sociology, its psychology.

If we want an answer to our question we must examine the psychology of the proletariat.

Who is a proletarian?

5

The proletarian is a proletarian by his own desire.

It is not the machine, it is not the mechanization of industry, it is not the dependence of wages on capitalist production that makes a man a proletarian; it is the proletarian consciousness.

There was an assembly during the revolutionary year of 1919. In justification of the Revolution and its prospects a proletarian contended that there are far more proletarians in Germany than is commonly supposed. "Ninety out of every hundred of us," he cried, "are proletarians!" Another interrupted: "But they don't want to be!" This contradiction sounds the knell of the proletarian movement. There is a point after which it can gain no more recruits: there are people who *will not* be proletarians. The man who will not, supplies an answer to the question: Who is, and who is not, a proletarian?

The proletarian's philosophy of life is simple. Therein lies his strength. But his philosophy is also narrow, hidebound, elementary; it is inadequate, inexperienced, untried; it is without the idea of growth, without feeling for organization, without knowledge of the interrelationships of things. Therein lies its weakness, its impotence and its hopelessness. The spell which binds the proletarian is the spell of birth. As men, as prehistoric men, if you like, we were all originally proletarians, who sat about naked on the bare ground. But a differentiation soon set in; inborn superiority asserted itself, and was inherited as outward privilege. The man who was not sufficiently developed to fit into this social structure as it developed remained at the bottom, he did not rise, he sank.

He was the proletarian. Proletarians multiplied and sough to assert themselves and to claim a share in the general progress. But only those succeeded in obtaining a share who ceased being proletarians. The proletariat is what remains at the bottom. The proletarian of today will succeed in obtaining such a share provided he does not shut himself out from the social organization, from the national organization; but he will succeed only in his children. The masses lift themselves by generations. This uplift is selection. The inertia of the masses remains. There always remains a proletariat. Socialism makes an effort to hasten the raising process. Behind the fourth estate the fifth is seen advancing, dour and determined, and behind that the sixth, which is perhaps no longer a single enslaved class, but a whole nation which has been enslaved—with flags whose colours no man knows. There is always a proletariat.

Meanwhile the man who will not be proletarian is differentiated from the other, by his inherited and acquired values which give him greater intellectual mobility and a wider outlook. The proletariat has not yet taken its share in the values which our forefathers bequeathed us and which distinguish more educated, more conscious men. These values existed before the proletariat came into a world it did not understand. The proletariat has no ancestors and no experience. It took over theories which uprooted idealists of other classes formulated to suit it. What is the past? It is not anything to eat! The proletariat sees the present only. According to what it feels to be its needs, it dreams of a juster future. It does not feel itself part of a community, but a body misused by society. It has its origin in overpopulation and thinks of itself as a superfluous, outcast section of humanity for whom there is no room on the earth. So the proletarian demands a share not of the values of which he knows nothing—but of the goods which he sees in the possession of more privileged persons, of which he imagines himself to have been the creator.

The proletarian sees only his own, immediate, proletarian world; he is oblivious of the surrounding world which encompasses his and on which his is founded. His thought is keen—but short. He has no tradition of thinking. The more gifted man, who takes a share in the spiritual and intellectual values of a wider community, imbibes from these the strength to rise above class distinction, to extricate himself from the masses: to become the non-proletarian. The proletarian has no assurance that his sons or his sons' sons will remain proletarians; they may in the meantime have learnt to find a place in the structure of society and be no longer in their own eyes proletarians. It is true that a revolution may hasten this process. In a revolution the will of the proletariat is directed to force, not power; but force is ephemeral, while power is enduring. Ultimately from a revolution there arises the man who is a proletarian and no conservative and who is yet constrained to act as a conservative: to conserve—in order to survive.

Creative conservatism is more vital in the political field than in any other. The proletariat had no political tradition. Its school had been the political party. The proletarian thinks only of the moment, he is a primitive and a materialist. But since no man can live wholly in the present, since even the most miserable of human beings yearns for some hope, the proletarian, with naive egotism, sees the future as a utopia specially reserved for him. Today a terrible reality is bringing home to him that he is living in a present of his own creation in which things, far from growing better, are growing every moment worse—and this because there were credulous people who imagined that all would now be well.

The conservative does not confine his thinking to economics, he takes account of the impulses and passions, the aims and ideals, which have gone to the making of history. His thought is not bounded in time. From all corners of the world and from all periods of history he garners the lessons which throw light on the present sufferings of his own people. The proletarian will only find salvation when he can rise to this super-economic thought and concerns himself not with building up a proletarian world, but with finding a niche for the proletariat in the historic world.

The proletariat has a right to a recognized and stable position in a society dependent on industrial enterprise and proletarian labour, but it has no right to the arrogant position of power which the socialist parties would have liked to seize for it during the revolutionary upheaval. The more modest position is of vastly greater value; it is more genuine, justified and enduring.

All the world over, proletarian thought is taking on a more intellectual and spiritual colour. In proportion as it does so, the proletarian ceases to be a proletarian. The working classes are taking their place as a part of the nation. This movement is contemporaneous with a conservative counter-movement. It is beginning to dawn on the working classes of the oppressed and unjustly-treated nations, that the social problem will never be solved until the national problem is solved, until the peoples have regained their freedom.

It is still possible that our first revolution may be followed by a second: that a communist revolution will follow on the social democrat revolution; a terrorist revolution on the parliamentary; a world revolution on the state revolution. But this second revolution would only precipitate the conservative counter-movement which would try to neutralize the disintegration and restore the cohesion necessary to the life of men and peoples—unless indeed the complete dissolution of European civilization lies ahead: which we cannot know, but for which we must be prepared.

The man who is prepared for all eventualities is the conservative. It is not his role to despair when others despair; he is there to stand the test when others fail.

The conservative is always prepared to make a new beginning.

6

The German proletarian—and the man who is forced into being a proletarian against his will—suggests another calculation.

We know ever since Versailles how many proletarians there are in Germany: twenty millions. We do not, however, know which of us belongs to the twenty millions who are "in excess." Every third man among us may any day sink into the great community of misery. This uncertainty makes proletarians of us all. We are on the way to become a proletarian nation.

The first, however, to be threatened by the fate of being "in excess" are the masses who have the proletarian consciousness: who are wilfully proletarian. If Germany perishes as the result of the Revolution, the first to perish will be the German proletariat because they are the least prepared for resistance to the march of history. It is inconceivable and intolerable to the Germans of the new generation, who have replaced the feeling for class by the feeling for nationality, that we should permit twenty million to exist among us in such social conditions that they have become inhuman and un-German. These men of the new generation do not wish to be proletarian, but a sense of comradeship makes socialists of them. Fate had made nationalists of these young men of the new generation. For them it is intolerable that the German nation is becoming proletarianized: not only the twenty, but the sixty, seventy, hundred millions: despised and outcast among the nations for all time: enduring the scorn of other nations: in servitude to other nations. These men of the new generation, who *will not* be proletarians, are Germans out of self-respect.

They accept the present. They believe that we stand in the middle of our history, that nothing can hinder the thousand-year future being the continuation of our thousand-year past. The Marxist knows nothing of these things. He does not perceive that the problem of overpopulation, which is identical with the problem of the proletariat, is not international but national: the vital and essential problem from which political thought must start.

The proletariat will take its position in society only when it has learnt to think of itself, not as a proletariat, but as a working class. The distinction is not a matter of terms: a working class shares in the communal life of the nation; a proletariat denies the nation. The proletariats of the western powers were conscious of their nationality; the Russian proletariat only became conscious of it when the western powers attacked the Soviet territory; only since the Occupation of the Ruhr has the German proletariat begun to recognize the economic and political lessons of history.

German communism would fain interpret history on Marxist principles; but already it is making an appeal to the labourer, the peasant and the soldier; it is beginning to reckon with non-proletarian elements. This is something new in the history of Marxism. The communist's policy however remains international. The individual working man on the other hand, when he rattles the chains that fetter him, discovers that his class slavery is one with the greater slavery into which the whole nation has sunk. The only question is whether the national elements in the German working classes will have the power and the will to wheel the proletarian battle front in a "national-socialist" direction; or rather to wheel it right about, so that the forces which were directed to class war against our own nation shall face the foreign foe. Our political fate hangs on the answer.

The one question on which proletarian and national elements are at one, is that of foreign politics. The people are becoming more and more reluctant to toil day after day that foreign nations may enjoy the dividends. They have not forgotten the betrayal of Versailles; they realize that they were betrayed by the persuasiveness of their own leaders. They want to make an end—not of the Republic but—of the weak state which counted on their docility, their industry, their credulity and their long-suffering. Of all the socialist parties only the communist, as beseems a revolutionary party, had the courage and the ruthlessness to tell the truth. The socialists and the liberal democrats feared to confess it. The communist boldly said that the pacifist cosmos was a swindle, but he still believe in the International and hopes for the co-operation of all the proletariats of the world. He counts on the French communist and a class revolution in France. He counts on Russia and raves about the Soviet state, which as he boasts comprises one-sixty of the area of the world, the sole proletarian government which has ever maintained itself in a capitalist world. He was somewhat abashed when he had to admit that Moscow had made capitalistic concessions to the Entente. "But Russia must live," he said. Well, and what about Germany?

Amongst the values which the German proletarian has not shared is the consciousness of nationality. He believes—or till yesterday believed—in the international solidarity of the manual workers of all countries. For him history began on the day when he first heard this gospel. He at once put himself at the service of this idea. He did so whole-heartedly and unselfishly: that was very German of him. But the most German thing about him was that he did not think of his own people. It never occurred to the German socialist that the German nation was more privileged and more gifted than other nations. He had never said to himself "There are twenty millions too many of us." He did not recognize overpopulation or pressure of space. The wealthy social democrat generously contributed towards the class war of other nations, and the French proletariat accepted eagerly enough the moneys sent from Germany. The German proletarian may fairly claim that he is THE socialist *par excellence*. The War and the outcome of the War, the Peace of Versailles, the ultimatum of London, and the policy of Poincaré at last convinced even the German socialist that in this world of ours the people of one country are the natural enemies of the people of the other; that each nation thinks of its "ego" and that the German people stand alone, deserted and betrayed. Since the Ruhr the German proletarian is face to face with this fact. Perhaps the future will show that the Revolution was needed to gather the German proletariat into the fold of the German nation.

On a certain occasion in the Reichstag the three socialist parties protested against the reproach that "the communists are no Germans!" Amongst those who indignantly clenched their fists were the independent-socialists, though it was they who acquiesced in the "war-guilt" clause of Versailles. The international-socialists joined the protest, though one of them with the pertness of a messianic schoolteacher proclaimed that "the world" was his "fatherland." The majority-socialists also chimed in, though it was their left hand that signed the peace when their right hand had refused the office. Lastly the official communists protested also. One and all claimed German nationhood.

The net of communism is flung wide. It embraces the extreme left which dreams of a millennium in which there will be a community of goods and all men will live happily ever after, and it includes the radicalism of the extreme right which thinks of its own people and talks of a community of the nation and nowadays also, of a community of suffering. There exists thus not only an international but also a national communism. The revolutionary and the conservative of the opposition have one point in common. Each attacks liberalism, whose poison has spread and infected and destroyed all parties. Both alike abjure parliamentism as the protective covering that liberalism has assumed. The difference is that the one wishes to substitute for parliaments the dictatorship of the proletariat and the other wishes to see a state government established, which shall claim the allegiance of all trades, professions and callings and shall evolve a leading class.

Are communists Germans? There can be no question that some Germans are communists. From the heated exchange of words in the Reichstag it was clear that the communists' first anxiety was to protest that they were Germans. The nationalist whose taunt provoked the socialists' indignation would have done better if he had cried: "it may be necessary to fight you to the death if you start a civil war; but we do not deny that you are Germans, crooked-headed, crazy Germans; we can only regret that you are on the wrong side and fighting an imaginary enemy, fighting against other Germans instead of fighting as Germans against the French and the Poles, from whose greed and oppression we must defend ourselves."

Points of contact between nationalism and communism exist from of old; we may instance the remarkable corporative and syndicalist schemes that cropped up after the War to reorganize life on brand-new or age-old mediaeval enthusiasms. The enthusiasts who formulated them discovered the "man" in the proletarian, and discovered that he was the martyr of our civilization. The War established other relations by bringing men together. Politically, nationalists and communists face each other as foes, and are prepared to take arms against each other, but this does not prevent kindly feelings prevailing to and fro between students, officers, soldiers and working men: kindly feelings rooted in four years of comradeship which permitted the so-called educated man to discover the virtues of the simple man.

All possibility of mutual understanding vanishes, however, when the working man ceases to feel himself a man and becomes a proletarian, one atom in the party mass, thinking in doctrines taught by the party leader.

The communist working man has considerable insight into political cause and effect. He laughs us to scorn when we say we have a democracy. He laughs us to scorn when we talk of looking forward to enduring peace. He laughs us to scorn when the League of Nations is mentioned. He still pins his faith to a world revolution. He does not realize the other terrible alternatives which our working men will not be able to escape—unless we all, with the might of our sixty millions repulse the doom prepared for us—the alternative of a continued slavery, compulsory labour for our enemies for a hundred years to come, our annihilation as a free people. The German communist does not want this slavery; the German nationalist does not want it. Can they unite? The answer lies with the communist. The German working man must realize that there has been a sound reason for the continued failure of his hopes of a world revolution. The reason is that German communism was dependent on its Russian allies. The German communist admired the Russian example; he never set a German one. He speedily set aside the pacifist principles with which he had embarked on the Revolution and learnt that if a revolution is to succeed it must militarize itself. But characteristically—for he was a German—he accepted this because the word came from Moscow, from Russia, from a foreign country. The Russian conditions are different from German conditions. If Russia had poured into Germany in 1919, we should not have seen Budenny's "Front from the Rhine to Vladivostock" which a red, bolshevist-spartacist army was to form against the capitalism of the Entente; instead, we should have seen a universal economic and political collapse in Germany, Europe and Asia to boot. The communist made party politics out of his world revolution; hence its failure.

It is cruel to shatter men's hopes. But we must shatter one which is leading from folly to destruction. There is no millennial kingdom. There is only the empire of reality, which each nation creates in its own land. No German can live if Germany perishes. The democrat says: "Germany could at least vegetate." If permission to vegetate was an adequate ambition for a nation, then the communist would have no right to taunt the democrat with having failed to join up with bolshevist Russia. The guilt lies with the Revolution itself: the sham-proletarian revolution, which was carried out, not as a national but as an international movement; the guilt lies with the socialism that did not lead to a German socialism but to an impotent democracy. While the Revolution was working itself out, we had to spend our time in defending ourselves against Russian conditions which in our country would have been catastrophic. While we were occupied with this self-defence against Russia, our democracy was able behind our backs to come to terms with the west and begin teaching us how to "vegetate." But the German people is determined to *live*; and so are the German working classes.

The working man concentrates on his cause; he does not yet see that his cause is the cause of the whole nation. He does not realize that a future is impossible which fails to take account of the past. But he is learning in the present that he cannot reach his goal without the possession of certain values which those of his fellow-countrymen possess who have in the past been the makers of our history. German history will only gain significance for the working classes when they share those intangible values as they share the speech and the history of their fellow-country-men. In our history we have been victorious when we have been at one; we have always lost when we have been divided.

There was a time in German history when two classes of the nation raved against each other; when the peasants of the Neckar and the Rhine attacked the castles of the princes, and the heavens were red with war. The fanaticism of the Anabaptists devastated Saxony and Westphalia. Political and social and religious passions were blended and the cry of "divine justice" fired the country and the hearts of men. Many knights were to be found in the insurrectionary camp. An idle nobility, threatened in its rights fought with Franz von Sickingen against the princes of the Empire to establish an independent emperor. Ulrich von Hutten turned from a humanist into a patriot. The rebels achieved nothing of all they had so confidently hoped. The fault was their own. The peasants felt then as the proletarian feels today. Their ideas were "just" but narrow; they distrusted their friends of other classes. They refused the leadership that was offered them.

They had no unity amongst themselves, and greedily snatched immediate success heedless of the ultimate result. We see the same thing today. It was a German communist who recalled the speech of Florian Geyer to his peasant-proletarian comrades: "Know ye what ye have wrought? God gave into your hands the best, the noblest, the holiest of causes—in your hands it has been like as a jewel in a pig-stye." So the Germans of those days frittered their good cause away. The champions of the Clog lost their fight against the oppressor and the exploiter because their short-sighted jealousy would not let them trust the young proletarian knights who might have led them to victory against the princes. The Germans who today do homage to the Soviet star are no less short-sighted. The instinct of the masses is sound, but their leaders want to fight the cause alone, to make it a party cause, a domestic political cause. There is only one hope for us. This time the oppressors and exploiters are the generals and the politicians of another nation; the oppression comes from without; and foreign politics offer the sole hope of relief from our misery.

In its need the proletariat is seeking new leaders. It is beginning to realize that these can only be found amongst men who have no mind to be proletarians. We cannot ask that the proletariat should accept the leadership of that generation which lost the War and against whom the radicals carried out the Revolution; but a new generation is coming on. The men of the new generation will not endorse the Revolution, but they will accept the mental revolution that has taken place. They owe no loyalty to the age of William II, whose greatest crime was that it allowed conservative forms to fall into decay. No barrier severs this new generation from the proletariat.

The German working man must recognize that he, who was said to possess no fatherland, today possesses almost nothing else.

7

The cry and the promise of a world revolution still echoes amongst the proletariat. The hope is too big a one to be lightly buried, even under the disillusionment which democracy brought. It is more than the mere hope of a new economic system, of a communistic age succeeding a capitalist age, as it in its day succeeded a feudal age; it is the hope of a new humanity, a new enlightenment of heart and head; it proclaims to the masses that life on earth which has hitherto been senseless and accursed, will now be blessed and full of meaning and will make men, men.

The socialists preferred the apparent security of the present to the hope of an uncertain future; as opportunists they compromised with the present. But the communist party, the party whom the Revolution had most disappointed, still fights for the idea of the world revolution which is the only ideal left to a proletariat inspired to class war, the only cry that can still rally the masses. In every country the proletariat is too weak to carry through the class war on its own strength alone. In the victor countries it is on the defensive. In France it is held in check by militarism; in Italy it is overwhelmed by Fascism. In England the working classes are too politically-minded to adopt any policy but a national British policy. In Russia the proletariat has captured the state; in Germany, where this attempt failed, we are more captivated than any other people by the idea that the united proletariats of all countries might undertake an attack on capitalism for which the proletariat of any individual country alone is too weak.

The communist has learnt a lot. He now makes merry over the idea of pacifism, which was once a fine proletarian ideal. He started the revolution with it, and it ultimately cost him the revolution. He now knows that that enduring peace on earth must be won by fighting, that to renounce weapons is to renounce victory. He had made an equally clean sweep of the whole "chatter about the state" (as Engels called it)—the stateless state. Marx had promised that the state would "die out." Marxism wasted seventy-five years in such talk. The various, empty theories of Engels and Bebel are no less out of date. Russia has given the example of an organization based on power that can only be understood as a "state" though time alone can show whether it will have the permanence that belongs to a state. The German working man has clearly grasped the importance of the Russian example. He has saturated himself with the thought of a "working man's government," which must depend on the proletariat's seizing the "state power" before proceeding to solve social problems along communist lines. His own opinion is that it must be in the hands of one party, his own, and he rejects most logically all thoughts of a coalition, whether proletarian-nationalist or proletarian-democrat. The class war idea still haunts him, however, and prevents all conception of a state and a government whose sole preoccupation shall be the nation.

A third mental adjustment is taking place in the individual communist's mind, though the communist party vigorously opposes it: a reaction in favour of nationality. The party opposes it because it spells the end of the International and the world revolution ideas. The problem of nationality is too insistent however to be permanently suppressed. The events of today, the ill-treatment we are enduring, the presence of the enemy within our borders, are forcibly bringing home to the proletarian the fact that the nation as well as the proletariat is being oppressed, that there exist oppressed nations as well as oppressed classes—and that of all nations the German is the most oppressed. Russia has here again set the example. The red flag is the Russian flag. Under it the Soviet State has asserted its national independence both against the Entente and against the reaction. Nor has the lesson of Fascism been lost on the German communist. Even the *Red Flag* has written that communism must not neglect to harness to revolutionary aims "the strong national feelings" that Fascism has enlisted in the service of reaction. Clara Zetkin in her great programme speech could not avoid a concession to this mood that is beginning to prevail, especially among the young communists: it is true, she stated, that the proletariat has no country; it must conquer the country for itself. This demand is equivalent to ours: the proletariat must become a part of the nation. It is beginning to dawn on the young communist that the question is not so much one of tangible goods as of inner values which must be intellectually and spiritually won. The German of today realizes that the proletarian's just claim is to a share in all values that Germans have created.

Even the world revolution can only be realized nationally. Each nation has its own peculiar mission. We believe that it is the mission of the German nation to translate the world revolution into the salvation of Europe. The world revolution, however, will not be that which Marx envisaged; it will rather be that which Nietzsche foresaw. Here again Marx and Nietzsche are poles apart. Marx spoke of "the legal and political superstructure" reared on "the sum of the conditions of production"; this he proposed to overthrow and destroy. Nietzsche saw "state and society as substructure"; he had the wider outlook of the great mind unfettered by time and party. Nietzsche, writing *The History of the Coming Centuries*, describing "what is coming, and what must inevitably come, the advent of nihilism," did not shirk the problem of the proletariat. Claiming to "have lived through nihilism in his own soul, to have put it behind him and out of him," he hoped to see that "substructure of social feeling-values" established to form a "basis" on which, as he put it, a "higher species can take its stand and live for its own tasks." Marx was thinking of the masses; Nietzsche was thinking of the individual. In this he was a romantic. In this, on his own lofty aesthetic plane, he was a reactionary. The future belongs not to the problem-monger, but to the man of character.

So far we have not seen the MAN who kept his saddle and was able to ride the catastrophe. The masses meantime, the "surplus" millions, are faced with the danger that the catastrophe which broke amongst them will trample them ruthlessly to death.

The problem is how to preserve the historic life of Europe, more especially the characteristically German life which shall make a German nation of us and embrace all who belong to the nation. Revolution may change a man inwardly, but this inwardly-changed man must continue the great historic life of Europe, whether to find in it his rise or fall.

The problem of every revolution is how and when and whether it will end. If there are any survivors of a world revolution those who will emerge victorious will not be classes, but the nations who after the immense displacement of centres of gravity, have most speedily been able to recover their equilibrium.

The problem of the catastrophe is a problem of conservation; not a party problem but a problem fraught with destiny: the problem whether after it we shall resume life with eyes directed forward to the future or backward to the past.

Germany's Third Empire

VI. REACTIONARY

A Policy may be reversed: History cannot

1

The revolutionary concludes overhastily that the world will now for all time be guided by the political principles which governed him in overthrowing it.

The reactionary takes the diametrically opposite line: he seriously considers it possible to delete the Revolution from the page of history as if it had never been.

The revolutionary is soon cured of his error. The very day that sees the old moulds of life shattered, brings home to him the urgent necessity of casting it into new moulds. He who has hitherto been wont to criticize the conditions of the state, without troubling overmuch to understand them, makes the disconcerting discovery that certain conditions, laws, interrelationships exist in the political world which cannot be ignored. He becomes suddenly conscious of a responsibility which forbids him to substitute for orderly government the improvisations he had had in his mind; he finds he must make adjustments, even at the cost of compromise. The actual needs of the millions, who after the severe upheaval yearn for some equilibrium in life compels him to make concessions to reality. The revolutionary has to become an opportunist.

The reactionary on the other hand imagines that we need only revert to the old moulds in order to have everything again exactly "as it was before." He has no inclination to compromise with the new. He believes that if only he had the political power it would be perfectly simple to reorganize the world according to the admirable scheme of older days.

The reactionary recognizes the fact of the revolution but he refuses to recognize the revolution itself. He demands emphatically the restoration of the *status quo ante*.

The revolution has so obviously been wrong—historically wrong: as everyone can see after the event! It seems as if the reactionary might be right.

Let us go slowly—we must distinguish between the reactionary and the conservative.

2

The reactionary, like the revolutionary, sees the Revolution only as a political event.

The conservative on the other hand sees it as a historical event and recognizes behind the revolution a spiritual process in which the revolution has its origin—however undesirable the spirit of it may seem to him.

The thought of a people is the sum of its experiences with itself or with other nations. The Revolution brought the German people a revelation of its own nature, an experience which was lacking. The reactionary says: a wholly unnecessary experience. The conservative takes a different view, he says: an experience, which, now that it has occurred, we must immediately repudiate politically with all its works, but which we must historically endorse, because of the consequences it has brought.

The conservative reckons with the immemorial human impulses, the inalterable human passions. He realizes that any given situation is dependent on circumstances that may seem foolish and yet be full of meaning, which may seem accidental and yet be pertinent. He knows also that the full meaning of an event can only be gauged in the afterlight of its ultimate result. It was the most conservative of all Germans who made the least reactionary of all comments on the Revolution: "Who knows? There may be some good in it."

The reactionary is a spurious variety of conservative. He is a rationalist. He sticks to facts. He recognizes no consequences save the immediate ones. Thus he clings to the facts of the Revolution and pays no heed to its causes. He ignores the causes, partly because he himself is one of them—not as a person but as a type. Indirectly and unsuspectingly, he has allowed many a mental omission of his, which led to a political omission, to contribute to preparing the outbreak of a revolution which he was then powerless to prevent. He has not yet understood the Revolution. The conservative on the other hand understands the problems of the Revolution. He has a view of time and space into which these problems fit.

Each nation has its own peculiar and characteristic way of conducting its revolutions. We have seen how the German people conducted theirs. But no people emerges from its revolution unchanged. For one moment—out of eternity—the nation lives under acute stresses. And these reveal paths which had not before existed. This effect is more important than the immediate rearrangement of strata, the confusion of ranks, callings and classes which result from the upheaval. It effects a regrouping of forces. It releases what had become jammed. It makes an end of custom and permits men to contemplate the unaccustomed. It provides a new mental outlook which may be the starting-point of a new epoch of history.

The reactionary's reading of history is as superficial as the conservative's is profound. The reactionary sees the world as he has known it; the conservative sees it as it has been and will always be. He distinguishes the transitory from the eternal. Exactly what has been, can never be again. But what the world has once brought forth she can bring forth again. The reactionary's policy is no policy; the conservative's is policy on the grand scale. When policy makes history it is grand and enduring.

The reactionary confuses the one with the other and would fain reverse the course of history.

3

The present can never be entirely history or entirely politics. It is necessarily a blend of both: a transition from ephemeral politics into enduring history.

Similarly the present can never entirely distinguish revolutionary from reactionary elements. The general opportunism, the political confusion in which we are living and the hesitating, aimless attitude of the everlasting parties tend to blur all distinctions.

The advanced Left finds champions of its democracy in the ranks of the centre party, where one would only expect to find devotees, and moral-sticklers and the worshippers of a super-temporal *ethos*. The centre also produced a champion of the "fulfilment policy," who thought economically like a materialist and contrived to reconcile with his system of faith and morals the decision to "leave on one side" the question of guilt. On the other hand there are Roman Catholics who are passionately and unconditionally nationalist; there are socialists who have turned patriot and have no faith left in Internationals. And we might also notice that there are communists whose ideas of dictatorship are very closely akin to those which one associated with militarist bullies. So every German who reckons himself member of any party finds links with other Germans of other parties, according to the degree of expectation or disillusion which the War and the Revolution brought him.

A common fallacy identifies the reactionary and the conservative. There is however an unfailing touchstone by which Germans, whether of the Right or of the Left, can be divided nowadays into two great groups: the one, with a natural human weakness, fearful of the great unknown future, sighs: "If all could be again just as it was before!"—this group includes many sometime democrats and revolutionaries;—these are the real reactionaries; the other—and these are the real conservatives—yields to no flattering illusions but honourably admits the truth that life in pre-War Germany was horrible.

The reasons for this are not those advanced by the former opposition; not because much fault could be found with the Empire as it was, not because many things were lacking which we hail today as the achievements of the Revolution: *la carrière ouverte aux talents* for every man; the vote for every woman; councils for children; a black-red-yellow flag—or any of these apparently vital, essentially valueless things. Our life was horrible for quite another reason: for the all-pervading amateurishness which tainted everything in the public life of the Empire. Instead of a great and dignified state, worthy of a nation of sixty million, and genuinely representative of the nation, we had a grandiose state whose pomp and show sought to distract attention from the fact that the nation had no share in it. The Empire was formless. It had abandoned the conservative forms in which it was founded, and had adopted imperialist forms. It treasured a host of outworn conventions—based on superficially-interpreted tradition—which were sacrosanct, while it paraded a host of equally superficial evidences of its progressiveness. It was thus a hybrid state. Far from being embarrassed, however, by these inconsistencies, the age of William II pushed its self-conscious arrogance to extremes. With noise and display it advertised itself in unprecedented fashion to the world.

Its self-advertisement was based on many items of real value—on achievement and highly-developed skill of many kinds: on its technical and industrial performance and the growing share it was taking in world economics. Its best tradition was the Prussian tradition of practical accomplishment, but in all matters that concerned the latent gifts of the people, the co-operation of employer and employed in modern enterprises, the Empire failed to maintain its grand style. Only its militarism still showed style—a little garish perhaps, but serious and keen and unobtrusively diligent.

The Empire was based on this militarism, but the imperial policy was scatter-brained and indecisive, now challenging, now timorous, wholly lacking that consistent continuity which Bismarck had imposed. This policy was not dictated—as was commonly believed—by a sense of power, but by a timidity which took refuge in perpetual half-measures. William II in his self-conscious vanity was consumed by an irritable anxiety lest any affront should be offered to his power or to his personal prestige.

It is possible that a victory in the World War would have automatically put an end to this amateurishness. It is possible that if the War had not prematurely broken out, the German nation would have gradually of its own strength matured into its due position in the world. It is possible that the pressure of our population problem would have given both our socialists and capitalists an education in foreign politics and lent due significance to our economic policy, to industry, trade and commerce.

It is possible that our colonies would have reacted on the mother country, bringing freedom and salvation, releasing us from petty preoccupations, and from a life over-regulated by bureaucracy and police, and would have given scope to men of daring and enterprise, lovers of adventure.

There were unmistakably signs before the War that the German was gradually developing a cosmopolitan outlook. People of Hamburg, Kiel and Bremen can testify that interest in the Empire and an understanding of world affairs was no longer confined to overseas Germans.

Developments were taking place among the youth of the country, indicating that they were no longer content to accept the Empire as no concern of theirs, but were beginning to grow into it. If only time had been granted to us, the rising generation was promising gradually to evolve a consciousness of German nationality, a freer and worthier self-consciousness than the prevailing before 1914.

The sudden, unexpected and overwhelming outbreak of the World War summoned the nation to take its share in the Empire. The four years which followed proved again that we are a people at our best in grave situations; our collapse proved that we had been insufficiently prepared for this situation. The War revealed the worth, the strength, the sincerity of the people's nature. The loyalty, the willing devotion with which the nation plunged into it, the courage, the endurance, the heroisms which were displayed on every battlefield, showed the attacking world what the nation was worth. But the collapse showed that the nation had no political cohesion. The nation has been compelled by the War and the upheaval that followed, to try belatedly to acquire that cohesion: we are acquiring it late, after the most cruel testing—and no one can yet foresee whether it may not be acquired too late.

The conservative recognizes the causes and effects that brought this doom on us. All are too closely intertwined and interrelated for it to be possible to reverse our fate. The reactionary on the other hand imagines that it can be met by the adoption of a policy which is essentially the same as that which failed us during the War and the Revolution. Against him he has, however, all the forces of youth and all the forces of the working classes, the only forces that the nation can still boast: new forces, determined to act creatively.

4

Revolutions are only interludes in history.

Marx called them the steam engines of history. We might rather call them the collisions of history: immense railway accidents which take their toll of sacrifice; which may be pregnant of consequences, but which have something of the banality of accidental catastrophes.

Catastrophes serve to remind us of human carelessness. They come as a surprise, even though we may have long foreseen that they are bound to occur some day. They have the cruel logic of the elementary forces they let loose. But no one would maintain that they represent man's real aim or his power of attainment in any sphere.

At best catastrophes have the virtue of calling attention with a terrible emphasis to existing faults, to which custom and stupidity and self-sufficiency have blinded us. The necessary salvage work after a revolution must, however, be handed over to some experienced person conversant with the whole administration who can set the wrecked, overturned engine in motion again. Life of its own weight resumes its equilibrium, and the conservative principle on which all life is based is vindicated.

We are now involved in this conservative counter-movement. So is Russia. Germany is thinking out her problems. The whole world is experiencing similar developments. There is no country where the spirit of revolution is not stalking abroad. There is not state which was not drawn by the War into the community of suffering, economic and evident. The very nations who have been spared the disintegration of a revolution are redoubling their efforts to preserve the cohesion peculiar to them, which has elsewhere been lost.

In the victor countries the conservative counter-movement is inspired by the desire to preserve political institutions and traditions which have in the past protected the nation and which proved their value in the War. The conservative counter-movement is strengthened by the secondary desire to perpetuate the victory, to treat the peace as sacrosanct and to garner its fruits. Here the movement is reactionary.

In the vanquished countries on the other hand the conservative counter-movements strain towards the future, seeing the necessity, if the ultimate goal is to be attained, of concentrating on the immediate goal of cancelling the decisions of a peace which would perpetuate the present. Here the conservative counter-movement is looking not for an end but for a beginning.

Russia, where the revolutionary upheaval began, was the first to make concessions to conservatism, to abandon one after another of its utopian doctrines. The first to go was the pacificist ideology. The creation of the Red Army marked the abandonment of one essential item of the rationalist programme to which the bolshevists had at first subscribed. They were compelled to take account of realities, to recognize that right cannot prevail alone—not even revolutionary right. So they organized the power of the state on military-political lines, preferring unrighteous might—for such it was according to all socialist-pacifist theories—to mightless right. The second concession, their production policy, as the Soviets style their foreign policy, sprang from sheer impotence, from lack of goods and lack of credit, from the necessity to pull through somehow even at the cost of a theory. An internal economic compromise accompanied the foreign one: free trading was again permitted, markets flourished once more and the famous fairs were renewed. These surrenders to international capitalism were unavoidable. They hit the bolshevist hard, because they were contrary to his communist principles, and involved the admission that the Marxist experiment had broken down. The truth is—and the point is psychologically important—that the greater-Russian Tartar is essentially a merchant and will not permanently forgo his right to barter. All these compromises, however, were made for the sake of preserving the Soviet state. Not one item of Uvarov's triple formula—Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality—has been dropped. After the Revolution had broken the bureaucratic power of the Holy Synod, the Russian church was given the opportunity of striking deeper roots in the Russian people than in pre-Peter days; autocracy has been established by bolshevism in a peculiarly Russian, genuine Muscovite style and from its centre in the Kremlin rules over the capital and the whole giant empire; nationality is as much an axiom in revolutionary as in tsarist Russia and displays the same imperial greed. It is clear that the essential character of a people persists through all metamorphoses of a state.

The conservative counter-movement in Germany seems much more haphazard and aimless. It has no definite tendency, except the general one of trying to escape from the bonds imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, of trying to find an exit from the narrow prison house in which our wartime enemies have penned the nation. Domestic politics were confused with foreign politics; individual nationalists took the initiative with actions of despair which sought to give the country back her freedom of movement and yet accomplished nothing, as the various attempts from the Kapp *putsch* to the murder of Rathenau demonstrated—unless indeed they accomplished the very opposite of what they were designed to do.

These are exploits, however, rather of the expiring Revolution than of the conservative counter-movement. The conservative counter-movement, which in Russia is conducted by the state itself, is in Germany necessarily led by the opposition. In Russia the state is carrying the movement out; in Germany mental processes are going forward which are politically far more significant than mere opposition. A national opposition is being developed, directed against the German Revolution because it was essentially un-German, westernizing, pacifist and international, in contrast to the Russian Revolution which soon became essentially Russian in character. The conservative counter-movement represents the returning of the people to consciousness. It tackles all German problems: republic and monarchy; centralization and federalism; socialism and capitalism and the very principles of conservatism itself. It does not crave to restore the *status quo ante*. It seeks a reality in which the nation can come fully to its senses again. The people see that they have been deceived in believing that a revolution would bring world-peace, liberty, justice and a maximum of prosperity. They are beginning to reflect. The conservative counter-movement is the expression of their reflections. It is not a party movement. There is no party now in Germany that has not its conservative wing; all are inspired by conservative thought; liberals, opportunists, democrats, religious parties, even the revolutionaries. So far it only amounts to an impulse; we might call it a "lurch towards the Right" (*Rück nach Rechts*). It points, however, to a dawning realization that life consists in cohesion and not in disintegration and that revolutionary torrents debouch in conservative streams.

The conservative counter-movement does not seek to re-create, but to link up with, the past. This is the ideal which it sets above all others, even above the monarchical ideal. We do not seek reaction; we do not want a restoration which—apart from all other considerations—would have most disastrous foreign political repercussions. The age of William II lies behind us. The nearest approach to a Wilhelmine type which survives amongst us is the new German republicanism with its Reichstag parliament which is just as impotent and versatile and self-complacent as was post-Bismarck imperialism at its zenith. The Revolution brought to the surface all the inconsistencies, contradictions and dualities of the nation's character. What is conservative thought to link up with? With the Prussian or with the federal ideal? With the centralist, or the centralist-Bismarckian, or the centralist-socialist ideal?

The one thing we have not got is a republican tradition. The German Republic has no roots. Germany never was a republic. Such republican tentatives as our history records, were of the feeblest and were never more than tentatives. If Germany is really about to enter on a republican era, which, as we have seen and said, is perfectly conceivable, she must start at the beginning to build up a national consciousness on republican lines. But though the revolutionary republicans have occasionally talked of nationalizing the democracy (and some of them have honestly endeavoured to be "good Germans"), they are still far from having accomplished this. Hitherto they have brought the nation nothing deserving our gratitude—not a single act of positive or symbolic value to enlist us on their side.

The position of opposition which has been taken up by the conservative counter-movement since the Revolution is therefore not one of opposition to the Republic as such, but of opposition to its policy, its policy of government, its "policy of fulfilment" or whatever we like to call it which seemed to be heading direct for the destruction of the Empire, the ruin of the nation and the demoralization of the people. Amidst all the chaos of the Revolution one sentiment has united people of all provinces and races and classes: their loyalty to the Empire. To this every soul in Germany clung and clings. This loyalty to the Empire, to which the Republic as the guardian of its black-red-yellow standard lays claim, is essentially a conservative idea.

The conservative counter-movement in the rest of Europe differs from that of Russia and Germany in this, that other countries possess complete freedom of movement in their foreign politics, at worst they suffer from domestic inhibitions. The conservative counter-movement is everywhere hostile to an international revolution with the disintegration of the state and the weakening of the nation that would follow in its train.

Italy is the cradle of nationalism and of modern attempts at unification. The national ideal there takes precedence of all other ideals. Though Fascism has allowed irredentism to colour its relations to other nations, its primary idea has been in practice to conquer economic radicalism by armed force. Italy has formulated a few powerful rhetorical maxims—now tinged with Roman, now with Machiavellian doctrine—and enforced them by a reign of terror. The chief of these maxims is the discipline of the state.

Throughout her history England has been the land of tough conservatism, skilfully masked by the appearance of liberal method. So far she has thus won through; she is now engaged in the despairing attempt to maintain her system of see-saw politics in the universal crisis which threatens the British World Empire. The English working classes will certainly prove selfish enough—which in England is identical with being conservative enough—to support this policy.

France has no ideas except indeed the one, fixed one—of maintaining by every military expedient, her predominant position of power on the continent. She clings to paragraphs and to machine guns and insists of the letter on the law. This is a reactionary idea for a people once so revolutionary. All the petty, little nations that have sprung up in Europe and Central Europe out of the ruins of the Russian and Austrian empires, and that form France's military suite, lacking all tradition and as barren of ideas as France herself, imitatively adopt France's one idea as their own.

Thus conservatism and revolution co-exist in the word today. Only the land of thought is left to us—as they said when they threw, as they thought, our carcase to the dead. We shall take a worthy revenge by evolving a conservative-revolutionary thought as the only one which in a time of upheaval guarantees the continuity of history and preserves it alike from reaction and from chaos.

Germany's position is a central one. She is the focus of all political, economic and intellectual problems. If the world wants salvation, and so far as it deserves salvation, Germany will be able to express whatever this revolutionized world can hope to salvage. But German thought will not this time be content to evolve a system of philosophy existing only in German books for the rest of the world to benefit by.

The German nation has a bitter experience behind it; such an experience as never a nation was before called upon to suffer at the hands of other nations. This has provoked not merely philosophic contemplation but bitter self-examination, stern, cold passion which demands action. Conservatism and revolution would destroy each other, if the conservative had not the intellectual superiority over the revolutionary, and the political wisdom to recognize that conservative goals may be attained even with revolutionary postulates and by revolutionary means. Conservatism seizes directly on the revolution, and by it, through it and beyond it saves the life of Europe and of Germany. Retrospectively the revolutionary will realize that this is indeed a different life from the one his revolutionary doctrine foreshadowed, but that it is nevertheless the only life possible. It is founded on the laws of nature: and Nature is always conservative.

The nations want conservatism. When they cannot achieve it they makeshift with democratic opportunisms. But this temporary makeshift is inadequate and based on self-deception. Reaction is only another makeshift which skims over the surface of problems without solving them. Conservatism means the preservation of a people; it is the political art of enabling the nation to maintain its position in the world, according to the conditions in which its lot is cast.

Today we meet with mistrust and misunderstanding on every hand. "Conservative" is confused with "reactionary." There can be no greater antithesis. The conservative must step forward and make his position clear.

He must answer the urgent question: What is conservative?

5

A German metaphysician once said: "The power of releasing more and more completely that in us which is eternal—is my conception of what is conservative."

This is not the interpretation current among politicians, in press or party or parliament.

We confuse democracy with demagogy; aristocracy with oligarchy; federalism with particularism; centralization with unity; liberalism with liberty; "reason" with understanding; monarchy with absolutism; the nation with the masses. Similarly we confuse conservatism with its degenerate bastard: reaction.

This error is a hundred years old. It is a century since conservatism brought itself into disrepute as an obscurantist movement. In its name, European statesmen set up their system of statecraft with beadles and gendarmes, knout-wielding cossacks, and policemen. These reactionary systems everywhere made use of force to supply the place of the intelligence they lacked. In Austria the obsolescent state strove to maintain a prestige to which it had forfeited all right. France of the Restoration sought to stamp out all flickerings of a new revolution, whether the sects of the Saint Simonists with their infantile religious services in the Quartier latin, or the more dangerous reform banquets which preluded the barricades. The Russian Third Section with its anti-nihilist bureaucracy made martyrs of students and packed them off on the long road to Siberia. Perhaps it was also so in Prussia though to a vastly less degree—for Prussia never deserved the evil reputation it won, of having set the last and most abhorred example of reactionary tyranny.

Conservative though is based not on force but on power. Reactionaries use force; revolutionaries use force; conservatism seeks to gain power, not outward but indwelling power: a power emanating from a constructive idea, which confers impersonal right and possesses enduring potency.

If it were not for human imperfection this power might remain a purely intellectual and spiritual one. But experience has taught the conservative that men and nations must be governed, and he preserves their conditions of life, their customs and institutions for them by keeping himself in power. Conservatism is a law of nature; it recognizes that there are things in the world which are immutable: human, spiritual, sexual, economic factors. The great facts of human life are love, hate, need, daring, enterprise, discovery, strife, competition, ambition and the lust for power. Above all ephemeral phenomena reigns eternal immutability.

Conservatism—as the word implies—aims at conservation. It needs the recognition, not of one generation but of a series of generations who have experienced its permanence, benefited by its cohesion and grown up in the protection of its power. The mediaeval empire and the Roman Church were in their day institutions of similar power and extent. Wherever a true democracy has existed, it was a conservative expression of a nation's desire for self-preservation, cast in the form suited to that nation. We might even assert that no state has more need to be conservative than a democratic one. And indeed all empires, whether spiritual or secular, maintained their power by remaining in close touch with the people and giving popular expression to the people's desire.

Democracy was undermined when it became liberal. Liberal thought is disintegrated conservative thought; it leads through individualism to revolution. The world is in perpetual movement. Conservatism and movement are not mutually exclusive.

We have seen that the revolutionary does not recognize conservation but only turmoil, which he misinterprets as movement; when he attacks conservatism he confuses permanence with immobility; he confuses the conservative with the reactionary. All revolution is irrelevant noise, indicating disturbance; it is not the calm progress of the Creator through His workshop, it is not the fulfilment of His command. The world was designed for permanence; if it is momentarily jarred off its axis, its own force speedily restores its equilibrium. The revolutionary has value only so far as he clears the path for the conservative. The revolutionary identifies turmoil with movement, and movement again with "progress." He conceives the gradual perfecting of mankind as not only desirable, but possible, probable: nay, certain. Conservative thought on the other hand is never utopian but realist.

Conservative thought presupposes a principle: which a man, having freely adopted it, will maintain even under the direst stress. To have a principle, to maintain it, to act on it, not to swerve from it—this is a question of character.

The liberal's principles are always relative; he is always ready to abandon one and adopt another so long as he can find a formula to justify his opportunism.

The reactionary has an absolute principle, but with him character has become obstinacy, life has come to a full stop.

The principle of the conservative is an organic one. His thought is that of a creative man who carries on the Creator's work on earth.

All great men have been conservative and have felt like Nietzsche: "I want to be right, not for today and not for tomorrow but for centuries to come." Conservative thought does not believe in "progress"; it holds rather that "history" has her great moments which appear and vanish, and that the most man can do is to try to give permanence to them when they come.

The reactionary creates nothing. The revolutionary only destroys; though incidentally, as the instrument of ends he does not perceive, he thus in favourable circumstances creates fresh space. The conservative creates by giving to phenomena a form in which they can endure.

Conservative thought is the recognition of the fundamental conservative fact on which the world is based—and the strength to act thereon.

6

Politics are the stage and the stage-management of a period.

History is the drama that is played on the stage. The tragi-comedy of the Empire of William II is played out. It ended in tragedy. The reactionary wanders still over the empty scene. He still believes that the curtain has fallen on the best of all possible empires. He can suggest nothing better than the fresh performance of the same intoxicating play.

The reactionary is the inner danger, a danger to the nation. He has no feeling for those imponderabilia to which his idols Bismarck was so sensitive, which enabled that great statesman to foretell the ways of fate.

The reactionary is a man who toys with fate, and would seek to turn it from its course by a *coup d'état*: the man who cannot wait, cannot prepare the ground, cannot conjure up the opportune moment that brings certain success. He is willing enough to help but he only hinders. He has no feeling for psychology, no knowledge of men; he misjudges people and misunderstands problems. He is an opportunist, a man of the moment, and does not share the sense of responsibility that weighs on the conservative; he is so superficial that he conceives as easy a task which is going to prove difficult, so infinitely difficult.

Soon after the Ninth of November the reactionary began to think of reversal: he dreamt of a war of liberation—this was simple-minded of him and plucky. But his idea was to make things as if they had never been, and he thought of his way of liberation as conducted on earlier historic models. He dreamt of 1813 and conjured up visions of Schill and Blücher and the short-service system, of Fichte and Theodor Körner and even the Empress Louise: men and heroes and brilliant geniuses indeed, whose names it behoves us to cherish and whose spirit must be our inspiration, but whom we can never again have with us in the flesh. The reactionary's favourite dream is of a war of liberation fought on the one hand against our hereditary foe and on the other against the working classes, a war which with one blow shall drive both disturbers of the peace out of our beloved fatherland—disturbers who prevent our living there as we used to live in the old days, which the reactionary thinks of as "the good old days." By a sudden *volte face* the next idea of our reactionary was that we should serve as the mercenaries of the Entente against bolshevist Russia. But war with Russia would have meant civil war in Germany; and how can a people win its freedom with civil war raging in the rear? The reactionary was too gravely out of touch with facts to realize that our sole hope lay in uniting all the peoples of the east against the west; the socialist peoples against the liberal peoples, continental Europe against negrified France.

The reactionary is unpolitically-minded. He imagines himself closely bound up with our past history and on this account lays claim to the privilege of leadership, yet is oblivious of the meaning of present history which shows the War and the Revolution as a unity and gives to all events their national obverse and their social reverse.

The reactionary stands between the nation and the proletariat; he has been the greatest obstacle to the co-operation of the extreme Right and the extreme Left. He has thought only with bitterness of a class on whom rests the burden of responsibility for the Ninth of November, the fatal day on which the glory of us all collapsed; it was very natural—but it was not politically wise and it was not nationally wise. The reactionary fails to realize that the war of liberation which lies ahead of us must be waged by the nation as a whole. We must all face it as the ultimate test; and if we fail to pass that test our downfall is inevitable. He does not see that the future holds two possibilities: not of a war of liberation only but of a civil war, which would bring not the ruin of the hated Republic, but the ruin of the beloved fatherland. He does not see that the proletariat, which he hates, is destined this time to lead the war of liberation which will be not only a national, but for the proletariat a social war also, and which will expiate the blunders of the Ninth of November. He fails to see that this was of liberation, led by the proletariat as the oppressed section of an oppressed nation, will be a war of world-ideals, a "citizens' war" directed not against ourselves but against the bourgeoisie of the world—to whom we are being sacrificed. If we win this final war we shall thereby win the Empire back for ourselves, not the Empire of the reactionary's dreams but the EMPIRE OF US ALL.

The conservative thinks of Germany's Third Empire. Just as the mediaeval empire of our great Germanic emperors lived on in Bismarck's Hohenzollern empire, so the Second Empire will live on in Germany's Third Empire. The conservative is fully conscious that history is an inheritance which the peoples of the past hand on to the peoples of the future. But this inheritance must be striven for and won, and won again, that the unity of the great trinity may be perfected; the great trinity of empires of which we know the past and the present ones, while the future one exists as yet only in our dreams.

Germany's Third Empire will come into existence when we will. But it will live only if it is a new creation, not a slavish copy of the earlier empires.

Germany's Third Empire

VII. CONSERVATIVE

Conservatism has Eternity on its side

1

We live in order to bequeath.

The conservative is the man who refuses to believe that the aim of our existence is fulfilled in one short span; the man who believe that our existence only carries on an aim.

He sees that one life is not enough to create the things which a man's mind and a man's will design. He sees that we as men are born each in a given age, but that we only continue what other men have begun, and that others again take over where we leave off. He sees individuals perish while the Whole continues; series of generations employed in the traditional service of a single thought; nations busy in building up their history.

The conservative ponders on what is ephemeral, and obsolete and unworthy; he ponders also on what is enduring and what is worthy to endure. He recognizes the power that links past and future; he recognizes the enduring element in the transitory present.

His far-seeing eye ranges through space beyond the limits of the temporary horizon.

2

The liberal thinks on other lines. For him life is an end in itself. He demands liberty to enjoy life to the utmost, to procure the maximum of happiness for the individual. Provided one generation enjoys life and another follows and enjoys, man's well-being—at any rate the liberal's personal well-being, which is always his first consideration—is assured.

The liberal is, however, chary of using the word enjoyment; he prefers to talk of progress. Men are continually perfecting means to lighten the burden of life, and the path of liberty leads through progress to gradual perfection. Thus the liberal tries by generalities to divert attention from the egotism which liberalism invented so as not to be without some philosophy of its own.

The conservative sees through this humbug. The liberal must admit that everything which he as an individual undertakes is dependent on the conditions of life of the existing community. He must admit that, while repudiating all obligation, liberalism seeks to enjoy the fruits garnered by an earlier conservatism.

The revolutionary holds yet another opinion. He does not want to create. His immediate aim is to abolish. He renounces the past and swears devotion to the future. He talks of a millennium that will some day dawn—but it is the immaterial figment of an ever-receding future.

The revolutionary shares the liberal's idea of progress; or rather he presupposes it, leaping from the real to the utopian. He shares the biological illusion—which dominated all our thought during the nineteenth and on into the twentieth century—that life is based on evolution, and consequently that the evolutionary possibilities of all human affairs are infinite.

The conservative recognizes no evolution, only genesis. He does not of course deny the phenomena of evolution. But he contends that nothing can evolve which was not primarily in existence; evolution is a secondary phenomenon; genesis is a primary phenomenon.

We can examine the history of all ages and of all peoples, we shall never discover progress. We see values created wherever men of strong will, or mighty popular movements, are in play. When we enquire how they came into being we find that Nature like history knows no progress, but only continuity, tradition.

Values are a matter of grace. They arise suddenly, spontaneously, demonically, when their time is fulfilled. When the rationalist deliberately sets out to "make" values—whether with reactionary or progressive intent—his creative power fails him. Since men invented the idea of progress there has been nothing but retrogression. The liberal century was upon us.

The conservative justifiably believes that our whole age has gone astray. The revolutionary believes that the world has always been astray until today, and that our only help can come from an entirely new organization of life. The liberal is as always unteachable. Even in the face of the catastrophe he contends there has been democratic progress, and would deny that it was his principles which our enemies were skilful enough to exploit in the War and of which we were the sacrifice. He would deny that we owe the misery of Germany and every retrogression in Europe to these principles of his. The conservative on the other hand seeks to discover where a new beginning may be made. He is necessarily at once conserver and rebel. He asks: what is worth conserving? The conservative and the revolutionary have this in common that they alike despise the juggling, mystery-mongering and pettifoggery that are the liberal's stock-in-trade.

The conservative's enemy is the liberal. The conservative has a high opinion of men—and at the same time a low one. He knows that men can achieve things worthy of all reverence when they unite to defend their existence, to fight for their future, to maintain their freedom. But he does not deceive himself: he knows that when men or nations or epochs give their egotism free rein, and live for their own lusts, existence becomes a thing of dirt.

3

The German Revolution was the work of liberals, not of revolutionaries. That was its doom.

It was the work of opportunists, not of fanatics. It was a pacifist Revolution to end a war whose burden had become intolerable and the continuation of which seemed aimless. It had no ideal of its own, but snapped at an ideology whose expounders were trusting in promises that came from the west, the home of liberalism. It was hoped by revolution, by change of constitution, by surrender to the will of the enemy, to obtain conditions which would make life possible again. The liberal tendencies which exist in all democratic parties were given play, and finally the social democrats brought the Ninth of November on our heads.

German socialism was also corrupted by liberalism. Its basic idea of social justice gave birth in the course of the nineteenth century to a party of enlightenment which tossed the brightly-coloured balls of "progress," "liberty," "equality," "fraternity" from hand to hand, and yet was content to be nothing more than a party of adaptation. The social democratic party became the party of "evolution" in the particular application of the word which characterized the nineteenth century, and transferred the idea from the domain of natural science into that of universal history. Is it to be wondered at that the party gave no heed to genesis and origins?—that it ignored problems of space and population?—that it was blind to the fact that industrious and expanding nations rise in the scale while dwindling populations, consumers rather than producers, must sink? This would seem rather a vital consideration for a party whose main concern was professedly social justice. The initial principle of such a party should have been that social justice for men, strata and classes presupposes social justice for nations.

German social democracy adapted itself, however, to the liberal age; it soon exchanged its revolutionary stride for the parliamentary jog-trot. It went into opposition and the only manifestation of radicalism it betrayed was the criticism which—in truly German style—it directed against government of its own country. It was a party of petty German bourgeois who called themselves internationalists, and as such did not trouble their heads about the international conditions which were essential to the existence of their own national state. The German social democrat was so obsessed by domestic politics that he had no eye for foreign politics. Had not Marx assured him that the rule of the proletariat would eliminate all national distinctions between peoples!

So the social democrat waited for the day of his power and did not, or would not, perceive that a century of war was beginning, war between class and class, between nation and nation. He contentedly busied himself with his Erfurt Programme which enunciated enlightened views about workmen's protection acts, the secularization of schools, the rights of wives, religion as the private concern of the individual, etc., etc., but dismissed with a few benevolent phrases all political questions of real import: the declaration of peace and war should be left to the "people's representative bodies"; an effort should be made to solve all international quarrels by "some method of arbitration." It was easy for a great war to take such a party by surprise; they had foreseen that "a good old smash up" was bound to come, but had overlooked the deeper problems underlying it.

No party could conceivably have been less qualified to take over and carry out a revolution which had been precipitated even more by domestic than by foreign pressure. If it was to be successful, it would have needed World-Revolutionaries to carry it out—and these were lacking. A true German socialist revolution should have concluded a socialist peace, which meted to its nation its due, and not a "liberal" peace which robbed its own nation of its right; not this westernizing, world-capitalist Peace of Versailles which was dictated by a combine of states to one, and which decreed that the less-industrious nations might lay greedy hands of the surplus labour of a more-industrious people.

A people must be prepared beforehand for a revolution. A revolution has its own tradition in the spirit of the revolting people; it is dependent on the men who make it, and they on the genius, or lack thereof, of the nation they belong to, with which their fate is bound up, however much they may call themselves internationalists.

The genius of the German people is not revolutionary. Still less is it liberal. It is conservative.

For this reason—if no other—the Revolution was only an interlude.

4

The German Revolution was not even a revolutionary interlude.

The political incompetence of the German socialists was so great that they were able to retain power only for a couple of stormy days or weeks the governing power which the Ninth of November suddenly put into their hands. Then the Revolution ignominiously retreated before democracy which took over the government instead of the proletarians, who vainly waited for the day of their dictatorship. The realists and the opportunists had to content themselves with sneaking in under the aegis of democracy, and securing for themselves a personal, parliamentary influence and a share in the formally controlled democratic conditions which were subsequently formed between the social democrats, the centre democrats, the party democrats of every popular party and even the national liberals. The German Revolution became a liberal interlude.

The liberal made good use of the following years. He consolidated his political position by the humble fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles. He accepted the conditions to which the result of the War had brought the Empire, even professing to find them entirely tolerable and well-pleasing. The liberal is an acquiescer by profession, he eats any dirt that is flung to him. His position in the state was not a strong one. He had not so much seized power after the upheaval as had had it thrust on him. He did not owe it to his own strength, and still less to the inherent strength of the German people. He owed it to the dubious favour of circumstances, to the fear of Russian revolution and the benevolence of the western democracies.

We could have borne all this if the liberal had so demeaned himself as to show that he appreciated the national distress, and if he had displayed the unobtrusive intention of working towards ultimate resistance. He had snatched for himself whatever benefits accrued from the Revolution, his sole anxiety in those years was to prevent the masses from realizing how intolerable the position was. The moment when the people forsakes democracy may well prove dangerous for the liberal, especially if it happen to coincide with our second revolution: the radical revolution of a people of sixty millions, in despair because they are denied the right to live.

The liberal democrat could not prevent conservatives still existing who were sensitive to the disgrace under which we were living; he could not prevent this consciousness of shame growing steadily stronger amongst all politically-minded people and in the form of nationalism taking hold of the youth of the country, as it grew up into political consciousness. Administrative necessity had compelled him to turn for help to whatever conservative elements still existed in the country, and he became accustomed to rely on their trustworthiness whenever the danger threatened of the state having to defend itself against the proletariat. This did not prevent his playing off the Left against the Right and arming himself with emergency laws which could be turned equally against either. The democracy which had come into power during the Revolution felt the need of "preserving" itself, and appealed to the nation to acknowledge the Republic, to recognize the Weimar Constitution, and to accept as an accomplished fact the complete metamorphosis of our government institutions.

Every revolution has had to make a like demand, when once it set about establishing itself as a government. The revolutionary who snatches power is at once compelled to seek a conservative basis for his administration. This lies in the nature of power, of government and of conservatism: without which community life is impossible to man. The question arises whether the conservative is bound to place himself at the service of a revolutionary state. When the revolutionary government is engaged in a defensive external war, there can be no question: the conservative will take service under any government that is governing for the sake of the nation and not merely for the sake of governing.

5

The democratic idea of the state is different from the conservative; though, as we have seen, we can imagine a state in which democracy and conservatism are united. What was the reason that we failed to get a democratic-conservative state? Both Left and Right in different ways bear the guilt.

The state which crashed in the Revolution was a state-for-the-sake-of-the-state. Incidentally it existed also for the sake of the Empire, for German unity, and for the Hohenzollern dynasty, which was for us the symbol of the state and which—according to the good conservative principle of the Fredericks—existed for the sake of the people.

But the state did not exist for the sake of the nation. It could not. A nation is a people conscious of its nationality. We must face the fact that we were not such a nation. We were conscious of the state; we accustomed ourselves to it because we knew that it protected us.

Before the War, the liberal was crying out that the German people must be made politically-minded. He was thinking of democratization and parliamentarianization. He did not see that a people must first be nationalized before it is democratized. To democratize it without having first nationalized it leads only to democracy-for-the-sake-of-democracy. For an immature people this is just as much a makeshift as the state-for-the-sake-of-the-state but it lacks two things which the latter possessed, the inner cohesion and the outer protecting power. Instead of waiting till our foreign war was successfully ended, we were so unwise as to involve ourselves in an internal political crisis, which gave our revolutionary parties the right to substitute the policy of which they were the sponsors, for the only policy worthy of a state—that willingly adopted by the people. This led us to a democracy. Such was the fate deservedly incurred by a people that lacked all the qualities of nationhood, that had allowed itself to be talked over by its liberals into abandoning conservative principles. This transition stage was exploited by the revolutionary for his own ends, not in order to weld a people into a nation but to create an upheaval for the sake of an upheaval.

If from the ruins of the state-for-the-sake-of-the-state, there had arisen the state-for-the-sake-of-the-nation, we might have looked back on this day of mourning as the brightest in our annals, we might for all time have celebrated that great day—as other nations celebrate their revolutions.

But the opposite occurred. The people listened to the voice of the tempters from the west, who assured them that Germany's future depended on her altering her constitution. They responded to the talk of a world peace that should follow the World War.

After such weary years they were decoyed by promises of a better life for all nations, and believe that this should be the lot of the Germans also if only they would lay down their arms. The people were unsuspecting, they entrusted the peace to their enemies. The peace was such as might have been expected.

Whose fault was it? Obviously the fault lay with the people, with the masses who for a few brief weeks had acted as the German people; it lay with their leaders who had built up their policy on the ideal of a democratic state.

The deeper guilt, however, lies with those responsible up till the Ninth of November for the conduct of the state-for-the-sake-of-the-state. Those who were responsible for the conditions that were the cause of the Revolution and that made the Revolution possible; who were responsible for the fact that a state, which appeared securely established for all time, should have become they prey of illusion and self-deception and have plunged into the distress and misery of our revolutionary days.

The conservative has no difficulty in reconciling the ideals of a conservative and a democratic state. This reconciliation is in harmony with the development of German history. Along these lines the German nation can be evolved. He only fears that we may first perish of democracy.

He is free from all the intrigues and *arrière-pensées* of party politics. His party is Germany. He is not a conservative for the sake of the state but for the sake of the nation. The power of the state—for he cannot conceive a state without power—is welcome only for the sake of the country's freedom.

The hour which sees this freedom established will not be the hour of liberal, nor of parliament, nor of party—but of the conservative. He is the New German of Today: though if we interpret him in the light of history we shall recognize in him the Old German of Always.

He will be able to rise to the height of that hour only if he recognizes that the chasm which sunders Right from Left is the chasm between two mutually hostile philosophies, a chasm which we have so far failed to bridge.

When he recognizes that those who upheld the conservative ideal of state in the nineteenth century were false to the spirit of conservative thought; that the age of William II was false to a conservative tradition which had existed in pre-Bismarck Germany before the foundation of the Empire, and indeed had existed in Germany from the dawn of history.

The conservative will rise to the height of that hour only if he, whose function it has always been to act, proves himself not only manfully ready to act but spiritually capable of acting.

6

The Left has reason. The Right has understanding.

It is characteristics of the confusion of our political thought that we confuse the two conceptions.

The confusion began with rationalism, with the inference: *Je pense, donc je suis*. The age of reason adapted this and said: "I am a reasoner, therefore my reasoning is correct." The result of thought was identified with truth. This fallacy underlay the devastating influence which reason exercised on understanding. Reason trespassed outside her intellectual domain. True reason should guide emotion, not destroy it. This false reason destroyed feeling and thereby forfeited all guidance, all inspiration, all intuition. Reason should be one with perception. This reason ceased to perceive; she merely reckoned. Understanding is spiritual instinct; reason became mere intellectual calculation.

The consequences showed themselves first in the political sphere. Reason it seemed was capable of drawing any deduction that self-interest wished to draw. Reason arrived at the conclusion that the highest wisdom is to be found when each contributes his individual wisdom. Only understanding is capable of drawing the simple inference from empiric fact, that when all act exactly as they like, the net result is wont to be an infinity of unreason. What everyone thought was for the best, proved the worst for everyone.

Understanding and reason are mutually exclusive; whereas understanding does not exclude emotion. Rousseau perceived this, and took his stand against rationalism on the basis of the "reason of feeling." But he was not able to shake the position of rationalism. The marriage of reason and sentiment only made reason the more rabid. Whereas she had at least been a seventeenth-century lady, she now became little better than a whore, the bedfellow of every rationalist. When the French Reason raised her to the rank of a goddess, the last shred of her reputation was gone. She formed all the political ideals of Europe and developed into that "idle reason" which Kant exposed as our most dangerous self-deceiver. Her baneful influence brought us eventually to such a pass that we lost our hold on moral values and imagined that reason was the guarantor of justice.

In the west, and in all countries where sly reason held commerce with political ideals, people soon discovered that it may be extremely advantageous to talk of the rights of man, of liberty, equality and fraternity, but highly dangerous to put these into practice. Reason then acquired a double application, according to whether a man's own interests were at stake or another person's. A mood was skilfully created in the world at large, which uncritically accepted as progress everything that happened in western countries or was imported from them. France no longer spoke of the sovereignty of the monarch, but of the sovereignty of the state—and gave the state over to party corruption. England spoke of public welfare and left her people socially backward. In later days the western powers spoke of peace and the love of peace, while they prepared themselves for war.

Germany was completely taken in. Before the War committed the folly—which we imagined to be the height of wisdom—of seriously believing in a "world policy without war" as Lichnowsky and his fellows formulated it; and we saw in the policy of "encirclement" only a peaceful "bye-product of the loftiest political adjustments." So, during the War—by which time we really might have known better—we continued to believe in a peace of reason and to trust to states and statesmen who posed as pacifist. After the War our theorists imagined that a voluntary confession of guilt would touch our enemies to mercy; they had not acumen enough to distinguish the proximate cause from the intention, the accidental from the essential, the formal from the psychological guilt.

The Right has always had understanding enough to see the devastation which reason would wreak amongst men.

All that the conservative stands for: security for the nation, preservation of the family, devotion to the monarchy, the discipline that regulates life, the authority that protects it, constitutional self-government in professional and corporative organizations—these things are the practical derivatives of his knowledge of men. All great men have been great conservatives; all have done homage to this eternal principle. They had every right to distrust a rationalism which developed only the brain and let the human being perish.

Conservatism is a nation's understanding. German conservatism—not a political party but a conscious principle—was the one thing that we needed to win the War. Now after the War it is only the conservative who understands and is able to interpret the events, who feels no surprise that the Revolution failed or that the peace brought fourteen points of deception.

It was French conservatism and English conservatism, however,—not German—which possessed sufficient knowledge of men to lead their peoples to victory. German conservatism failed in its allotted task.

After the Revolution, in order to discredit the Right with the country, the Left asserted that we owed our collapse to the breakdown of the conservative system. This is untrue. The system which broke down was not the conservative, but the constitutional system. The Kaiser himself was no conservative monarch, but a liberal. The loss of the War was the price we paid for his liberal half-measures. Liberalism and the Kaiser lost the War. Apart from the fighting, liberalism lost the War all along the line: in principles, parties, persons.

The fault of conservatism lay not in its principles, which are sound and unalterable. The guilt lay with the representatives of conservatism whose principles had lost their spiritual content. The fault lies in the spiritual bankruptcy which had overtaken the nation.

The German conservative had forgotten that he had first to win what he was to conserve; that a thing can only be conserved by being incessantly re-won. The cause of conservatism was lost when its last, best, greatest representative Wilhelm von Humboldt, went over to humanism, and the conservatives had not the courage to follow and keep their claim on him, but left the liberals to adopt him as their own. In the same way German conservatives neglected to complete the work which Freiherr von Stein had begun, and felt themselves more at home with Metternich at the Congress of Vienna and in the atmosphere of the Holy Alliance.

Conservative circles did not throw up one single man in later days to lead the cause; when they wanted a mouthpiece they had to borrow from men of other races, of other nationalities: from Stahl or Chamberlain. The conduct of our foreign affairs fell into the hands of increasingly incompetent diplomats, none of whom realized that statecraft is history in the making. The members of the All-German Union were at least aware of the problems that arose from Germany's position as a world power, but they confined themselves always to physical dangers, to the fall in the birthrate and to race suicide—they never touched on the question of spiritual and intellectual deterioration.

During this period the liberals held aloof from the nation's real problems but dominated the literature of the time, and by busily keeping pace with all the developments of thought, science and taste presented an appearance of mental activity, and while producing nothing of permanent value, at least controlled the slogan market.

The conservatives on the other hand took refuge in stereotyped phrases. No conservative seemed to remember that a conservative's function is to create values which are worth conserving.

7

The parties of the Right could do nothing to avert our collapse. They were forsaken of God—whose name they invoked merely from habit. They had forgotten to win the heritage that had been committed to them. Where they had formerly been leaders they had lost touch.

The parties of the Left seized the opportunity of thrusting themselves forward, and claimed the right, as apparent representatives of the people to the apparent leadership. The same process is to be observed in all parliamentary states.

Among the western powers the parties of the Right dominated; and though the parties of the Left were well represented, the western statesmen were aware that in all question of power they could reckon on a strong conservative bias even amongst the extremer socialists. Cosmopolitan speeches were made; peace speeches evoked particular enthusiasm. None of these entailed responsibility, but they sounded impressive. And their effect was deceitful if their intention was not.

Germany was taken in over and over again. We preferred to make patriotic speeches; but this was only to conceal the fact that a nation was being addressed which had to a certain extent achieved external apparent unity, but which lacked all the elements of inner cohesion. It was rare, however, for anyone in the age of William II to look facts in the face. The parties of the Right would give rein to their vexation against sections of the people, and pillory them before the European public as untrustworthy; and conversely the Left never missed an opportunity of harping to the foreigner on the backwardness of our German state.

The only wise conservative tactics would have been to win these malcontent elements for the nation, and inspire them with loyalty to the nation. But after Rodbertus no attempt was made to make an idealist appeal to the proletariat and teach it to identify its aims with the aims of the state. The German masses were never told that only foreign policy can come to the rescue of an over-populated country. The nation was educated intellectually, but no one even tried to educate it politically.

Thus the War caught us unprepared. When it broke out, a sudden consciousness of unity naturally took hold of all, for all felt themselves endangered. The people drew together; party politics were shelved; elementary instincts asserted themselves; we sent forth our army; a living army, not torn by conflicting opinions, but one in will. Then the most fatal possible course was pursued. An optimism born of the soft, liberal sentimentality that was the curse of the Wilhelmine era was given free play. Everything was seen through rose-coloured glasses. Our prospects were painted in the brightest colours. Lies were told us. Everything was depicted as easy, which was in fact so difficult. No one told the people how terrific the War was going to be; how incalculable its duration; how unthinkable the consequences if it were lost. We were assured that it was bound to be short. That it was already half won. That it would soon be decided, happily decided, in our favour.

In the middle of the War, while battle was raging on every front, peace was being talked of at home. We were assured that this peace—which increasing privations made more and more desirable—was not a question of victory, but of reason. The conservative thinker knew that this was humbug, but kept silence. When it was already too late, the conservative thinker was induced to make lame and half-hearted concessions to the opposition, but he did so without conviction.

Meantime democracy was vocal; before the War somewhat shamefaced still; during the War more and more shameless. Democracy was armed with all the weapons of intellectualism and of a reason which was subsequently to prove that it had been un-reason. The conservative thinker, who had lost the habit of independent thought, was powerless. His sons had fallen on the battlefield, that was the sole contribution they could make to the nation's cause. Meanwhile the father had to look on at events which he could not prevent. The conservative parties were more and more crushed out; their adherents were bewildered. The day of upheaval demonstrated their timidity and helplessness.

Liberal statesmen, denying the conservative foundations of their creed; politicians, scenting a chance of making a career; journalists, no longer disguising their francophil leanings; a press that seemed predestined to help to lose the War; the suggestibility of our people; demagogues inspired by vanity or rancour to words of treachery—these all conspired in the name of reason to give a turn to the War which indeed brought it to an end, but which also brought about our collapse. The parties of the Right still had understanding on their side; they had no illusions; they faced realities; they foresaw the historical consequences which must follow. Understanding remained a conservative monopoly.

But it was not possible to make understanding prevail against reason, to which the Left unremittingly appealed.

Every German who accepted his fate consciously, whether peasant or workman, nobleman or commoner, socialist or clerical, showed conservative traits in his manliness; he realized what was at stake. But he and his fellows made a vain sacrifice because they were united only by the patriotic phrases and not by an immanent patriotic ideal, which should have been set before the immature nation while there was yet time.

Before the War conservative thought had been the monopoly of an exclusive society. Our defeat restored the principle to the whole community to whom it originally belongs. This permits all persons, whether they owe allegiance to the Right or the Left, to feel that all are members of one body, the nation to which they belong. This abandons "idle reason" wholly to those idle folk whose decisions are dictated by what they love to call "sound common sense." This vaunted "common sense" is just as useless as "good will" and our boasted gift for the "practical." We have staked too often on this worthless trio—and lost. They are self-evident—or perhaps threadbare. The only thing that is self-evident and not threadbare is understanding.

8

Conservatism is another thing which must be constantly re-won. Conservative thought perceives the eternal principle which, now in the foreground, now in the background, but never absent, ever reasserts itself because it is inherent in nature and in men.

This eternal principle must be continually recaptured amidst the transitory. Creative conservatism was non-existent in the Wilhelmine Germany of the end of the nineteenth century. The great Germans of the beginning of the century—who were all conservatives—had left a mighty legacy of thought which the conservatives failed to conserve.

Our state was founded, it is true, on conservative thought. But the conservative accepted the state as something established and inalterable. He could not conceive any state but a conservative one. He was right as regards the eternal factor in the state, and perhaps the time is not far off when the people will see that he was right. A non-conservative state is a contradiction in terms. A state must conserve. But the nineteenth-century conservative had not arrived at this principle himself; he had taken it over at second-hand; he was repeating parrotwise the judgment of his fathers whose blood and brains had gone to the creation of the state. The collapse of the state-for-the-sake-of-the-state was a conservative tragedy; the tragedy of unworthy grandchildren.

The grandchildren lived after their fathers' pattern. In their private lives they were manly, fearless and blameless. They served their King and Kaiser as their fathers had done. This was not enough. The conservative tradition still lived in their blood, but no longer in their spirit. They considered this tradition their political privilege; they lost touch with the people. The conservative was not aware that his consciousness of nationhood was a thing apart which the people did not share. This was our doom. It is true that we were all reared in patriotism; patriotic words had prepared the people for patriotic deeds. This method proved its value on the First of August. Sixty million people felt themselves "WE."

But the people were not national at heart. They were inwardly unprepared for great events, such as every politically-minded people must be ready to face. Moreover they were undermined by distrust of the conservative thought in which they had been reared.

The fatal result was the Ninth of November. Then the sixty millions thought as "I" though they imagined themselves as being a "we" mature and free. Liberalism was responsible for this mistake which even deceived the socialist, and which deceived the people. They were misled into committing the task of carrying out their will, first to their Commissioners and then, under the reign of parliaments which were called democracy, to their voting papers.

The history of the next years, the conclusion of the Peace, the policy of fulfilment, revealed the calamity that overtakes a people which puts its faith in reason and not in understanding.

We have all learnt much since 1918. Socialists observed how the postulates of a socialist system broke down, in face of an age adapted to advanced capitalist development. The incalculable happened, for which the socialist was not prepared. The moment when he was to grasp political power coincided with the end of a war which left the nation in a state of economic disintegration. The incalculable upset his calculations. It was not possible to realize socialism by succeeding to the economic power of a single class. Socialism only acquired a meaning when it embraced the whole people and their economic necessities.

The conservative for his part overcame the mechanical socialism, which was purely theoretic, by an organic socialism which could be put in practice. He conceived a socialism that should start with the group, with the community, with the corporative unity of the whole nation. Such a socialism was familiar to the conservative from the idea of guilds and callings and professions which he had inherited from the specifically German past. The Left had become familiar with the same socialism by the idea of councils in the development of which the Russian revolutionaries had set an example.

Right and Left had made a mental approach to each other which might lead to a political approach. Communist Left and conservative Right were united in their distrust of parties; in their distrust of the liberal and egotist taint in party life which attaches more importance to the programme than to the cause; in their distrust of the parliamentary party system which necessarily sets the party before the nation even though it acts within the framework of the nation. They were further united by the thought of a dictatorship; hard experience having taught that human welfare cannot safely be left to human caprice, but can only be attained by compulsion and leadership and the direction of someone designated to supreme control. Thus a solution of the problems was being sought and might have been found in some adjustment which would become possible the moment that the Left was willing to abandon Marxism and the Right, reaction.

The Left did not in the end do this. It clung to it party standpoint and its class war, though the social democrat Left made continual compromises in which these things were sacrificed.

The new-socialist thought of these last years has gained some insight, but it has not been able to shake off its party prejudices and class rancours. It has only learnt to content itself with makeshifts, with parliamentary compromises and formally democratic half-measures. The thought of the young-socialists is only an attempt to formulate a philosophy; and communist thought is concentrated on willing a will but one which is contrary to nature and threatens forcibly to break the continuity of history.

In contrast, however, to socialist thought which centres in its own problems, conservative thought concerns itself with the problems of every sphere, those which are peculiarly conservative, and those of the opposition which must be solved if conservative life is ever to be possible again.

To which end nothing could have been more useful than that the conservative should have been driven to re-examine his own postulates.

And to search his own conscience.

9

Conservatism is not reaction.

The reactionary clings to existing conditions or wishes them back if they have changed. He can conceive the world only as it was at the day of his birth. His thought is in its way as circumscribed as that of the revolutionary, who can only picture the world as it was the day he overturned it.

In contrast to these the conservative is accustomed to get busy and do something. He has no ambition to see the world as a museum; he prefers it as a workshop, where he can create things which will serve as new foundations. His thought differs from the revolutionary's in that it does not trust things which were hastily begotten in the chaos of upheaval; things have a value for him only when they possess certain stability. Stable values spring from tradition. We may be the victims of catastrophes which overtake us, of revolutions which we cannot prevent, but tradition always re-emerges.

Revolutions have eternity against them.

Conservatism has eternity for it. The cosmos itself, spinning on the axis of law, is no revolutionary phenomenon but one of conservative statics. Nature is conservative. The mightiest phenomena of destruction are trivial compared with the power of procreation which immediately comes again into play and year by year and century by century brings similar forms of life to birth.

The conservative recognizes that human life maintains itself in nations. He therefore seeks to maintain the life of that nation to which he belongs. The reactionary puts his faith in forms; the conservative in the cause. What cause is ours today? What is the only possible cause? What cause MUST be ours? On one point the conservative is clear: our only cause, now and for ever, is Germany's.

The conservative inherits from his fathers the motto "I serve." How can he best serve the German cause? Faced by this question, the conservative must get to grips with the republican ideal and with the legitimist ideal.

It would be quite conceivable that we, who for a thousands years have been a monarchical people, should be for the next thousand a republican people. This possibility should have less terror for the conservative than for anyone. Conservatism can be combined with any form of government. The Roman conservatives were republicans. Their Cato saw no hope for Rome if it were to become hellenized and to accept a Caesar. Yet the inevitable change in the Roman constitution and in Roman culture, which to the patriots had seemed to spell certain ruin, ushered in the greatest age of Rome. Similarly France, and England under Cromwell, and Russia under Peter, experience profound constitutional readjustments with which conservative thought was able to keep pace.

Only Germany remained always a monarchy. The World War has certainly been mentally a parting of the ways, a turning-point. It is entirely conceivable that a change should take place from a monarchy to some new form of state; it is even possible that the Old Germany will perish and form the foundation on which a New Germany shall rise.

The German Republic arose from revolution; and the revolution from betrayal; and the betrayal from stupidity.

When once the people has become a nation, it will be difficult, nay probably quite impossible, to delete this sequence of origins from the memory of men. The Ninth of November—a date as covered with shame as the First of August is with glory—failed to bring political renewal. The War was still in progress. But the revolutionaries ran up their red flag and made signals to our enemies. What would become of Germany? They never asked; they were thinking of humanity; and the masses were thinking of themselves. If the thought of humanity was victorious, so reasoned the revolutionary leaders, then Germany would be cared for among the rest. But most of them did not think of Germany at all.

The revolutionaries might have had a perfectly free hand—for as long as the Revolution lasted the foreigners could not tie them down—to insist on a socialist peace such as they had promised the people. But amidst the fall of princes, generals and ministers not one great socialist rose to bring new order to the world. These amazing world-upheavers waited anxiously to see what the world—and for them the world meant the Entente—would permit them to do or to leave undone. They would have had the opportunity to experiment with many a daring plan. Having the power they did not even consummate the union of Germany with German Austria. When they perceived that the Entente was betraying them, they could think of nothing better than to hearken to the cowardly and vain advice of an old fool whose political wisdom was this: "only confess! Confess that the guilt of the War is yours! and you will be granted a merciful peace!" Till finally there was nothing to be done but make a big election urn into which a patient people might throw its voting papers for a National Assembly. The National Assembly forthwith dismissed the revolutionary clique and threw the responsibility for the government on to the Republic. No genius presided over our Revolution.

Even a republic must have some tradition. A republic is impossible without republicans. Republicans cannot exist without pride in their republic. We have had tentative republics in our long history. We had the confederations of the towns and we had the Hanseatic League. These were never able, however, to act for the nation; their policy was purely a business policy, never an imperial policy. The republican attempt of 1848 with its dream of a Greater Germany was so full of pure ideology that it had no effective policy at all. The German revolutionary republicans who followed the Novemberites hauled down their red flag again. They began somewhat belatedly to ponder on their German allegiance, and to give expression to it they seized on the black-red-and-golden flag that had once been the symbol of a great enthusiasm, but later the symbol of a grievous German disillusionment. It was not their fault that the black-red-yellow flag of the Republic was fated to be once more the flag of disillusionment rather than of enthusiasm. The Republic under which we are living is an uninspired republic. We cannot even make it "interesting" as a commonplace democrat once suggested in a peculiarly commonplace touring speech.

Is our Republic a republic? Is it not still a monarchy bereft of all symbols in which men believe: monarchy in deepest degradation? So the legitimist thinks. His opinion is that we need only restore the monarchy in order to recapture the position we enjoyed while we still were a monarchical people.

The conservative cannot agree. He is a monarchist because he believe in the power of a leader as ensample. But the conservative's monarchism is founded on a higher conception of monarchy than that of the legitimist, who is solely concerned with the power of the symbol. The German Republic has been obliged in these years to depend on the support of our enemies. This has been hard for Germany and, we may well suppose, bitter for the republicans. But it would have been intolerable for a monarch.

If, or when, it is finally demonstrated that democracy cannot save us; would it not be most natural for us to have recourse to a monarchy again? The answer is No. A monarchy ought to be won; and we see today no sign of a monarch who could win it. Even if we suppose that the man exists and is in waiting somewhere needing only a summons, we cannot perceive conditions which would make it possible for him to show himself. A tolerated, graciously-permitted monarchy under the supervision of foreign parliaments, under the guarantee of foreign governments—that would be no monarchy in its own right, let alone a monarchy by the Grace of God.

A monarchy must be fought for. It cannot be accepted as a gift. The idea of monarchy involves the idea of consecration: which the last of our monarchs desecrated. The man to whom a king is holy, and an emperor glorious, must obliterate himself today. Political conditions are not favourable for a monarchy; spiritual conditions even less. There is nothing in the German world either royal or Christian: and so there is no king. There is nothing imperial in the German world today: and so there is no emperor. Only the people itself is there: the German people, waiting to become a German nation. At this stage our need is rather for leaders. We need popular leaders whose only party is Germany—it matters little whether they are of the democratic or of the aristocratic type, whether they prefer the role of Marius or that of Sulla.

We need leaders who feel themselves at one with the nation; who identify the nation's fate with their own; leaders who, whether they spring from the old leader-class or themselves create a new one, will devote all their powers of decision, of will and of ambition to securing the future of the nation for Germany. It is very possible that we shall need a long and changing succession of such leaders to nationalize the people, and then to make the new-born nation politically-minded; leaders under whom the German history of yesterday can work through the effects of the Revolution and pass on into the German history of tomorrow, into which we should without them drift leaderless; leaders who will know how to hold the scale even between the possibilities which still remain to us and the new possibilities which are only opening before us; leaders not concerned that a party should be always right, but that one person's will should prevail; leaders who in the uncertain future into which we are sailing will steer a straight course and through all vicissitudes and storms will keep their bearings and pass on the chart to their successors.

The Revolution threw up no such leader. The Revolution produced only revolutionaries each of whom abdicated next morning. Leadership is not a matter of ballot-boxes, but of choice based on confidence. The disillusionment which the parties have wrought, has created a receptivity for the leader-ideal. Youth is entirely for it. The monarchy had no room for this ideal; the monarch claimed the leadership himself; but he claimed it exclusively as a matter of privilege, and not of merit. Not till the Revolution came was the leader ideal made possible, the ideal of a leader who shall not destroy but conserve.

The Republic is now at the helm. A republic which would give scope to a leader is perfectly easy to conceive. For the sake of ending our insecurity it is easy to imagine the republic reverting to conservative traditions—worthier, more deeply rooted and of greater antiquity than those we abandoned in 1918—and reviving a form far more truly German than western parliamentary government and party systems—leadership. The time now again approaches fulfilment. Fulfilment cannot come until the slow task of making a nation out of the German people, is complete; until the conservative this time is sure of the nation; until the pressure of this unendurable life has wrought a mental preparation in the people; not until then shall we be ready to alter that fate for which every German bears in his own way a measure of responsibility.

To be a conservative today means to help the German people to discover the form of their future.

10

The question: "what is conservative" leads on to another: "When will conservatism become possible again?"

The confusion of conservatism with reaction arose when our political life lost its conservative basis and was invaded by reactionary phrase-mongering on the one side, and on the other by revolutionary ideology, the latter ultimately gaining the upper hand. The confusion will end only when conservatism itself has once more become conservative.

The conservative counter-movement, which is active all through German today, is a fight against the Revolution, an effort to call a halt. It is at the same time, however, a reckoning between the conservative and the reactionary. The reactionary lives with his eyes on the past; the conservative, from his point of vantage looks before and after, from what is past to that which is to come. The revolutionary on the other hand looks forwards only. He is the heir of the liberal who invented "progress," and who today, especially in the victor countries, is selfishly intent on enjoying the loot which he secured. The liberal is the reactionary of Yesterday's revolution seeking to enjoy his Today. The revolutionary movement is against him, shaking the foundations of Today, while the conservative counter-movement would secure for Today its due position in eternity and aim not at restoration but at a fresh linking up with the past.

The revolutionary denies the conservative counter-movement and opposes it. He has promised too much. He intended to make the world totally different from what it had been before; he dare not confess that he deceived the world and himself. He is himself, however, beginning to succumb to the influence of the conservative counter-movement, though he would not care to admit it. He promised once—to quote the communist manifesto—"the overthrow of all hitherto existing social order." Here spoke revolutionary thought. But the German communists' new programme flings at imperialist capitalism the age-old reproach, that it has failed to establish "either the economic or the political equilibrium of the world," and that it is powerless to create "a new, stable, enduring world-order." There speaks conservative feeling.

The German communist believes that during our Revolution the proletariat was very near the Marxist goal, was just about to lay hands on the helm, to seize surplus values and to confiscate property values. The thinker among the communists well knows that the Revolution failed because it was a liberal revolution.

He is, however, reluctant to admit that the forces which defeated it were eternal conservative forces which have always existed and will always exist. Every revolution is wrecked on the same rock. Again and again the communist is forced to recognize that there are in the world forces of tradition, of survival, of unalterable law. Yet if the proletariat was absolutely alone in the world, if no other human life had ever been—even then in an existence regulated on the strictest Marxist principles, the great conservative law of gradation would immediately begin to assert itself and the primitive instinct to form groups, families, nations, would prevail; order would arise—and history would inevitably repeat itself.

At this point the socialist will protest that he never spoke of any other equality than that which would follow on the elimination of economic contrasts, and that a social order founded on this elimination is entirely feasible. Communists would contend that their equality means only community of the means and of the products of production. Democrats would be content with an equality of classes which would be bound to react on governmental and economic institutions.

All this is correct in theory, but the idea is false. If the ideal of equality is not the ideal of socialism, then socialism has no ideal at all. Equality has been the compelling principle of socialism, as love was the compelling principle of Christianity. From the trinity of French Revolutionary catchwords the socialist plucked out the "equality"—leaving the "liberty" and "fraternity" to be the stock-in-trade of sentimental liberal demagogues, and adopted Babeuf's fiction that equality and justice were one. This identity of equality and justice became the centre of the socialist ideology.

At an earlier stage of development, Saint Simon's demand was: "To each according to his gift; and to each gift according to its value!" Marx took up the cry and preached a coming day when "the slavery arising from the subordination of the individual to the division of labour" should be abolished; the materialist interpretation of which was: "To each according to his need!" Lenin took up Saint Simon's challenge, and, recognizing that equal right for unequal individuals—and, we would add, for unequal nations—leads rather to injustice, he drew the conclusion that the bolshevist's equality of work and of reward established only a "formal justice" and that the task of creating an "actual justice" lay still ahead.

The circle of socialist thought is for the moment complete in Lenin. Lenin could not admit that his conclusion brought him back exactly to the point where men have always stood when they tried to order their existence in a state—to the very point where a new state necessarily stands which is seeking to evolve a just system which is bound to lead, not to ultimate equality but to a new inequality.

Leninism meantime has had the opportunity of making experiments with reality. The Russians have experienced what the transition period is like, between a capitalist and a communist society, and have experienced what is called "the dictatorship of the proletariat" and—or so it seems to us—the Soviet state has moved not in the direction of communism, of which Lenin spoke, not in the direction of realizing utopia, but in the direction of political realities.

The conservative thinker has the advantage over the proletarian thinker in knowing the historical relationships—the historical relationships on which the world is hinged. This is not merely a question of book knowledge which may be belatedly—though with how much difficulty!—acquired. However perseveringly the proletarian strives to raise himself, his self-education always remains somehow amateurish and inadequate, narrow and circumscribed. This is a matter of inherited knowledge, which the conservative has in his blood and which gives him an inborn gift for leadership.

The reactionary's world has crumbled about him, because he had allowed his values to lose their value and his life to become a routine. The revolutionary lives in the illusion that this collapse gives him the opportunity for giving existence an entirely new set of values according to laws evolved in his own head which he can compel the present to accept. He divides the past, a time of history but unhappiness, from the future, a time of happiness but no history. He established a new calender which divides history into two periods, the first from the beginning of human life on earth until Karl Marx—from whom time must henceforth be reckoned—the second from Karl Marx until the end of man's life on earth. But the continuity of human history bids defiance to this illusion. If we suppose that for one moment the revolutionary were to succeed in "overthrowing" and apparently annihilating all traces "of the previous social order," on that same day the conservative law of movement would reassert itself.

At best, communism has in its favour the seventy-five years during which it has been preparing the proletariat for the world it is to conquer with class war. But these seventy-five years have against them the sum of uncounted millennia, the cosmic nature of this planet, the biological nature of man, a human nature which not even the greatest, the most profound, the most spiritual, the most intimate revolution in history—the appearance of Christ and the introduction of Christianity—has been able to suppress or to alter. They have against them the characteristics of race, the results of civilization, the laws of space which outlast every shift of the historic scene and the men and forces which act thereon, laws to which even Christ and Christianity are obedient. The revolutionary conceives history as beginning with him. Marx spoke of the proletarian movement as the "independent movement of the immense majority." He did not see that everything which today is seen in motion, moves not of itself, but is in fact *moved by* the momentum of the millennia that lie behind.

Marx imagined that he could set himself above the continuity of history. He believe that he had discovered, in the material and economic conditions of life, the conditions that made history. He believed that once these conditions had been discovered, the future history of mankind could be "made" by the materialist.

But the conditions are spiritual. The slim pamphlet that contains the manifesto of communism seems to the ingenuous socialist like Faust's book of magic. Ranged against it are St. Augustine and Dante, the myths of prehistory, the mysticism of the Middle Ages, the protests, the criticisms, the idealisms of the Germans of our great period. Our sense of form, enduring and ineradicable in our modes of thought, rebels against the substitution for European culture of a proletarian cult. Against a mass-age, oblivious of nationality, rises up in revolt the individual history of every land.

Russia has proved this. Everywhere in the world the communist experiment comes up against the conservative forces whether Russian or European which the revolutionary is unable to master. Lenin mentioned them on occasion, and as a theorist he spoke of them as the "survivals of the Old" which meet us "at every step in the New," "in life, in nature, in society." As a statesman. He acted on the recognition that there existed a connected between the "New" which he was creating and the "Old" which persisted: a conservative connection which the revolutionary cannot set aside. The conservative sees the "Old" of which Lenin spoke, not as a fragmentary survival, but as the Whole, the ever-present, the all-embracing, the imperishable. For him the "New" is merely the accidental addition of the time. When the "Old" has stagnated into the conventional, or even into the reactionary, then the "New" may well serve to set the "Old" in motion once again. Our Revolution will certainly have this effect, if it does not end in complete disintegration but leads on to comprehensive reorganization.

The effect will not be a revolutionary reorganization—which is a contradiction in terms—but a conservative reorganization. Russia is already setting the example. When the figure of Lenin took the centre of the stage as leader of the bolshevist Right, he owed his position to his unsuspected conservatism. In Germany the immediate result of the Revolution was a reversion to conservative thought. The conservative must now be take on himself the problems of the Revolution which neither proletariat nor democracy has been able to solve, and lift them to the plane of his own philosophy.

Such signs indicate that in Germany as in Russia the "second phase" of the Revolution is going to be a conservative one. It is true that the revolutionary continues to think that it will be a communist one. Face to face with the irreconcilabilities of reality, he tries to salvage his theory. Lenin tried to take comfort in the thought that human nature when once subjected to communist education would gradually "grow accustomed to obey the rules of social communal life without subordination or compulsion, or the apparatus of compulsion." Lenin constantly recurred to this idea and spoke of "the rules in all traditions for tens of centuries" to which men who had thrown them off must "reaccustom" themselves.

This is the last hope of the revolutionary; but it is a conservative hope, nay, almost a reactionary hope. The conservative cannot be content with a "growing accustomed" which is a static ideal and reduces men to the level of a human herd. The conservative aims at combining conservation with movement, in which man can show his mettle and preserve his values.

The revolutionary wants the "New" of which Lenin spoke; he wants it above else. The conservative is convinced that the "New" can be absorbed, not into the "Old" but into the "Whole" to which it belongs. The revolutionary has set himself the goal in thought and feels confident of achieving it in practice. The future world in which his goal will have been attained he can conceive as that which the Marxists promised. The powerful logic of the class-war idea captures the proletariat, whose thought never ranges outside the problems of the proletariat. But the revolutionary's philosophy has to surrender before a richer, more highly developed, many-sided philosophy, which conceives life as a whole, of which proletarian life is but a part: the superior philosophy of the conservative.

The whole suffices; the part does not. While the revolutionary conceives the state as an "apparatus of compulsion" which impedes the attainment of his goal, the conservative conceives the state as a means towards securing, and as an expression of, the community of life. The question is only whether the conservative will have to get his way in opposition to the Revolution or whether the revolutionary will of himself turn towards conservatism.

The revolutionary is entirely absorbed in the contemplation of an ultimate power which shall be his. As a proletarian, he feels that he cannot hope to arrive at it himself; but he trusts to the momentum of his mass movement.

The conservative conceives that among the results of the War—though perhaps the least important of them—is a movement released by the revolution which brings economic upheaval in its train, and that a point has been reached at which the age of capitalism is to be succeeded by an age of socialism, just as the feudal age was in its day succeeded by the age of capitalism.

The conservative starts from the data; he preserves detachment towards the vicissitudes of life, seeks to gauge their extent, to anticipate the demands of the present and to stabilize the future. This is what distinguishes the conservative from the revolutionary—the politically-conscious man from the politically-ingenuous—and this underlies all the divergencies of their political strategy and political tactics.

The revolutionary assumes that man is by nature "good" and that only history and economics have made him "bad," the conservative knows that man is weak and must be compelled to develop his strength. The revolutionary trustfully believes in progress, and imagines that in proportion as economic exploitations cease to foster the evil, the good in man will assert itself.

He hopes that the movement of the "immense majority"—to which the proletariat is stirred by the thought of class war—will produce a "genuine mass progress" in all domains "of public and private life."

The conservative is much more sceptical. He does not believe in any such progress-for-the-sake-of-progress as reason demands. He believes much more in catastrophe, in the powerlessness of man to avert it, in the inevitability of the march of fate and in the terrible disillusionment which awaits the over-credulous. He believes only in the power of grace and of election granted to the individual, in the sign of which men and nations and epochs must stand if success is to wait upon their will.

While the revolutionary seeks to enlist believers in his utopia, the conservative fears that democracy will prove to be the *tertius gaudens*: an international, westernizing, liberal, formal, corrupt democracy, composed of an immense *minority* of the rich (both men and nations) which with entire lack of scruple has hitherto understood only too well how the immense majority can be controlled.

The conservative's forecast of the future is this: if it proves impossible conservatively to harness the forces of the Revolution, then Germany will finally perish of this democracy, of the democratic struggles which tear Europe to pieces, of the suffering, the discord, the pettiness of this democratic strife which may well last for centuries.

11

We have the experience of the Russian and of the German Revolutions behind us, and we can see how again and yet again all calculations have proved to be miscalculations, while self-willed fate continues to hold sway. While the Revolution was rolling over Russia, and Germany was still in the throes of her own Revolution, many Germans made a comparison between the two countries and said: Russia has time, Germany has not.

The contrary is the case. Russia has allowed herself no time; but Germany has had to take time. It was and is true that every hour is of burning importance while Germany waits anxiously for help. An industrial country is infinitely harder hit by a collapse than an agrarian country. After 1918 Germany was faced by the possibility of further upheavals (whether revolutionary or counter-revolutionary makes little difference); their origin lay in the external foreign pressure but their focus lay in the peculiar economic conditions of Germany, in industrial crises, in communist putsches, in the gradual proletarianization of the educated classes, eager not for a class war but for a war of liberation. Germany tried again and again to recover from the blows she had dealt herself in the Revolution and the terrible blows later dealt her by her enemies in Versailles. Germany waited; we must today admit that fate compelled her to wait, even though she had no idea what she was really waiting for. Was she waiting for Russia's stabilization?—or America's deliberation?—or England's decision?—or the union of the neutrals?—or her own preparedness?—Hitherto Russia has been the danger to Europe; now Germany is the danger. Only the conservative counter-movement offers salvation, if it is not the movement of a party only but the involuntary effort at self-preservation of a desperately-threatened people, a supreme effort of self-defence in face of danger.

Even the revolutionary does not shrink from the defensive war into which the war of the nations has merged since the sham peace which was supposed to end it. But the revolutionary would wage it for his doctrine, for the class-war ideal, and for all the other catchwords which he gets second-hand from Russia. His words are therefore double-edged. He talks of war against the "capitalism of the Entente" but he means war against "all capitalism."

He is neither honest enough, nor logical enough, to distinguish between the French attackers and the Germans attacked. He marshals the proletariat for war—equally against both. With his international preoccupations he addresses himself to humanity, equates humanity with the proletariat, and abandons his own people to its tormentors.

To the conservative on the other hand the defensive war is a war for very life, for the nation's freedom, for the nation's preservation, only possible in freedom. This makes his cause a natural cause, the cause of all whose elementary instinct is to turn and rise against the oppressor—without seeking justification in any doctrine. We hope that here—as ultimately everywhere and all the time—Life will prove mightier than Theory.

The revolutionary and the conservative have today a common foe—not in the reactionary; he is merely an obstruction. The revolutionary has always succeeded in getting the better of the reactionary; the conservative has always overcome the reactionary in himself.

The common foe is the liberal. The revolutionary instinctively feels it; the conservative consciously knows it. The revolutionary gives him another name and calls him capitalist. He takes the economic point of view and calls him the exploiter of the masses, who is withholding the rights of life from the proletariat. The conservative recognizes in the liberal an age-old enemy; mentally a freebooter, politically a rationalist and a utilitarian who can sneak in disguise into any form of government, can destroy religion and has even been able to destroy conservatism. The liberal grasps at power in the name of liberty; he may be known alike by the lying plausibility of his words and unscrupulousness of his deeds. We can see this in the political outrages of the *grande bourgeoisie* of France, who brought about the World War for their own ends, and the plans of their ambitious lawyers and pious generals who invaded our territories with their white and coloured troops.

The revolutionary loves to talk of epochs succeeding each other, but he has an eye only for the future to which he conceives himself to be leading the way. He marches in step with the proletariat, advancing to class war, and under the Marxist flag he believes his victory assured.

The conservative on the other hand who takes his stand on data, not only economic but also political and moral data, cannot ignore the economic question, because it is far from being proved that the capitalist epoch is nearing its close—as the revolutionary hastily maintains. It is not yet clear whether the World War has smashed capitalism in world economics or not rather cleared the way for it. He only knows that the world always tend to become—by a law of nature—conservative. His is the responsibility to see that the world through all its vicissitudes is stabilized, united and organized: politically by the state, morally by men.

He knows also that the world which until the appearance therein of the liberal was always conservative, cannot become conservative again until the liberal is eliminated. The conservative, in embarking on his fight against the liberal, is aware that it is only the continuation of the great struggle between two principles which began when the age of enlightenment came to bring darkness rather than light to the world. This struggle has been going for three hundred years; the conservative is prepared to believe that it may last for another three hundred until it is fought to a finish—once and for all.

The revolutionary is incapable of seeing these connections. Partly because he is himself a product of the age on enlightenment and is still enmeshed in its illusions and self-deceptions—himself only a most radical variety of liberal. He sees time only as the present. History for him begins with himself. And he hopes with the blows of his horny fists to usher in the millennium.

He has no links with the past he ignores, or with the future he conceives. Before he catches up the knowledge that he lacks, which other men—conservatives or even revolutionaries, but assuredly no proletarians—have already attained, the proletarian will have missed the possibilities of the present. For are not the liberals ranged behind his back with tanks and machine guns, with press and propaganda, with triumphant militarism and with triumphant ideology?

The conservative recognizes the peril. The revolutionary is his comrade in the fight so far as he is a man and not merely a reactionary. The conservative does not appeal to party Germans, whether of the Right or Left, for in them he sees the bane of his country.

The conservative belongs to a Third Party which cuts across all political party lines, repudiates the political thought that brought Germany and Europe to ruin, and appeals to the man in every German, and to the German in man. He trusts that there still exist in Germany many men whose reason has not been darkened by enlightenment, but who have preserved clearness of understanding. Men with true, simple, straightforward insight, with strong, virile, primitive passions: and the will to act accordingly. He trusts that a people of such men still lives in a Germany that must pass through suffering, to find in the Empire its fulfilment; and he trusts that the degenerate European world will allow itself to be set in order once again by this country and this people.

Has the Revolution robbed conservative thought of its meaning? Not so. The Revolution has restored its meaning to conservative thought.

Germany's Third Empire

VIII. THE THIRD EMPIRE

We must have the strength to live in antitheses

1

The Third Party wills the Third Empire.

The Third Empire stands for the continuity of history.

The Third Party is the party of all who wish to see Germany preserved for the German people.

Germans of all parties cry out at this point: "We want it too!" We are very willing to believe you; but we know only too well that you are thinking of the Germany of your party, and that you want to see life in Germany cut according to your party programme.

Some of you come with your red flag, which is only an infuriating rag the colour of blood without brains. The red flag can never be ours, not even if you deck it out with a hammer and sickle and a star for humanity. Others of you have brought out the black-red-gold flag which once the romantics hailed as the flag of our first Empire; but it has long since lost the golden glory with which stormy and enthusiastic youth endowed it. Others of you cling to the black-white-red of our second Empire, which fluttered above a dream of power that dreamt of sailing the seven seas before it had even conquered the continent. We lived to see the day when this, our proudest flag, sank amid the vortices of Scapa Flow.

Over Germany, today only one flag is flying, the token of mourning and the symbol of our life: only one flag which tolerates no colour near it and robs the people who move below its sable folds of all their joy in merry pennons and in gaudy standards: only the black flag of need, humiliation and an utter bitterness—a bitterness which clothes itself in self-control lest it should pass into despair—a black banner of unrestful thoughts that hover day and night over the fate which a conspiring world has designed for our disarmed country: a banner of resistance for men who will not resignedly acquiesce in the work of annihilation that begins with the dismemberment of our country and is intended to end with the obliteration of our nationhood: a banner of revolt for Germans who are resolved to fling back deceit in the teeth of the deceiver, to rescue their nation and to preserve their Empire.

2

Today we call this resolution not conservative but nationalist.

This nationalist will desires to conserve all that in Germany is worth conserving. It wills to preserve Germany for Germany's sake: and it knows what it wills.

The nationalist does not say, as the patriot does, that Germany is worth preserving because she is German. For him the nation is not an end in itself.

The nationalist's dreams are of the future. He is a conservative because he knows that there can be no future which has not its roots in the past. He is also a politician because he knows that past and future can only be secure if the nation is secure in the present.

But his thoughts range beyond the present. If we concentrate exclusively on the past, we might easily imagine that German history is closed. It is nowhere written that a people has a right to life eternal. For every people the hour at length strikes when they perish either by murder or by suicide. No more glorious end could be conceived for a great people than to perish in a World War where a world in arms overcame one single country.

German nationalism is in its way an expression of German universalism, and turns its thought to Europe as a whole, not in order—as Goethe in his middle phase expressed it—to "lose itself in generalities" but to maintain the nation as a thing apart. The German instinct of self-preservation is penetrated by the experience which Goethe in his age confessed to: that art and science alone are "poor comfort" and no substitute for the "proud consciousness" of "belonging to a strong people, respected at once and feared." Romance nationalism thinks only of itself. German nationalism thinks of itself in relation to other things. The German nationalist wants to preserve Germany not merely because she is Germany, which might easily mean simply to preserve the past. He wants to preserve Germany as a country arising out of the revolutionary upheavals and changes of a new age. He wants to preserve Germany because she holds a central position from which alone the equilibrium of Europe can be maintained. The centre, not the west, as Pannwitz though, and not the east, as Spengler too rashly anticipated, is the creative focus of our hemisphere. The German nationalist wants to preserve German nationhood; not to exchange it for the "supernational culture" of a Fr. W. Foerster—in whom the bastardization of German idealism reached its zenith,—but to preserve Germany in the consciousness that the Germans have a task in the world which no other people can take from them.

Our old, enduring mission is a continuation of the task of Austria, and Prussia and the Bismarckian Empire. We can only fulfil our task towards the east if we feel our rear protected in the west. Our most immediate and most German task is to make ourselves free. Fr. W. Foerster called Bismarck the greatest blunder in our history. But Bismarck, the founder of our Second Empire survives his work, and lives to be the founder also of Germany's Third Empire.

The conservatism that corresponded to the state-for-the-sake-of-the-state had treated the problem of nationality too cavalierly. Therefore it foundered.

The patriotism in which we were bred by that state considered nationality to be merely a question of the country in which we were born and the language which we spoke. This was not enough.

A common country and a common speech and the foundations of a nation, but historically the nation receives its own peculiar character from the manner in which the men of its blood value life. Consciousness of nationhood means consciousness of a nation's living values. Not only those are Germans who speak German, or were born in Germany, or possess her citizen rights.

Conservatism seeks to preserve a nation's values, both by conserving traditional values, as far as these still possess the power of growth, and by assimilating all new values which increase a nation's vitality.

A nation is a community of values; and nationalism is a consciousness of values. The peoples in the World War who possessed a national consciousness of values were defending not only their speech and their country but their civilization and their culture. We were defeated by them because, though our state was strong and our military power was great—that is, we were strong in everything that should give protection—we were lamentably weak in everything worth protecting.

We imagined that even if we lost the war it was only the state which would be defeated. We now know that it was the nation which was defeated.

We must make our starting-point a new conservatism, that aims at conserving, not for the sake of the state but for the sake of the nation. We must make good what our patriotism lacked; we must formulate and demonstrate what nationalism means in the present and what it means for us in our future.

Under our First Empire we had a strong consciousness of values. With this we combined profound and powerful mediaeval conceptions of a definite occidental mission which was ours; we believed that the German nation was privileged to represent the Christian and imperial ideals of the west. This lent us a courageous and lofty self-consciousness.

The princes for whom this self-consciousness was reserved early developed a separatist consciousness which benefited only their individual states. The nation was thus deprived of its national consciousness which, being based on values common to all, might have enabled it to maintain itself as a political unity. There were individual Germans, acutely conscious of these values, who deduced from them a passionate belief in our destiny as a nation; and sought to awake a national consciousness among us similar to that which animated Spaniards, Frenchmen and Englishmen. But these Germans who had experienced a consciousness of nationality in foreign parts and amongst the clash of other nations, were never understood at home when they summoned their people to partake their experience.

This is why German nationalists, from the times of Ulrich von Hutten onwards, were always felt as outsiders and were never accepted by the nation. Their influence was lost—until today. No one troubled his head about them; they went on their way, pursuing their business or profession and the state-for-the-sake-of-the-state saw to it that they were able to do so in safety. In return, the state demanded obedience and gratitude. The patriotism which the state taught—as a schoolmaster teaches his pupils—was a duty imposed. Nationalists were somehow rather a stumbling-block to this kind of patriotism. No one remembered them except in times of stress, and they never got the opportunity to become what they ought to have become: the leaders of the nation.

Those who justified this state-for-the-sake-of-the-state were no doubt conscious of a certain emptiness it left in the souls of men. So the state sought to fill the vacuum by cultivating the attitude of the vassal towards the state. Patriotism had become a custom among its citizens; it was necessary to justify this custom to their souls. The justification was sought in loyalty to throne and altar. The state made use of the mystery that underlies the two conceptions: Royalty and Christianity.

The state took over the legal responsibility for the lives of men—which is inherent in royalty; the moral responsibility which is inherent in Christianity. Loyalty to the monarchy and loyalty to God reinforced and complemented each other, forming a unity on which the state was founded.

In the long run, however, these two conceptions fared as patriotism had fared; they became mere customs and lost their consecration; they became formulas which had lost their content. They became conventions which sufficed for times of peace, but when a testing-time arrived, the people failed as a nation to stand the test.

So royalty disappeared from the world. The individuals who sat on thrones had lost their royalty long before the actual loss of their crowns confirmed the fact that they were no longer princes but very human men. Had this not been so, their people would not have let them fall, they would have rallied to the support of the crown and with their wonted loyalty defended its wearer to the last. But this being so, the representatives of royalty were driven out from the holy places into the banality of private life, in a general tragedy that lacks all tragic grandeur.

Similar changes took place in the Christian world, though they were not so catastrophically evident. As the princes had lost touch with the people, the churches lost touch with their flocks. The throne had not availed to save the state; the altar was even less able to do so. The state crumbled; its foundations gave way; its two pillars gave way. It had miscalculated in thinking that "patriotism"—on which it had always laid stress—could permanently form a substitute of "nationalism" which it had always fought shy of.

Time and history have liquidated the state. Only the nation remains: only from the nation can a new mystery spring: the love of country.

The state that has fallen had made patriotism an item in our educational curriculum. In the cultural decay of the nineteenth century, however, more especially of the Wilhelmine period, education was degraded more and more to serve the ends of career, of social position, of economic advantage. Hence the inevitable failure of our patriotic education.

The crumbling state threatened to bury the nation in its ruins. But there has arisen a hope of salvation: a conservative-revolutionary movement of nationalism. It seeks to save the nation's life; it seeks to make good what had been omitted: to permit the nation to take a share in determining its own destinies.

Nationalism seeks to secure for the nation a democratic participation in which the proletarian shall also have a share.

The ideals of a nationalist movement differ as greatly from the ideals of a merely formal democracy as from the ideals of a class-conscious proletariat—above all in this: that it is a movement from above and not below. Participation implies consciousness of the values which are to be shared. This consciousness can never be imparted unless a movement of ready acceptance comes from below; it must, however, be imparted from above.

The democrat, who always leans toward cosmopolitan points of view, and still more the proletarian who hankers after international trains of thought, both like to toy with the thought that there exists a neutral sphere in which the differences between the values of one people and of another vanish. The nationalist on the other hand holds that its own peculiar values are the most characteristic and precious possession of a nation, the very breath of its being. These give a nation form and personality; they cannot be transferred or interchanged.

In no country are the values so mysterious; so incomprehensible and uncomprehended as in Germany: so imperfectly-developed, fragmentary and yet complete; now the most intimate confessions, now wild stormings of heaven; tender or powerful; earth-born or sublime; utterly realistic or entirely space-defying; to all appearance the expression of irreconcilables and incompatibles. But in no country are they more closely and fatefully bound up with the history of the nation: they are the countenances and the mirror and the tragic confession of the German who has created them amidst the contradictions of his history—not for himself, but for the nation.

In no country have these values tended so definitely towards a unity—a unity which we have never enjoyed since our First Empire, a unity in which our Second Empire we failed to achieve—

A unity which it must be the task of our Third Empire to establish. The antitheses of our history will remain, but it is reserved for our Third Empire to bring our values to their fulfilment.

3

We must have the strength to live in antitheses.

German history is full of fresh starts for new goals.

We never reached any goal. When we did reach one of the goals we had set ourselves, we reached it accidentally and with a bound and for a moment, only to fall back from it the more completely. But we pulled ourselves together and chose another goal—frequently an old one over again—and tried with new strength.

We were barbarians who took over the inheritance of Mediterranean civilization. We were heathen and became protectors of Christendom. We were tribes and created a nationality. We abjured our gods and followed the Saviour. We possessed our dukes and chose ourselves a king. We began our history with particularism and laid claim to universal monarchy. We set up an Emperor and shared with Rome the overlordship of the world. We were a democracy of freemen and an aristocracy of feudal vassals. We recognized, supported and did homage to Rome and yet were forced to defend the secular against the spiritual power. Our bishops struggled against the Pope and our princes set themselves up against their overlord. Our virtues were faithfulness and defiance. We crossed the Alps and we rode to the East. We took the side of the Ghibellines and we took the side of the Guelphs. We were South Germans and North Germans. We were mystics in the west and pioneers in the eastern colonies. We betrayed the Hohenstaufen in the height of their power, quarrelled amongst each other for their crown and finally let it fall to foreigners. We consoled ourselves for the fall of the Empire by the sovereignty of the states, we decentralized on a large scale, we centralized on a small one. We carried on domestic politics and grew into the Habsburg-Spanish Empire on which the sun never set. We created no metropolis for ourselves but a great town civilization. On the ramparts of Vienna we defended the west against the east and we let our western boundary be breached along the Rhine. We opposed the decay of the Church and let the wars of religion rage in our countries for thirty years. Our Protestant Lutherans fought against our Protestant Calvinists and let the Counter-Reformation spread. The Peace of Westphalia interrupted the Emperor's attempts to establish an absolute monarchy and took France as surety for our German Imperial constitution. The princes divided the government of the country between them and the imperial house exhausted itself in wars of succession. Prussia gained predominance in Germany, but twenty years after Frederick the Great, Napoleon was able again to take up Richelieu's policy against Germany.

The nation's consciousness awoke in poetry and philosophy, but the Empire was in disillusion. While German idealism lifted the human spirit on to the loftiest plane, the nation of idealists fell under a foreign yoke. We made ourselves free once more and rested content with ourselves. We were a people of geniuses and we began our new life by degrading Stein, failing to utilize Humboldt and misunderstanding Kleist. We enjoyed intellectual superiority over all other nations in 1800; allowed them to catch us up, and we spent the century in developing internal discords until at last towards the close we founded the Second Empire. The "domination of Prussia" and the "unification of Germany" were two ambitions which coincided: till Bismarck finally used the "domination of Prussia" to subordinate every other thought to that of the "Unification of Germany." Yet anxiety for Germany's future clouded the last days of the great statesman's life.

His anxiety was justified. The dynastic foundation of the Empire which Bismarck founded has collapsed. But the work that he accomplished will outlast the Second Empire, which proved to be but a circuitous route to the nation's unification. It is timely to recall that Bismarck was wrong in the national conclusions which he drew from the dynastic premisses. As a conservative he reflected over the duration of his work. Weighed continually the foreign dangers and the internal possibilities. On one occasion he said "suppose that the German dynasties were suddenly eliminated. It is unlikely that national feeling would hold the German together as one people amid all the frictions of European politics."

Today his hypothesis is fact; but the hypothetical consequences have not followed. If one thing is certain in the Germany of today, it is the feeling of solidarity that unites all Germans. The various races who to Bismarck were an obstacle to unity, exert a centripetal not a centrifugal attraction to each other. They possibly chafe a little over the arbitrary internal boundaries of ancient princedoms which cut across racial boundaries; but far above everything else they feel the common German tie which binds them together whether they are North German or South, East German or West. The problems of unity and federalism will be met from within. The Bavarians, from whose particularism our enemies before the War ingenuously hoped so much, are the race which have seized on the idea of national regeneration with the greatest enthusiasm. The working classes in the border provinces are firm in their loyalty to the Empire, and firmly withstand all the seductions of the French or the Poles. They are discovering in their own persons that there is no such thing as the International they used to be taught about, but only the nation to which they belong. The border provinces feel themselves all of a sudden as marches, and from the frontiers the conviction spreads gradually inward that Germany herself is one great March against which the hereditary hostility of our enemies rages in vain, seeking by the perpetuation of the Un-Peace of Versailles to cripples our German existence for ever. This is what makes our people a nation today.

The antitheses which have marked our history are still perceptible. The oldest of all which we had thought dead, are coming again to life. It is significant, even politically significant, that there are Germans today who consciously turn back to the earliest stage which was the basis of our First Empire: that there are Germans who revert to the idea of mediaeval guilds and mysticism, or even to the still earlier primitive myths as offering a new starting-point: that there are Germans who prefer the cult of the Middle Ages and of prehistoric times to the westernizations, the civilization and the progress of which they have had a taste; that there are worshippers of Thor amongst us here and Primitive Christians there, and nothing awakens greater enthusiasm than the memories of our romantic and barbaric days.

The antitheses of later days are disappearing. Once in our history at the zenith of our First Empire we overcame a mighty feud which had long rent the nation in twain. The time is past when the twin cries "Hie Welf!" "Hie Waibling!" sufficed to kindle fratricidal war, and we have long paid equal homage to the graves of Palermo and the Lion of Brunswick. We must similarly obliterate all the antitheses of our past which are still with us, not by burying them but by lifting them to a higher plane. Immediately after the collapse of our Second Empire, the Prussian-German feud, which still lived on in rancorous feeling, fell into the background before the popular wave of national German consciousness. The races feel more strongly conscious of their racial individuality than ever before, but stronger still they feel themselves the Germans that they are. All Germans today feel themselves "Greater Germans" regardless of frontiers and customs boundaries.

Yet a third antithesis is dying out today: that of religious differences.

Everywhere there are Germans today who do not feel their creed as a confession which severs, but as a religion which unites. Roman Catholics and Protestants are drawing together regardless of their differences. The Protestants are allured by the thought of ONE catholic Church, and Roman Catholics are learning to look on Luther not as the founder of enlightenment, rationalism and liberalism but as the last great German mystic. We must have the strength, not to deny and reject, but to recognize and to reconcile all the antitheses which are historically alive amongst us.

We must have the strength to be "Welfs" again full of a consciousness of race, and at the same time "Waiblings" inspired by imperial thought. We must have the strength to be at once Barbarian and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, South and North German, East and West German. We must have the strength to be Prussians, Austrians, Bavarians, Swabians, Franks, Hessians, Saxons or Frisians: everything—for ourselves and for each other—as GERMANS.

9

Such sentiments and such consciousness must be the basis of the practical philosophy of Germany's THIRD EMPIRE. There remain antitheses enough: the federalist-unitarian problem, the socialist problem, the pacifist problem.

The Weimar Constitution made a radical failure of the federalist-unitarian problem. It is a monument to the unteachability of the liberal, for it is based on all the principles which had been used to deceive the German people. The Weimar Constitution is in fact far behind the changed times and far outstripped by the country's feelings. It bears no relation to the changes wrought in the German people by its growing nationhood. Its paragraphs sought to create an artificial unitarian Republic, not heeding the inner natural unity that was developing in the body politic. The Weimar Constitution took the revolutionary interlude as its basis; it was a purely negative document as was tacitly admitted when it laid down:

EMPIRE LAW SHALL OVERRIDE THE LAW OF THE LAND

Not so. Law must not overrride. Law must work. Germany must reach the point where Empire Law and the Law of the Land, the Law of the Land and Empire Law are one and the same. There must be other goal than a state: we must revive a federal state or a confederation of states; we must create an Empire that shall be both. Only in such a state will a real representation of the people—instead of parliamentism—be possible, in which the vital force of the people will be represented as the current of their will. Rodbertus saw "the finger of Providence" in the fact that the German state was called "to take up the social question after having solved the national question." Engels expressed the challenge: "We are not concerned with preserving the revolutions made from above in 1866 and 1870; it is our business to complete and improve them as may be necessary by a movement from below." The Revolution failed in the first instance to introduce socialism. But a movement-from-below has sprung therefrom which we have called the proletariat's participation in the nation. This must be fulfilled in the Third Empire if it is to have its roots in the people: but it must not merely a material participation such as communism demands, confusing the classes with the nation. Socialism cannot be realized from above as the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine social policies imagined. Socialism can only be realized by the co-operation of Above and Below, not by a socialism of profit, as Marx assumed, but by a socialization of enterprise founded on mutual understanding and co-operation between economic direction and labour effort which shall establish harmony between profits and claims.

This socialization of enterprise, however, cannot extend to the entire world-proletariat, as communism and the International promised. It will only be possible in an economically, spatially, nationally co-ordinated sphere, as the economic system of a people, valid only for its own economics in the first place, however exemplary it may prove for other peoples. Since the German collapse, the German economic system has been involuntarily approaching the standpoint of socialism so interpreted. The distinction between enterprise and business became ever more evident. Being defeated and fettered the nation possessed neither time nor space, nor freedom of movement to realize its own new conception of an economic world. German capitalists had difficulty enough in keeping their enterprises going. But the ground for a transition from a pre-War capitalist system to a post-War capitalist system is being gradually prepared. The first preparation is a change of soul and heart which makes the natural attitude of capitalist and workman no longer a hostile but a friendly one, no longer destructive but constructive.

The problem of pacifism in Germany is closely related to that of our supernational mission. It is the most vital, the oldest and the most difficult in German history. To live not for ourselves only, but for mankind: to erect an immortal memorial of our existence that shall stand to the limits of furthest time for the most distant men: this has been the innermost meaning of all German achievement throughout our history—as it has been the ambition that has fired all great peoples at all times.

The greatness of a man is: to be something more than his mere self.

The greatness of a nation is: to be something greater than itself, to be able to communicate something of itself; to possess something that it can communicate.

In this ambition all great German fulfilled their tasks on earth, and left the issue to eternity. They often did not emphasise their German nationality in their work; yet it was there: enshrined, unintentionally, securely, self-evidently, and they could rest secure that its influence would not belie it. But if they were asked whence their strength came to which their work was owed, they forthwith confessed their German nationality. And when their people were in danger they rallied to them.

Side by side with this, however, there has always existed a fatal German weakness to fall under the spell of foreign modes of thought, to prefer foreign opinions to our own and to run off to salute the flag of every foreign philosophy. German ideologues talk today of a supernational mission by which they mean a renunciation of nationality—and boast of this betrayal as something characteristically German. These are the people who as revolutionaries confused the idea of political peace with the philosophical ideal of world peace. Even today, after the experiences of the Ruhr and the Rhine and the Saar, there are German communists so hardened in their enlightened world-revolutionary doctrines that they will not admit that the class war idea is not only "national in form" (which Marx admitted), but also (which Marx repudiated as bourgeois) "national in content."

Engels spoke of the "spirit of servility" which still clung to us from the days of our many petty states, and he hoped that a revolution would cure us of it. He was thinking of this spirit of servility as something in our domestic politics: a spirit of vassalage which a free people no longer owed to princes who had forfeited their royalty. It would be a most desirable result of the Revolution if it could teach us to think of this spirit of servility in relation to our foreign politics: a false spirit of admiration which we now owe to no other nation—since ten of them stood against us and seven and twenty of them betrayed us. It would be good if this experience made us humbler towards ourselves and haughtier in our bearing to the foe.

We have had our warning—an experience unique in our history. We know that we can only live with our supernational mission if we as a nation are secure. All our values owe their origin to the German nation's fight for spiritual and intellectual self-preservation. If we had not maintained ourselves politically as a nation we should never have possessed anything to communicate to other nations; we should have been scattered and crushed at other nations' will. If our credulity is such as to let us still trust the European benevolence of our enemies our fate is sealed.

The thought of enduring peace is in very truth the thought of the Third Empire.

But it must be fought for, and the Empire must be maintained.

5

The Second Empire was a transitional empire. It collapsed because it was not given time to become a tradition.

Yet the German conservative sought to preserve this empire. He sought nothing more. That was his crime. He sought nothing less. That was his virtue. He wanted to preserve for us the form in which Bismarck's empire had been committed to us; but this form was too raw and young; it was outwardly and inwardly immature.

The Second Empire was an imperfect empire. It did not include Austria which survived on from the First Empire, side by side with our Second Empire. Our Second Empire was a Little-German Empire which we must consider only as a stepping stone on our path to a Greater-German Empire.

Our First Empire lost many lands of foreign speech, Lombardy and Burgundy. We lost also lands which belonged to us by race and speech, Switzerland, and the Netherlands and the Baltic colonies; but during those periods when we grew weaker and weaker we concentrated more strongly on what we retained.

During the whole of our more recent history we have been busy with a tidying-up process, getting rid of the ridiculous little frontiers and obstinate internal barriers with which the fall of the First Empire in the middle ages had cumbered Germany. We got rid of the system of petty states which had been the expression of our powerlessness. In our Second Empire we regained the position of a Great Power, basing it on the great races and the greater internal kingdoms which had succeeded in surviving the downfall, and on the smaller states which during it had become ever smaller and smaller.

The result of the World War was to break the position of the Second Empire as a Great Power. The Revolution brought disintegration. It could not prevent our impoverishment nor the destruction of our four Marches. The Revolution left us to live in a Rump Empire whose mutilated shape we do not recognize as the German Empire of the German nation. The Revolution missed the great opportunity which the collapse of the Central Powers afforded for the union with German Austria, and lacked the courage, the will and the ambition to present the world with this union as a *fait accompli*. The Revolution was a Little-German insurrection and wrote itself in Weimar a constitution whose federalist-centralist scribblings accorded neither to the Empire nor to the states, neither to the races nor to the districts, what was their due.

Yet the Revolution worked some simplification and cleared up some of the internal barriers which were still encumbering our development into a nation. The Revolution is a German episode whose meaning will be retrospectively seen from its results. A bye-product of the Revolution, which seems to be becoming its main result, was that it provided a forcible solution for many German problems for which we might not readily have otherwise found a motive. It made an end of small states that had outlived their usefulness. It organized the empire on the basis of races, which we are able to adopt now that we are a free people. This would be of little importance if it represented only entries on a map. It is vital since it expresses human feelings. We lost territory; but we drew together as Germans. As Germans we acknowledge the Empire which must be preserved for us.

The Revolution deserves no credit for this. It had no consciousness that it was in fact acting for the nation and not for the party. We are living in uncertainty. We have no guarantee that the Revolution if left to itself—as the insurrection of an unpolitical people—might not prove to be the beginning of the political end of the German people. But we believe that it will prove to have been a German folly which will subsequently gain meaning if it succeeds in making the German nation politically-minded when it finds that it cannot live in the conditions imposed by the issue of the World War.

The Revolution was an episode in our national history. We believe that it will prove to have been a detour necessary in order to snatch us out the rut into which—German-wise—we were getting accustomed to run under the Second Empire. We believe that the Second Empire was only the transition to a Third Empire, a new and final Empire, which is promised us, and for which we must live, if we are to live at all.

There are some German who comfort themselves with the thought that even if the collapse of the state should be followed by the downfall of the nation, the nation's values will nevertheless prove indestructible. This is the most grievous of all the self-deceptions of which Germans are capable. We were fighting for our civilization and culture: but our enemies were fighting for theirs. Our enemies have no use for our civilization; they do not understand our values. They each think their own civilization perfect. The thought of according equal rank to German civilization and culture is intolerable to them. They do not recognize our values as valid.

We do not recognize our values ourselves. The course of our history has been such that we repeatedly broke off one set of values to start others elsewhere. It is with this which makes German civilization rich and many-sided on one hand, and on the other confused and difficult to summarize. It will be the task of the new nationalism to gather up and to set forth, to display clearly to the nation the inheritance which belongs to her, because it is German and because it is of value: German human history.

The goal is a spiritual one, yet a political task is included. Judging by what we know of other peoples, if we perish as a nation, then Germany will perish also and therewith all that Germans have ever created. There is no other people that could assimilate us. The people of the west deny us. Their values are different from ours; they are incapable of our valuations. Even in Clausewitz the French General Staff were only able to see the "German fog"—though the fog was often lifted with a German clearness that was terrible to our foes. When the Entente advised us to abandon Potsdam and revert to Weimar, they played as their trump card their greatest lie. The peoples of the west ought to hate Weimar far more than Potsdam since their purblind eyes see in Potsdam only the expression of militarism, while, if they admit that Weimar is an expression of civilization this at once raises the question of the relative quality of that civilization. The classic plane is as much loftier than the place of classicism as the plane of Goethe is loftier than the place of Racine. German civilization does not hang on these two towns alone, but on every German town within the range of German values, from Strassburg's Minster and the town where Grünewald's Christus hangs on the German cross, to towns far away in the East.

The peoples of the east accept such values as reach them from Germany and as can be of use to them. But the German language is a medium of communication only in Eurasia and central Europe. It is a business medium but does not speak from spirit to spirit. When it was adopted as the language of the Third International, it communicated only internationalism and Marxism, but not the great cosmos of German intellect and spirit, which stands before and beside and against Marx, which refutes him and remains un-understood. Even those Russians who differ from Tolstoi in not repudiating Europe root and branch, are too deep-sunk in their own nationality to take more than partial values from us: matters of system, and of idealist-philosophy, Hegel and possibly Schiller. The German infinity, which cannot be limited by finite terms, is closed to them because they possess an infinity of their own, which is not ours, which turns its face towards Asia, away from the west.

6

German nationalism is the champion of the Final Empire: ever promised, never fulfilled.

It is the peculiar prerogative of the German people for which other peoples vie with us. In the World War the peoples fought against the Empire-for-the-sake-of-the-empire, the Empire-for-the-sake-of-world-hegemony, in which we claimed our very material share. Each of these nations wanted an empire of its own: a sphere and empire of Latin or Anglo-Saxon or Pan-Slav thought. They annihilated our material empire. They still tremble before its political shadow.

But they had to leave our Empire standing. There is only ONE EMPIRE, as there is only ONE CHURCH. Anything else that claims the title may be a state or a community or a sect. There exists only THE EMPIRE.

German nationalism fights for the possible Empire. The German nationalist today as a German remains for ever a mystic, as a politician he has turned sceptic.

He knows that nations can only realize the idea committed to their charge in proportion as they maintain themselves and assert themselves in history.

The German nationalist is in no danger of falling under the spell of ideology for the sake of ideology. He sees through the humbug of the fine words with which the peoples who conquered us ascribed a world mission to themselves. He knows that within the radius of the peoples' civilization, which they so complacently describe as western, humanity has not risen but has sunk.

In the midst of this sinking world, which is the victorious world of today, the German seeks his salvation. He seeks to preserve those imperishable values, which are imperishable in their own right. He seeks to secure their permanence in the world by recapturing the rank to which their defenders are entitled. At the same time he is fighting for the cause of Europe, for every European influence that radiates from Germany as the centre of Europe.

We are not thinking of the Europe of Today which is too contemptible to have any value. We are thinking of the Europe of Yesterday and whatever thereof may be salvaged for Tomorrow. We are thinking of the Germany of All Time, the Germany of a two-thousand-year past, the Germany of an eternal present which dwells in the spirit, but must be secured in reality and can only so be politically secured.

The ape and tiger in man are threatening. The shadow of Africa falls across Europe. It is our task to be guardians on the threshold of values.

Germany's Third Empire