



ERNST JÜNGER  
INTERWAR ARTICLES

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*"...the only genuine follower of Nietzsche."*

- Martin Heidegger

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## INTRODUCTION

Ernst Jünger (b. 1895) came to prominence during the 1920s as the foremost chronicler of the “front experience” (*“Fronterlebnis”*) of World War I. His well-nigh lyrical descriptions of trench warfare and the “great” battles of materiel” (*“Materialschlachten”*) – that is, of those aspects which made this war unique in human history – in works such as *In the Storm of Steel* (1920) and *War as Inner Experience* (1922) earned him the reputation of a type of “aesthete of carnage.” In this way, Jünger, who was deeply influenced by Nietzsche’s critique of “European Nihilism,” viewed the energies unleashed by the Great War as a heroic countermovement to European world-weariness: as a proving ground for an entire series of masculinist warrior-virtues that seemed in danger of eclipse at the hands of an effete, decadent, and materialistic bourgeois *Zivilisation*. Yet, the war of 1914–1918 had proved that in the modern age warfare was more dependent on the amassing of technological capacities rather than acts of individual heroism, and this realization left a deep imprint on all of Jünger’s writing in the form of a profound *amor fati*. Thus, as the following passage from *War as Inner Experience* demonstrates, in the last analysis the war did not so much present opportunities for acts of individual prowess as it offered the possibility of a metaphysical confrontation with certain primordial, chthonic elements: forces of annihilation, death, and horror: “*The enthusiasm of manliness bursts beyond itself to such an extent that the blood roils as it surges through the veins and glows as it foams through the heart ... [War] is an intoxication beyond all intoxication, an unleashing that breaks all bonds. It is a frenzy without caution and limits, comparable only to the forces of nature. There the individual is like a raging storm, the tossing sea, and the roaring*

*thunder. He has melted into everything. He rests at the dark door of death like a bullet that has reached its goal. And the purple waves dash over him. For a long time he has no awareness of transition. It is as if a wave slipped back into the flowing sea."*

In the late twenties Jünger published over 100 essays in leading organs of Germany's conservative revolutionary movement (Arminius, Deutsches Volkstum, Vormarsch, and Widerstand), thus establishing himself, along with figures such as Moeller van den Bruck and Oswald Spengler, as one of the movement's most celebrated and influential figures.

Need for this collection arose because people only judge Ernst Jünger based on his autobiographies and novels but all of those came later. The interwar articles and Storm of Steel are probably the most important of Jünger's writings. Sadly, not all of his interwar articles are included in this collection but that could change in time to come.

**List of articles included:**

1. *Revolution and the Idea (Revolution und Idee; Völkischer beobachter, September 23/24, 1923)*
2. *Revolution and the Frontline Soldiers (Revolution und Frontsoldatentum; Gewissen, August 31st, 1925)*
3. *Differentiation and Connection (Abgrenzung und verbinding; Die Standarte, September 13th, 1925)*
4. *The Frontline Soldier and Wilhelm's era (Der Frontsoldat und die wilhelminische Zeit; Die Standarte, September 20th, 1925)*
5. *Mechanized Warfare (Die Materialschlacht; Die Standarte, October 4th, 1925)*
6. *War as an Inner Experience (Der Krieg als inneres Erlebnis; Die Standarte, October 11th, 1925)*

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7. *The Machine (Die Maschine; Die Standarte, December 13th, 1925)*
8. *Foreword to Friedrich Georg Jünger's book "March of Nationalism" (Aufmarsch des Nationalismus; 1926)*
9. *Blood (Das Blut; Standarte, April 29th, 1926)*
10. *Will (Der Wille; Standarte, May 6th, 1926)*
11. *Character (Der Charakter; Standarte, May 13th, 1926)*
12. *Nationalistic Revolution (Die nationalistische Revolution; Standarte, May 20th, 1926)*
13. *Unite! (Schließt euch zusammen!; Standarte, June 3rd, 1926)*
14. *Unite! Final word (Schließt euch zusammen! Schlusswort; Standarte, July 22nd, 1926)*
15. *Time of Fate (Die Schicksalszeit; Arminius, Januar 2nd, 1927)*
16. *New Nationalism (Der neue Nationalismus; Völkischer Beobachter, January 23/24, 1927)*
17. *Nationalism and Modern life (Nationalismus und modernes Leben; Arminius, February 20th, 1927)*
18. *Nationalism and National Socialism (Nationalismus und Nationalsozialismus; Arminius, March 27th, 1927)*
19. *On Spirit (Vom Geiste; Widerstand, April 1927)*
20. *Our Stance (Unsere Kampfstellung; Arminius, June 5th, 1927)*
21. *Total Mobilization (Die totale Mobilmachung; Krieg und Krieger, 1930)*
22. *"On Danger" (Über die Gefahr; Der gefährliche Augenblick, 1931)*

# REVOLUTION AND THE IDEA

*Völkischer Beobachter, September 23/24th 1923*

We are the youth of Germany, full of spirit and enthusiasm. We were born and brought up for free thought and that is why the word "revolution" on the eve of war awoke in us a sacred thrill. And though we lived in the realities of a corporate state, we knew from history that a moment comes when the people can no longer tolerate the existing government, regime or right. The great moments of uprisings, splashes of violence birthed by oppression, the appearance of a new idea on the barricades accompanied with a drumbeat and red flag - all this found a reflection within ourselves. For we knew, that for such fleeting moments, when people, parties or willful individuals by force broke the chains of old forms and proclaimed a new right, sprouts of new life and youthful strength appeared in the country. But all of this was based on one condition, one so obvious that it should not even be mentioned - there being an idea worthy to fight for.

From the history of great revolutions it can be seen quite clearly that at first the idea is born in the heads of but a few men, and then in the course of long and tormenting work the setting is set for its manifestation into life. Take the Reformation and its related movements, the first French or the recent Russian revolution, everywhere we see the harbingers of the coming storm - grand literature, prophets and martyrs, suffering for the idea and shedding their blood for it, even if the idea was false.

Completely unexpectedly we were given the chance to experience a revolution or movement in our own country, that called itself revolutionary. It was given to us at that moment, when the people, its



## Revolution and the Idea

very best were surrounded on all sides by mighty enemies and fought a desperate, final battle. This fact alone was enough to give impulse for an uprising. Any revolutionary organization chooses the time for revolt when the existing regime is at its weakest - to realize an idea favorable conditions are required. But in our case it was not the government that led the struggle: the people as a unified whole were fighting for the new image of the world, and the defeat in this struggle threatened not just the future of the country but the basic existence of everyone in it.

The fact that the war was most likely lost either way changes nothing, even if under different conditions. Serious mistakes were made, both before and during the war, but the reckoning had to come after peace was signed. Thus the revolution was nothing more than mutiny on a ship during a battle. People who took the helm at the moment of danger most dire thus also took upon themselves the greatest responsibilities. History has shown that the burden was too great for them. The reason for this was that they were not driven by an idea, but by a desire for profit, and they were supported by the cowardly, starving and blinded by slogans masses.

Now even the most short-sighted person can see what was really hidden behind those slogans. The so-called 1918 revolution was not a revival but a real feast for flies that converged on a rotting corpse. So which idea did this revolution manifest to life? Freedom? Democracy? Parliamentary Government? This question can truly stomp anyone. Nothing new took place even on a merely formal level: Russian institutions were partially copied, mediocre parodies of 1789 to 1848 events, the old dusty slogans of marxism were taken out of the chests. But when it they should have created something new themselves, the leaders of the revolution helplessly threw up their hands, and realizing their own idea-lessness, grabbed onto the very things which should have been combated. Thus with their help capitalism had only

blossomed, political pressure was unrestrained, and promises of freedom of speech and the press looked like a mockery.

The only circumstance that could serve as a historical justification for this revolution of materialism, is that it was successful. This can be said simply and directly, same as how those events took place. A bunch of sailors took over the cities, deserters and teens tore off the symbols of the old state. This fact, that to the future generations will look like something inconceivable, has but one explanation: the old state lost its will to live, which is so important in dire times. An organism incapable of neutralizing the poison that infiltrated the blood will inevitably die, especially when there is no strength left. The weapons were ready, the only thing missing was a strong hand to put it to good use. The decaying state announced its own verdict, by not allowing to shoot<sup>1</sup> and cornering itself with negotiations and indecisiveness - 50 year old global power disappeared like a sandcastle. The rulings of history cannot be contested in court. What once was cannot be brought back.

And so for the last five years in the Reich there was no idea, except for quarrels about worker's pay, not one new building had risen from the ruins, not one great goal was proclaimed. But the consequences made themselves known: constant changes of policy, internal bickering, helplessness in the face of outside forces. Behind the theatrical facades of governments and cabinets, looters are running the show. Only muggers and the mugged are left. Professions which were meant to save and multiply the ideals of a people are dying out. Representatives of the most vulgar materialism, market speculators, dealers and moneylenders - here are those who are now in favor! Everything

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<sup>1</sup> Even before November 9th, 1918 when the last Reich chancellor of Wilhelm's Germany, Prince Maximilian of Baden had given up his duties to the Chairman of SPD, Friedrich Ebert, the military commandant of Berlin had issued a ban on shooting in the city.

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revolves around goods, money and profit. All of the state's proclamations, directives, explanations, measures, money and appeals smell of smoldering ashes. And it could not be otherwise. For the revolution did not become the birth of the new, the forge of new ideas, it was but the smoldering of a dying body. This sad spectacle drags on!

A real revolution has not happened yet, but its marching step can already be heard! This is not a reaction, but an authentic revolution with all its tell-tale signs and slogans, her idea is the völkisch, sharpened to an unprecedented edge, its banner - the swastika, its political expression - the concentration of will, a dictatorship! It will replace word with deed, ink with blood, empty phrases with sacrifices, the pen with the sword.

It will carry in itself all the signs of an authentic and righteous rage, it will repel from itself all obscurantists, because you won't be able to warm your hands with it. Its driving force will not be money, but blood that flows in the veins of the nation and mysteriously ties it into a single whole. This blood will sooner run than allow itself to be enslaved. From this blood will be born the new values, thanks to it individual sacrifices become the freedom of the whole, its waves will reach the borders given unto us, it will repel the poisons that destroy our organism.

These are the values being fought for on our barricades!

*The article was published 3 weeks after Jünger's dismissal from the Reichswehr on August 31, 1923. As an officer in active service he had the right to publicly state his political stance.*

# REVOLUTION AND THE FRONTLINE SOLDIERS

*Gewissen, August 31st 1925*

"Frontline soldiers represent the most valuable and prized elements of the people" - such phrases were uttered often and in earnest, when the people were not represented by rhetoricians, but by real, living people with weapons in hand. Then being a representative of the people was a matter of honor and not simply something beneficial for oneself. But those who at that point honestly fulfilled their duty today are considered to be either victims of a scam or complete fools - and that is very much in the spirit of the so-called revolution.

In reality there was nothing surprising if a man who was forced for 4 years to deny himself all pleasures of life for the sake of values that surpass the fate of any one individual, would pull at his own hair in desperation at the sight of this rampant, shameless and selfish individualism. Those who have seen with their own eyes hunger and cowardice that under the guise of revolution attempted to give itself idealistic flare, who have seen the masses of students of the lowest order, shouting grand slogans as they scurried to occupy all vacant spots and lived in clover until they wasted the last of their money, who had seen all this had to be convinced in the need for the most severe, ruthless and dictatorial means. Even if this feeling were to manifest itself as a reaction, which is not at all the case for our youth, this reaction, correlating with the highly developed state of society, would nevertheless be unquestioningly superior to the reaction related to the animal pleasures of gluttony, sloth and complete irresponsibility. In November of 1918 the government was like a crew of a ship that at the sight of the coming tragedy took to opening barrels of rum, to eat, drink

and have fun, forgetting shame and responsibility. Literary circles did not stray far as they tried to retroactively present this roistering as heroism. The watery sauce of pacifism and internationalism goes well with a dish lacking meat and fish, a dried ragout made with French revolution leftovers that would make even the masses vomit.

Some ask themselves, why didn't this revolution attract to its side the young national leaders, that is to say first of all the officer corps, who could've realized their ideas by armed force as it happened in Paris of 1789 and in Lenin's Russia. The answer is simple. There were no ideas and without them it is harder to gather people (at the very least valuable people) than it is without money. There were people, of course, even of a vivid revolutionary character. But they had gone there, where one goes to sacrifice oneself, they had gone to the freikorps, who carried on the fight on the eastern borders. There they fulfilled their work, but it is hard to judge its importance at this time. Some rubbed their hands, glad that they could get rid of them, as upon coming to power they did not want development of a revolutionary situation, but peace and quiet. They were satisfied with phrases like "revolution on the march," as it were just enough in order to keep the exhausted bourgeoisie on their toes. Probably the only person who thought about how to give the movement energy was Noske. But there was a need for a willful man like Trotsky, while Noske avoided getting his hands dirty and tried to sit on two chairs simultaneously: for the workers he was a setter, for the officers - simply the party secretary. His work did not pass the test of strength in the form of the Kapp Putsch<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The **Kapp Putsch**, also known as the **Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch** after its leaders Wolfgang Kapp and Walther von Lüttwitz, was an attempted coup on 13 March 1920 which aimed to undo the German Revolution of 1918–1919, overthrow the Weimar Republic and establish a right-wing autocratic government in its place. It was supported by parts of the *Reichswehr* (military) and other conservative, nationalist and monarchist factions.

The Red Army on the other hand presented no threat due to its lack of professionals. So long as communism only works with the proletarian masses led by a thin layer of intellectuals, it will be forced to retreat when facing movements led by a born leader or officer. Then it'd have a chance, relying on Russia and declaring war on France, to attract to its camp a good deal of national elements, because the question of property is not the most principle one that separates us from the communists. Naturally communism as a fighting movement is closer to us than democracy, and the balance of power will have to be restored at some point - by peaceful or violent means. But it has to be repeated time and time again: at that moment people did not want a fight, did not want to pick up weapons, to spill blood, they wanted peace. The German communist cannot compare to his Russian counterpart. The Russian communist had an idea and he worked to fulfill it by any means necessary. He led a struggle both inside the country and on its borders. He made history. We had but an oratory contest. In Russia for the sake of their goals, which, of course can be accepted or rejected, entire segments of the populace were exterminated, and the armies under the command of czarist officers invaded Poland. We, on the other hand, in between all the coffee shop speeches and vile, stupid acts, were facing our own inner weakness. We lacked race, martyrs, dramatic development of events, that convincing logic that is present in the merciless advance of a great idea, in other words, we lacked revolution itself. It's not hard to imagine that lightning-speed development of events that don't take into account individual life, would have propelled us further than the constant changes of bandages over rotting wounds by the members of parliament. Russian communism has a national character. Internationalism simply serves as an excuse for realizing its expansionist desires. If our own communists had the confidence to

## Revolution and the Frontline Soldiers

announce the center of this Napoleonic international to be Berlin, rather than Moscow, then supporters would have flooded to them.

Regardless, the so-called revolution failed to attract frontline soldiers to its ranks, and this is symbolic. One should not understand a frontline soldier to be someone who spent a particular amount of time on the front line - there were plenty of those who were forced to be there. A frontline soldier is someone who consciously fights and dies for the idea. But since these very men, in as much as their health and experience allowed it, with iron necessity wound up in the most dangerous of places, it was exactly them who became the face of a frontline soldier. And that part of modern youth that also fits this profile, organically joins with the brotherhood of experienced soldiers. Unable to attract these men to its ranks, the revolution had thus rejected the very symbols of manhood, honor, bravery - symbols which always had and always will lead to victory. As a result it stood in opposition to these circles, which promises nothing good for it. If it were able to truly promote great, selfless ideas, based not in instincts, but suffered and born in the depth of the soul, then the best of these men would have voluntarily jumped in her embrace. At the end of the war they were overstrained by unbearable burden and suddenly felt complete spiritual emptiness. But one single event worthy of sacrifice would have been enough for them to gladly offer their help. But in this marketplace, in this clearance-sale of all and everything, there was no need in people of strong character. In the end the force that bravely fought on the borders of the Reich was shattered to many pieces, as was possible only in Germany. And even if afterwards there were protests and sometimes even bloodshed, the time for resolving who's right and who's wrong hadn't come yet. One day a monument will be erected to these people, something one can't even dream of today.

The inner-loneliness of the frontline soldier cannot be explained by him suddenly being surrounded by enemy masses (he's used to this!), but rather by how he had suddenly become a witness to the disappearance of the world of forms. Without order in this world, fulfilling duty was unimaginable, and thus it melted before their very eyes as if but a dream or fog. It is precisely for this reason that a true frontliner will never be a reactionary, for he wasn't just betrayed, he was abandoned. Where were all the title and post holders, what were they doing in those hours when the fate of the whole was being decided? Did they see overwhelming enemy forces? Very well, but why did they not fight then? Why are they still alive? Where was that Reichstag that in all other instances considered it to be its duty to poke its nose into everything? This is exactly what the last and unknown soldier, who at any moment was ready to leave his cover and sacrifice himself, could not understand. Instead of facing the great gates fully armed, even if one by one, the very people deserving it most slipped away through hidden passages. Perhaps the "historic moment" demanded this of them, but historic moment is not equal to tens of years or centuries. Better they had stayed in their heroic hiding places, dreaming of times long gone! But they just had to come on out once the storm had passed, to rise like a swarm of bats who nest in old ruins! And so on par with disdain for the so-called revolution, the frontliners souls also carried a heavy memory of those shameful days of the inglorious death of the old form, that had rejected itself and thus would never live again.

But in the end, form is not spirit, although they felt closely related. Much time has passed until the frontline soldier had realized this. There are noble symbols and signs and when they fall to ruin, everyone who feels a connection to the soil also feel their heart bleed. But signs and symbols, void of spirit and life, are dead like the ruins of the past. They



are like exhibits behind the glass of museums and command respect that has nothing to do with either the present or the future. But we cannot burden ourselves with sarcophaguses, that which lives demands our strength!

The frontline soldier is not hiding in wait in the cracks. He kept on fighting on the borders even after the catastrophe, though inside the country his name was trampled in the mud. He gave order to big cities that allowed for the weakling upstarts, who were almost swallowed up by the very wave that raised them up, to calmly take possession of old wealth and spend it.

The big question is if it would have been better had the frontline soldier stood on the sidelines and witnessed how the communists give out to the "representatives of the people"<sup>2</sup> what they deserve, and would have entered the fray only when the complete uselessness of these people with their insignificant resources became apparent. Big question, was it right to accept the role which these messers. had delegated to the remnants of the old army and newly created military formations. In the moment of danger they utilized them like some magic fetish, like a pocket lightning-rod in the face of the raging masses, while they themselves sat in comfortable houses and made deals with capitalists of the worst sort. Who at that time did not have a desire to grab a club, except for those with fish blood in their veins?! We ourselves have deprived us of the pleasure to see how the workers would have had their way with people like Scheidemann<sup>3</sup>. It was

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<sup>2</sup> From November 10th 1918 until February 13th of 1919 the German Reich was controlled by the Council of People's Representatives which de facto was a cabinet of ministers.

<sup>3</sup> Philipp Heinrich Scheidemann (26 July 1865 – 29 November 1939) was a German politician of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). On 9 November 1918, in the midst of the German Revolution of 1918–1919, he proclaimed Germany a republic. Later, beginning in the early part of the following year, he became the second head of government of the Weimar Republic, acting in this post for 127 days.

completely different in Italy, fascists calmly waited until the cart was completely stuck in the mud. They put an end to the shameful spectacle only at that point, when every single one was sure that it cannot go on like this.

But we didn't have people like Mussolini. We had the strength but they were either left unused or uselessly wasted, shattered into a multitude of factions. We don't even have a party of frontline soldiers; there is a dominant opinion everywhere that you can't do politics with them, that they must be limited exclusively to "preserving the memory" by gathering for holidays and friendly binges. Perhaps it's not right for the army, for the Reichswehr to conduct politics, but the old soldier, who worthily represented his people in the hardest times, not only has the unalienable right, but also simply must demand political control. Slogans like "peace and order" could have had their place after 1806 but today we have every right to be anything but calm!

The gallows long cry for the pseudo-revolutionaries! The mudflow has passed, the time has come for the real revolution!

*Gewissen (Conscience) was considered to be the mouthpiece of "german socialism" ideas. Was published by Eduard Stadtler, with Arthur Moeller van den Bruck as the editor-in-chief.*

## DIFFERENTIATION AND CONNECTION

*Die Standarte, September 13th 1925*

"Frontline soldier" should not be understood as experiencing oneself as a frontliner, but as having a conscious attitude towards that experience, in other words it implies having a certain character that we are yet to define in detail. We are required to make a differentiation as we are dealing with a movement that loudly proclaimed its existence. Its nature does not allow for hitchhikers thus making it superior to any party. The strength of a movement is not defined by the number of votes but by its internal might. Hitchhikers slow down any action, they fear battle but are drawn in again by success. The völkische<sup>1</sup> knew this in their better days and soon as they forgot about it, crisis immediately spread in their ranks.

The best differentiation that a movement can make based on its makeup and its idea is in unifying all the spiritual and material forces at its disposal. Blurred lines pose a danger of the movement turning to dust, whereas the opposite may lead to an unwanted loss of strength. We were always prone to exaggerated individualism and anyone who feels at home in the nationalist camp and in particular among its youth knows: a passion for highlighting particular aspects leads to completely unjustified divisions based on purely superficial reasons. Generally speaking, the main question is what divides us and not what unites us. Unification leads to immediate disarray, waffling, lack of discipline,

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<sup>1</sup> The völkisch movement (original name: völkische Bewegung) is the German interpretation of the populist movement, with a romantic focus on folklore and the "organic," i.e.: a "naturally grown community in unity" (as opposed to a refined and sophisticated society characterised by diverging interests), characterised by the one-body-metaphor (Volkskörper) for the entire population.

jealousy of the leader and the formation of fractions. Anyone who has been to the völkische meetings knows all of this.

Naturally, it is important to achieve differentiation, but it is no less important to leave enough room and remove divides at their very conception. Differentiation means choosing the foundation of the struggle and this foundation must be broad and solid. Now that we have given a definition of the frontline soldier it becomes apparent who must and who must not be brought into the frontliner's movement. It may be said that if this achieved then the movement will have at its disposal a material that is rarely found in history. Nevertheless there are still practical questions that must be answered.

First of all, we're talking about the opposites of young and old, which have often given way to quarrels and drastic statements. There have been mutual accusations of pretentiousness, lacking in understanding of the spirit of the time and so on. Opposition of young and old in the frontliner's movement is indeed an unfortunate way of putting that opposition, the existence of which would be useless to deny. But we have the right to ignore this. This opposition has its roots in wartime, in the recent distrust of the combat troops for the HQ commanders, in other words for that which men in the trenches dubbed "green cloth." This distrust is alive and well today: one only has to remember that a real combatant proudly uses the word "front," thus it is only logical to ask if a frontline soldier's movement can have any other source than the "front" itself.

The issue can be resolved easily, any nobility club or homeowner's union has specific conditions for membership, thus the same can be done for the movement of frontline soldiers. We must then understand if being an HQ commander is mutually exclusive with our definition of frontline soldier. Usual objections boil down to how only a man from the frontline submitted himself to deadly danger, how only he brought

the greatest sacrifice and thus only he carries within himself the spirit of the great war.

This is all true. A movement founded on the idea of personal sacrifice has solid footing underneath. And, of course, the figure of the lone soldier, a man in a steel helmet, the unknown soldier, who carried an unbearable burden on his shoulders, must become the ideal, the guiding star of the movement.

But let us not deal with minor details. The war was waged not on the surface but deep within, and the armies were like force fields that attracted everyone to themselves. And even though the high level of specialization, characteristic of battles in the epoch of machines, did not allow for everyone to fulfill their duty on the forward edges of the front, this alone does not mean anything. It would be most unwise to measure with a ruler and compare the firing distance of weapons.

Another issue is that the frontline soldier's movement is indeed a movement of the young, young not in terms of age, but in terms of their connection to their epoch, in their desire to utilize the methods and set for themselves goals that are distinctly relevant only for this epoch and no other. Obviously such criteria is characteristic not so much of those men who from the very first day of war, full of conviction, fulfilled their task, as it is of those who were shaped by the alarming years of war. Stubbornly grasping at the past in the face of a new era is understandable, but it is contrary to the meaning of the movement. To live off the capital of the past instead of feeding off the energies of the present age and believe in further development means dooming oneself to futility. One only has to point to Hindenburg<sup>2</sup> to be convinced

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Ludwig Hans Anton von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg, known universally as Paul von Hindenburg (2 October 1847 – 2 August 1934) was a Prussian-German field marshal, statesman, and politician, and served as the second President of Germany (1925-34).

in how the spiritual conditions we have described do not depend on one's lifespan. For old men who remained young our ranks are always open.

Moving on, inclusion of officers is of great importance to the movement of frontline soldiers who have their origins in the "nation in arms"<sup>3</sup>. Combat officers - this is where the movement must gather its valuable leaders who were taught by experience. The failure of mass movements, to which we were all witness, seems to be something weird if one takes into account that the resources utilized for those were not small. When it comes to the communists this can be explained by an almost complete absence of natural leaders (more so speaking in terms of tactics than strategy), whose task would have been forming the masses in the spirit of the idea. However when the top management is separated from the masses or when the rationally and dialectically educated party members simply project onto them their programs, then there is no living connection with real people of flesh and blood, no living leadership that would give the idea hands and make it manifest. The movement of frontline soldiers is free from the necessity to solve the most difficult internal task of any movement, the task of producing a breed of leaders, for it has an abundance of men who had undergone trial by combat and had enough time to grow accustomed to other than military conditions. Thus we have another ace up our sleeve in order to make manifest the great idea of a leader, and a real man will quickly find a reason for action.

Old officers have proven their capability of adapting to conditions and sacrificing themselves. Soon after the catastrophe many of them

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<sup>3</sup> Volk im Waffen - army of a new type that appeared during the Napoleonic wars and has to do with compulsory military service. Thus Jünger relates the freikorps with the idea of a people's war (levee en masse), which was developed in the Prussian military HQ by Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. See notes for the "Total Mobilization" article.

## Differentiation and Connection

displayed a willingness to reject all former privileges and join the national rebuilding efforts in a plain soldier's uniform. A truly new spirit was dominant among the officers of the 1919 volunteer corps, while socialists all over the country conducted their experiments, they practiced real socialism that had nothing in common with the turmoil that ruled the streets. And if the "appointed by the people" managed to keep hold of their new seats and were not overwhelmed by the very wave that had brought them to the top, then it was only so because of those men, who had put an end to bolshevism, without waiting for any compensation.

This new spirit must be retained in the movement of frontline soldiers. An officer gives his services to the regime not to retain old privileges but to serve his duty. What remains of the old army is not the uniform, but the spirit, not the limitations but the binding origins, that is to say that realization that inside a great body all fulfill one task. But conditions have changed, which dictates a need in changing the organization itself. Today it's not important to be representatives of the people to the outside world, but to first gain recognition of the people, the lack of outside support must be compensated by internal unity of a higher order. This also refers to the rarely witnessed today sense of equality that is rooted in duty and not in democratic slogans.

Old officers have largely retained the important qualities of discipline, internal and external determinism, the ability to correctly occupy a position, in a word they retained a race, a breed. But even he who had never worn shoulder straps was able of finding his way in life and stood fast in the face of cruel economic battles inside the country that lost a great war. The situation changed repeatedly, many former officers now work for their former subordinates. The same happened not only in the economic field. And if one was to look over this passed milestone, they'd see that in these new conditions officers as potential

leaders acted impeccably. We see generals who participate in movements lead by former captains<sup>4</sup>, and frontliner cells spread across the country often have regular soldiers as their leaders. And in the very depths of the völkische movement, where the first, albeit tentative attempt was made to make the principles of race and blood the foundation of the state, appears the figure of lance-corporal Hitler, who like Mussolini undoubtedly manifests in himself the new type of leader, and both officers and workers stand shoulder to shoulder beneath his banners. Back then this spirit had neither form nor the means with which to express itself, but now the spirit of fiery nationalism and the spirit of the frontline soldier have come together as one. Individual matters not, what matters is the task, which means that the question of a leader is resolved in the simplest and most certain terms.

Finally, a few words should be said about the growing generation. Seven years have passed since the war's end and quite a few (or perhaps even the majority of) frontline soldiers have grown over 30 years of age. To rely exclusively on the fighters of the Great War would mean limiting ourselves to the one sole source that would with the passing of time irrevocably come to an end. But the center of gravity for the frontline soldier's movement is not in reminiscing on the past, but in the hope for the future and thus we should foremost attract the youth to our ranks. A variety of methods had been tried to attract the young teams to existing unions but these youths are growing up and demand that they be treated like equals. Since the "frontline soldier" doesn't just refer to a specific man in space and time but foremost a particular character, young squads could very organically come together with the old guard. Not every generation gets the chance for

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<sup>4</sup> Referring to Franz Seldte.



## Differentiation and Connection

heroic deeds but every one of them must have an internal readiness for it. Only our descendants can finish what we didn't have the time to.

The Great War became history, its spirit is preserved in the best warriors who remember it, and this spirit must not die, even if none remain alive who having stood upon the earth devastated by fire of weapons, came to realize that technology is nothing and man's will is everything. New energies, born from seemingly senseless events of war that pierce our time, that undeniable victory achieved over oneself despite the lost war, that is perhaps more important than any territorial expansion - all this will remain with the people for many years to come.

The frontline soldier who had to bear the external trials of war must come to inner conclusions and turn his great fate into a source of strength and pass it on to the new generations.

## THE FRONTLINE SOLDIER AND WILHELM'S ERA

*Die Standarte, September 20th 1925*

Having defined the primary qualities of the new type of man who plays the central role in the frontline soldier's movement it is necessary to also have a quick look at the process of his becoming and his current stance. This way we'll be able to define the primary points of his future development. We shall take Wilhelm's era, which had ended with the war, as the starting point of this development. All of today's frontliners were born back then. Of course, by the start of the war the majority of them were too young to have a defined worldview. However they couldn't not experience the influences of this era, for upbringing and environment inevitably leave their mark on the emotions, thoughts and actions of a man, even more so of a young man, and when this becomes a force of habit a certain style of life emerges. War had halted the mechanism of habit and pointed the frontline soldier to a completely different path. He had entered a new, unknown world, and new experiences had provoked in many an internal upheaval. It can be, perhaps, compared only to a religion phenomenon of "grace," which suddenly befalls on man, radically changing him. Exactly this explains the slow and cautious return of the frontline soldier to civilian life. They are as if blinded and can't forget the upheaval that the war had caused, while representatives of the older generation chide them for excessive "sentimentality." In reality behind this behavior hides an instinctual knowledge about new tasks the fulfillment of which does not at all depend on them having been formulated or not. Naturally it is much easier to continue ride the wave towards maturity than to look for oneself in an unfamiliar force. A period of maturity also comes for the

frontline soldier when he overcomes the period of romanticism and organizes within himself new energies. However beyond that one must also critically look at the old, highlighting that, which has finally lived out its age, and that which is still valuable for the struggle.

It goes without saying that the frontline soldier must have a different attitude towards Wilhelm's era than those who grew up and matured in it. However the final verdict can be rendered only many years later, when all the people living now are gone and conditions appear for an impartial historical overview. Nevertheless we must take a specific stance here and now, not at all to claim some historic objective truth, but simply so that we may be able to move forward. All in all the time has come to put an end to the senseless ambition for objectivity which only leads to relativism and doubt in one's own strength. It is necessary to take a conscious one sided position, giving priority to evaluation rather than "understanding."

It is not at all hard to maintain such a one sided position, especially since it doesn't necessarily concern the individual. Marx<sup>1</sup>, in his original but unfortunately virtually unknown book "World War in the light of scientific conception of history" [Der Weltkrieg im Lichte naturwissenschaftlichen Geschichtsauffassung. Laiengedanken eines Berufsoffiziers uber das Rasseproblem, Berlin: Barth, 1919] talks about the "dramatic conception of history" which consists of reducing fate to a personal factor. It can be hardly denied though, that it is in fact fate and not man that is the true motor of history: presence or lack of a strong personality is none other than part of fate. Utilizing Spengler's deep differentiation between fate and chance (according to Spengler

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<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Marx (15 January 1863 – 5 August 1946) was a German lawyer, Catholic politician and a member of the Centre Party. He was Chancellor of Germany twice, from 1923 to 1925 and again from 1926 to 1928, and he also served briefly as Minister President of Prussia in 1925, during the Weimar Republic. He was the longest-serving Chancellor during the Weimar Republic.

fate occurs out of necessity whereas chance is a result of arbitrary ties) we gain the key to evaluating Wilhelm's era.

Without mentioning names it can be stated that the time after Bismark's dismissal, which should not be "dramatized" but evaluated symbolically, carries within itself a seal of chance and nothing in it, neither men nor their deeds, is indicative of an iron, unyielding march of history. No matter where and what we look at: external or internal politics, literature after Nietzsche, the visual arts, architecture, social life - everywhere we see a multitude of separate entities and individual achievements, but at the same time their foundation lacks unquestionable necessity that would force external phenomena to represent internal essence. Only technology and army stand as exceptions to this - the two means for conquering the world market and global dominance. They appear before us as whole and internally complete.

This is explained by Wilhelm era's characteristic ambitions for border expansion. It is here that this most positive moment resides, endowed with value for the future; this is the legacy that we will have to master and multiply. Army, navy, the colonies, presence at the farthest reaches of the world, untouchable sovereignty and Reich's might - these are the questions that despite all our losses are of great importance to us. We must expand the spectrum of these questions, based on the idea of political unification of all Germans in Europe, the inevitability of which became particularly obvious after the fall of monarchies.

Thus the frontline soldier takes from the Wilhelm era precisely that, for which Germany was reproached both from within and without - imperialism. At the moment of our deepest humiliation this word has been given the same treatment as "nationalism": they attempted to tarnish it in most democratic fashion, by making any sort of serious

discussion about it impossible in the first place. But this must not confuse us. If one is to take a careful look at the forces interested in opposing German imperialism, then very soon it becomes obvious that they themselves have imperialistic ambitions, reflecting the main tendencies of the modern age. Borders of all sort are crushing our chest, and within us, people of our time, grows a desire to break the chains. In terms of foreign politics the undesirability of German imperialism is all too obvious, simply because it constrains the actions of others. Everyone would like to play an active role and not be a passive viewer. However even in internal politics we find tendencies that display a clear desire to create vast empires with no account for existing borders and racial differences, where all like-minded people would be united by a single dominating idea. However since people cannot have the same ideas then even in this intellectual imperialism will have its masters and its oppressed - it would be dumb to believe in utopian lands of happiness for all, even though such utopian spirit is very characteristic of this imperialism. But we have come from the crucible of struggle and thus we can never accept thoughts of universal happiness. Our idea is nation and blood which is why our imperialism can only be national. And if our idea of nation and organic unity may seem a kind of "biological relic" to various von Unruhs<sup>2</sup> and co. we will still continue our fight from this abandoned post. First we will, however, arm ourselves with confidence of our struggle being just, and seeing how convictions are always in opposition with each other we are ready to pass even the most severe trial, biological trial by battle, which puts every thing in its place. We are ready for armed conflict. Moreover we believe that all the questions which are of concern to serious men, be they about the League of Nations, peaceful Europe or an 8 hour

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<sup>2</sup> Fritz von Unruh (10 May 1885 – 28 November 1970) was a German Expressionist dramatist, poet, and novelist.

workday, will be more correctly resolved by national imperialism rather than by some intellectual establishments. We believe that the entire national complex, including facts, ideas and feelings, is modern, viable, moral and more than capable of answering the call of time. We don't have to fear intellectual demarches which the democratic press likes to scare us with. They are yet to shake our confidence.

We have inherited imperialism from Wilhelm's era. And despite how it is exactly the leaders of that era that now try to blacken it, it is our duty to ignore all reproaches and begin the offensive. We do not think like this. We believe growth to be the natural right of all living things. The Great and mighty Reich of all Germans will forever remain the main goal of our struggle. However our imperialism must not be defined by superficial expansion rooted exclusively in suppressing and exploiting the local populace for market interests, but rather our imperialism must spring forth from a deep confidence in the victory of justice. If we have this confidence then we are capable of achieving the merging of a people's fate with the fate of a whole culture, thus allowing the people to enter a fateful period of its history. At the start of the war we had not reached such heights even though we liked to think so.

In answer to this reproach, or rather subjective evaluation, we usually provide the undeniable fact of a 4 year struggle of the German nation against hordes of enemies. We had inner strength - they had technological supremacy. To this one can answer: if this were all true then our situation is most dire, seeing how if we truly fought with all our might then the circumstances can only be made different by multiplying our technological arsenal. Nowadays resources are scarce, meaning that nothing of the sort can be considered seriously. Likewise it is useless to seek the true reason of defeat in wrongly chosen allies or other means, creating excuses formulated as "war of lost opportunities." However none of these factors mean anything to us for

## The Frontline soldier and Wilhelm's era

we have given the lead role to blood! Neither do we want to see the reason for the catastrophe in the betrayal of 1918 - for it was no more than a disgusting and unpleasant spectacle. And yet we must agree with one thing: at that time we lacked that very instinct, that supreme confidence, in which lie the seeds for victory that easily surpass any material obstacles. Our faith in the future lies with them as well!

Lack of certain qualities cannot forever serve as the basis for self-deprecation, for character is something deeper than identity. In his book "The Third Reich" Moeller van den Bruck states: "It was an accursed time." There is an element of truth in such an admission, an understanding of fates inevitability. Without question, commanders acted in a manner that seemed correct to them and only the ungrateful will speak of how they could have overpowered fate. These separate achievements are also part of the Wilhelm era. However neither strategic, which will forever go down in history, nor miracles or organizational techniques can improve the bitter taste of defeat. There was none of that inner harmony which would reconcile and organize all internal forces, which is why all was for naught, as it happens with capital of an unprofitable business. We had lost the war because we had to lose it. People capable of facing reality will accept defeat and won't cry about the "lost empire." They will not hang up their arms and sadly recite the facts, instead they will seek a solution till their last breath.

If we understand this solution as an inner will of life itself, far deeper than personal will, understand it as a mysterious flow of energies, then why during times of chaos and external helplessness we still hope for success and new solutions?

We have the right to hope for them because we have lived through the war. That experience that had changed us at our very core, made us feel the breath of fate itself. We do not only see in war the dusk of the old world but also the dawn of the new era. We have lost the war

because we had to lose it; to us this fact will not be the end, but the start. Victory in the war would have brought us only expansion of external borders, defeat on the other hand allows to concentrate all inner strength and establish a solid foundation for the future. Defeat in the war did not make us doubt our values, in battle they must be forged anew. Defeat taught us to confirm our faith with blood, it restored our connection with the soil, it changed all views and gave depth to feelings. In it, with amazing intensity, were united external and inner experiences.

At the epicenter of the war was the average frontline soldier. He had experienced for himself the destruction of the old and the birth of the new world. He understands the past, but his values are now different.



# **MECHANIZED WARFARE**

*Die Standarte, October 4th 1925*

With the arrival of 1916, after the bloodbath at Verdun, the visage of war had changed. By that time the striking force of the great armies was either depleted or successfully held at bay by the opponent, forcing them to resolve to new means in order to sway the outcome of the battle in their favor. Mobilization became more intense, encompassing with no exceptions all the energies and organizational resources of national states. The Battle of the Somme had already shown that persistent combat for the edges of some little village or a patch of scorched forest demanded the strength of the entire nation, all the way down to the last woman factory worker.

All energies of great industrialized countries with their factory centers, transportation capabilities and armies of machines had erupted in fiery currents onto the battlefields. The front was transformed into a churning cauldron that had to be maintained in working order. Development of weapons, with possibly the exception of large battleships, that manifested in themselves imperialistic will in its pure form was lagging behind technological progress. There was a lack of practical experience to realize the hidden capabilities of technology. Lost time had to be made up, war had to become the essence of the modern spirit of big cities. At first the will for technological modernization was reduced to merely stockpiling weapons, and the new period of the war became perhaps the most vivid symbol of the man of the materialist era. This is not at all because military material was utilizing in never before seen quantities; after all, any era uses the resources at its disposal. Indicative was the very

character in which military technology was utilized, it was cruel and calculated. In some ways it was similar to the marxist understanding of production.

The spirit of time passes through all phenomena of an epoch - thinking, labor and of course, war. The cost of war was now measured in the cost of production, drawing a logical conclusion to the pre-war technological development. Success was guaranteed to those who in the shortest time sent out trains with tons of explosives or supplemented production with coal and steel. We, and the whole world for that matter, were unbelievably lucky that the war's conclusion came about with a gigantic mechanized battle. Now we see a decline in materialist thinking, people seek to find a productive source in the soul and this tendency is most welcome.

Supremacy of the human soul's inner strength over technology already became noticeable in the first great battles of the modern age. The horribly disfigured landscapes devoid of people, scorched and twisted by explosives and steel with signs of rampage left by the technological force. No matter where you look, everywhere you feel the work of technological machine, everywhere were gaping craters similar to those of some distant lifeless planet. Each time an iron curtain dropped on the soil plowed by shells, one could get the impression of some cosmic soulless process, where there is no place for man. Military technology reached its apex at the Battle of the Somme and ever since only the scale changed, but never the intensity.

It was already during the Battle of the Somme when man found himself at his limit. And then the sons of the materialist age suddenly realized that in reality there was nothing that a man couldn't withstand, there is no such technology that could rival spiritual strength. We were convinced of this countless times, this fact was proven by every unknown soldier, who had passed through all the horrors of military

## Mechanized Warfare

technology and placed his indestructible, sturdy heart on the scales. This is when it became apparent that what was important is man, not technology. We've grown used to hearing from people who lack any capacity for heroism that a dumb piece of metal is still stronger than even the strongest man. Obviously! However if there was no metal there would be no brave men either. Of course technology can lay down anyone, same as how once wild animals easily tore apart martyrs in circuses. But only he is afraid of it, who recognizes nothing but crude matter. A soldier must always remember not only the hardships and sacrifice, but also victory.

Realizing the supremacy of the soul's inner strength over matter, overcoming it in unequal battle, the frontline soldier did not come back to civilian matters empty-handed. However even here he was still faced with a new situation. The endless trench war opened his eyes to what man can do when he must, now he also realized what man can do when he wants it. He gained this knowledge by passing through a horrible school. Of course, not all managed to withstand it: on those fields shrouded with gas clouds remain both those who were crushed by the machine and those who heroically defied it. However the great can be seen only at a distance, thus all that was taken away from those battles plays a significant role. It will continue to live and be of benefit. And even though there are few people like that, they don't rely on numbers for victory.

The battle of military technology had showed us another important lesson: one cannot with impunity equate material and spiritual forces. We've done this, but each of us had our reasons for it.

No matter the difference in material means, moral supremacy made up that difference. Obviously this way the best capital was spent. Instruments are not what's important, however without them the will

has no means of expressing itself. The instruments of the modern man are the technological arsenal.

As we are talking about the becoming of a specific man, the frontliner, one sad observation is enough: a poorly developed production led to constantly making up the lack of military technology with the strength of moral resistance. War had revealed the flip side of the era that had not yet mastered the machine, subjugated to its dictate. Here again is found that huge divide which even before the war had cut through the economic and social life of the country.

We see before us ill-fed and poorly dressed German soldiers, who with incredible fortitude resisted well equipped armies of the whole world. Even though fate subjected the strength of the German man to a cruel, almost unbearable test, we can say that he had passed it adequately and can think back to that time with pride, as we remember the unprecedented enthusiasm during the early days of the war. Fortitude before the strikes of fate - this is a German's virtue. It was also seen in the Nibelung struggle beneath the burning ceiling of the Etzel dining hall. In this time people of firm character were formed, declaring their existence already during the war.

We have the right to state that we were the first who had overcome the spirit of mechanized battle and put an end to the simple quantitative machine production competition between empires. Even though our last efforts during the war's end did not lead to success, we were able of giving modern warfare a new visage. Military technology was once again brought down to be an instrument of the spirit, and a poorly equipped army was once again braving assaults on superior, in the materialistic sense, forces of the enemy.

He who had taken part in those battles will never forget that fiery exaltation that erupted in the first days of the war, nor that great will for victory that settled in his heart. It marked deep changes. Not only

had the art of war entered a new level, but a new combatant type of man was formed.

When in the spring of 1918 soldiers left the trenches for the last and decisive battle, where was gone that former joy and intoxication of battle? The army was made up of men used to military life, who had learned to soberly judge things and be masters of their will. The outcome of the battle was no longer decided by soulless machinery that trampled over man. Spiritual and material forces had come together as one, war attained a modern character, all the soldiers felt this new spirit. Back then, shortly before the catastrophe, the war reached its second apex and the will had come to completely dominate modern technological means. Thus a hierarchy of values was formed, born in the years of war. Thus was formed a new type of man who would now take his place in history and become the basis for the frontline soldier's movement. He is a distant cry from the image of a hansom youth with a fiery gaze who with song on his lips greeted death at the Ypres in 1914. He is also far from the image of the lonely soldier of mechanized battles who was not broken but powerless. To the contrary, before us comes the image of man forged in the fires of battle, who had experienced for himself the severity of the great task and mastered the external means of power so as to bring his ideas to life. Here they are, soldiers in steel helmets: their ascetic faces reflect a firm will for action, in their somber eyes dances the flame of the idea.

So what if these warriors did not get to experience external success? Heroic values are not the values of merchants<sup>1</sup>, they value principles, not success. Although what was happening on the fields of

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<sup>1</sup> Hinting at the famous pamphlet of the sociologist Werner Sombart, written in the first months of the war addressing the "young heroes fighting the enemy." Sombart puts in contrast to German "heroic virtue" the English values based on utilitarianism and positivism (W. Sombart's "Merchants and heroes. Reflections of a patriot").

## Ernst Jünger - Interwar Articles

battle doesn't have just monumental value but also a direct relation to our time. Even if all that we have achieved internally at the end of the war did not lead us to some tangible success, nobody can take that experience away from us. Metal forged in the hearth of battles is still strong. Soon will come the day when it will be put to use.

## WAR AS AN INNER EXPERIENCE

*Die Standarte, October 11th 1925*

Frontliner's generation faced a kind of test by military technology that is rarely seen in history. But not every external experience has to be matched in intensity by an internal experience. Anyone who was by chance engaged in a rapid whirlpool of events can undergo external experiences, whereas not everyone undergo an internal experience. Thirst, hunger, cold, exhaustion, wounds, combat excitement, dangers and fear of death - all of this is directly related to the body and in no way synonymous with inner experience. And the fact that one man is broken by overwhelming enemy attacks and another resists them while himself displaying cruelty means nothing. The most important thing is the mental connection with external events and anticipation of the superior, transpersonal force. It is found in the destiny of peoples and particular individuals. In order to feel it one doesn't at all have to have a multitude of external experiences. It is available equally to both a hermit in his cell and a warrior in the thick of a bloody battle.

Immediately after the war the reading public was overwhelmed with a flow of confessions. But the most buzz was generated by Barbusse's<sup>1</sup> "Le Feu." Authors wanted to lay claim to having understood the war's deepest meaning and thought they would be able to put an end to it for good. But such a fast reaction to events could not but make people with sharp critical senses suspicious. An argument was made in favor of "canceling war," a most naive collocation, that war is unethical. One would expect that this very claim, the attempt to influence the

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Barbusse (May 17, 1873 – August 30, 1935) was a French novelist and a member of the French Communist Party. He was a lifelong friend of Albert Einstein.

ethos of culture will be justified based on the ethos of the individual. But the reader didn't find anything in these books other than descriptions of hunger and thirst, empty eyes and exposed internal organs. In other words nothing but the most gruesome shades of war that people were already somewhat aware of. Of course landmines, gas attacks, tanks and drumfire are new phenomena. One understands that it were technological advancements that determined the attitude to war. However can one truly say that this is what all psychological experiences of war boil down to? Can one extract moral conclusions from the simple increase of technological armament? Then why didn't these people protest, how come they only begun to act so clever after the last cannon grew quiet? Were they afraid of the state? What kind of morality grovels before the state? Every last infantryman who charged ahead and met his death in battle had more internal fortitude than these people! We won't be so far from the truth if we see fear in this reaction, hidden behind talk of morality. There is yet to be such a man who'd prove to us that an individual who sacrifices himself in the name of a higher goal acts immorally or that a state is immoral if it demands such sacrifice from the individual. To the contrary, all these Barbusse-like speeches are filled to the brim with materialism. One shouldn't regard it tragically however, because it will lose its power soon as it won't instill fear and horror. In reality, when they speak of the soul they don't differentiate it from the nervous system.

True inner experience is a rarity in both war time and any other time. It is "an experience only for the few." There was during the war, undoubtedly, psychological growth, moreover it became something important and new for a generation nurtured in a marxist-darwinist spirit. Gradually the very few people who had undergone this important experience are making themselves known, after all, what was conquered in the crucible of scorching war will eventually manifest.



## War as an Inner Experience

Pain and suffering are evident immediately and one can scream about them in all four directions. But what was truly experienced in the very depths of one's soul comes out gradually.

In an attempt to feel out this new and unfamiliar force of nature, hidden in the spiritual depths of European youth, we will understand that here, as in any other case, actual experience depends on the very material that is being experienced. That is why we should go back to the Somme - in that battle was first born that war that reflects the nature of our era, while military art after a long and fruitless pause was able to catch up to the other forms that manifested our will to live.

We see the very best representatives of our peoples in this disfigured landscape - fields plowed with craters, seams of trenches, bombed villages. Here they had undergone trial by war that could be best described as industrial war (*Produktionskrieg*). Will to destruction manifested in its purest form by means of machines, death was understood in a technical sense. This is an especially disheartening sight because death no longer relies on her intricate means. It is a hunt for a most valuable game! Yet death refuses sophisticated entertainment in favor of a mass meat grinder. Nobody takes aim, every square meter of land is systematically worked over with grenades. And even if not all grenade explode their work is finished by two-three blind hits or a powerful ricochet from a destroyed weapon. All of this is once again related to the mass. Acceleration can be somewhat compared to a seasonal sale, production looks like manufacturing of cheap goods which overflow in entire provinces. Somewhere deep from the rear one by one supply carts are rolling on shiny rails, in all factories driving belts are humming, there is feverish mining for coal and ore in all mineries, blast furnaces are on fire day and night in industrial zones. Supply is well maintained, hellish fire can keep going as long as it has to. In reality the industrial age managed to create a magical landscape, one that is very

close to Dante's mighty vision: white flame of purgatory, fire of technological battle.

Purgatory? When we were kids we laughed at this superstition, but now we slowly came to realize that deep meaning that the Middle Ages had invested in this symbol of purification by fire, of burning out sin from man. But how could this symbol, already implying some kind of fault, be applied to men under fire? Majority of them are too young to have any kind of comprehensive understanding of their era. Some of them lived peacefully and justly in their little enclosed world, until the force of fate ripped them out of there and tossed them into a kind of desert that just two years ago was unimaginable even in one's worst nightmare.

However, if a man has no higher value than the value of identity, then he is unlikely to find an answer here, he will have to come to terms something senseless is happening here or that a grandiose crime is being committed, one that the leadership has to be blamed for. This is point of departure of the revolutionary: he is connecting the dots of cause and effect everywhere and blames the leaders of his own people for everything; the nationalist differs from him, who blames everything on the leaders of the other people, so does differ the pacifist who sees the cause of all ills in both.

But the path of faith is different. One of Spengler's great merits was that he managed to clearly and convincingly show the difference between fate and causality, between soul and reason. He who understood this difference is not susceptible to false temptation of measuring in reasoning categories the causalities of spiritual experience. Fate has its own laws and these laws presume a sequence of the highest order.

Fate knows not individual responsibility. Its irrevocable march is hidden behind a chain of external events but at the most unexpected

## War as an Inner Experience

moment, when defense and security were seemingly guaranteed, suddenly the time comes to square accounts. A good example of this is Louis XVI. He had to pay with his blood for what he personally was the least responsible in. From this point of view one should also regard the spiritual experience of war. Only here accumulated debts are being paid up by the entire generation, deep in its soul it experiences the collapse of an entire era and its worldview. And the majority experienced it like animals who suffer not knowing why, albeit this is unimportant, for fate does not reveal her reasoning, and man realizes rather late its unquestionable necessity.

Yes, here matter itself holds a terrifying court over an entire era which worshiped matter and substance like a God. First hints of this appeared in the Wilhelm Era, in its economic and social tendencies as well as in a deep internal dissatisfaction which pushed towards searching for new ways but did not give true liberation. In this exaltation with which people greeted the started war one could feel hope that finally great changes were about to take place, that something absolutely new would appear. However, nobody could foresee that it would happen *like this*. So the spirit of the age turned towards us and showed its accursed face. He showed himself to be the most young, healthy and strong representative of the people; he notified everyone of his presence with terrifying strikes of a heavy hammer. Those who had truly lived through this could no longer doubt that it wasn't just some state or some system falling apart, but the entire worldview, moral values of an entire culture. The most terrifying thing was not the *fact* of war in of itself, for wars had always been and will never go away, but in its physiognomy that reflected the tiniest folds of our internal working. A horrifying gaping emptiness ruled among the orgies of technological battles and we have no grounds to be proud of our time's reflection that looked at us from beyond the mirror of industrial

warfare. However, only the heroic stance of the loner who had atoned for a fault he is not aware of, shines bright in the desert darkness. But beyond it lies only suffering and not liberation and mighty deed.

Such is the spiritual experience of this war, that lights up like fire an understanding of the inevitable collapse of an entire era. Even the materialist noted this, but once he tried to make his own conclusions, he was not able to rid himself of his view of rotation of various systems and formations. One cannot cure with external means that which requires internal transformation.

The transformation began, as was the case with external experience, during the war. And even though the soldier can form his own reasoning based solely in military events, we're not talking about *what* is being experienced, but rather *how* it is being experienced. The game of spiritual forces finds its external manifestation in everything, one only has to learn to see it.

So we are not making a mistake when we make conclusions about underlying ethical ignorance based on external strategic manifestations

Therefore, we are not mistaken, if on the basis of external strategic manifestations we draw conclusions about their underlying ethically unconscious position. During the last battles of this war, not long before our collapse, a new attitude appeared towards technology, related not to adaption, but to a will and desire to subjugate it to internal powers. And even though these attempts were made as if blindly, one cannot ignore them. All the important things that made themselves known during the destructive rampage of military force have meaning to all fields of our culture. Already in these first manifestations of will the technologically weaker gains solid footing and this signifies serious changes.

Military technology is but matter from which the soul blindly creates its own imagery. But if there is no inner strength and instinctual

## War as an Inner Experience

accuracy of movements, then matter becomes a goal in of itself, an independent churning force of nature. And on the other hand, if there is only inner strength and no external means, then a rejection occurs of any attempts to shape the visible world, therefore a rejection of happiness which exists in living activity. This may be an ideal for some Hindu, but not us. Our ideal is an inner strength, a force of the soul, creating in the visible world its symbols and monuments, like how the soul of the Gothic man erects grandiose cathedrals and was elevated with them. He who dominates matter dominates himself - such is the perfect man.

This why the surprising aspiration for the limitless, that we saw in the example of imperialism, can have success only if it is replenished with spiritual depth. We lacked this depth on the eve of war; others lacked it too which is why no super empire appeared as a result of the war. However new strings are drawn directly from the ruins of the old era. The spiritual experienced gained during the war isn't important just for war, for it is a condition of the new age. That the German man lived through the most horrifying trials must not simply become a lesson to us, but also instill a hope for the future.

# THE MACHINE

*Die Standarte, December 13th 1925*

The world we were born into appears to us as something self-evident. From the very moment of our birth we are surrounded by a multitude of things, with first inklings of consciousness we learn to more clearly define them from the perceiving Self. We couldn't talk yet and didn't know what motion is, but the noise of trains that rushed on the rails through forests and fields was already something familiar to us. If we were to grow up in some cabin among the virgin forests of South America we'd become acquainted with motion, observing the treetops waving in the wind, flying birds and the flight of an arrow. Village, colorful birds and arrows would be something natural to us. But from our mother's arms we observed huge iron wagons and complicated steel mechanisms, not understanding them in the slightest. This truth was discovered in the history of thought a long time ago: first we perceive objects and only later subject the variety of experience to strict classification. We should sometimes remind ourselves of this truth, in order to see just how much we are connected to our era and our surroundings. We assume that we can conquer both with thought, but in reality thought is but their function.

Today, sitting comfortably in the seat of a restaurant wagon with a newspaper in our hands, we pay no mind to the landscapes passing us by. Moreover we will not be surprised with the towns and villages passing us by in the window. We are well familiar with them from our early childhood, this is our world! Yet let us at least once try and see them with different eyes, for instance with the eyes of a man from

## The Machine

another era, when fortresses, monastic buildings and cathedrals towered above.

Forests and fields sliced up with the shiny canvas of a railroad were not always as they appear today. These are not just forests and fields as such, these are forests and fields that belong to our time and place. Neat rows of beeches and firs remind us of soldiers on parade. Rye and wheat form strips on a rectangular field as if measured with a ruler. All this was done by a machine. Individual grains, one by one in a strict line. Just some 30 years ago fields look completely different.

And so we arrive into a big city. Masts of traffic lights appear, bridges on narrow iron piers. We rush by marshalling yards, conglomerations of levers and wire, strict factory silhouettes in the windows of which we can see flywheels and shiny bulbs. And the closer we approach the center the more tightly we are surrounded by a magical garden with its peculiar technological plants.

We leave the train at one of the gigantic stations (hints of the modern imperialism style in their architecture) and go to the streets. Night has already descended. We dive into a colorful sea of light, bright signs glide on building walls, fire wheels spin around towers. Caravans of machines rush through wide squares and narrow shafts of streets; rumbling, hissing, honking, - they are like screams of dangerous animals. Yet we calmly and indifferently walk through all this chaos beneath the artificial sky of arc lamps, we are surrounded by a magical landscape that surpasses any fantasies of "One Thousand and One Nights."

Here we feel at home. It would not be a mistake to say that we live in a fairy world. Everything comes and goes, and it may seem that when our world sinks into nothingness, our descendants will tell legends of us, legends about evil and mighty wizards. Yes, we have created great and wondrous things and have the right to be proud of them. For there

are such moments when we truly are proud of that, which is called progress. Let's remember the intoxicating joy that overwhelms the modern man at the sight of his own creations burning gigantic amounts of energy in the sky above the metropolises. Let's also remember the feeling of emptiness on weekends when this gigantic machine is made to stop. Then it appears to us as though the masses of leisurely shuffling people in the streets have lost their true meaning, and the praise of holidays that we have inherited from more pious ancestors almost looks like sin. We are ready to completely transform life into energy.

However there is still a deep fear hidden within us before this mechanical apparatus, this witch's broom that it seems we forced to move, yet as if the sorcerer's apprentice,<sup>1</sup> forgot other enchantments and became confused. Fear consciously manifests itself when technology is seen as the result of rational thought, believing that the spiritual world had irrevocably perished and in its place appeared the cult of material gain. It is particularly vivid in the new generation that had survived the war, which instinctually chooses common blood and seeks to avoid any rationalistic worldview.

Truly, the machine had taken much from us. It made our life more energetic but it also took away its luster. Taking away the whole from us it turned us into specialists. We thought we'd be able to make it work for us as if an iron servant, but instead were grinded up by its wheels. When Keyserling<sup>2</sup> in his "Travel-journal of a Philosopher" stated that in the end it was a great delusion that we achieve everything with machines, leaving ourselves only the function of control. With every new machine the strain on us grows - it is enough to look at statistics.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" (German: *Der Zauberlehrling*) is a poem by Goethe written in 1797. The poem is a ballad in fourteen stanzas.

<sup>2</sup> Count Hermann Alexander von Keyserling (July 20, 1880 – April 26, 1946) was a Baltic German philosopher from the Keyserlingk family. His grandfather Alexander Keyserling was a notable geologist of Imperial Russia.



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However it is important to understand that the motion of machines is of a compulsory character. It runs over whomever stands in its way, becoming a means of destruction. Any protests will crash against its steel shell, like the protest of English factory workers who revolted against the use of first steam machines. One cannot deal machines with bare hands - this is a lesson we learned from fiery battles of military technology. And here is something else that is important to remember: the machine is not at fault for the world losing its deeper dimension - which is exactly the reproach used against it by the false desire to "internalize." Only man himself is at fault, if one can at all talk about faults when it comes to such matters. Today the machine is an instrument of a particular, singular man, and their massive unification becomes the instrument of the nation. And through the machine the spirit can do anything it wants, just as with any other instrument.

Nietzsche's renaissance landscape had no place for the machine. But he taught us that life is not only a struggle for mere pitiful existence, that it can seek higher and more serious goals. Our task is to apply this teaching to the machine. We have no right to view it as a mere means of production, satisfaction of material wants because it can satisfy needs of a higher order. And that is why we must free it from the shadows of intellect and place it in the service of the will and blood. That which in the language of the intellect is called means of progress, in the language of blood is called means of power.

Intellect creates the instrument, but the will of blood directs and utilizes it. Machines are used to fill entire countries with cheap products and to create technological trinkets. Machines are used by cultured nations to create tanks and offensive weapons for themselves and it is clear that this does not stop at steel plates and gun barrels.

As in war, so in peacetime modern nationalism is incapable of operating without machines. Battles of the Teutoburg Forest, which

were wages with clubs and flails, are long behind us. Now, if a country doesn't possess the necessary technological arsenal that allows for sending trains, print slogans and just generally imposing any will onto our time and place, then it is doomed to failure.

There were people who during the war, believing in the supremacy of spirit over matter, had sent soldiers into battle without modern weapons. Such mistakes were paid for dearly. Of course the spirit possesses supremacy over military technology, but this does not mean that they should be set against each other directly. The supremacy of the spirit presents itself in the ability to control technology according to one's will. In peace time we also must seek to equip the nation with the newest technology. During certain times people express themselves with bombings and gas attacks, whereas in other times the cinema, radio and press become such a means of expression. Here we have a vast field to work with.

But one cannot conquer this space unless one first conquers the modern factory worker. We must convince him in the necessity of finding an out of this dead end of marxist and capitalist presets, which being connected exclusively to issues of production, have led to the industrial war and the Battle of the Somme.

We must find a new way to freedom. We must convince him that our values have no monetary equivalent, we do not engage in distributing gain but are solving a question of blood and power. To us he's not some unskilled laborer but a comrade with equal rights. The worker has been easily bought with promises time and again. But what marxism offered him in a purely material sense, nationalism can provide and then some.

The factory worker is the first and strongest factor in the rise of modern nationalism which presents in itself a new European phenomenon.

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*In the notes to this article it is said that Jünger read a variety of antiquity authors during his time as a Reichswehr officer, namely Cassius Dio, Tacitus, Martial and Horus (sourced to a January 14th 1923 letter he wrote to his brother Friedrich George Jünger, DLA, Nachlass Jünger)*

## **FORWARD TO F. G. JÜNGER'S BOOK "MARCH OF NATIONALISM"**

We call ourselves nationalists and do not fear incurring the hatred of the educated and uneducated plebs, all these opportunists of spirit and matter. For that which they hate, what goes against the rotten flow of progress, liberalism and democracy, has one advantage - it is not universal. We do not demand anything universal. We reject it - starting with universal truths and human rights and ending with universal education and compulsory military conscription, universal suffrage and universal ignobility which is a necessary result of the previous point. Universal qualities and demands are qualities and demands of the mass, and the greater their universality the less is their value. To acknowledge yourself as part of the mass means to claim credit for owning purely physical properties of gravity, and to extol the notion of humanity means to place some essential value in simple belonging to a particular mammalian species. The universal is weighted, measured and calculated, what is special is evaluated and prized. To desire the universal means to be blind to any special value in oneself, making one at best an objective, measured, rational, scientifically "fair" To desire the special means to have standards, to feel responsibility of blood, to follow spiritual impulse.

Modern nationalism thirsts what is special - such is the primary feeling of the new generation which is sick to its stomach with vapid Enlightenment talk. Modern nationalism does not wish to measure with universal rulers, it wants to set its own standards based on spiritual strength. It has no intentions of proving its rights using scientific methods like marxism. It utilizes the canvas of life itself, on which any science relies in the first place. It does not wish to measure and ration

rights but demands only the right of life to live. Nationalism is unthinkable without this right, and it will inevitably limit all other rights. Nationalism does not wish to make peace with the rule of the mass, but demands the dominance of identity, whose supremacy is made up of inner content and living energy. It wants neither equality, nor impartial justice, nor freedom that is summed up in empty claims. It wishes to get drunk on joy and its joy is *to be itself*, and not something else. Modern nationalism does not wish to float in the airless space of theories, it does strive for "free thinking" but desires to gain strong ties, order, to grow roots in society, blood and soil. It does not wish for socialism of opportunities, it longs for socialism of duty, for that rigid stoic world that the individual man must sacrifice himself to.

The father of that nationalism is war. What our literary figures and intellectuals say about it has no meaning to us. War is the experience of blood, thus it is only important what men have to say about it. The infamous Intellectuals' Manifesto<sup>1</sup> neither canceled war nor that which the war gave birth to. It is like a vane - it turns with the wind. And if insignificant people of large or small scale use war as the measure of all things to measure themselves then it is a purely psychological issue.

The core of German youth had experienced war firsthand and not in coffee-shops or behind a writer's table in a warmly heated office. They've been to hell and back - yet even from hell the Faustian Man does not return empty handed. Barbusse and his ilk can see whatever they like - we managed to gaze at something greater! We did not just bring negation back with us. Only having seen the power of matter did we understand the power of an idea. Only having discovered for ourselves the fruitfulness of sacrifice did we understand the value of man and the difference of ranks between people. We saw the white

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Henri Barbusse "Manifeste aux Intellectuels" (Elevations) in which intellectuals of the world called for peace and a common struggle against war.

flame of will burning brighter than the flames of fire. Grenades, gas clouds and tanks - it may all appear as something horrifying to cowards but what we valued more than this external shell was the gloomy background from which silently emerges the figure of a man hardened in storms of steel, facing his era. We anticipate that the new type of man will soon appear in all peoples of Europe same as how the war had touched not only Germans and how the newly birthed by war nationalism did not appear solely in Germany. We see everywhere a great energy powered by blood, which has already taken hold of peoples or is laying the groundwork through struggle, ready to take on new forms. So let us rejoice and speak to others: "Be such as you are!" For it is far more and pleasing for us to live in a world full of meaning than to drown in liquid gruel devoid of any character, form or uniqueness.

However, we have the unquestionable right to be proud of one thing - that war has affected us more than anyone else. We, the defeated by this horrible spectacle, will require much time to contemplate it and thus we also have the right to hope that the new crop will reap the richest harvest.

War is our father, it conceived us, the new tribe, in the scorching womb of trenches and we proudly acknowledge our kinship. Thus our values will be the values of heroes, of warriors but never of merchants who are ready to measure the whole world with their yardstick. We do not mule over benefit and practical gain, we have no need of comfort, we only require that which is necessary - that which fate desires.

The German frontliner marches in columns on the right, left and center. Give him time to determine the direction of the march, but let each do it on their own. Only then will it become apparent that we are all moving in the same direction. So long as we haven't figured ourselves out we will not be able to internally overcome the resistance of our

Forward to F. G. Jünger's book "March of Nationalism"

world. Our flag is neither red, nor black-red-gold, nor black-white-red; it is the flag of a new, vast Reich that resides in our hearts, attaining in them its gestalt. The day will come when we will be able to unfurl it. Our common tradition is war, great sacrifice. So let us comprehend the meaning of this tradition!

Many more works will follow this book that I welcome as a brother, comrade and friend. In them we will attempt to describe the fundamentals of modern nationalism. The positions of doctrinaires, liberals and reactionaries are all equally foreign to our youth, it does not wish to be infected with the spirit of that turnip revolution. In the most horrifying landscapes of the world our youth had conquered for itself the knowledge that old paths have been walked to their end and new paths await it. The first stage of preparations is complete, a new one begins.

We welcome blood that was not burned out by the flames of war but turned into heat and fire! What managed to survive will be of use in the new struggle. We welcome those who come<sup>2</sup> - those in whom the old school coincides with depth! The march begins, soon the ranks will link. We welcome the dead - their spirit sternly calls out to our conscience. No, you have not perished in vein! Germany, we welcome you!

Jünger Friedrich Georg, Aufmarsch des Nationalismus, Leipzig, 1926 (Der Aufmarsch. Eine Reihe deutscher Schriften, hrsg. von Ernst Jünger, Zweiter Band), S. VII-XIII.

*Ernst Jünger planned to publish his own essay "Foundations of nationalism" with "Aufmarsch" publication. The text was meant to be the*

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<sup>2</sup> Die Kommenden (The Coming Ones / Those who Come) - name of one of the leading military-political union journals.

## Ernst Jünger - Interwar Articles

*third tome in a series that was started with Franz Schauwecker's book "The Fiery Way" (Der feurige Weg), however these plans never came to fruition. "Foundations of Nationalism" were published next year in the yearly Stahlhelm (edited by F. Schauwecker) and included the articles "Blood," "Will" and "Character."*



# BLOOD

*Die Standarte, April 29th 1926*

Our solidarity must be a solidarity of blood - that is our first demand. But what is blood? It is both a simple yet difficult question. In it we discover the deep contradiction between cognition and feeling.

Anyone who truly values life feels what it is - common blood. He also knows that it is harder to talk about those moments when this fluid force of nature churns with unrest. Blood cannot be expressed by mere words. Language is like a fishing net that loses the lion's share of the catch through its gaps just as it is raised from the depths. Language contains in itself meaning like the walls of a house and only through the windows does the magical light escape. The mysterious unspoken heat, once expressed in a word, becomes matt pale and colorless. Even the richest languages is but an artful frame for the mysterious paintings that are visible only to the internal gaze.

Blood is deeper than everything that is said and written about it. Fluctuations in its light and dark masses give birth to enchanting melodies that can either provoke sadness or fill our chests with joy. They either draw us to people, landscapes, objects or push us away from them. That grand unknown that is revealed to us in the silhouettes of mountains, in the horizon of the plains, in the game of clouds in the sky, in human laughter, in the movement of beasts or colors of a painting whose artist may long since be dead - in short, that unique accent that life itself gives to everything that surrounds us is determined by the uniqueness of blood. We are given a phenomena, but it is the strength and richness of blood that first gives it value, makes it something significant, symbolic and deep. With eyes we see, with ears

we hear, with hands we feel, with our brain we perceive the thoughts of others, but blood alone decides if all this remains dead matter or be filled with living breath. We perceive objects by means of nerves and sensory organs, by means of blood their inner meaning is revealed to us. Thanks to senses we come to know things, thanks to blood we accept them. Through blood we feel our kinship or foreignness.

Blood feels kinship of one man with another. We live in an overpopulated world and can no longer understand how happy a man can be who finds this kinship because desire for rationalizing has dulled his instincts. Only loneliness, only great differences in race and forces of nature are capable of once again awakening this mighty sleeping feeling inside man. Even such a cold and sober author as Stanley<sup>1</sup> said that upon his return from his Congo adventure where he spent years among the ebony-black people he experienced an intoxicating and incomparable feeling once he met a white man.

However even in modern civilization, in this fairly mechanized world, we are not able to escape the influence of blood. Men shaking hands, meeting of eyes, tone of voice, everything dependent on the content of speech, gait, bearing, movement and facial expressions - perceiving thousands of subtle things, even without thinking about them, we speak the language of blood, blood itself talks through us, calling out, attracting or pushing away. Despite the multitude of masks, I and You achieve mutual understanding thanks to the secret tongue that predates all languages. And wherever there is common ground between I and You there must be something greater, some environment that includes both sides, like how even in vacuum ether

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Morton Stanley GCB (born John Rowlands; 28 January 1841 – 10 May 1904) was a Welsh-American journalist and explorer who was famous for his exploration of central Africa and his search for missionary and explorer David Livingstone. Stanley's book about his search for the source of the Nile was one of Jünger's all-time favorite books (sourced to one of his diaries, entry from August 14th 1965).

## Blood

permits for sunlight. It is fate, linking loners together in kinship and common meaning. With individual senses we only perceive the surface of phenomena and not the real links, the subterranean entanglement of roots that shoot out here and there with new sprouts, compared to which the individual is nothing for only they have power of conception. We have an inkling of this thanks to blood, obtaining in it the joyful feeling of solidarity and unity.

If some commonality does not have this feeling, then it is already dead as a commonality. A people who do not feel blood ties is but mass, a physical body incapable of rising above matter and manifest the force of higher life. There is no place for the incredible in such commonality, its blinding light can no longer soothe a man in moments of weakness, only mechanical laws prevail all around. One should neither live, nor die, nor procreate, nor waste creative energies for such commonality beyond the individual sphere. It no longer has fate or blood that is ready to accept that fate.

These two elements give life great intensity, purpose, dignity, and tragic content. Fate and Blood. First is an unseen power, the second is a force of nature in which we find fate. Only thanks to it can we comprehensibly understand the essence of blood. Blood without fate is like an uncharged battery, a magnet without attraction. Purity and breed of blood, quality of its mixing have no meaning whatsoever without a great destiny. It is like a touchstone that is used to test the value of blood.

That is why we refute all attempts to subsume race and blood in some rationale.<sup>2</sup> To prove the value of blood by means of the brain and

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<sup>2</sup> In his musings about the irrational link of race, blood and fate Jünger was very close to O. Spengler: *“Race, like Time and Destiny, is a decisive element in every question of life, something which everyone knows clearly and definitely so long as he does not try to set himself to comprehend it by way of rational — i.e., soulless — dissection and ordering. Race, Time, and Destiny belong together. But the moment scientific*

modern natural history is like demanding a knecht<sup>3</sup> to answer for his master. We do not wish to hear of chemical reactions, blood injections, skull shapes and Aryan profile. All this sooner or later will result in ugliness and petty squabbles that open the door for the intellect into the world of values that it is incapable of comprehending and can only destroy. Blood needs not proof or tests of legitimacy, especially if we're talking about man's relation to a baboon. Blood is that fuel that feeds the metaphysical flame of fate. It can have any chemical composition, that does not matter to us. Let men of science look at blood cells through their microscopes and debate about them. It's the spirit that fills pages of books with such questions, but life fills the spaces of fate with something else.

The magnetic power of blood does not need external material traits. It contains a symbolic value, not a logical one. Its carriers find each other like two butterflies in a valley at night: they recognize each other miles apart. They feel when their time has come like how the flair of migrating flocks of birds knows more than all meteorological stations of the world. In everything they follow the unyielding call of fate, long before historians will write of this necessity in the history books. Blood accurately knows from where to expect danger and where to gain

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*thought approaches them, the word "Time" acquires the significance of a dimension, the word "Destiny" that of causal connection, while Race, for which even at that stage of scientific askesis we still retain a very sure feeling, becomes an incomprehensible chaos of unconnected and heterogeneous characters that (under headings of land, period, culture, stock) interpenetrate without end and without law. [...] Race, in contrast to speech, is unsystematic through and through. In the last resort every individual man and every individual moment of his existence have their own race. And therefore the only mode of approach to the Totem side is, not classification, but physiognomic tact."* - **Decline of the West**

<sup>3</sup> Knecht, in German, means in general a male servant, and can refer to a servant of a sovereignty such as a mercenary foot soldier or the classic farm servant.

## Blood

support. It cannot be tricked with a blindfold because it sees without light.

Kinship of blood is only born where blood is bound by the strings of fate. Without those bindings family, aristocracy, a people - everything would lose its meaning, all the deep ancient senses would become targets of ridicule from liberated minds, from the arrogant and cynical writers. Everything is equalized, decomposed and smeared over the surface, leveling any creative deviations and the sense of the unique dies in the desert of common truths, that sense of an organic link. The individual no longer regards insults towards his commonality as having been spat in the face, great accomplishments of the individual no longer inspire pride in the whole, no longer can one recognize himself in his leaders, and that amazing sense of unity that fills big cities with the greatest exultation of life is gone. And with that assertion of a sublime, timeless life disappears the contempt for death, as it is tied to the understanding that a singular individual has meaning and value only in correlation with the higher, suprapersonal value. Will to sacrifice, that divine force that reconciles one with death, is extinguished.

To blood motion is more important than the goal. Blood does not know progress for its will seeks and reaches the absolute in any age, in any place in any commonality. It all comes down to the intimate link and indestructible strength. That is why we recognize the heroic deeds of all ages and all countries. Our love for Rome does not exclude our love for Hannibal. In Napoleon we see a surprising manifestation of life's energy. We value the great and bloodstained figures of the French Revolution, from Mirabeau to Robespierre, each in their own way, and any examples of violence cease to appear horrifying to us soon as we

remember the coldblooded Barras<sup>4</sup>. We'd pay tribute to our revolution as well if only as much blood was spilled for it.

Evaluating us our descendants will not look at the goals that we sought. Goals were reached, tasks accomplished, new ones had been made. What is important is that these tasks are but an external transient shell of fate. Fate exists forever and only fresh blood asserts itself in new forms each time. We won't be measured by the ruler of success alone. Only one thing matters - have we reached that potential destiny gave us or not. Leonidas' Spartans had fallen but in their heroic deed the absolute meaning was fulfilled. Never, nowhere and by no means will life be able to commit greater heroism.

No, we won't be judged by our success - they will only ask how loud was our "Yes," how brightly the flame of will burned in us. And one day we will be able to proudly say that it was our share of good fortune to reach the absolute on the new strand of fate. Every battleship that sunk under the sea with its flag raised high is our testimony. And all those who were on it, from the admiral to the simple stoker, are heroes united by blood and filled with contempt for death. So do attest us the soldiers of trench warfare, who fearlessly looked onto the approaching military machinery and fell slain dead, accepting supreme being with wild elation.

All of this is now part of the eternal, while we stand in the midst of a changed world. Our blood strives for new goals, thirsts for new ideas to grow drunk with, new motion to give itself to until complete exhaustion, new sacrifices to deny its very self in. Blood wants to partake of the great love; it longs to live and die for it.

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<sup>4</sup> Paul François Jean Nicolas, vicomte de Barras (30 June 1755 – 29 January 1829), commonly known as Paul Barras, was a French politician of the French Revolution, and the main executive leader of the Directory regime of 1795–1799.

# WILL

*Die Standarte, May 6th 1926*

Every new experience presents us with a challenge! First we clarify this experience and then proceed to evaluate it so as to put it in service to the future. This means that we go from the space of observation to the more severe space of will. Values that have been tested and recognized by the soul must now be made manifest and urges us to fight. Higher emotions give birth to heroic deeds, convictions - to weapons, and faith - to sermon.

Thus our question is: "What can we affect with our will?" It has nothing to do with the question of free will that prevails throughout the entire history of religions and philosophic systems, starting with high antiquity and ending with the modern day. At times it was accepted and at times rejected but we didn't get any closer to reality. Acceptance or rejection of free will is nothing more than an expression of the dominant sense of life in a given era. We can witness something like this today, when the most forefront fields of science are inclined to denying free will. Take philosophy of history for example, which introduces some suprapersonal energies that subjugate life of singular individuals, or neovitalism in modern biology,<sup>1</sup> which denies the darwinian principle of chance while promoting the notion of a creative or otherwise same suprapersonal life energy. To us this is all nothing more than a sign. We don't ask if it is truly so, we ask ourselves how can we assert ourselves in the real world. We agree with Karl Marx: it is not a matter of

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<sup>1</sup> Vitalism (neovitalism) - a variation of the philosophy of life that stems from the fundamental difference between machine and living organism. In Germany the leading figure of neovitalism was the biologist and philosopher Hans Driesch, whose lectures Jünger attended when he studied in Leipzig.

explaining the world, but of how to change it.<sup>2</sup> We ask this not just as thinking people but also as acting and willing people. We do not rely on what can be known. Rational cognition is but a part of our position. It must be combined with other parts but not dominate them.

Foremost questioning the capacity of our will, we do not rely on reason, we are driven by another relentless sense. This sense appears in response to an internal catastrophe which is a result of a grander disaster. We have all desired, as much as people can desire, but in the end our will turned to failure. We have personally experienced the natural forces of war and revolution - like great natural disasters they had swept our world, mercilessly depriving us of simple human joys, sorrows and hopes. We have seen as the victory we had honestly earned, which we believed in deeply for many years, was handed over to the enemy. And we witness day in and day out how enthusiastically are preached the beautiful, the good and the just, but life refuses to deviate even a little from the grandiose line of eternal and initial principles and laws. We tried to find someone to fault, but even if there was any benefit from these attempts then it is only in that we have convinced in the necessity, inevitability and the inner consistency of what had transpired. We asked the question about the meaning of our experience and only understood that this meaning must in any case be different from the original meaning - yes, we had wished back then, our will turned out to have been directed in an entirely different direction. Ever since then we have been in a state of confusion and ask ourselves what can we affect at all. For it is beyond our capabilities to will stronger than we had back then.

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<sup>2</sup> Here Jünger paraphrases Marx's famous 11th thesis on Feuerbach: "*The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.*"



## Will

Our generation has the right to point towards its great achievements, it does not have to feel ashamed before its fathers. Yet still all our efforts were for naught. Failure created duality in us, it had shaken our inner foundations and sharpened our external strength. How reliable was the world that our fathers lived in! Children of victory and Enlightenment, they dared to place in man the source of development, saw him as the master of the future. What was important were the thoughts and will of this man, they produced all sorts of motion and their summation took on the proud name of progress. This wonderful word encompassed the entire faith of the materialist generation and we ought not to laugh at it now. Their position had integrity, something that demands respect. However, even if we acknowledge it, we cannot identify with it due to our tragic experience, on our lips the word "progress" will be but an empty word.

Progress! This word has lost its former meaning to us. To use it means to not only look down onto heroes and saints of ages past, but to also deny our own achievements<sup>3</sup>. We don't need this though, even if all our applied efforts did not lead to victory. We will be proud of those efforts. Can someone betray himself just because his luck had run out? We'd sooner rely on the faith of our fathers, the faith in the reliability and rationality of the world. Even despite our will we must believe in the divine meaning of what transpires, in the higher purpose of things, that we cannot judge. Otherwise ground will give way beneath our feet and we'll hang over the abyss of chaos, chance and meaninglessness. What's the use in rational clinging to things if they are devoid of any deeper dimension and do not reflect the inner order? *We must* believe that the world is meaningful and orderly, otherwise we will be among those who are internally overwhelmed and terrified, those who hope to

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<sup>3</sup> One can read more about progress as "the people's church of the 19th century" in Jünger's "Total Mobilization" article.

change the world or who live one day at a time, dragging on their animal existence.

Having recovered from a deep inner shock we realize that we have gained a new center of gravity, a new side to our being. Our generation still experiences some vague premonitions, something still causes us to fret. Prophets appear heralding truths; each word has a new sound to it and causes unexpected reactions. The generation sated with Enlightenment is once again starting to take religion seriously. New editions of even remotely important books of our and other cultures are published and are given new interpretations, different from the ones of merely ten years ago; people talk, read and write so much about a broad variety of things, that even the most impartial man can't help but feel serious unrest. New societies are formed, old ones revived, and the feeling that the logical structure of the world has fallen apart in our mind forces man to turn to the extrasensory. It leaves its mark everywhere - from the highest matters of spirit to the primitive nonsense of the marketplace haggler who fill newspaper columns. War is the great turning point, it is finds itself in the history of metaphysics and in medicine, in our comprehension of the soul and government, in our attitude towards money and civil law. Everyone are still searching, blindly trying to feel the way, it would take just a bit more faith and a bit more seriousness to find ourselves in a different world.

Faith in the sacred meaning fills us, the tempered generation, born in the scorching womb of the trenches and full of pride in its past. And even though that past is related to failure we should not conclude from this that it was meaningless as any corner merchant claims. That for which men die can never be meaningless. Even a singular death is full of meaning. If we were to suddenly find ourselves in that situation today, then surely we'd do something differently. But essentially, regardless of any experience, our stance would have remained the

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same. Let them reproaches us, as if the past didn't teach us a thing - we know for certain that there exist things which cannot be taught for they are innate. Let's not judge by success or lack thereof, like how the plebs of all sorts like to do it, but rather ask ourselves what *has to be* done. Will our efforts be fruitful we do not know; we know for certain this - that they will be full of meaning.

The great source and reason for this necessity we call fate. Thanks to fate we appear not as blind and accidental figures but as a creative force whose goal is unknown to us. We do not even know if it has goals at all, or if it is none other than the pure divine motion, equally great and complete in each moment. And what else do we call this suddenly awakened in us sense of what is necessary, which often forces us to act despite our personal interests, sacrificing our rest, joy, peace and even life, if not the will of fate? Let our will follow this necessity! We have all experienced moments of joy when fate took hold of us and dragged us with its iron hand. We know that these dramatic and not given onto every generation moments are connected with a series of sorrows and joys. Yet we do not despair nor flatter ourselves, we do and seek that which is necessary, that which fate desires. This grand "Yes" to the joys of conception and pains of birth, readiness for the inevitable struggle which seals the fate of the warrior. Do the demands of fate coincide with our demands or do our demands coincide with fate - this is a question for the professors, one that we have no interest in. We do not see a division here but a higher form of unity, centaur merging of horse and rider.

Therefore we want what is necessary. Why? Because it is necessary! What will we achieve this way? Meaning. And that absolutely achievable goal is what is important, even if attaining meaning means our death. But we, old soldiers, used to the harsh days

## Ernst Jünger - Interwar Articles

of war, have never given much value to questions of joy or lack thereof, of salvation or ruin. How much really depends on us?

# CHARACTER

*Die Standarte, May 13th 1926*

We, nationalists, decided to wish for what was necessary - that which was desired by fate. Making this decision we consciously leave the cover of safety that was provided to us by reason, so as to trust ourselves to the reliability of a higher order, to the sureness of fate. Let them try and convince us of this or that being right, acceptable and advisable, but if there is no need in it we will reject it. Thus we do not rely on causal patterns, but on higher supreme patterns, which, however, do not exclude reason, but to the contrary include it. Where that which is necessary must happen it will have no trouble justifying itself with logical arguments.

So then, if we can desire what is inevitable then we must somehow understand it. The chain of logic is obvious to us, deduced by reason. The outer appearance of the world, in other words particular qualities of objects in the physical plane, is perceived by the senses and transmitted by the central nervous system to the brain. There this imperfect material, transformed by imperfect senses, is processed by reason, "the thinking soul." Reason forms concepts, makes judgments and comes to conclusions. According to Wundt<sup>1</sup>, this is the "ability to think in terms of objects and their relationships," while according to Hegel it is "the most amazing, greatest and furthermore absolute power." But its limitations are without question and are hinted at with

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<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt (16 August 1832 – 31 August 1920) was a German physician, physiologist, philosopher, and professor, known today as one of the founding figures of modern psychology.

this famous phrase: "Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses."<sup>2</sup>

As our spiritual experience shows, above the outer logic of reason, conditioned by the senses, rises an internal logic of fate. And we perceive it not by the brain, but by blood which uses the brain for its own goals or in spite of it. The arguments of blood are not convincing, they are compulsory. Its goals are not logical constructs but are the consequence of necessity. Its main organ is the heart. And that which in relation to the brain we call reason, in relation to the heart we call character. This relation, of course, cannot be proven anatomically, however we see in this a positive, rather than a negative. Unlike the Age of Enlightenment we believe character to be the highest value - that is the most important sign of our inner transformation.

Character is what is important in us; it is our true nature, honest form, and our life is its external footprint. As the organ of fate, in its action it is present in all of fate's great forms - combination and separation, love and struggle, sympathy, loyalty, bravery, sense of honor, pride, fear, indecisiveness, softness, strength, knighthood, hatred, avarice, wastefulness. Love of nature - in this is revealed the march of fate. It is precisely this that determines the position and ambition of a singular person. It is this love of nature, in the form of sexual attraction, that makes up the most significant part of man, it dictates the choice of slogans, heraldic figures and proudly proclaims: "This is what we are and thus we want to remain!" Exactly this gives society form, makes armies crave battle and makes revolutions fruitful; it forces hearts to beat in rhythm and this beating of hearts is all the

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Aquinas adopted this principle from the Peripatetic school of Greek philosophy, established by Aristotle. Aquinas argued that the existence of God could be proved by reasoning from sense data. He used a variation on the Aristotelian notion of the "active intellect" ("intellectus agens") which he interpreted as the ability to abstract universal meanings from particular empirical data.

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louder, the less it is thought of or spoken about. It is at the foundation of entire people's history, defining the internal logic of their development - their rise, victories, catastrophes and decline. It overcomes all obstacles - be they rivers, seas or mountains, it overcomes all commonality and differences of economic interests. It's specifically the relationship between the character of peoples that explains why they feel predisposition, hatred or respect for one another. Let us look upon ourselves: we quite clearly feel what is a German man or a German woman. It may not be simple to put into words, but such is the quality of fate - it is impenetrable to words: we feel this. And we know, that this ideal has no rational foundation. Yes, it is from life, where fate rules through blood, that unity and the sureness of a higher order are born, born despite all contradictions, mistakes and delusions. Such is the unity of a work of art, a painting, a drama - the paints and colors are the same as everywhere, and yet they form a transparent curtain that separates us from the intangible world: we are only reached by the breath of the divine and are forced to our knees.

We must understand: the sense of fate's laws is not determined by moral principles, which are like the still stars in the sky. Character in of itself is neither good nor evil. It is above these. It determines what is good and what is bad. Character can be great or small, strong or weak, firm or soft, tragically divided. There is no moral law in of itself. Each law is determined by character, by the imperative of blood. Did Hagen von Tronje<sup>3</sup> have the right to strike with his spear or not? In Germany and France the answers will differ. Murder out of jealousy in the face of Norwegian justice is one thing, in the face of Italian - another. Character

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<sup>3</sup> Hagen is a Burgundian warrior in tales about the Burgundian kingdom at Worms. Hagen is often identified as a brother or half-brother of King Gunther. In the Nibelungenlied he is nicknamed "from Tronje."

is the great workshop where invisible power gains its visible expression, where all systems of thought and morality are minted. The latter, of course, come from axioms and maxims, yet it is character that chooses ones over others. Such is the order of fate.

Character is not acquired, it is given unto man at the whim of divine unjust fate, recognized by nationalists and denied by liberals. Character is "etched" into man once and for all. Laws of progress do not govern over him, only laws of development. As is the oak's development is destined in the acorn, so is in the child's character destined the character of the grown man. We all know from personal experience that in any melody there is a leitmotif. In the most different areas of life we make the same mistakes, but thanks to them we reveal our better side. All that is unveiled by life, what it sharpens and tempers, and on the contrary - everything that is softened by society, suppressed and made blunt, does not affect character in the slightest; however at the same time experience, upbringing, education, examples, ideals, surroundings, morals, laws affect us and shape us. Although, it is impossible to artificially create character, just as it is impossible to artificially replicate a plant cell, let alone a human. Character, unlike reason, is not distracted from life, moreover in its essence it is something organic, living and thus tied to the creative source of life itself. Character is the condition for any upbringing, not its result. Its result is at best a form. To bring man, society, nation to form means to actualize their character. Here there are likewise no absolute principles with which this goal could be accomplished. A Brandenburg regiment must be given form differently than a Gascons regiment. Constitution that makes sense in North America loses all sense in Liberia. Slave blood can never be ennobled and no disciplinary tricks will turn cowards into men.



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Thus it is our duty to liberate the idea of forming and selecting men from rational assessment. Life itself gives us such a right. All that is living - and such is foremost our movement! - is subordinate to an all-encompassing will, not to rational rules. History is not constructed, it is lived. The nature of politics cannot be perceived with theories. There is no recipe for winning a battle, to creating a painting. But there are rules of global history. There is a higher school of politics. Napoleon studied the battles of Frederick II. Apprentices study painting from the masters. However we have already stated: the goal of education is form, and this is quite a high goal. Thus one can talk of strategy using a specific formal language. It doesn't matter then if we'll win the Battle of Cannae or the Battle of Marne. However the living content of language is just as varied as all living formations. Clausewitz, for example, does not consider the art of war to be an empirical science even though he grasped its fundamental knowledge from experience. "In actions the majority follow the simple tact of reasoning, which is more or less good - depending on the amount of genius within." Furthermore: "Even the most sophisticated military Headquarters with the most correct views and principles is incapable of providing an army with successful leadership if there is no soul of a great military leader. The direction of gaze and will, inherent to the military leader's nature, often turns out to be the best countermeasure to the confused in its own plans learning which, however, is a necessary tool for a leader."

We have nothing more to add. We placed our Headquarters, our thinking soul above character, that is to say the feeling soul. Yet it is the feeling soul that is our truest, our primary. Impervious to any external changes, it constantly seeks to conquer the world, however not to subject it to thought, but to actualize itself in it.

This attempt at realization is the primary right of all living things. We wish to use that right. So in choosing fronts and leaders let the final

word be with the sense of fate's logic! We wish to bind ourselves with ties of commonality on the basis of blood and character, to become one with such organic society<sup>4</sup>, where there won't be either class or property distinctions, but where there will be a distinct understanding of who does not belong to this organic society. Thus we'll do what is necessary - that which is desired by fate.

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<sup>4</sup> Jünger is using the traditional to German social philosophy differentiation between the organic society (Gemeinschaft) and society as a mechanical association made up of individuals (Gesellschaft).

# NATIONALISTIC REVOLUTION

*Die Standarte, May 20th 1926*

Calling ourselves the honorable name of nationalists we turn our back not only on those who are used to uttering that name like a curse, but on all the peaceful bürger. The whole essence of our movement is to stand for values of life by military means and we don't give a damn if these means are justified by some universal morality or not, this movement relies on frontline soldiers, real, living people, loyal to their duty with love and joy. These are not some merchants and owners of marzipan factories that water down the army in the era of compulsory military service, but men who carry danger within themselves, because they like being dangerous.

These are not the pampered babes who worry not for the state so long as they see a general's uniform or black-white-red flags in the streets, but once the thrones had shattered lost all hope to find any kind of meaning in world history. Of course, had these protectors of peace, order and inertia, whom liberalism could've very well paid pension for their eternal loyalty, had they decisively stood for nationalism then the existence of the November republic would've been all but guaranteed. There would've been no need for any security laws and after the end of the conservative and democratic liberalism standoff the movement's cravings would've been sated (let's not forget about their blood relatives, the communists).

But one could hardly hope for such simplicity. In this day and age we understand surprisingly clear the possibility of a national revolution, and the threat to liberalism within it: for it can but with one gust of wind overthrow all its laws, depriving it of its big and supposedly undisputed

gains of 1918. Nationalism itself hardly believes in this possibility, unthinkable without war and subsequent rearrangement of forces. Its backbone are nationalists who are so used to being tied down to a big government apparatus, that with its disappearance they felt as if ground gave way underfoot. Nationalism couldn't just discard it all like a shabby dress, it took considerable time to internally overcome the forms of old government, even though they long since ceased to coincide with reality. The first spontaneous uprising in Munich<sup>1</sup> became the first step towards liberation. However along the way entirely new feelings were awakened. Will to power had shed all its shackles, all responsibilities, felt itself free, more free than German will had ever been.

Thus the role and place of nationalism are slowly revealed. Old forms are disappearing into the past, to cultivate them is the inheritance of philistines or journals such as *Weltbühne*.<sup>2</sup> The first self-evident duty of nationalists is to turn away from these fighters of small caliber, not honoring them with even one drop of contempt. Their task is to arm themselves at all costs for the struggle with the existing status quo which differs little from the situation of 1919, for it is nothing more than a renewed facade, to please the common eye, of a rotten building. Destroy it, leave no stone standing!

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<sup>1</sup> The Beer Hall Putsch

<sup>2</sup> Weekly *Weltbühne* (World stage) journal - Weimar Republic period radical-democratic German journal about politics, culture, economics. Originally created by Siegfried Jacobsohn under the name *Die Schaubühne* as a purely theatrical journal (began publishing in 1905 in Berlin). During the war shifted direction towards the political-economic theme. Renamed into *Weltbühne* in 1918. After Jacobsohn's death in 1926 the publication was led by Kurt Tucholsky, a year later the head editor position went to a German publicist of Polish origins, a pacifist Carl von Ossietzky. The journal published such famous journalists and writers as Lion Feuchtwanger, Erich Kästner, Kurt Hiller, Erich Mühsam.

## Nationalistic Revolution

To prepare nationalism for this task - that is the real essence of the 1918 revolution. Thanks to it not only had the German overcome his fear of revolutions but it had also removed all obstacles in the way of nationalist will. It is necessary to turn this path into a truly revolutionary one not only so as to strike a death blow against liberalism, circumventing all legal traps, but also to forge the will of nationalists themselves. A nationalist has no right to even consider a different outcome. It is his sacred duty to give Germany its first true revolution, that is to say a revolution based in absolutely new ideas.

Revolution! Revolution! That is what must be preached unceasingly, pointedly, systematically, uncompromisingly, even if this preaching takes ten years. So far only a few had realized this requirement in its full severity - sentimental blabbing about brotherhood and unity by means of various possible and impossible varieties of spirit still blooms with vivid colors. Let them go to hell or the parliament where such talk belongs! In our desired world there is no unity of opposites, there is nothing but struggle. Nationalistic revolution doesn't need preachers of peace and order, it needs preachers who declare: "God will come down upon you and you will die by the sword's edge!"<sup>3</sup> It must once again force to sound fiercely the name of revolution that has been a joke in Germany for a hundred years. A new, dangerous kind of man was born from the Great War and this man must be forced to act!

So let's get to it, comrades! Let's strengthen our influence in combat organizations, to revolutionize them is our first unavoidable duty. Less comforts, less members, more activity! Centralized leadership! Attract the workers! Do away with liars who preach peaceful economy! We are not the jailers of workers! We will broaden

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<sup>3</sup> Paraphrasing Luke (21:24).

and rally combat nationalist trade unions that must be controlled by workers of a nationalist breed. They will achieve more on nationalistic barricades than marxism has in all its fifty years. And what of the universities, the youth movement,<sup>4</sup> all those organizations that present an interest to us? Where else will sprouts appear? What holds the state together? Cooperation and opposition. And how can we overthrow it? Only by exiting it, by a war of attrition, by forming a state within a state - self-sufficient, starting with its idea and ending with the means of struggle for that idea. How to affirm the German nation? By recognizing it as something can be recognized by a nationalistic spirit.

To be a nationalist in a war meant to be ready to die in a war for Germany; today it means to pick up the banner of revolution for a more beautiful and grander Germany! That is the goal worthy of the best and most fiery part of this country's youth.

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<sup>4</sup> Jünger is using the general term "youth movement" (Jugendbewegung), which implies prewar organizations such as "Wandervogel" (Migratory Birds) or "Freideutsche Jugend" (Youth of Free Germany), as well as political youth organizations of the Weimar Republic frontliner soldiers (so called "bundische Jugend"). Also see notes for "Revolution and the front-line soldier."

# UNITE!

*Die Standarte, June 3rd 1926*

We, warriors of yesterday, today and present day, live in a time when all ideals in which we used to believe and for which innumerable soldiers died for had been trampled in mud. In the old days we would gather in a close circle of friends in different corners of the country, following a sense on internal protest.<sup>1</sup> We simply had no right to reject that for which we had sacrificed everything, we had to find certainty in the existence of a deep and necessary meaning of what was happening. Our first decision was to strictly follow tradition and preserve trampled banners in the most hidden crevices of our hearts. That is how the best of us felt, which is why their resolve will not disappear tomorrow. Reactionaries of the past will become revolutionaries of the future!

We know now that a more important task stands before us. The word "tradition" gained a new meaning for us, we no longer see in it some complete form, but an eternal living spirit, for the deeds of which every new generation is responsible. And with each passing day we more clearly feel that we are a new generation, a new breed of people, tempered in the hearth of the greatest war in history, internally changed by this fire. While all the parties are undergoing decay, our thoughts, feelings and life are given a completely different form; there is no doubt that with the growth of our self-consciousness it will be made manifest. We are called upon to fight for a new state!

As our understanding of our fate and calling deepens we begin to see things in an entirely different light. Hundreds of bloodless brains were convincing us that we were playing the unenviable role of

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning gatherings of frontline soldiers.

unwitting accomplices in a crime. But now we realize that those who fought for their country had shown themselves to be the very best citizens. Thanks to this we uncover for ourselves both the past and the future. Even the pathetic revolution of 1918, pointless in of itself, attains meaning in the perspective of things to come. It teaches us that sprouts of life stretch upwards, ignoring the weight of defeats. The uprising cleared us a path, removing everything on its way that could have prevented us from accomplishing our task. The gravediggers dug their own graves, they thought they were shaping destiny but turned out to be merely her instruments. We will follow a different path, not the one that was followed by youth in 1813. We are capable of realizing a synthesis between feeling and power, of which German idealism was incapable. It was drunk on ideas of a great revolution but the dramatic consequences had frightened it. We on the other hand had learned to stare fear right in the eyes.

Which is why we have the right to hope that one day we'll be able to pave the way for the German and with one strike realize that which has no need for compromise, voting and budget cuts. Yes, we want that which is German and we have the power to want thusly! The shape of the future state has been made clear in these years. Its roots will feed from different sources. It will be national. It will be social. It will be armed. Its structure will be authoritarian. It will be a state completely and equally different to both Weimar and the old Kaiserreich. It will be a modern nationalistic state. Such is the state of the future. In spite of our scribblers' efforts, whose thoughts can't keep up with their wishes, nationalism was not destroyed in the last war, to the contrary, it first appeared together with and thanks to that war, in a previously completely unfamiliar form. Nationalism has nothing in common with the bourgeoisie feeling, it is radically different from patriotism of prewar time. It is dynamic, hotheaded, full of our big city vitality where



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- and this is another typical quality - it is experiencing rapid growth unlike the fading away conservative sense of life. This nationalism is not reactionary, but revolutionary from start to finish.

I am familiar with real non-parliamentary powers in Germany (and only they should be taken into consideration), I am acquainted with many leaders and know that they all stem from those four great principles of a nationalistic state: its outlines have already begun to form. From the multitude of political movements (which is undeniably a positive factor, up to a point) that some highlight one particular program point, whilst others highlight another. Many of them are still undergoing their becoming, exploiting each calm day, whilst others have completed this process and now they, naturally, are threatened by weakness and internal crisis. For despite the relatively big number of separate movements, independently they are incapable of taking action. The time has come when separate movements must flow into a single nationalistic front. This necessary step will bring about not only solace and an inner strengthening of each individual member, but it will also ignite all their energy for action. Thus our ranks will be joined by all those who have not yet joined any movement - did not join because they longed for a whole and not merely a part.

As for the nationalistically inclined masses, then it is obvious: each individual not weighed down by prejudices and whose heart is with us, will happily vote for a clear and decisive program, if it is built on those same four pillars - nationalism, socialism, defensive capabilities and authoritarian structure - and if this decisiveness is also joined by a number of tactical agreements that will help realize the program.

We can state that since the time of the marxist-liberal revolution we've made a great step forward. Consciousness grows with each day. Nationalism could today already stand on the verge of victory, if not for two critical program points that require very energetic elaboration. The

first is regarding the tactical regulation of the social program. Existing problems in this field showcase the fact that the national labor leaders disassociate themselves from the combat unions block, afraid of damaging the cleanness and strictness of their demands. This very division must be removed! Such is the state of affairs, more or less, so long as the nationalistic state of the future is not the highest authority in economic questions. Independent, nationalistically inclined workers joining under the leadership of labor leaders, best of all in the traditional form of labor unions, lead an economic struggle with purely economic slogans. For if we demand that socialism disassociate itself from internationalism then we under no circumstances can drag nationalism in quarrels over wages. Moreover, the worker will only fully realize his equal rights (something we give great significance) once we give him the opportunity to resolve his own affairs. If combat unions were suited for creating labor unions then we wouldn't be able to overlook that. National-socialism on the other hand, thanks to a different type of leaders has that capacity and until both sides forget petty quarrels and extend hands to each other, serious success is unlikely.<sup>2</sup> So let's draw a definitive distinction: soldiers as leaders in the power struggle and workers as leaders in the economic struggle!

However this economic struggle is different from the marxist one in that its goals are realistic. It is actively supported by the masses those of nationalists who were able, thanks to their war experience, to overcome the bourgeoisie ideology and one of the mightiest pillars of the class state along with it. The other pillar will be destroyed by the worker himself, subjugating the economic state to the national one. It

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<sup>2</sup> In 1925-1926 Jünger still looked positively at the national-socialist movement. On January 9th he sent Hitler a copy of his book "Fire and Blood" with a dedication "To the National Leader Adolf Hitler! -Ernst Jünger." Hitler thanked Jünger for the gift in a responding letter, noting that he read "all" of Jünger's works (sourced to a letter from Hitler to Jünger from 27.05.1926, DLA, Nachlass Jünger).

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is already becoming clear that nationalism, of course, can't offer the worker the same as what marxism had been promising him for the past years, however it will give him immeasurably more than the worker ever had before. But foremost it will illuminate his life with the rays of great ideas and help him realize that, which historical materialism had failed at, namely: lead the spirit to victory over machine. People from both the bourgeoisie and marxist camps will flow to us, stand shoulder to shoulder and create a new strong camp. Workers will receive wide support for their just demands from capitalists and come together in the struggle for political power. We have not yet achieved unity, but it is the only path to victory. The destruction of the internationalist labor unions will not achieve anything unless we create circumstances that will allow us to attract into our ranks those of common blood. This goal requires people who had accepted marxism and had grown severely disillusioned with it.

The second important question that requires immediate resolution is the question of the central role of the leader. We still do not know if there is a man among us, who is so consumed by the idea of uniting all interests in a single fist. But we do know, unfortunately, that there are none who enjoy universal recognition that is so important for this role. And since we cannot wait for when the great loner appears and manages to unite the scattered movements, we are left to work with what we have. So long as we are not ready to create a mighty organization (but one day it will inevitably appear!) we will be forging a united front that will determine the direction and strict structure for the already existing movements. Before the great loner appears and personally leads the authoritarian structure, there must exist a central committee of leaders with a chief of staff, responsible for the cleanliness and strictness of the movement. This step, if we are capable of making it, will allow us to preserve the originality of each movement

and considerably multiply the total combat potential. Then we'll prove that we can set out on our crusade for new great goals. And if a sense of unity and confidence in that everyone is in their right place appears in all combat unions, then we'll enter the second phase of our great struggle that had begun in November 1918. This struggle will continue until our generation has fully expelled from itself the memory of that revolution!

This is what I call upon all the leaders to do and will not cease repeating my call time and again in the close-knit circle of decisive fighters: do what is necessary - that which is desired by fate! That is the demand of our time! Understand: our time has come, cast aside individual interests and let the bright sun of coming victories blind us! Forward, as long as youthful fire burns within us! Towards great deeds - for only we are capable of them! Leaders have shown that they are capable of creating and obeying a common idea, despite the difference of views. And all of you who had joined various movements and are awaiting a signal, forget disputes and focus on what's important, that which unites you. For behind petty quarrels you had missed how you became a laughing stock for those against whom you ought to be arming! But that laughter will die quickly, the second they see how our forces have grown once somewhere an agreement has been made, and somewhere else - total unity. Cast aside a commoner's joy over bickering that puts in question the seriousness of our goals! Better ask ourselves: do these tiny disputes help us come closer to our great goal? The shape of our movement will determine the form of the future state!

I am addressing you, knowing that you are military men who had gone through the greatest war of our century, who had been raised by it, matured by it. Thus one should not forget about the virtue of frontline soldiers, about the indisputable superiority of the idea over the comforts of the world, one ought to remember courage,

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responsibility, comradeship, bravery, order and discipline! Old ties are destroyed, you carry a responsibility to the future. And there is no greater responsibility than that!

*On June 6th 1926 Jünger sent the "Standarte" issue with his call "Unite!" to Adolf Hitler. Hitler thanked the author and expressed an interest in attending such a meeting, which, however, never took place (sourced to a letter from Hess to Jünger from 11.06.1926, DLA, Nachlass Jünger).*

## UNITE! FINAL WORD

*Die Standarte, July 22rd 1926*

Many had answered my call for unification<sup>1</sup>, meaning that I had managed to touch upon one of the movement's primary questions. It is also clear that we have the right to talk about a *singular* movement, even if several columns make up the march. Paths may be various but the goal must be a common one. And we do indeed have a common goal, we may lack a clear program but our hearts beat in sync and are determined. Do not waste words. We long since keep hearing the same question: "When will the time finally come?," and we know real well what day that will be.

We have been destined by fate to carry weapons. Our unions have military character, they exist outside bourgeoisie morality. Our position isn't influenced by elections and compromises. We are dynamite placed under the cracked shell of the contemporary state, to create a way for the new one. Our goal is not to construct this new state, armed with sharpened quills and sat in stuffy cabinets. Detached from life scribblers discuss this matter in national pedagogic courses and during esthetic tea time, successfully summoning the spirit of Fichte, practicing cabin-socialism and artistically discuss the problem of "renewal." Let all these prophets conduct their historic pioneering and when they reach 1866<sup>2</sup> we'll have hopefully already accomplished our deed. They'll probably

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<sup>1</sup> Standarte received many letters from readers including replies from former freikorps leader Hermann Ehrhardt, former SDPG member and oberpresident of Eastern Prussia August Winnig, Stahlhelm leader Theodor Duesterberg, publicist Albrecht Erich Günter.

<sup>2</sup> The Peace of Prague was a peace treaty signed between the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Empire at Prague on 23 August 1866, ending the Austro-Prussian War.

still try to squeeze out of good old German words, deeds, names last drops of juice but by then an already open struggle will have begun between those forces that today are still arming themselves. They revile liberalism but in reality present themselves as its logical conclusion.

We must rely on men of a different sort. We know that history is not constructed but created, any words look pathetic compared to living blood, and the revolutionary path does not lead through debates and "German evenings," but through completely different, unpleasant places. We have gone through an excellent school and learned to value the hierarchy in relations between men. The hierarchy formed inside our unions (within the scope of the old state mechanism they have the role of bastions of the future, which must be maintained and fortified) can only be of a military type. Our goal is the future and thus hundreds of battles we've gone through are not as important as that one battle which we are yet to win. Nationalism had lost its initial battles because it wasn't yet free, factually or spiritually, from reaction; yet still these lost battles make this postwar time at least somewhat tolerable for us. In them resonates a protest that the liberal monarchy of 1918 was incapable of making. A protest must be realized not in the form of reports about the meaning of the German mission and not in the form of books dissecting the corpse of marxism, but measured out and soberly with grenades and machine guns on street pavement. Yes, I am referring to those people, who with laughter anathematized the state and went on to fight in the Baltic states<sup>3</sup>, to blow up bridges in the Ruhr region<sup>4</sup>, who participated in the events at Brandenburg Gate<sup>5</sup>, Upper

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<sup>3</sup> In 1918-1919 the German freikorps opposed the bolsheviks in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (also see notes for article "Revolution and frontline soldiers").

<sup>4</sup> In September of 1923 there were acts of sabotage against the French occupational forces in the Ruhr region.

<sup>5</sup> On March 13th 1920 (during the days of the Kapp Putsch) naval officer and freikorps leader Hermann Ehrhardt with the 1st sea brigade that wasn't made part of

Silesia<sup>6</sup> and Munich<sup>7</sup> and are still ready to in a moment's notice appear wherever one is needed to risk their life. Absolute will is manifested in them and a true man knows how to value that even in his enemy. On the other hand those who while sitting in their cabinets mumble about recklessness and adventurism (and 120 years ago they likewise mumbled about major Schill<sup>8</sup>) better ask themselves if it is not their own squalor that prevents us from going forward. We carry in ourselves the force of danger, we are attracted by adventure, furthermore we have consciousness of the supreme law, which easily outweighs public morality, written laws and actual violence. This is precisely what must be pointed out with increasing insistency, because the time is upon us when national authors together with the army of empty-word philistines will have to make way for the onslaught of combat groups.

Therein lies our primary difference: we are a combat formation. Soldier's union gains its greatest triumph in combat, otherwise it cannot exist. If we thought differently then all our speeches would lose their meaning. It'd be best to then simply disperse in various directions and try to gain seats in the parliament with campaign leaflets. Should we

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the Reichswehr occupied the entire Government Quarter in Berlin. Before ending the siege the brigade started a massacre ("Hackenkreuz am Stahlhelm, schwarzweiss-rotes Band | Die Bridage Ehrhardt werden wir genannt"). However captain Ehrhardt wasn't put in jail until two years after the events took place: in 1922 members of his "Consul Organization" killed the minister of foreign affairs Walther Rathenau. Ehrhardt was pardoned during in the 1925 amnesty and until the very end of the Weimar Republic remained one of the far right leaders.

<sup>6</sup> On March 20th 1921 a plebiscite took place in Upper Silesia. Majority of the populace voted for remaining with Germany. Afterwards polish insurgents took over a large portion of Upper Silesia but were unable to retain control over it and were pushed out by the forces of the local "self-defense" groups supported by the freikorps.

<sup>7</sup> Beer Hall Putsch.

<sup>8</sup> Ferdinand Baptista von Schill (6 January 1776 – 31 May 1809) was a Prussian officer who revolted unsuccessfully against French domination in May 1809.



copycat the red frontline soldiers<sup>9</sup>? Do we not believe that we are acting in the spirit of a deeper idea and are we not ready to shed precious blood for it? Didn't even the Russian communists sympathize with Schlageter's<sup>10</sup> deed? And don't supporters of national activism unwillingly not notice the sympathy they receive specifically from representatives of the most hostile camp? They are as proud of it as they were proud of that wreath that was placed on Richthofen's<sup>11</sup> grave by an English pilot.

The signs are multiplying and they are telling us that we are on the right path. Already in particular circles, where just half a year ago they shunned the very word "nationalism" as something compromising and utterly impossible, they now raise up nationalism, though in reality they continue to do that which they've been fruitlessly doing for seven years. But they and we have different paths! By saying that word, which was once trumped in mud, we say "Yes" to one thing and categorically decline another. It befits only those who can fill it with new meaning, not those who merely repeat words but those who have it in their blood. We saw how they puckered when our generation talked about the worker. "If the representatives of these directions in military unions were correct then it'd be right to destroy even national-socialist unions"

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<sup>9</sup> In 1924 the German Communist Party created "red frontline soldier" squads to counter the national-socialist SA squads.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Leo Schlageter (12 August 1894 – 26 May 1923) was a member of the German Freikorps. His activities sabotaging French occupying troops after World War I led to his arrest and eventual execution by French forces. His way of death fostered an aura of martyrdom around him, which was cultivated by German nationalist groups, in particular the Nazi Party. During the Third Reich, he was widely commemorated as a national hero.

<sup>11</sup> Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen (2 May 1892 – 21 April 1918), also widely known as the Red Baron, was a German fighter pilot with the Imperial German Army Air Service (Luftstreitkräfte) during World War I. He is considered the ace-of-aces of the war, being officially credited with 80 air combat victories.

- this phrase was coined by the "Young German Order's"<sup>12</sup> newspaper and Franz Schauwecker<sup>13</sup> managed to find the most correct words to express our attitude towards plutocracy. In any case it doesn't come down to utilizing them in concocting social programs for the creation of common well-being. From the statements of all unions it becomes clear that the frontline youth is not going to stand for someone's non-transparent interests. It saw through the trick that hides behind the shell of a friendly advice to "leave politics to the more experienced people and dedicate yourself to exclusively military matters."

The struggle unfolds for the state of frontline soldiers! We have formed the four primary qualities of the new state. They are nationalism, socialism, defensive capabilities and authoritarian structure. There were no objections. One Prussian general wrote that these distinct qualities are none other than those of the state of Frederick William I, as well as of the Roman republic. They are naturally present wherever the masculine, soldier's spirit reigns. Fruitless arguments of the intellect "for" and "against" lose their meaning when confronted by "character." That is why we purposely stress that for the resolution of the social question simple "tactical means" are enough, for if someone didn't take away from war a clear understanding of the essence of the question, then they can read sociology literature all they want and miss what is important. If we want revolution then we need the strength of the estate that is already today full of revolutionary energy and capabilities. The unions are proud that among their members 80% are workers. Make your own conclusions.

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<sup>12</sup> The Young German Order (in German Jungdeutscher Orden, often abbreviated as Jungdo) was a large para-military organisation in Weimar Germany.

<sup>13</sup> Franz Schauwecker (March 26, 1890 - May 31, 1964) was a German writer and publicist.

Now it should be clear what we don't mean by unification. We're not talking about moving pieces on a chessboard. Baron Hans Henning von Grote<sup>14</sup> justly noted the dangers of the V.V.V.<sup>15</sup> No unions that don't aim for a power struggle, don't gather their will into a fist and who are incapable of marching and military advancing! It's not a matter of mechanically adding new members but of organically unifying. Can we hope for accomplishing our set out task?

Yes, we can! 500 men from all movements that present in themselves a real force have already confirmed that they are working in a nationalistic direction. Unions have begun forming (for instance just recently in Weimar), gatherings took place and events within the scope of various groups and printing houses. It is not at all a matter of banners and slogans! Everyone are striving for the concentration of force and are independently making decisions about unification. At the same time it is important that we create an independent foundation, like a central conscience that would allow us to overcome disputes.

Proposals exist to form a nationalist core on the basis of a special program. In reality it is difficult to imagine something less prudent. It would mean removing leaven from their daily bread. Success guarantees decisiveness, unity of idea; not unity of an ideological system, but a common sense of conjugation. It will not be difficult to prepare projects of programs and constitutions, right now hundreds and thousands of minds are working on it. But they will remain on paper if they have no support of the combat unions. And nationalism simply has no other support than these unions and national-socialists. Striving to internally strengthen organizations created with love and

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<sup>14</sup> Hans Henning Alfred August Freiherr von Grote (born September 7, 1896 - May 18, 1946) was a German officer and writer.

<sup>15</sup> Jünger is referring to the negative evaluation Grote gave to the "United Fatherland Unions" (Vereinigte Vaterlandische Verbände) - an artificial union of some armed unions and similar organizations.

enthusiasm, to strengthen their positions and lessen friction we'll provide nationalism the greatest service. We'll breathe in power to the organs and then the idea will be capable of utilizing them.

Friedrich Franz in an "A reader's letter" (Standarte #16) reproaches me: supposedly I am too optimistic. I am ready to admit to that. However if we don't want to be get stuck in meaningless quarrels, then we must try and see not what exists at present, but the sprouts of that which will be. We shouldn't limit ourselves to exclusively "legal means" either, which are not of the least importance. Only mediocrity and weaklings cling to them, meaning their defeat is assured. We live in unusual times and they demand unusual methods. "Victorious revolutions are always legal," - so writes one frontline officer, and these words should be heeded.

So let it ferment! In all movements - if one forgets about the hitchhikers who appear always and everywhere - there is a solid core of reliable soldiers who will make it through. The day draws near when combat unions and individuals will give their leaders a specific task to send trusted persons to the grey council of soldier and worker deputies. They will hear the demands of the 30 year old frontline soldiers and ignoring those demands will already be impossible.

# TIME OF FATE

*Arminius, January 2nd 1927*

Time of fate<sup>1</sup> cannot be calculated or measured by the hourly mechanism; everything that happens within it is incompatible with the reliability and infallibility of the experiment. Time of fate is not an astronomical time. It is possible to measure the time it takes light to reach our eye from some star and it is likewise possible to measure how much time it takes some roofer to reach the pavement from the fourth floor of a building. However no brain, no matter how perfect, is capable of calculating what at the same time goes on in the roofer's soul. One 300 pages novel is dedicated to just that kind of event, however even 3000 pages would probably be insufficient. Drowning people in but a second and hundredths of a second live out their entire lives all over again, all manner of facts, events and shreds of thought pass before their eyes. Twelve hour sleep is equal to a second when in the intoxication of an assault, and, frankly, in any serious moment of life we do not notice time. To someone under fire in the trenches it lasts time drags on forever. Time flies, time stretches, one man dies, a whole people die - time stands still. That is the time of fate. Of course while the roofer was falling the watch in his pocket kept on ticking, but that was an insignificant detail in the eternity of spaces and times that he had crossed. The theory of relativity sets a special time for the observer. Scientists are discussing this subject but we have no time for them. One thing is clear: any measured time exists within time of fate. Time of fate

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<sup>1</sup> The question of time is one of the central themes in Jünger's works. Later an entire essay will be dedicated to it - "At the wall of time" (1959)

includes measured time in itself but that is by far not the only thing it includes.

The march of hours of fate is inconstant. Sometimes the arrow barely moves and sometimes it spins wildly. In the calendar of fate there are unremarkable decades, years can go by before one holiday is changed by another. There are days and hours that in certain circumstances can last a hundred years. And to the contrary, moments of combat are experienced completely differently, when blood and moments of peace are sacrificed to fate, when history is sealed. Thus from the depths of fateful time are quietly born new, for now invisible, future forms. "The dew falleth on the grass when the night is most silent"<sup>2</sup>. While astronomical time is measured by mathematically fixed movements, passing of the planets, a trickle of sand in an hourglass or by the movement of a steel arrow on the dial, the passing of the time of fate cannot be measured by any means, it is as different in any given moment as are different the strands of fate. They cannot be measured but only *assessed*. Life itself is the hours of fate, and her arrows are animated by a living force. Time of fate is the subjective opposite of objective time. Hence why comprehending it means not being objective, not measuring, not "just" but a subjective, evaluating and "injust" person. It means to *feel* when the time has come. But no one can see and hear it, know it.

In the tiny space of time of fate that we call history, history of mankind, the flow of fate is inseparably tied with blood, much like how the electric current needs metallic conductors. It is possible, analogically to the system of chemical elements, physical qualities and animal subspecies, to highlight a multitude of branches of this blood-flow - from great arteries of cultures to the tiniest capillaries of

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<sup>2</sup> Passage from "Thus spoke Zarathustra" (chapter "The Stillest Hour").

individuals. Parallel to the circulatory system forms a consciousness of new necessities, a new character, a special sense of fate's logic. The process of forming new character is one of the most marvelous wonders in the world of fate, one that is beyond the power of rational darwinian methods. Special character appears suddenly and its first magnificent appearance on fate's stage does not go unnoticed. Infusorian's red eye already holds in itself the capabilities of all future eyes, Goethe thought up *Faust* in his youth, one of Grünewald's<sup>3</sup> paintings contains within itself all modern naturalism and expressionism, and the style of the first battle with which a young people declares itself in history foretells the style of the last battle after which it leaves the stage. And it doesn't matter, if we're talking about a troop of horsemen, a squadron of warships, tanks or planes.

In the eternal flow of the great time of fate each organic unit has its own particular moment of fate. While for one the sun is just rising, for another it is at its zenith, and for another still the cold night descends. Only gods tower above the time of fate, they are eternally young and full of energy. The image of the Eternal Jew is an amazing symbol of our life, doomed to miserable stagnation once our life's earthly meaning is fulfilled and its allotted time is up<sup>4</sup>. Inability to die is the greatest curse to a mortal, hence why great heroes and saints joyfully accept their time of death.

A particular man doesn't just live in his own time. He simultaneously lives in the time of his kin, his people, his culture and these different experienced times are one of the primary sources for dramatic conflict. The son is younger than the father for each of them

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<sup>3</sup> Matthias Grünewald (c. 1470 – 31 August 1528) was a German Renaissance painter of religious works who ignored Renaissance classicism to continue the style of late medieval Central European art into the 16th century.

<sup>4</sup> The figure of the Eternal Jew, or Ahasuerus, appears again in Ernst Jünger's "The Worker" in the chapter "The Fall of masses and individuals."

is involved in his personal time of fate. However he is older than his father in the sense of being included in their common time of kin. We must experience this with particular intensity, because our time of fate, compared to the previous generation, has gone way ahead. We call the form of common necessity of generations' tradition, and its living core is the essence of tradition. The latter doesn't indicate something that has already formed, but a constantly developing in the great flow of time of fate, that is to say the blood-flow's very character the essence of which is realized in time, merging of future and past in the fiery hearth of the present. Contemporary generation will live in the spirit of tradition if it is capable of complimenting personal necessity with supreme necessity of the generation. It doesn't matter by what means. Revolution will destroy tradition as form, but that is precisely why the essence of tradition is realized<sup>5</sup>.

Peoples that share the fate of the same great culture are none-the-less present in their own time of fate. Some people live slowly, others with great speed. We, Germans are a slow living people. Our state, Imperium germanicum, as the supreme and perfect form of national character, hasn't yet found its manifestation. We are younger than others in relation to time of fate; we may have been born at the same time as others, but our life went on slower, deeper and ardently. From a sense of their own superiority, proud of their polished form, other people accused us of barbarism in the last war, something that besides the usual hatred also indicated a good measure of respect. In that word was reflected the fear of the young, of that which stands closer to the

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<sup>5</sup> Jünger's thoughts on tradition and revolution as well as the concept of a "young people" have traces of considerable influence of Arthur Moeller van den Bruck. The idea of "young peoples" has its origins in Dostoevsky's "A Writer's Diary," who counted Russians and Germans among said young peoples. Moeller and Merezhkovsky attempted to release the Complete Collection of Dostoyevsky's works in German, thus helping to popularize his ideas in Germany.



## Time of Fate

source, wild and dangerous flow of blood that is still yet to reap its rewards. Naturally in the mind of another time of fate this blood appears as a manifestation of evil.

No matter where we've headed, everywhere we came in contact with another, foreign to us time. Dry leaves that crumple underfoot, trampled bugs, mosquitoes in the air, flock of cranes high in the sky - everything living follows its rules, lives according to its own laws. Everywhere a different rhythm and different length of life - from a drop of blood that evaporates in a few hours, to the cosmic bodies that experience thousands of years as but a few seconds. But it is not all about the variety of movement. Each individual is conjugated to the movement of the supreme time of fate. He doesn't simply revolve around his own center, counting days and nights, minutes and hours, but is alike to the satellites moving around their planets that are not tied to the trajectory of the central stars, which is why there are curves and intersections of fates. They are out of a mere mortal's control.

However we have already stated: man determines his place in the time of fate by evaluating, not measuring. Man *feels* if he is young or old, if he belongs to the future or the past, if he is blossoming, in his prime or decay. Man lives in the good old days or dreams about a better future: his own present doesn't seem sufficiently important. Otherwise man carries his time in himself and sets the clocks in the town and village according to it. Every person has their own calendar of holidays and we have to fake a satisfied face, coming to someone else's holiday. Man lives in tradition and notices someone else's dates only in as much as they are related to his own.

Hence why we must take an active stance towards our time and fill it with life. Let us see meaning in it, *our* meaning, let us feel the red strings of blood by which we are tied to our time! Let's proudly comprehend the great time of fate, common to us and our fathers! Yet

as a generation we are separate from them. The time we spent in combat *demands from us* to wish differently, even if we are striving for the same goals. Let us dissociate ourselves from reactionaries and romanticists, utopians and improvers of the world - they don't live in our time. To act and wish for that which is necessary - that which is desired by fate - we can do only in our own time. Let it appear difficult, disgusting and ill - we say "Yes" to it, like a seeder says "Yes" to his plowed field. Where else are we to be if not in our own time? Any argument with time in which you live is non-other than admitting one's own weakness. So let us make sure that *our* time and no other comes to manifest!

## NEW NATIONALISM

*Völkischer beobachter, January 23rd/24th 1927*

New nationalism is the central movement of our time, one that any organization must join if it doesn't want to lose touch with the living forces of the epoch.

The sense of national originality we call *national sense*. National sense becomes *national consciousness* when as a result of particular events the distinctions between the essence and the goals of the nation are made manifest. In 1914 we all experienced a powerful splash of national consciousness. *It was in those unforgettable years that new nationalism was born.* It then became apparent to all, what a gigantic task can be accomplished if one fully integrates with the nation, feels its living connection that is greater and more important than the mechanical sum of individuals.

But national sense and national consciousness alone are not enough. They must be joined by *will* and readiness to fight with all of one's might for the originality and rights of the nation. That is the *will to power* inherent to each healthy organism.

*The state is but the form of the nation, it must never be the nation's goal in itself.*

If we ask ourselves, does the nation's form respond to the demands of the time, what is this state that we live in now, then it will be the easiest to answer the given question by saying that it is the *bürger state*. "Liberalism" is the most favorite word of such states (and there's more than a few of those in Europe since the start of last century), a word that after Nietzsche acquired a rotten taste.

We already had a liberal state before the war in the guise of a constitutional monarchy. Unfortunately it continues to exist in the Weimar parliamentary-liberal apparatus. Its latest stage is the state of lawyers and secretaries of petty bourgeoisie labor unions.

However the sprouts of future time are already breaking through its calloused shell. All over Europe begins a national task of liquidating the outdated liberal machinery that is wasting its last breath in parliamentary babble. The word "bürger" has lost its former weight. A new estate is making its way to the political scene and is preparing to take power into its own hands. It is the 4th estate. The worker's estate! And all the while the trust for the word "bürger" diminishes, the word "worker" sounds louder and louder. "Worker" doesn't mean the same thing as "the working class" - a term of historical materialism, invented by the bürger and the university professor. The worker as a class exists only in the confines of a class state, which is none other than the liberal bürger state with all its parties that in essence amount to nothing more than class representation. However, just like the class state came to replace the dynastic monarchies, so will the nationalistic state come to replace to the class state.

*The worker in the new sense means a commonality of blood of all workers within the nation and for the benefit of the nation. Only this commonality is capable of overcoming the ugliness of capitalism.*

*From here is derived the most immediate goal of new nationalism - to take on the form of the worker's movement.* The task of the workers then lies in understanding that victory in the struggle for their existence can only be achieved in the scope of the nation.

*Right now only one state exists in Europe, whose form is dictated by the nationalistic workers.* What do we care for the malicious attacks of civilization supporters, of these literary-westerners, who have monopolized all our press? Take this example of an absence of

spirituality - the recently released issue of *Simplizissimus*,<sup>1</sup> directed against Mussolini. Truthfully, there were instances of violence, and that vexed the gentlemen of liberal circles where, despite all disputes, they attempt to avoid all serious confrontations. However the primary and most honorable goal of *new nationalism* is precisely a *strong state power of a strictly authoritarian type*. And if this power creates obstacles in the way of any scribbler trampling his own nation into the dirt with impunity, in other words if it abolishes the freedom of press, such a move can only be welcomed. Naturally such power will inevitably become the sworn enemy of parliamentarianism. Strict subordination of economy to the state, about which it is impossible to talk today (seeing how both employers and hired workers are only using state power for their own goals), such subordination can guarantee economic security of not just separate individuals, but of the entire people as a whole.

*Next, the foremost duty of the nationalistic state will be the creation of a powerful army, equipped with the most modern technical means.* Thanks to the army the just demands of the nation will have weight behind them, otherwise we are doomed to a comic or tragic resentment of the humiliated and insulted. Only with this considerable argument will it be possible to review the Treaty of Versailles - the true spawn of liberalism that outrageously violates the national principle.

*The cornerstones in the building of a nationalistic state - nationalism in its pure form, socialism, defensive capabilities and authoritarian structure.* These words are not new yet we imbue them with completely new meaning, meaning that same as everything significant can only be felt, for it cannot be understood rationally. As it was already said, Italy is currently the only country where they seriously

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<sup>1</sup> Popular satirical political journal *Simplicissimus*, published in Munich since 1896. Reference to issue #32 from November 9th, 1926.

attempted to realize this idea. It can be said that the "March on Rome"<sup>2</sup> has the same meaning for the new will awakening in the depths of a people, as the taking of the Bastille had for the bourgeoisie.

As for ourselves, despite the great casualties our situation is much better than it may at first appear. Please understand me right: *these favorable conditions for the work of modern nationalism can be largely attributed to the 1918 revolt*. However, revolutionaries were least of all expecting this exact effect, since their revolt was the last dirty triumph of liberalism's destructive toil. Thankfully history works in such ways that the decisive role in it is not given to plans but to the results of actions.

Speaking purely objectively, disregarding any sentimental thoughts, then in our present situation the revolution can be considered a great blessing, seeing how it happened at all. Any organism finds it easier to repeat already familiar motions rather than completely new and unfamiliar ones. The German is originally not a revolutionary man, he is made distinct by his inherent respect for authority. *However such a powerful shift as the transition from a liberal bourgeoisie state to a state of nationalistic workers can only happen on the revolutionary path*. Constitution leaves no room for maneuverability. The fact that the 1918 revolution - despite the betrayal of the nation that will never be forgiven - at the most dangerous point betrayed the Wilhelm state casts a shadow on the very state that it produced. *It is exactly for this reason that nationalism has the right to question loyalty to the current state*. It is highly probable that nationalism, as it exists today, would have been in violent opposition to the Wilhelm regime, but this new opposition appears all

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<sup>2</sup> The March on Rome was a march by which Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's National Fascist Party came to power in the Kingdom of Italy. The march took place from 22 to 29 October 1922.

the more clear and active to us. Thanks to it we for the first time began seriously discussing the idea of a nationalistic revolution.

One other positive outcome of the November revolution for nationalism consists in that it had cleared the way for nationalism, fulfilling for it the task that it was back then incapable of achieving itself. Let's remember the youth of 1813: their greater-Germany will could not withstand the confrontation with the dynastic regime! *Let us think, for instance, how would have the House of Hapsburg reacted to nationalistic demands!* That is why we can only welcome the tendency towards centralization of power, since a nationalistic state requires hierarchy firmly tied to a single personality.

Likewise one shouldn't underestimate the army of the disgruntled, born out of the November uprising. It was no longer a matter of liberty, equality, brotherhood and the idealistic potential of liberalism had already been considerably worn out. The mob was satisfying itself with the promises of material goods - "peace, liberty, bread!" Does one really have to be reminded of how well these promises were realized?! *We can calmly claim that we live in a state that nobody is satisfied with the possible exception of a handful of people who profited from the revolution.* Its entire shaky structure is held together exclusively by the party struggle, none of which are capable of putting an end to this state of affairs.

So then, the foundation for a real German revolution is ready. There is no more need for acquiring royal concessions or improving the liberal constitution by means of debate. Now is the right time to take a risk and take the whole.

But where are we to get the forces ready to take on such a task? *Obviously parties will not help us!* Even if one of the major parties could commit a coup, the power wouldn't be in German hands but in the hands of a certain stratum's interests.

No, parties are not among the chosen. Yet just as the new type of soldier-worker comes to replace the dying bourgeoisie, so will behind the facade of party struggle form entirely new forces. *I am talking about retinues called upon to serve in the organs of nationalistic struggle*<sup>3</sup>. Parties as the organs of the bourgeoisie are based on universal suffrage. *Retinues on the other hand are founded on their duty of loyalty to the führer. The strength of parties is in the electoral ballots, the strength of retinues is in the level of their military discipline.* Parties as a liberal formation present foremost the interests of owners or those who are deprived of ownership. *Retinues as blood unions present foremost the goals inherent to the blood.* Parties have no authoritarian leader, *whereas the striking force of a retinue is concentrated in a singular personality.*

We Germans cannot complain on the lack of retinues. To the contrary it seems like there are too many of them. Albeit we should keep in mind: today the internal structure of particular retinues is still too varied. The spirit of the modern worker is already prevalent in some of them, lending them the typical national-revolutionary and social-revolutionary character, whereas in others the ideas of a class state are not yet fully overcome. Dependent on the views of the past epoch they flirt around with parties, with patriarchal forms of economy, factory unions and collaboration within the scope of the liberal state - the arch enemy of national powers. Yet it seems that precisely now serious changes began to occur everywhere. Even among the most reactionary retinues appears *a young nationalistic opposition* that sooner or later

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<sup>3</sup> Jünger is using the word "Gefolgschaft" which was firmly cemented in the dictionary of the "conservative revolution" and later on was adopted in the Nazi dictionary. Ancient Germans used this word to designate loyalty of a free man to his king. In his "Worker" Jünger uses the word as a technical term to designate new forms of organizing masses of people who fit the "worker's gestalt."



## New Nationalism

will achieve victory because it is in the youth that the comprehension of new tasks is born.

However - and this may be far more important - *lately even inside the marxist working class new labor leaders began to appear, who are not foreign to the nationalistic question* and their speeches already differ little from the speeches of nationalists in combat unions. This path leads us into the thick of the workers. For if nationalism *in its struggle for power requires military leaders, then it needs labor leaders to realize its economic demands.*

There is no doubt that the entire blooming variety of ideas and movements at some point will inevitably feel a necessity in aligning together and seeking mutual support. One can suspect that as soon as a unified movement center is formed, either in the *face of a führer<sup>4</sup>* or in the form of some union of labor leaders, then both isolated individuals and closed groups will not be able to withstand the mighty centripetal movement.

A new worldview is being born before our very eyes, and it is already seeping into the hearts of the new generation. Let us hope that this generation will be capable of realizing in other ways that, which fate did not allow to happen on the fields of great battles!

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<sup>4</sup> Despite popular opinion the so-called "Führerproblem" was one of the key themes of German political discussions of the 1920s. Its solutions were offered by social-democrats, young conservatives, national-bolsheviks and national-socialists.

# NATIONALISM AND MODERN LIFE

*Arminius, February 20th 1927*

Our epoch is devoid of forms: all of life is ready to transform into active force hence why it doesn't care for symbols. However, in some weird manner we had adopted one ritual that has a deeply symbolic meaning. The pace of life in our time grows faster with each passing minute and if one were to talk about any kind of freedom then it is no more than the freedom of the wizard's apprentices - our daily experience simply leaves no space left for faith in freedom of will. Little space is left for contemplation either - holidays on the calendar of fate fly by one after another and few notice the events the far lasting consequences of which will determine the life of future generations.

Nevertheless the need in contemplating, in the meaning of existence makes itself known. What other than this need can explain the fact that at their moments of triumph people suddenly stop rapid movement of life as if wishing to ask the silence that is unnoticed behind the powerful gusts of wind. And this is understandable, after all we even only recognize the movement of the clock once its pendulum stops. So do we for a one minute stop the trains in a clear field, halt the movement of the factory flywheels and turn off the car motors on a busy traffic road, in order to pay tribute to the dead, remember a war or to meet with jubilation the announcement of peace. To stop the pivotal points of existence, to grasp from this peculiar activity even but a minute and dedicate it to a much deeper meaning - that is real contemplation for our generation, which wastes all its energy outwardly and doesn't know sacrifices more valuable than energy.

Yet still human existence, which gives so much emphasis to motion and barely dedicates time to contemplation, is not necessarily devoid of meaning. Life among machines and flammable materials is usually called sober and soulless, it is considered to be "games on asphalt," and to further accentuate its cold mechanics, people speak of life separated by city pavement from natural soil and its life sustaining sources. Observing the superficial flow of our working days, and even holidays, one is readily inclined to agree with such a conclusion. Do we truly still have real weekends, and isn't the way we spend our free time indicate a constant caution of motion suddenly stopping? Seeing the monotonous mass of people leaving the city in slender, almost military-like columns, observing sport fields where people are taking care of their bodies not unlike how a worker looks after a machine, and finally, marveling at the almost automatic behavior of the crowd at entertainment venues, that practically seems to be celebrating some mysterious cult to the sound of constantly flowing music - observing all this one can't help but notice that even leisure has become a variation of work, became the mechanism's playful makeweight, its necessary accompaniment.<sup>1</sup>

However this life is still not defined by mechanisms alone, on the surface one can also see meaning, though one cannot grasp it while being on the surface. We think ourselves firmly secure, and the more geometric forms persist in our world, the more we are inclined to search for some goal in life, in other words something rational. Yet dreams also sometimes discover a strict logical order, which doesn't at all diminish their appearance of islands in a mysterious ocean. Therefore nature finds its way even through the pavement of big cities and breathes real life

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<sup>1</sup> Jünger further develops this thought in "The Worker" ("On labor as a way of life").

into the work of machines and marionettes, life that is superior to any expediency and does not bow obey the rules of mathematics.

Though perhaps one shouldn't bother pondering the meaning of this life, for it can only be experienced firsthand and one can at best believe that he is fulfilling its meaning. In its external form it is reminiscent of mosquito flocks that rise from the surface of ponds in like regular columns. Then why do these columns, without dispersing, stand on water, as if made of stone, when the particles they are made out of are constantly in chaotic, meaningless motion? There can be but only the following answer: they hold form not thanks to the sum of mosquitoes but because of a realized in them superior order. In mathematics the organic whole is not equal to the sum of its parts but is greater than it.

Likewise in our life things that at first seem senseless are not at all without a supreme meaning. And that feeling of emptiness that sometimes takes hold of use, in essence is not at all fear before the sobriety and coldness of life, but fear before that insuperable might with which life it takes hold of and consumes the individual, washing away all obstacles erected by the individual in its path. This life is not at all sober, to the contrary, it bodes intoxication. Only when intoxicated do people consider themselves to be more sober than ever, and when they sleep a deep sleep they think they are awake like never before.

Yet let us try and imagine ourselves as outside observers standing in one of the big squares at the height of traffic flow. A fantastic image would unfold before us: thousands of randomly moving people, deafening automobile horns, a powerful waterfall of flickering lights of all manner of colors - does this image not remind one of that mosquito swarm? Of course everything within this stream is pursuing its own fleeting interests and they, summing up, birth the rational phenomena of economics and transport. And yet still this stream as a whole is

greater than the sum of individuals, it is a manifestation of powerful life that bursts like a flame from underground and burns in each unconscious atom<sup>2</sup>. That is the eternal meaning in a special space, a special time. In *our* space and *our* time!

The mighty drive toward conquest is the very best that is inherent in our race and it had opened before us the way to many mysterious worlds. Our desire to uncover a mystery, go there where cold passion has made union with fiery will to life is most vividly displayed in the struggle for reaching the poles<sup>3</sup>, the furthest points on Earth that lie in the eternal cold and have a purely magical meaning. Only this can one understand the tender emotion, the sacrifice and the readiness to accomplish a task. But the most wonder comes, of course, from the spirit itself, that expresses that readiness. It urges us to dig up ruins of unknown cities, to cast nets into the depths of the ocean in the search of new creatures and populate epochs long gone with fantastic animals. Everywhere our gaze reaches life promises adventures and those are, in essence, none other than a mirror reflection of our own life.

However it is precisely this, our life, from which symbolic circles radiate in all directions, that remains the most closed off to us territory. Yet none of the ancient East's magical cities can compare with the big city of our days. Yes, in the depths of the ocean exist peculiar creatures, fish that light their way with multicolored torches, cuttlefish shooting inky clouds but can they compare with the organs that are at our life's disposal? Of course we are surprised, but not deeply enough, missing the essential. It is not progress that is surprising, which like a skilled magician demonstrates for us amazing feats - everything new and

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<sup>2</sup> Later Jünger will provide the definition of gestalt as "a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts."

<sup>3</sup> Referring to the rivalry between Roald Amundsen and Robert Scott for becoming the first to reach the South Pole.

unheard of is already familiar and old the next day; it is not the rate of movement that is surprising but the force behind it which always existed and always will exist. It's not the organs that are marvelous, but the eternal meaning that creates them.

"Everything transitory is but an image"<sup>4</sup> - but that is exactly why it deserves veneration. We have to internally isolate ourselves from the purely mechanical processes of modern life, completely dissolve on its surface. Every moment of this life contains in itself the depth and surface, what is becoming and what has become. Only from judging external phenomena can we comprehend the gestalt of the animating force, only in what is becoming, what scholastics called *natura naturans*,<sup>5</sup> can be discovered the living substance of what has become. Only by living through a great war do we again obtain the ability of double vision. This vision is reflected in the paintings of magical realism, where each line of the external world is subjugated to the strict mathematical formulas, and through their icy surface incomprehensibly comes through a warm mysterious glow<sup>6</sup>. We are not materialists, we are making a claim to call ourselves realists, because war has taught us this vision. Take the modern battleship for example. A manifest of iron will - coal and steel, oil, explosives and electricity, a specially trained team of people - from admiral to coal stoker - in other words, a manually serviced miracle of precise mechanics, practical in every

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<sup>4</sup> Quote from Goethe's "Faust," part 1.

<sup>5</sup> Nature that creates (lat).

<sup>6</sup> "Magico-realistic" perspective offers a view of the cosmos in which "our everyday phenomena act as symbols of a more significant life." Symbols not as merely signs or directions but in accordance to Greek meaning, parts of an undivided whole. Symbols are the visible reality through which man receives a part in eternity, divine depth, discovering his rank in the hierarchy of the world. Jünger calls the vision that sees the invisible behind the visible and discovers the transparency of the world stereoscopic. Jünger's essay "The Adventurous Heart" can serve as an example of the magic realism style.

aspect, worth millions. And in but a few seconds it is sinking, sacrificed in the name of things that cannot be known with certainty, which can only be believed in. The burning battleship is sinking but does not lower the flag. To the screams of "hurrah" it is joining eternity and it would seem like fate itself intoxicates the blood. In faraway seas it was sacrificed to the fatherland that could possibly already tomorrow belong to history. The scream of a dying crew that pierces the heart and reaches the very depths of the soul, like lightning sheds light on the chasm between the two worlds - a chasm that is felt by each of us, from the factory worker to the secretary behind a typewriter. Naturally we're not talking about the hero's glory that always drags young men to great deeds, we are talking about the dignity of man in himself. And so long as the struggle for it goes on - and it does indeed go on - we are not just part of what has become, we participate in becoming. So long as we are not satisfied with rational goals we won't stop wishing to gain meaning. To not accept all this at face value but like a symbol to be ready of any sacrifice, great or small - that is the dignity of man.

Therefore anyone can make a considerable contribution, adopt that custom that we had mentioned at the very start. But one single minute is enough for contemplation. Among the automobiles and illuminated signs of the big city, in the thick of massive gatherings, in the motorized pace of work and leisure, into the bustle of modern Babylon anyone can make their own feasible contribution by stopping for one minute, like a man from another world who with childish wonder says: "Yes, there is meaning in all this, deep meaning, and I too fulfill it."

# NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

*Arminius, March 27th 1927*

A nationalist's ideal is his own internal position. And everyone who strive for that ideal, even if their views don't align, are kindred spirits, seeing how the distance between the surface of a ball and its center is the same everywhere. An organization that strives for power would act completely differently in this situation, seeing how it's most clear threat are other organizations like itself. However since nationalism never attempted to create a strict structure, many organizations have used the word without considering the negative consequences to themselves.

Nationalism had foremost manifested itself in the literary field, though that is exactly what it has been reproached for. One should object to this, that the spiritual flow uses other means and thus the reproach of low efficiency would be more logical to direct at practical field. It is no coincidence that on the forefront of nationalist ranks are foremost people with oratory talents and Hitler himself can be called the greatest German orator.<sup>1</sup> But it was Adolphe Thiers<sup>2</sup> who in his "History of the French Revolution" had first said that one's influence over the listeners is limited by the present moment, whereas the influence on the reader has a more stable character. Therefore such

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<sup>1</sup> By the end of the 1920s Jünger changed his positive attitude towards Hitler as a politician and towards national-socialism in general, however he had always held the Führer's oratory skills in high regard. Hitler's speech at the Munich circus where Jünger was present at the start of the 1920s left a lasting impression on him.

<sup>2</sup> Marie Joseph Louis Adolphe Thiers (15 April 1797 – 3 September 1877) was a French statesman and historian. He was the second elected President of France, and the first President of the French Third Republic. He was ex officio Co-Prince of Andorra during his term as president.



reproaches have little point in them until nationalists have turned to action. One shouldn't think that old soldiers will sit it out in their corners when the time comes. Seeing how the language of violence has a point only at decisive moments, during times of reprieve it is important to ponder on the victory of what values will the decision lead to. Naturally such contemplation must be realized thoroughly and, in my opinion, by impractical means. The phrase "Here I stand; I can do no otherwise,"<sup>3</sup> spoken seriously and responsibly, must come only after a time of pondering and internal preparations. Are we really already so certain in the truth of our words that we're ready at any moment to go into battle with them? Let us remember the war, which we had lost not because of poor organization but because of insufficient internal readiness. Naturally battalions decide the outcome of battles, and the more people stand under gun fire the closer lies victory. However they don't shoot for nothing, but for a clear and transparent idea. Therefore one cannot join the ranks unless internally convinced in the truth of their position. The story of national-socialism serves as proof of that. Why did the Munich uprising have such an amazing outcome? Is betrayal at fault for all of it? Wonderful! However betrayal has as little to do with present reality as a strike of the dagger at the end of the war<sup>4</sup>. What truly matters is that national-socialism had only a vague idea about the specifics of its own goal and therefore was mistaken in choosing its comrades. And it couldn't have a clear understanding, although by then it was the most modern and the most developed of all movements. The fact that it had managed to recover from that strike says a lot about its might. Since then there were plenty of opportunities for sharpening

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<sup>3</sup> Famous Martin Luther Phrase.

<sup>4</sup> Jünger here again distances himself from one of the central ideological points of the NSDAP, "the legend of the stab in the back" about how revolutionaries had essentially back stabbed the undefeatable German army thus ruining the successful outcome of the war.

one's position in confrontation with antagonistic and kindred in spirit movements. This struggle is only beneficial. Take marxism for example. It's far from enough to criticize Marx's fundamental work "The Capital," providing a counterargument to each of his arguments. Such works, as Spengler correctly notes, are no longer read not because they were proven wrong but because they become boring. Only *the movement* is fated to become the German labor movement of the future, which will find in itself the strength to build a likewise authoritative and convincing work. A movement that claims to manifest German will in its pure form absolutely must have people, comparable to the best German minds of the past. Of course the bar is raised high, moreover such a demand is not met by the opposition, where there are plenty of organizational talents, but no trace of new will. However it is not the opposition that sets the scale of the task. The absolute scale is determined by the spiritual effort which was at the beginning of every revolution in history. Is such magnitude possible or impossible today remains an open question, but any national-socialist will agree that it is something to strive for.

Here is where national-socialism and nationalism intersect. However the difference between them does exist. The former, being a political organization, is aimed at achieving real power, whereas the goal of nationalism is something else. On the one hand there is a desire to realize the idea, on the other - to gain understanding of it in its purest sense. Hence why the masses are so important to national-socialism, whereas to nationalism quantity has no meaning, while Spengler's phenomenon, kept so stubbornly quiet about by democrats, has more weight to it than a hundred seats in parliament.

Nevertheless such a distinction is possible within the very same body, since man is capable of both thinking and acting. Without a doubt national-socialism will be transforming so far as it is in its becoming. And

in the course of those changes it will require support that is deeper than any economic and political forces.

And what if someone disagrees with calling this support, this anvil where the strongest swords are forged, "nationalism"? Then let national-socialism, the faster it actively achieves power, work on contemplating the meaning of its own idea? However in the end what will come out is that the idea of national-socialism still does not fit into the narrow confines of the national-socialist organization which will again allow to increase the organization with new members. I am convinced: Hitler meant the same thing when he said that the goal of national-socialism will be realized with creation of new Germany. These words cannot be understood exclusively in the sense that it will win the power struggle. The very national-socialist idea must achieve such depth and such meaning, that would make it the sole idea worthy of being recognized as the German idea.

If this comes to fruition - and what nationalism does not with his whole heart wish for it to be so? - then the terms of national-socialism and nationalism will slowly merge together. In ideological terms this will look like the majority of decisions will depend on national-socialism, whereas on the personal level more and more talented people will be joining the movement that grows stronger.

## ON SPIRIT

*Widerstand, April 1927*

All living things have meaning simply from the fact of their existence. That meaning is not located somewhere externally, but within life itself. A valley where plants grow and animals live does not require someone's eyes to observe the rich variety of movements, does not need spirit that would be speculating about it. Everything that blooms in the sunlight, all that glistens and buzzes, procreates and eats one another, is born and dies - all of it has its own unique spirit and its own unique mind. It is eternally close and eternally far away from us. We can conceive a general idea about what was going on in ancient Babylon, or what magnificent creatures with giant tentacles and phosphorescent lights inhabit the deep crevices of the Atlantic Ocean. Yes, we uncover the ruins of ancient cities and cast nets into the ocean, but the essential meaning of these eternally far off places is not revealed to us even by an inch, despite our methods and devices. However when intoxicated by life's might, we march down the streets of big cities, then we partially feel that force that animated ancient Babylon. When hot blood rushes through our veins, we get an inkling of what great forces all living things possess. Only having restored a connection with the Earth will we be able to feel communion with all things that it carries upon itself.

We feel our connection with the spirit not when we try to immerse ourselves in it like a vast, free force of nature, but when we ourselves are possessed by the spirit. Spirit is connected to life like a clot, an idea or a meaningful incarnation of that very life, hence why its direction lies from the unique, limited, connected to the common. But the common does not include in itself the unique like in some zoological system. The

## On Spirit

spirit is of a masculine nature, it attacks, unwilling to be dispersed in the world, it wants to conquer it. It wants for the world to become *its* world, for it to become the same as the spirit.

The spirit is like a tree, its crown takes up all the more space the deeper its roots thrust into the soil. From deep, mysterious regions the spirit ascends to the light. The transparent spheres of consciousness are not its source, but its mouth. The spirit needs blood, for it is life itself, it doesn't need consciousness. In dramatic and creative moments, in moments when life's energy is amplified consciousness turns off. Divine inspiration, ecstasy, when according to mystics the soul unites with God, when the individual enters the unconscious unity with the foundation of the world (Weltgrund), all of man's existence is constricted to a singular point, concentrated in a singular feeling. That's when the limits of life's capabilities are reached, life becomes spirit, spirit - life, differences are lost. Saint's delight, painless detachment of a martyr, love's passion, heat of battle, an artist's vision - all this speaks of the awakening of the deep will of life. It is said in *Zarathustra* "Write in blood and you will know that blood is spirit," and it would sometimes seem as if Hebbel<sup>1</sup> writes not with ink, but with blood and mind.

Seeing how the spirit is alive and not dead, it does not grasp life by means of abstraction and generalizations, but by means of the idea. Goethe's germination was not in the concept but in the idea<sup>2</sup>. The spirit does not despise science with its methods, but understands its secondary nature compared to the sources of life, to which any phenomenon must be connected. The spirit *thinks* its necessity but

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Friedrich Hebbel (18 March 1813 – 13 December 1863) was a German poet and dramatist.

<sup>2</sup> In his essays written after WW2 (At the wall of time, Maxima - Minima. Notes to "The Worker") Jünger repeatedly comes back to the term "Urpflanze," in which he saw a more precise correlation to his notion on the "gestalt of the worker."

doesn't contemplate it. The spirit is meaningful, hence why in phenomena and in relations between them it sees meaning, not expediency. Beneath the surface mechanism it seeks to feel the deep correlation. It doesn't want to theorize, but to create, not to dissolve but to bear fruit. It doesn't strive to decompose the world into atoms so as to later artificially synthesize something, but to create magnificent paintings. To see its own reflection in all things, rather than be an eternal reflection of those things. It doesn't value the logical, but the symbolic substance of life. The spirit is above evidence, same as the logic of fate is above of the cause and effect links.

The spirit is fulfillment of the meaning of life, something whole, like how life itself is something whole and not a sum of anatomical parts. The spirit is not essence, it can't be distilled. Not some foreign principle, nor fire lit in lighthouses. It is alive, hence it's not subject to the laws of progress, but the laws of development. The spirit is not something that can be acquired, it is inherent, an essential property of life; just like character it is inherited from unfair fate. Therefore possessing spirit gives the right to aristocratic pride, the right to utilize the most magnificent gifts of life which can be neither bought nor earned. The spirit is proud, but not arrogant - it is not arrogant for the mere fact that it does not require consciousness. It is those motions in which life manifests its meaning that are full of pride: one only has to look to the butterfly that slowly unfurls its wings. And since the spirit is something whole and indivisible it is necessarily present in all meaningful manifestations of life: in the flight of a bird beneath the clouds, in the beast running across a plain and in the movements of an athlete's muscles preparing for the mark to start. The spirit is present in the complete creation and in every brush's stroke, in a statue in each strike of the cutter, in the long novel and in the short sentence. The spirit is absolutely present in the unknown soldier dying for his Fatherland, in

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the leader that declares war, in the peasant plowing the field. They all belong to the same commonality of life and therefor have common spirit, common idea that varies in the diversity of its manifestations, like how the idea of kin varies in types, or the ideas of the sexes in its individual representatives.

The spirit treats gratefully the foundation of life that sustains it, thus expressing the essence of this foundation. Only then, when life falls apart, grows bleak and weakens, does the spirit turn away from it. It stops feeling the immense connection, betrays life and rebels against necessity, against that which is desired by fate. This runaway spirit, the intellect, no longer recognizes what is unique, striving to reduce everything to a common denominator, to turn everything into cold merchandise and convertible values. It laughs at great symbols, dissolves them by means of abstraction. It aims to achieve eternity by destroying limitations. It is easy for this spirit to be just, since it doesn't have to stand up for any *unique* values. The thinner and more unreal is the layer of being in which it exists, the greater is the drive to achieve dominance over life, but life is preparing a terrible vengeance against it. The light of the liberated from all connections spirit turns the organic vision of the world into a mechanic one. Culture becomes civilization. Commonalities, created by fate, become random gatherings of people, masses, in best cases pragmatic unions. The Fatherland becomes a nuisance to freedom of movement. The so-called spiritual aristocracy or intelligentsia - an entire army of extremely flexible and shameless laborers of the mind - systematically destroys faith, makes irony of heroism and attempts to bury human dignity. By denying what is unique, that which connects and divides separate people, the individual, this pointless physical fleck of the mass, busying itself with constant self-affirmation, declares about its rights on every corner. Greedy individualism spreads and prepares the soil for nihilism. Reason

is everything, character is nothing. Art is turned into a literary and intellectual plaything in the service of the mass currents, without soil, without blood and character, feeble. Labor is turned into production, human relations are reduced to naked juristic relations. Science attempts to find mechanical formulas to the inexplicable mysteries and wonders of life, and morality of cowards and worthless souls brands all immediate manifestations of life's force and danger as "immoral." In the place of what is necessary comes the excessive, which life doesn't tolerate. Therefore the day draws near when all this heirless fuss will come to an end, the sword will stop all discussions and its sharp blade will not be softened by any theory. So long as endless conferences go on in the cabinets of the intellect, so long as something is measured and calculated, an iron fist loudly pounds on the door, ready to solve even the most complex problems. Life values the natural strength of the last barbaric people more than all the labor of the free spirit. And thus it is correct.

*This is the first of the 18 Jünger articles that were published in the national-bolshevist weekly journal *Widerstand (Resistance)*, organized by Ernst Niekish. Since then begins the slow transformation in Jünger's publicist career. The author steadily moves away from narrow political topics and dedicates more time to the style and explanation of modern life phenomena.*



## OUR STANCE

*Arminius, June 5th 1927*

Herr Becher,<sup>1</sup> a communist in his political convictions, but one with militaristic tendencies that I find favorable, in one of his recently published articles specifically dedicated to our circles is proving that the bourgeoisie at the late stage of its evolution can take one two, supposedly opposite forms - the form of refined spiritual decadence and that of merciless bloody cruelty. In his opinion "new nationalism" is a manifestation of the latter, hiding beneath the mask of military determination and believes that it regards struggle as something of a "value in itself." The author regards it as more dangerous than the wide patriotic masses, because it freed itself from the ballast of the Wilhelm era for the sake of increasing the speed of its motion. Nevertheless even "new nationalism" is portrayed as the last, desperate gesture of bourgeoisie ideology resistance against the march of the proletariat which has both the idealistic and material supremacy.

We gladly accept the attribute of "cruelty," that is to say the will to fight with any available means with exception for liberal phraseology, seeing how it does indeed accurately grasp the essence of our stance. herr Becher is known as the author of *Levisite*,<sup>2</sup> a book that was removed from the shelves immediately after its publishing. With great love and knowledge of the subject it portrays the victory of some red

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<sup>1</sup> Johannes Robert Becher (22 May 1891, in Munich – 11 October 1958, in East Berlin) was a German politician, novelist, and poet. He was affiliated with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) before World War II. At one time, he was part of the literary avant-garde, writing in an expressionist style.

<sup>2</sup> "Levisite or the Only Just War" was published in January 1926. It described how the German and American workers oppose the threat of gas warfare.

army in a gas war. Having read it we became certain that the difference in views and value systems between us isn't all that great, we certainly both prefer the necessity of the idea to the complexes of modern humanism and the ethos of comfort. However the criticism of our stance regarding class warfare is less successful. We, of course, understand that herr Becher can't regard us as anything other than representatives of the bourgeoisie worldview. Within the framework of the ideology where class warfare has the central role the categories of "bourgeois" and "proletarian" are present a priori in any possible evaluation, determining what is good and what is bad, dividing the world into two halves - marxist and capitalist. The nationalistic movement is not proletarian, therefore it has a bourgeoisie nature.

However we are free from such frameworks, to us the class state of the 19th century means no more than the dynasty state. Time presents before us other goals that differ from the problems of historic materialism, the meaning of which for life wasn't in realizing social programs, but in determining a new vector for a variety of energies and in stressing the will to power. If a movement has run its course, utilizing the same idea and presenting as revelation something that is long since known, than any great words will no longer be as bullets, but merely already shot shell casings, terms from the historical-philosophical dictionary. New values come to replace them and faith in them presumes people of a new generation and new forms of organization. That is why any man with a sense of dignity, who just 20 years ago would have joined the marxists, today becomes internally foreign to it.

That is why the suddenly awakened belief in blood ties, soil and fate, to us, people who had gone through war and experienced a radical reappraisal of values, appears more convincing, meaningful and necessary than any other kind of commonality and in particular that, which is built on logical linearity and the persuasiveness of economic

## Our Stance

theories. Hence it doesn't matter to us in the slightest, that the majority of our leaders - in the terminology of class warfare - come from the bourgeoisie camp. Yes, we recognize this "aggravating" fact: our ranks truly do have many representatives of the officer corps. However, in our defense we'll say that even before the war respectable citizens deflected attacks by calling themselves "honest bürger" ("gut bürgerlich") and thereby demonstrated a known level of class mentality; whereas the liberal minded intelligentsia started ironically talking about philistinism up to a hundred years ago, juxtapositioning it with achievements of progress, free spirit and free press. Although there are many labor leaders and even former marxists in the nationalist ranks - those very "regents of class warfare," as they were called by the marxist press.

There is nothing surprising about how in our circles specific views on labor and workers had formed that are fairly distant from the ideology of class warfare. It would be most strange if a fundamentally different sense of life didn't open up to us a completely new vision of social relations. The fundamental difference between marxism and nationalism lies in how the former beliefs the deciding factor to be the commonality of spirit, whereas the latter in the commonality of blood. Which is why the nation, the very existence of which marxism denies, has the highest metaphysical meaning to nationalism, one that determines all other values, including values of labor. We're not at all interested in wages and profits - two pillars of the moral world of class struggle - but only in labors meaning to the nation as the overcoming whole, that is more important than the sum of its parts. Economy is not a mechanical result, but an organic element of national life. Labor too is a manifest of the nation and the worker is one of its members. Any attempt to pull the worker from these ties of life, placing him in empty categories of "humanity" or international interests is a kind of state

treason of the intellect against blood. The meaning of labor is not in making profit and formation of wages, but in creation of values in the name of the nation without which it wouldn't be able to blossom with the full richness of its manifestations. That is why labor is always directed outwards, why it possesses a kind of military value, each touch of the machine is equal to a shot taken at the enemy, and each working day is like an army march.

I declare this: only this understanding of labor can liberate us from that extremely complicated situation that we find ourselves in now. To believe in what is necessary - that is our moral postulate. Only thus can the situation of every single individual be improved. For the teaching of the Internationale was not yet capable of saving even a single pfennig or alleviate even by a gram that tribute that we as a nation are forced to pay other nations. Only this view of labor as a moral action, and not that of it being a mechanical result evaluated by principles of the Taylor system<sup>3</sup> with an exact monetary equivalent, will give the worker that which is more important of any raise in wages, will give him the sense of dignity of a creative man, something that the marxist-capitalist world has none of. No amount of wage raising can change the situation of hired slavery: ignominy remains ignominy, no matter how much one is paid for it. Not wages but only a deep spiritual understanding of the meaning of labor can overcome the mechanical spirit of our age that oppresses any creative person. That's why it is illogical to wait for the hired worker to sacrifice himself in the name of great ideas which are only created for the free and the sons of free men. When the worker is relegated to the role of a kind of machine vested with universal human

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<sup>3</sup> Frederick Winslow Taylor (March 20, 1856 – March 21, 1915) was an American mechanical engineer who sought to improve industrial efficiency. He was one of the first management consultants. Taylor was one of the intellectual leaders of the Efficiency Movement and his ideas, broadly conceived, were highly influential in the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s).

## Our Stance

rights, and his labor is regarded as nothing more than an item of expenditure, moreover one that is constantly sought to be trimmed down, then very soon a mirror reflection of that situation will appear in the soul of the masses. From here inevitably stem the general fierce struggle for profit and the destruction of all real values. Then the Fatherland becomes nothing more than a figment of the exploiter's imagination, and all state institutions turn into means of compulsion since in the world where money is the dominant idea all values inevitably become up for sale and any power can be bribed, meaning that a rich soil is prepared for decay.

This process can't be stopped by marxism or capitalism, because both of them are related to it by a thousand threads. It can be stopped only by a new, deep evaluation of life and by the obedience of the calculating reason to deep feeling. This struggle is the goal of nationalism - only it can try to rip the economy out of the hands of private interests and subjugate it to the nation. If this attempt is successful then material oppression will lessen. However talking about this as a goal by means of propaganda methods means to lower ourselves to the level of demagogy and party quarrels, that is to say to be not as free people but as the oppressed, the slaves, to be incapable of fight for the idea with enthusiasm and commitment. The power of ideas is in that they demand one to sacrifice himself for it without promise of raised wages.

Which is why, herr Becher, I do not believe that communism can save us. For communism is none other than the heritage of late liberalism, the final and primitive consequence of a purely rationalistic worldview. Even if the proletariat were to win in our country (and liberalism, true to its dual nature, won't be so much standing in its way as it is going to be wholeheartedly helping it along), then it will be that portion of the masses that will come to power, which possesses the

most vividly pronounced proprietary instincts. We'll commit an injustice to the best part of the workers who have a strong will and a thirst for education, if we open before them the doors of dusty cabinets, these panopticons of materialism where no trace of living spirit is left! No, instead of entertaining the academic vanity of its spiritual fathers, pushing to the last limit violence against life, we would rather ponder on how to fortify our blood kin ties. Many fortuitous moments present themselves, for it is not only the economic program that discovers the infertility of German communism.

So then, neither the number of troops nor the popularity of the communist idea will shake our faith in that we have fought at an abandoned post. The nationalist vanguard has separated from the main forces, however we know that a day is coming when our stance will be the singularly correct one.

# TOTAL MOBILISATION

*Krieg und Krieger, 1930*

It goes against the grain of the heroic spirit to seek out the image of war in a source that can be determined by human action. Still, the multitudinous transformations and disguises which the pure form [*Gestalt*] of war endures amid the vicissitudes of human time and space offers this spirit a gripping spectacle to behold.

This spectacle reminds us of volcanoes which, although they are at work in very different regions, constantly spew forth the same earthly fire. To have participated in a war means something similar: to have been in the vicinity of such a fire-spitting mountain; but there is a great difference between Hekla in Iceland and Vesuvius in the Gulf of Naples. One might say that the difference in the landscapes vanishes the closer one approaches the crater's glowing jaws; also at the point where authentic passion breaks through—above all, in the naked and immediate struggle for life and death—it becomes a matter of secondary importance in which century, for what ideas, and with what weapons the battle is being fought. But that is not the subject of our essay.

Instead, we will try to assemble a number of facts that distinguish the last war—our war, the greatest and most influential event of our age from other wars whose history has been handed down to us.

Perhaps we can best identify the special nature of this great catastrophe by the assertion that in it, the genius of war was penetrated by the spirit of progress. This was not only the case for the fighting among the different countries; it was also true for the civil war that gathered a rich second harvest in many of them. These two phenomena, world war and world revolution, are much more closely

interrelated than a first glance would indicate. They are two sides of an event of cosmic significance, whose outbreak and origins are interdependent in numerous respects.

It is likely that many unusual discoveries await our thinking regarding the reality hidden behind the concept "progress" -an ambiguous concept glittering in many colors. Undoubtedly the way we are inclined these days to make fun of it comes too cheap. To be sure, we could cite every truly significant nineteenth-century thinker in support of our aversion; still, by all our disgust at the dullness and uniformity of the life forms at issue, the suspicion arises that their *source* is of much greater significance. Ultimately, even the process of digestion depends on the powers of a wondrous and inexplicable Life. Certainly, it can today be demonstrated convincingly that progress is, in fact, not really *progress*. But more important than this conviction, perhaps, is the question of whether the concept's real significance is not of a more mysterious and different sort: one which uses the apparently undisguised mask of reason as a superb place of hiding.

It is precisely the certainty with which progressive movements produce results contradicting their own innermost tendencies which suggests that here, as everywhere in life, what prevails are not so much these tendencies but other, more hidden impulses. "Spirit" [*Geist*] has often justifiably revealed in contempt for the wooden marionettes of progress; but the fine threads that produce their movements are invisible.

If we wish to learn something about the structure of marionettes, there is no more pleasant guide than Flaubert's novel *Bouvard and pecuchet*. But if we wish to consider the possibilities of this more secret movement-a movement always easier to sense than prove-both Pascal and Hamann offer a wealth of revealing passages.



“Meanwhile, our phantasies, illusions, *fallaciae opticae*, and fallacies stand under God’s realm.” We find statements of this sort frequently in Hamann; they reflect a sensibility that strives to incorporate the labors of chemistry into the realm of alchemy. Let us leave aside the question of which spirit’s realm rules over the optical illusion of progress: this study is no demonology, but is intended for twentieth-century readers. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: only a power of cultic origin, only a *belief*, could conceive of something as audacious as extending the perspective of utility [*Zweckmdssigkeit*] into the infinite.

And who, then, would doubt that progress is the nineteenth century’s great popular church—the only one enjoying real authority and uncritical faith?

With a war breaking out in such an atmosphere, the relation of each individual contestant to progress was bound to play a decisive role. And precisely therein lies the authentic, moral factor of our age: even the strongest armies, equipped with the industrial era’s latest weapons of annihilation, are no match for its fine, imponderable emanations; for this era can even recruit its troops from the enemy’s camp.

In order to clarify this situation, let us here introduce the concept of *total mobilization*: the times are long gone when it sufficed to send a hundred thousand enlisted subjects under reliable leadership into battle —as we find, say, in Voltaire’s *Candide*; and when, if His Majesty lost a battle, the citizen’s first duty was to stay quiet. Nonetheless, even in the second half of the nineteenth century, conservative cabinets could still prepare, wage, and win wars which the people’s representatives were indifferent towards or even against. To be sure, this presupposed a close relation between crown and army; a relation

that had only undergone a superficial change through the new system of universal conscription and which still essentially belonged to the patriarchal world. It was also based on a fixed calculation of armaments and costs, which made war seem like an exceptional, but in no sense limitless, expenditure of available forces and supplies. In this respect, even general mobilization had the character of a *partial* measure.

These restrictions not only reflect the limited degree of means, but also a specific *raison d'état*. The monarch possesses a natural instinct warning him not to trespass the bounds of dynastic power. The melting down of his treasure seems less objectionable than credits approved by an assembly; and for the decisive moment of battle, he would rather reserve his guards than a quota of volunteers. We find this instinct remaining healthy in Prussia deep into the nineteenth century. One example among many is the bitter fight for a three years' conscription: whereas a brief period of service is characteristic for a volunteer army, when dynastic power is at stake, tried and tested troops are more reliable. Frequently, we even come upon-what by today's standards is almost unthinkable-a renunciation of progress and any consummate equipping of the army; but such scruples also have their reasons. Hence hidden in every improvement of firearms-especially the increase in range-is an indirect assault on the conditions of absolute monarchy. Each such improvement promotes firing at individual targets, while the salvo incarnates the force of fixed command. Enthusiasm was still unpleasant to Wilhelm I. It springs from a source that, like Aeolus' wind-sack, hides not only storms of applause. Authority's true touchstone is not the extent of jubilation it receives, but the wars that have been lost.

Partial mobilization thus corresponds to the essence of monarchy. The latter oversteps its bounds to the extent that it is forced to make the abstract forms of spirit, money, "folk" -in short, the forces of growing national democracy-a part of the preparation for war. Looking

back we can now say that complete renunciation of such participation was quite impossible. The manner in which it was incorporated [into political life] represents the real essence of nineteenth-century statecraft. These particular circumstances explain Bismarck's maxim that politics is the "art of the possible."

We can now pursue the process by which the growing conversion of life into energy, the increasingly fleeting content of all binding ties in deference to mobility, gives an ever-more radical character to the act of mobilization-which in many states was the exclusive right of the crown, needing no counter-signature. The events causing this are numerous: with the dissolution of the estates and the curtailing of the nobility's privileges, the concept of a warrior caste also vanishes; the armed defense of the state is no longer exclusively the duty and prerogative of the professional soldier, but the responsibility of everyone who can bear arms. Likewise, because of the huge increase in expenses, it is impossible to cover the costs of waging war on the basis of a fixed war budget; instead, a stretching of all possible credit, even a taxation of the last pfennig saved, is necessary to keep the machinery in motion. In the same way, the image of war as armed combat merges into the more extended image of a gigantic labor process (*Arbeitsprozesses*). In addition to the armies that meet on the battlefields, originate the modern armies of commerce and transport, foodstuffs, the manufacture of armaments the army of labor in general. In the final phase, which was already hinted at toward the end of the last war, there is no longer any movement whatsoever-be it that of the homemaker at her sewing machine without at least indirect use for the battlefield. In this unlimited marshaling of potential energies, which transforms the warring industrial countries into volcanic forges, we perhaps find the most striking sign of the dawn of the age of labor [*Arbeitszeitalter*]. It makes the World War a historical event superior in

significance to the French Revolution. In order to deploy energies of such proportion, fitting one's sword-arm no longer suffices; for this is a mobilization [*Rüstung*] that requires extension to the deepest marrow, life's finest nerve. Its realization is the task of total mobilization: an act which, as if through a single grasp of the control panel, conveys the extensively branched and densely veined power supply of modern life towards the great current of martial energy.

At the beginning of the World War, the human intellect had not yet anticipated a mobilization of such proportions. Still, its signs were manifest in isolated instances—for example, the large employment of volunteers and reservists at the war's start, the ban on exports, the censor's regulations, the changes of currency rates. In the course of the war this process intensified: as examples, we can cite the planned management of raw materials and foodstuffs, the transposition of industrial conditions [*Arbeitsverhältnisses*] to military circumstances, civil-guard duty, the arming of trade vessels, the unexpected extension of the general staff's authority, the "Hindenburg program," Ludendorff's struggle for the fusion of military and political command.

Nevertheless, despite the spectacle, both grandiose and frightful, of the later "battles of materiel" [*Materialschlachten*], in which the human talent for organization celebrates its bloody triumph, its fullest possibilities have not yet been reached. Even limiting our scope to the technical side of the process, this can only occur when the image of martial operations is prescribed for conditions of peace. We thus see that in the postwar period, many countries tailor new methods of armament to the pattern of total mobilization.

In this regard, we can introduce examples such as the increasing curtailment of "individual liberty," a privilege that, to be sure, has always been questionable. Such an assault takes place in Russia and Italy and then here in Germany; its aim is to deny the existence of

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anything that is *not* a function of the state. We can predict a time when all countries with global aspirations must take up the process, in order to sustain the release of new forms of power. France's evaluation of the balance of power from the perspective of *energie potentielle* belongs in this context, as does the model America has offered-already in peacetime- for cooperation between industry and the army. German war literature raised issues touching on the very essence of armament, forcing the general public to make judgments about matters of war (if somewhat belatedly and in reality anticipating the future). For the first time, the Russian "five-year plan" presented the world with an attempt to channel the collective energies of a great empire into a *single* current. Seeing how economic theory turns volte-face is here instructive. The "planned economy," as one of the final results of democracy, grows beyond itself into a general unfolding of power. We can observe this shift in many events of our age. The great surging forth of the masses thereby reaches a point of crystallization.

Still, not only attack but also defense demands extraordinary efforts, and here the world's compulsions perhaps become even clearer. Just as every life already bears the seeds of its own death, so the emergence of the great masses contains within itself a democracy of death. The era of the well-aimed shot is already behind us. Giving out the night-flight bombing order, the squadron leader no longer sees a difference between combatants and civilians, and the deadly gas cloud hovers like an elementary power over everything that lives. But the possibility of such menace is based neither on a partial nor general, but rather a *total* mobilization. It extends to the child in the cradle, who is threatened like everyone else-even more so.

We could cite many such examples. It suffices simply to consider our daily life, with its inexorability and merciless discipline, its smoking, glowing districts, the physics and metaphysics of its commerce, its

motors, airplanes, and burgeoning cities. With a pleasure-tinged horror, we sense that here, not a single atom is not in motion-that we are profoundly inscribed in this raging process. Total Mobilization is far less consummated than it consummates itself; in war and peace, it expresses the secret and inexorable claim to which our life in the age of masses and machines subjects us. It thus turns out that each individual life becomes, ever more unambiguously, the life of a worker; and that, following the wars of knights, kings, and citizens, we now have wars of *workers*. The first great twentieth-century conflict has offered us a presentiment of both their rational structure and their mercilessness.

We have touched on the technical aspects of Total Mobilization; their perfection can be traced from the first conscriptions of the Convention government during the French Revolution and Scharnhorst's army reorganization<sup>1</sup> to the dynamic armament program of the World War's last years-when states transformed themselves into gigantic factories, producing armies on the assembly line that they sent to the battlefield both day and night, where an equally mechanical bloody maw took over the role of consumer. The monotony of such a spectacle-evoking the precise labor of a turbine fueled with blood-is indeed painful to the heroic temperament; still, there can be no doubt regarding its symbolic meaning. Here a severe necessity reveals itself: the hard stamp of an age in a martial medium.

In any event, Total Mobilization's technical side is not decisive. Its basis-like that of all technology-lies deeper. We shall address it here as the *readiness* for mobilization. Such readiness was present everywhere: the World War was one of the most popular wars known to history. This

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<sup>1</sup> Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst (1755-1813), Prussian general and creator of the modern Prussian military system. Following Prussia's losses in the Napoleonic wars, he reformed the Prussian military by abolishing its predominantly mercenary character and opting instead for a national force based on universal conscription.

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was because it took place in an age that excluded a priori all but popular wars. Also, aside from minor wars of colonialism and plunder, the involved nations had enjoyed a relatively long period of peace. At the beginning of our investigation, however, we promised emphatically not to focus on the elementary stratum of human nature that mix of wild and noble passions resting within it, rendering it always open to the battle cry. Rather, we will now try to disentangle the multiple signals announcing and accompanying this particular conflict.

Whenever we confront efforts of such proportions, possessing the special quality of “uselessness” [*“Zwecklosigkeit”*]-say the erection of mighty constructions like pyramids and cathedrals, or wars that call into play the ultimate mainsprings of life-economic explanations, no matter how illuminating, are not sufficient. This is the reason that the school of historical materialism can only touch the surface of the process. To explain efforts of this sort, we ought to rather focus our first suspicions on phenomena of a cultic variety.

In defining progress as the nineteenth century’s popular church, we have already suggested the source of the last war’s effective appeal to the great masses, whose participation was so indispensable. This appeal alone accounts for the decisive aspect of their Total Mobilization: that aspect with the force of faith. Shirking the war was all the less possible in proportion to the degree of their conviction-hence to proportion to the purity with which the resounding words moving them to action had a progressive content. Granted, these words often had a harsh and lurid color; their effectiveness cannot be doubted. They resemble the bright rags steering the battue prey towards the rifle’s scope.

Even a superficial glance, geographically separating the warring parties into victors and vanquished, must acknowledge the advantage of the “progressive” nations. This advantage seems to evoke a deterministic process such as Darwin’s theory of survival of the “fittest.”

Its deterministic quality is particularly apparent in the inability of victorious countries like Russia and Italy to avoid a complete destruction of their political systems. In this light, the war seems to be a sure-fire touchstone, basing its value judgments on rigorous, intrinsic laws: like an earthquake testing the foundations of every building.

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On the other hand, the progressive system's unexpected powers of resistance, even in a situation of great physical weakness, are striking. Hence, in the midst of the French army's suppression of that highly dangerous 1917 mutiny, a second, moral "miracle of the Marne" unfolds, more symptomatic for this war than purely military factors. Likewise, in the United States with its democratic constitution, mobilization could be executed with a rigor that was impossible in Prussia, where the right to vote was based on class. And who can doubt that America, the country lacking "dilapidated castles, basalt columns, and tales of knights, ghosts and brigands," emerged the obvious victor of this war? Its course was already decided not by the degree to which a state was a "military state," but by the degree to which it was capable of Total Mobilization.

Germany, however, was destined to lose the war, even if it had won the battle of the Marne and submarine warfare. For despite all the care with which it undertook partial mobilization, large areas of its strength



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escaped Total Mobilization; for the same reason, corresponding to the inner nature of its armament, it was certainly capable of obtaining, sustaining, and above all exploiting partial success-but never a total success. To affix *such* success to our weapons would have required preparing for another Cannae,<sup>2</sup> one no less significant than that to which Schlieffen<sup>3</sup> devoted his life's work.

But before carrying this argument forward, let us consider some disparate points, in the hope of further showing the link between progress and Total Mobilization.

One fact is clearly illuminating for those seeking to understand the word progress in its gaudy timbre: in an age that publicly executed, under horrific torture, a Ravailiac<sup>4</sup> or even a Damienst<sup>5</sup> as progeny of hell, the assassination of royalty would damage a more powerful social stratum -one more deeply etched in belief-than in the century following Louis XVI's execution. It turns out that in the hierarchy of progress, the prince belongs to a not especially favored species.

Let us imagine, for a moment, the grotesque situation in which a major advertising executive had to prepare the propaganda for a modern war. With two possibilities available for sparking the first wave of excitement-namely, the Sarajevo assassination or the violation of Belgian neutrality-there can be no doubt which would promise the

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<sup>2</sup> It was at the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C. that Hannibal defeated the Romans. In the history of warfare, the battle stands as the most perfect example of the double envelopment of an opposing army. It took Rome nearly a decade to recover from the loss.

<sup>3</sup> General Alfred von Schlieffen (1833-1913) was head of the German general staff from 1891 to 1906. He was responsible for the "Schlieffen plan" employed in World War I, which concerned the problem of waging war on two fronts.

<sup>4</sup> Francois Ravailiac (1578-1610), regicide who assassinated King Henry IV.

<sup>5</sup> Robert-Francois Damiens (1714-1757), who was tortured and executed for his attempt on the life of Louis XV.

greater impact. The superficial cause of the World War-no matter how adventitious it might seem-is inhabited by a symbolic meaning: in the case of the Sarajevo culprits and their victim, the heir to the Habsburg crown, national and dynastic principles collided-the modern “right of national self-determination” with the principle of legitimacy painstakingly restored at the Congress of Vienna [1815] through statecraft of the old style.

Now certainly, being untimely in the right sense-setting in motion a powerful effect in a spirit that desires to preserve a legacy-is praiseworthy. But this requires faith. It is clear, however, that the Central Powers’ ideology was neither timely, nor untimely, nor beyond time. Rather, the mood was simultaneously timely and untimely, resulting in nothing but a mixture of false romanticism and inadequate liberalism. Hence the observer could not help but notice a predilection for outmoded trappings, for a late romantic style, for Wagner’s operas in particular. Words evoking the fidelity of the Nibelungs, hopes pinned on the success of Islam’s call to holy war, are examples. Obviously, technical questions and questions of government were involved here-the mobilization of substance but not the substance itself. But the ruling classes’ inadequate relationship both to the masses and to profounder forces revealed itself precisely in blunders of this sort.

Hence even the famous, unintentionally brilliant reference to a “scrap of paper” suffers from having been uttered 150 years too late-and then from principles that might have suited Prussian Romanticism, but at heart were not Prussian. Frederick the Great might have spoken thus, poking fun at yellowed, musty parchment in the manner of an enlightened despotism. But Bethmann-Hollweg must have known that in our time a piece of paper, say one with a constitution written on it, has a meaning similar to that of a consecrated wafer for the Catholic Church -and that tearing up treaties certainly suits absolutism, but

liberalism's strength lies in their exegesis. Study the exchange of notes preceding America's entry into the war and you will come upon a principle of "freedom of the seas"; this offers a good example of the extent to which, in such an age, one's own interests are given the rank of a humanitarian postulate-of an issue with universal implications for humanity. German social democracy, one of the bulwarks of German progress, grasped the dialectical aspect of its mission when it equated the war's meaning with the destruction of the czar's anti-progressive regime.

But what does that signify as compared to the possibilities for mobilizing the masses at the West's disposal? Who would deny that "*civilisation*" is more profoundly attached to progress than is "*Kultur*"; that its language is spoken in the large cities, and that it has means and concepts at its command to which *Kultur* is either hostile or indifferent? *Kultur* cannot be used for propaganda. An approach that tries exploiting it in this way is itself estranged from it-just as we find the serving up of great German spirits' heads on millions of paper stamps and bills to be pointless, or even sad.

We have, however, no desire to complain about the inevitable. We wish only to establish that Germany was incapable of convincingly taking on the spirit of the age, whatever its nature. Germany was also incapable of proposing, to itself or to the world, a valid principle superior to that spirit. Rather, we find it searching-sometimes in romantic-idealistic, sometimes in rational-materialistic spheres-for those signs and images that the fighting individual strives to affix to his standards. But the validity lying within these spheres belongs partly to the past and partly to a milieu alien to German genius; it is not sufficient to assure utmost devotion to the advance of men and machines-something that a fearful battle against a world demands.

In this light we must struggle all the more to recognize how our elemental substance, the deep, primordial strength of the Volk, remains untouched by such a search. With admiration, we watch how German youth, at the beginning of this crusade of reason to which the world's nations are called under the spell of such an obvious, transparent dogma, raise the battle cry: glowing, enraptured, hungering after death in a way virtually unique in our history.

If one of these youths had been asked his motive for taking the field, the answer, certainly, would have been less clear. He would hardly have spoken of the struggle against barbarism and reaction or for civilization, the freeing of Belgium or freedom of the seas; but perhaps he would have offered the response, "for Germany" -that phrase, with which the volunteer regiments went on the attack.

And yet, this smoldering fire, burning for an enigmatic and invisible Germany, was sufficient for an effort that left nations trembling to the marrow. What if it had possessed direction, awareness, and *form [Gestalt]*?

As a mode of organizational thinking, Total Mobilization is merely an intimation of that higher mobilization that the age is discharging upon us. Characteristic of this *latter* type of mobilization is an inner lawfulness, to which human laws must correspond in order to be effective.

Nothing illustrates this claim better than the fact that during war forces can emerge that are directed against war itself. Nonetheless, these forces are more closely related to the powers at work in the war than it might seem. Total Mobilization shifts its sphere of operations, but not its meaning, when it begins to set in motion, instead of the armies of war, the masses in a civil war. The conflict now invades spheres that are off limits to the commands of military mobilization. It

is as if the forces that could not be marshaled for the war now demanded their role in the bloody engagement. Hence the more unified and profound the war's capacity to summon, from the outset, all possible forces for its cause, the surer and more imperturbable will be its course.

We have seen that in Germany, the spirit of progress could only be mobilized incompletely. To take just one among thousands of examples, the case of Barbusse shows us that in France, for instance, the situation was far more propitious.<sup>6</sup> In reality an outspoken opponent of war, Barbusse could only stay true to his ideas by readily affirming *this* one: to his mind, it reflected a struggle of progress, *civilisation*, humanity, and even peace, against a principle opposed to all these factors. "War must be killed off in Germany's belly."

No matter how complicated this dialectic appears, its outcome is inexorable. A person with the least apparent inclination for military conflict still finds himself incapable of refusing the rifle offered by the state, since the possibility of an alternative is not present to his consciousness. Let us observe him as he racks his brains, standing guard in the wasteland of endless trenches, abandoning the trenches as well as anyone when the time comes, in order to advance through the horrific curtain of fire of the war of materiel. But what, in fact, is amazing about this? Barbusse is a warrior like any other: a warrior for humanity, able to forgo machine-gun fire and gas attacks, and even the guillotine, as little as the Christian church can forgo its worldly sword. To be sure, in order to achieve such a degree of mobilization, a Barbusse would need to live in France.

The German Barbusses found themselves in a more difficult position. Only isolated intellects moved early to neutral territory,

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<sup>6</sup> Henri Barbusse (1873-1935), French writer whose experiences in World War I led him to pacifism. In 1916 he wrote the powerful anti-war novel, *Le feu* (Under Fire).

deciding to wage open sabotage against the war effort. The great majority tried cooperating with the deployment. We have already touched on the case of German social democracy. Let us disregard the fact that, despite its internationalist dogma, the movement's ranks were filled with German workers, hence could be moved to heroism. No-in its very ideology, it shifted towards a revision that later led to the charge of "the betrayal of Marxism." We can get a rough idea of the procedure's details in the speeches delivered during this critical period by Ludwig Frank, the Social Democratic leader and Reichstag deputy, who, as a forty-year-old volunteer, fell from a shot to the head at Noissoncourt in September 1914. "We comrades without a fatherland still know that, even as stepchildren, we are children of Germany, and that we must fight for our fatherland against reaction. If a war breaks out, the Social Democratic soldiers will also conscientiously fulfill their duty" (August 29, 1914). This extremely informative passage contains in a nutshell the forms of war and revolution that fate holds in readiness.

For those who wish to study this dialectic in detail, the practices of the newspapers and journals during the war years offer a wealth of examples. Hence Maximilian Harden-the editor of *Die Zukunft* and perhaps the best-known journalist of the Wilhelminian period-began adjusting his public activity to the goals of the central command. We note, only insofar as it is symptomatic, that he knew how to play upon the war's radicalism as well as he would later play upon that of the Revolution. And thus, *Simplicissimus*," an organ that had directed its weapons of nihilistic wit against all social ties, and thus also against the army, now took on a chauvinistic tone. It is clear, moreover, that the journal's quality diminishes as its patriotic tenor rises-that is, as it abandons the field of its strength.

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Perhaps the inner conflict at issue here is most apparent in the case of Rathenau;<sup>7</sup> it endows this figure-for anyone struggling to do him justice-with the force of tragedy. To a considerable extent, Rathenau had mobilized for the war, playing a role in organizing the great armament and focusing-even close to the German collapse-on the possibility of a “mass insurrection.” How is it possible that soon after, he could offer the well-known observation that world history would have lost its meaning had the Reich’s representatives entered the capital as victors through the Brandenburg Gate? Here we see very clearly how the spirit of mobilization can dominate an individual’s technical capacities, yet fail to penetrate his essence.

With our last fighters still lying before the enemy, the secret army and secret general staff commanding German progress greeted the collapse with exultation. It resembled the exultation at a victorious battle. It was the closest ally of the Western armies soon to cross the Rhine, their Trojan horse. The reigning authorities acknowledged the new spirit by the low level of protest with which they hastily vacated their posts. Between player and opponent, there was no essential difference.

This is also the reason that in Germany, the political transformation [following the military collapse] took on relatively harmless form. Thus, even during the crucial days of decision, the Empire’s Social Democratic minister could play with the idea of leaving the crown intact. And what would that have signified, other than maintaining a facade? For a long time, the building had been so encumbered with “progressive”

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<sup>7</sup> Walter Rathenau (1867-1922), leading German industrialist who played a key role in organizing the supply of raw materials for Germany's war effort during World War I. Served as minister of reconstruction and foreign minister during the Weimar Republic and negotiated the Treaty of Rapallo with the Soviet Union. Rathenau, who was jewish, was assassinated by right-wing extremists on June 24, 1922.

mortgages, that no more doubt was possible as to the true owner's nature.

But there is another reason why the change could take place less violently in Germany than, say, Russia-besides the fact that the authorities themselves prepared the way for it. We have seen that a large portion of the "progressive forces" had already been occupied with directing the war. The energy squandered during the war was then no longer available for the internal conflict. To express it in more personal terms: it makes a difference if former ministers take the helm or a revolutionary aristocracy, educated in Siberian exile.

Germany lost the war by winning a stronger place in the Western sphere-civilization, peace, and freedom in Barbusse's sense. But how could we expect anything different, since we ourselves had sworn allegiance to such values; at no price would we have dared extend the war beyond that "wall wrapped around Europe." This would have required different ideas and different allies, a deeper disclosure of one's own values. An incitement of substance could have even taken place with and through progressivist optimism-as Russia's case suggests.

When we contemplate the world that has emerged from the catastrophe -what unity of effect, what incredibly rigorous historical consistency! Really, if all the spiritual and physical structures of a non-civilizational variety extending from the nineteenth century's end to our own age had been assembled in a small space and fired on with all the world's weapons-the success could not have been more resounding.

The Kremlin's old chimes now play the Internationale. In Constantinople, schoolchildren use the Latin script instead of the Koran's old arabesques. In Naples and Palermo, Fascist police regulate the pace of southern life as if directing modern traffic. In the world's remotest, even legendary lands, houses of parliament are being



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ceremoniously dedicated. The abstractness, hence the horror, of all human circumstances is increasing inexorably. Patriotism is being diluted through a new nationalism, strongly fused with elements of conscious awareness. In Fascism, Bolshevism, Americanism, Zionism, in the movements of colored peoples, progress has made advances that until recently would have seemed unthinkable; it proceeds, as it were, head over heels, following the circular course of an artificial dialectic in order to continue its movement on a very simple plane. Disregarding its much diminished allowances for freedom and sociability, it is starting to rule nations in ways not very different from those of an absolute regime. In many cases the humanitarian mask has almost been stripped away, replaced by a half-grotesque, half-barbaric fetishism of the machine, a naive cult of technique; this occurs particularly where there is no direct, productive relation to those dynamic energies for whose destructive, triumphal course long-range artillery and bomb-loaded fighter squadrons represent only the martial expression. Simultaneously, esteem for quantity [*Massen*] is increasing: quantity of assent, quantity of public opinion has become the decisive factor in politics. Socialism and nationalism in particular are the two great millstones between which progress pulverizes what is left of the old world, and eventually itself. For a period of more than a hundred years, the masses, blinded by the optical illusion of the franchise, were tossed around like a ball by the "right" and "left." It always seemed that one side offered refuge from the other's claims. Today everywhere the reality of each side's identity is becoming more and more apparent; even the dream of freedom is disappearing as if under a pincers' iron grasp. The movements of the uniformly molded masses, trapped in the snare set by the world-spirit, comprise a great and fearful spectacle. Each of these movements leads to a sharper, more merciless grasp: forms of compulsion stronger than torture are at work here; they are

so strong, that human beings welcome them joyfully. Behind every exit, marked with the symbols of happiness, lurk pain and death. Happy is he alone who steps armed into these spaces.

Today, through the cracks and seams of Babel's tower, we can already see a glacier-world; this sight makes the bravest spirits tremble. Before long, the age of progress will seem as puzzling as the mysteries of an Egyptian dynasty. In that era, however, the world celebrated one of those triumphs that endow victory, for a moment, with the aura of eternity. More menacing than Hannibal, with all too mighty fists, somber armies had knocked on the gates of its great cities and fortified channels.

In the crater's depths, the last war possessed a meaning no arithmetic can master. The volunteer sensed it in his exultation, the German demon's voice bursting forth mightily, the exhaustion of the old values being united with an unconscious longing for a new life. Who would have imagined that these sons of a materialistic generation could have greeted death with such ardor? In this way a life rich in excess and ignorant of the beggar's thrift declares itself. And just as the actual result of an upright life is nothing but the gain of one's own deeper character, for us the results of this war can be nothing but the gain of a deeper Germany. This is confirmed by the agitation around us which is the mark of the new race: one that cannot be satisfied by any of this world's ideas nor any image of the past. A fruitful anarchy reigns here, which is born from the elements of earth and fire, and which hides within itself the seeds of a new form of domination. Here a new form of armament stands revealed, one which strives to forge its weapons from purer and harder metals that prove impervious to all resistance.

The German conducted the war with a, for him, all too reasonable ambition of being a good European. Since Europe thus made war on

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Europe—who else but Europe could be the victor? Nevertheless, this Europe, whose area extends in planetary proportions, has become extremely thin, extremely varnished: its spatial gains correspond to a loss in the force of conviction. New powers will emerge from it.

Deep beneath the regions in which the dialectic of war aims is still meaningful, the German encounters a stronger force: he encounters himself. In this way, the war was at the same time about him: above all, the means of his own self-realization. And for this reason, the new form of armament, in which we have already for some time been implicated, must be a mobilization of the German—nothing else.

## ON DANGER

*Der gefährliche Augenblick, 1931*

Among the signs of the epoch we have now entered belongs the increased intrusion of danger into daily life. There is no accident concealing itself behind this fact but a comprehensive change of the inner and outer world.

We see this clearly when we remember what an important role was assigned to the concept of security in the bourgeois epoch just past. The bourgeois person is perhaps best characterized as one who places security among the highest of values and conducts his life accordingly. His arrangements and systems are dedicated to securing his space against the danger that at times, when scarcely a cloud appears to darken the sky, has landed into the distance. However, it is always there: it seeks with elemental constancy to break through the dams with which order has surrounded itself.

The peculiarity of the bourgeois' relation to danger lies in his perception of it as an irresolvable contradiction to order, that is, as senseless. In this he marks himself off from other figures of, for example, the warrior, the artist, and the criminal, who are given a lofty or base relation to the elemental. Thus battle, in the eyes of the warrior, is a process that completes itself in a high order; the tragic conflict, for the writer, is a condition in which the deeper sense of life is to be comprehended very clearly; and a burning city or one beset by insurrection is a field of intensified activity for the criminal. In turn bourgeois values possess just as little validity for the believing person, for the gods appear in the elements, as in the burning bush

unconsumed by the flames. Through misfortune and danger late draws the mortal into the superior sphere of a higher order.

The supreme power through which the bourgeois sees security guaranteed is reason. The closer he finds himself to the center of reason, the more the dark shadows in which danger conceals itself disperse, and the ideal condition which it is the task of progress to achieve consists of the world domination of reason through which the wellsprings of the dangerous are not merely to be minimized but ultimately to be dried up altogether. The dangerous reveals itself in the light of reason to be senseless and relinquishes its claim on reality. In this world all depends on the perception of the dangerous as the senseless, then in the same moment it is overcome, it appears in the mirror of reason as an error.

This can be demonstrated everywhere and in detail within the intellectual and actual arrangements of the bourgeois world. It reveals itself at large in the endeavor to see the state, which rests on hierarchy, as society, with equality as its fundamental principle and which is founded through an act of reason. It reveals itself in the comprehensive establishment of an insurance system, through which not only the risk of foreign and domestic politics but also that of private life is to be uniformly distributed and thus subordinated to reason. It reveals itself further in the many and much entangled efforts to understand the life of the soul as a series of causes and effects and thus to remove it from an unpredictable into a predictable condition, therefore to include it within the sphere in which consciousness holds sway.

In this sense the securing of life against late, that great mother of danger, appears as the truly bourgeois problem, which is then made subject to the most diverse economic or humanitarian solutions. All formulations of questions at present, whether aesthetic, scientific, or political in nature, move in the direction of the claim that conflict is

avoidable. Should conflict nevertheless arise, as cannot, for example, be overlooked in regard to the permanent tact of war or criminality, then all depends upon proving it to be an error whose repetition is to be avoided through education or enlightenment. These errors appear for the sole reason that the factors of that great equation — the result of which has the population of the globe becoming a unified, fundamentally good as well as fundamentally rational, and therefore also fundamentally secure humanity — have not yet achieved general recognition. Faith in the persuasive force of these views is one of the reasons that enlightenment tends to overestimate the powers given to it.

One of the best objections that has been raised against this valuation is that under such circumstances life would be intolerably boring. This objection has never been of a purely theoretical nature but was applied practically by those young persons who, in the foggy dark of night, left their parental home to pursue danger in America, on the sea, or in the French Foreign Legion. It is a sign of the domination of bourgeois values that danger slips into the distance, “far away in Turkey,” in those lands where pepper grows, or wherever the bourgeois likes to deplore everyone not conforming to his standards. For these values to disappear entirely, however, will never be possible, not just because they are always present but above all because the human heart is in need not only of security but of danger too. Yet this desire is capable of revealing itself in bourgeois society only as protest, and it indeed does appear, in the form of romantic protest. The bourgeois has nearly succeeded in persuading the adventurous heart that the dangerous is not present at all. Thus do figures become possible who scarcely dare to speak their own superior language, whether that of the poet, who compares himself to the albatross, whose powerful wings are nothing more than the object of a tedious curiosity in a foreign and

windless environment, or that of the born warrior, who appears to be a ne'er-do-well because the life of a shopkeeper tills him with disgust. Countless examples could show how in an era of great security any profitable life will depart for the distances symbolized by strange lands, intoxication, or death.

In this sense the world war appears as the great, red balance line under the bourgeois era, the spirit of which explained — that is, believed itself capable of invalidating — the jubilation of the volunteer who welcomed the war by attributing to him either a patriotic error or a suspect lust for adventure. Fundamentally, however, this jubilation was a revolutionary protest against the values of the bourgeois world; it was a recognition of fate as the expression of the supreme power. In this jubilation a revaluation of all values, which had been prophesied by exalted spirits, was completed: after an era that sought to subordinate fate to reason, another followed which saw reason as the servant of fate. From that moment on, danger was no longer the goal of a romantic opposition; it was rather reality, and the task of the bourgeois was once again to withdraw from this reality and escape into the utopia of security. From this moment on, the words peace and order became a slogan to which a weaker morale resorted.

This was a war that not only nations but two epochs conducted against each other. As a consequence, both victors and vanquished exist here in Germany. Victors are those who, like salamanders, have gone through the school of danger. Only these will hold their own in a time when not security but danger will determine the order of life.

Precisely for this reason, however, the tasks that order must accomplish have become much more comprehensive than before; these tasks have to be performed where danger is not the exception, but is constantly present. As an example of this the police force might be mentioned. It has transformed itself from a group of civil servants

into a formation that already greatly resembles a military unit. Likewise the various large parties acknowledge the need to adopt means of power that express the fact that the battle of opinions will not be decided solely through votes and programs but also by the stalwarts committed to march in support of those programs. Such facts are in no way to be isolated and regarded as a temporary or transient change in the political landscape. Nor can the inclination to danger be overlooked in intellectual endeavors, and it is unmistakable that new forms of the volcanic spirit are at work. Phenomena like modern atomic theory, glacial cosmogony, the introduction of the concept of mutation into zoology all point clearly, completely apart from their truth content, to how strongly the spirit is beginning to partake of explosive events. The history of inventions also raises ever more clearly the question of whether a space of absolute comfort or a space of absolute danger is the final aim concealed in technology. Completely apart from the circumstance that scarcely a machine, scarcely a science has ever existed which did not fulfill, directly or indirectly, dangerous functions in the war, inventions like the automobile engine have already resulted in greater losses than any war, be it ever so bloody.

What especially characterizes the era in which we find ourselves, into which we enter more deeply with every passing day, is the close relationship that exists between danger and order. It may be expressed in this way: danger appears merely as the other side of our order. The whole is more or less equivalent to our image of the atom, which is utterly mobile and utterly constant. The secret concealed within is a new and different return to nature; it is the fact that we are simultaneously civilized and barbaric, that we have approached the elemental without having sacrificed the acuity of our consciousness. Thus does the path through which danger has penetrated our life present itself as twofold. It has intruded upon us first of all out or an



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arena in which nature is still more vital. Things, “the likes of which were only possible in South America,” are now familiar to us. The distinction is that danger, from a romantic dimension, has in this way become real. Secondly, however, we are sending danger back out over the globe in a new form.

This new form of danger appears in the closest connection having been made between elemental events and consciousness. The elemental is eternal: as people have always found themselves in passionate struggle with things, animals, or other people, as is the case today. The particular characteristic of our era, however, is precisely that all this transpires in the presence of the most acute consciousness. This finds expression above all in the circumstance that in all of these conflicts the most powerful servant of consciousness, the machine, is always present. Thus does humanity’s eternal struggle with the elemental nature of the sea present itself in the temporal form of a supremely complicated mechanical contrivance. Thus does the battle appear as a process during which the armored engine moves fighting men through the sea, over land, or into the air. Thus does the daily accident itself, with which our newspapers are tilled, appear nearly exclusively as a catastrophe of a technological type.

Beyond all this the wonder of our world, at once sober and dangerous, is the registration of the moment in which the danger transpires — a registration that is moreover accomplished whenever it does not capture human consciousness immediately, by means of machines. One needs no prophetic talent to predict that soon any given event will be there to see or to hear in any given place. Already today there is hardly an event of human significance toward which the artificial eye of civilization, the photographic lens, is not directed. The result is often pictures of demoniacal precision through which humanity’s new relation to danger becomes visible in an exceptional

fashion. One has to recognize that it is a question here much less of the peculiarity of new tools than of a new style that makes use of technological tools. The change becomes illuminating in the investigation of the change in tools that have long been at our disposal, such as language. Although our time produces little in the way of literature in the old sense, much of significance is accomplished through objective reports of experience. Our time is prompted by human need — which explains, among other things, the success of war literature. We already possess a new style of language, one which gradually becomes visible from underneath the language of the bourgeois epoch. The same, however, is true of our style altogether; it is reminiscent of the fact that the automobile was for a long time constructed in the form of a horse-drawn coach, or that a wholly different society has already long since established itself beneath the surface of bourgeois society. As during the inflation, we continue for a time to spend the usual coins, without sensing that the rate of exchange is no longer the same.

In this sense, it may be said that we have already plunged deeply into new, more dangerous realms, without our being conscious of them.





