

The Philosophical Foundations of National-Socialism

Otto Dietrich

Here is the translation of *Die philosophischen Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus: ein Ruf zu den Waffen deutschen Geistes* by Dr. Otto Dietrich, Reichspressechef of the NSDAP, 1934.

The fact that I have translated this handy presentation from 1934 should not be construed as an endorsement of any statement made by Dietrich after the war, when he was a prisoner of the victorious powers, circumstances under which a number of men were pressured to make statements confirming the propaganda of the victors. On the contrary, part of the purpose here is to show what Dietrich had to say about National-Socialism was when he was a free man.



The Philosophical Foundations of National-Socialism:

A Call to Arms of the German Mind

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by

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1. Preamble

We in Germany know what National-Socialism is—because we live it! With justification it has been said that National-Socialism's work is not an abstract ideological construction, but a volume of experience that has grown out of the solidarity of blood and out of the community of the people, and corresponds to our own innermost essence. We Germans, and above all those who did not themselves come directly from the domain of our National-Socialist thought, comprehend National-Socialism by experiencing it day-by-day in all its

manifestations and effects within the National-Socialist community of the people. And even the Germans beyond our borders can feel National-Socialism due to their inner blood-bond with us. But if we place value on making National-Socialism comprehensible to other nations that live in another world of emotions and ideas, and awakening understanding for it, then we must share our ideas in a form that they understand. We must express National-Socialism's ideas and spiritual laws of life in a language that allows the union of the new with the old, of the inner world with the outer.

This field of scholarly activity is important; it is urgent. That is because the absence of such a clearly thought-out, distinct form, I might say the lack hitherto of such an internationally understandable intellectual language of National-Socialism, not only contains the source of many errors and misunderstandings, but robs us of the possibility to oppose malevolent broadsides and slanders with the weapons of the mind. And that applies not only to the rest of the world, but also to a part of our own intellectual and scholarly world. Indeed, sensing this, Alfred Rosenberg, the party's commissioner, also recently called for a stronger intellectual affirmation of our worldview. "After gaining power"—as he explained—"the National-Socialist movement must be more concerned than ever about affirming its worldview, so that the unity of thought and action may be guaranteed not only for today but for all coming generations."

We National-Socialists so far have been too busy domestically to be able to devote ourselves to the scholarly refinement of our worldview. Unlike others, we have proceeded according to the principle of first arranging practical life in accord with our worldview, and then proving its viability, before perfecting its design in the realm of scholarship. But now it is time to reveal the spirit of the new Germany, which has

been actualized in the feeling and will of its folk-comrades, also as a confirmed doctrine. And laying a philosophical foundation seems to me one of the most important and indispensable prerequisites for that. And in service to this mission, I want to make a contribution. Not as a philosopher, but as a National-Socialist who is no stranger to the field of philosophy. I might add, by the way, that it is not the point of my explanations to state claims that are supposed to be accepted as true only because they encounter no contradiction. On the contrary, I place special value on keeping myself within the confines of an exclusively scholarly demonstration. And for that I must first back up a bit.

2. The Untenability of Individualistic Philosophy

If philosophy aspires to gather all the contents of the world's happening into a single point that can adequately explain the whole multifariousness of that happening, then the basic duality of spirit and matter—or whatever else one wishes to call it—certainly stands as an obstacle. The principal attempts at a solution—incorporating one of these poles into the other, or rather showing that one is derived from the other, so as to accomplish the oneness of the universe—dominate the history of philosophy.

Disregarding for now the philosophy of religion and its metaphysical orientation, we can classify the great philosophical systems before Kant formally into these two mental tendencies. Rationalism and sensualism select one of the powers of knowing, ratiocination (*Verstand*) or perception (*Sinnlichkeit*), as the means to establish the character of the objective world.

Kant was the first who overcame this contradiction in philosophical thought and tried to resolve it in a higher unity. For him the crucial prerequisite for knowledge of the world is neither syllogistic thought (das logisch-begriffliche Denken) alone, nor sense-perception (Wahrnehmung) alone, but the total power of comprehension (der gesamte Intellekt). The totality of consciousness, as a combination of both, constitutes experience (Erfahrung)—the unconditional validity of which he indeed presupposes. Since ratiocination is the sum of the pure forms whereby we are able to think at all, it is for him the precondition of what, with the help of sense-perceptions, becomes experience. And since for him things must first be broken, so to speak, through the medium of the soul before becoming knowledge for man, it was possible to say in Kant's sense: "The world is my idea." While Kant arrives by way of epistemology at the insight that only the "unity of consciousness" makes knowledge possible, and that this however limits to ideas (Vorstellungen) and shows that the absolute, the "thing in itself," is incomprehensible to our mind, Goethe for example, from an entirely different, more artistic approach, achieves a similar synthesis. "If you want to find yourself in the infinite, you must differentiate and then combine." He makes the concept of life felt as whole, as totality, into the point of origin for knowledge. With that the course has been set for a philosophy of life, and of course it was on the broader expanses of that territory that Schopenhauer and Nietzsche created their immortal works. Certainly they all unify it, although on a higher level, back into that underlying phenomenon [i.e. consciousness], from whose inexplicability philosophy began.

From yet another perspective however, it is possible to take a cross-section through philosophical thought. Faced with the manifoldness of phenomena, with the infinity of Being (Sein), the human mind can penetrate only by separating it into form and content. While on the one hand the idea that something persists amid all that changes allows

formless substance to grow into the totality of Being, on the other hand the attempt to make contentless form, the very thing that changes in all that persists, into the highest principle of the universe, is also found everywhere in the history of philosophy. The "philosophy of Being" found its most decisive expression in Spinoza's "Substantia sive deus." In Hegel's "self-movement of the idea", the philosophy of Becoming reached its zenith in close association with the idea of evolution.

We see from the history of philosophical thought, from whichever perspective we ourselves always contemplate it, that the contradictoriness of the world's contents also encompasses all attempts by the philosophical mind to master it. The philosophical striving for the ultimate scientific unity, for conceptual completion of positive knowledge, to a closed mental picture of Being, has remained in the final analysis unsatisfied to this day. Metaphysics, the appeal to the unprovable, has always been its last word. Even the so-called phenomenological philosophy has not so far convinced us to the contrary, since it can show no positive results whatsoever.

Thus the history of philosophy so far seems itself to affirm that the ultimate absolute truth is an ideal toward which cognition strives as a distant enticing light, a direction-sign pointing out of the darkness into the bright light and leading to humanity's relentless scientific progress. We are far from advocating any philosophical pessimism. That is because value and meaning, which these philosophical systems for the development of the human spirit have had, remain unaffected by the temporal limitedness of their cognitions. Like life itself, scientific knowledge is found in constant flux. And as Fichte's saying, "What kind of philosophy one would choose depends on what kind of human being one is," has meaning even today, so too will the philosophical thought of an epoch always reflect the spirit of that time.

If for that reason we seek the position of the philosophical thought of the present, the task is facilitated in no small degree by the fact that the philosophers of the world met a few weeks ago at the 8th International Philosophers' Congress in Prague. What became apparent before all the world at this congress, which was attended by more than 600 philosophers from 21 countries, was nothing other than the crisis of philosophy in our age, as of course had quite long ago ceased to be a secret to philosophical contemporaries. It would be of only slight value for the purpose of these explanations to go into the details of the disputes at the Prague congress; we shall in due course have opportunity to touch on some ideas. The net result of this philosophical discussion in any case consists not at all in positive solutions of a particular kind, but on the contrary, precisely in the absence of large and consistent perspectives of any kind. Even shifting the main theme to the field of the modern doctrine of the state by passionately debating the problem, "the crisis of democracy," could not obscure this impression, but only strengthened it further. The outcome finds perhaps its best expression in the lecture that the philosopher Edmund Husserl delivered to the congress, wherein he argued that philosophy today is in danger of dying out.

Skepticism, horizons of unclarity (Unklarheitshorizonte), and disunity of the philosophical discipline are indications of it, he said. The few still genuine philosophers are united only in their ethos. The question of what actually is (die Frage nach dem Seienden) must be posed radically anew. Only then, Husserl concluded, will philosophy be able to come together again in communal creating.

With that, the international forum of philosophers was told by someone from its own ranks what the philosophical consciousness of our age quite universally is really driving at: the question of what actually is must be posed radically anew in an age wherein the mind

presently confronts such a fundamentally new configuration of social life. We live today at the intersection of two epochs, the changing and transition of which were unleashed by the World War and by the socialist and nationalist revolutions in its wake. Is it amazing, or isn't it entirely natural, that this transition, wherein the old collapses and the new is not yet ready, precipitates also an intellectual reevaluation, a crisis of the mind and of philosophical thought as we see it today? For us this crisis would only warrant a skepticism if we felt ourselves shackled to the downfall of what was. But the fact that today everywhere in the world the old still struggles with the new does not absolve us, in whom the new has already taken shape, from the necessity of carrying it forward also intellectually, as standard-bearers of a new age.

If the intellectual picture of the world as most philosophers of the past have seen it and investigated it is reduced to a starting-point shared by all, to a common denominator, it has been individualism, to which almost all were subject in their thinking. "Man is the measure of all things." Man as "unity of mind and matter," as "unity of subject and object," as "the beginning and end of all philosophy." The individual was for the philosophy of all ages the point of reference of all knowledge whatsoever. The uniquely indisputable thing, the stationary pole amid the flight of phenomena—unless an easier way of thinking preferred also to dissolve this awkward-to-bear earthly remnant in the aether of an exclusive principle. Individualism was, to put it in Kant's terminology, the category of philosophical thought in general. What could be more obvious than the fact that the crisis of individualism that we experience today must also be the crisis of individualistic philosophy! And as life itself orients itself anew, forward from the worship of the individual and onward to the community, the same must be expected of intellectual life in general and of philosophy in particular, if it is supposed to acquire new life. That is no cheap assertion, but a reference to the fundamental situation.

Individualistic thought proceeds from individual consciousness as the only given fact, and makes it sovereign over the world. With this sovereignty of the individualistic spirit over the world, philosophy is given a practically boundless arena for metaphysical speculation. To arrive at knowledge of the world through philosophy: an enticing prospect that always has and always will attract the best minds. But all individualistic philosophy ends—as history shows us—in unprovables. It cannot grasp what the whole of life precisely is; only where individualism establishes assumptions and boundaries for knowledge does it arrive at practical, positive cognitions. For individualism, the identity of the subject with the object, as in consciousness of oneself, comes to light in the self-knowledge of the individual, the ultimate ... inexplicable thing. This unity of the knower with the known, which can be traced no further, remains for individualism the miracle, the "node of the world" as even a Schopenhauer must confess. And Kant's ingenious individualistic theory of knowledge that limits the world of experiences to ideas, ends in the postulate of practical reason (*praktische Vernunft*)—in the moral law of the community. Individualistic philosophy, which was elaborated in order to arrive at ultimate knowledge of the world, thus, at the end of its journey, sees itself faced with the community, and finds its practical cognitions for the first time where universal thought begins. With that we have reached a crucial point in our observations.

I found this section of Otto Dietrich's *Philosophical Foundations of National-Socialism* very difficult, not only to translate but to understand after I had translated it. (Translation was complicated by apparent misprints, including absence of some necessary commas and I had to read it many times to arrive at what I think is a correct understanding of the whole section. I think that this is because of the knowledge and assumptions that Dietrich took for granted in his audience and therefore did not articulate, which are unknown to Americans. I think that a German philosophical audience of 1934 would certainly have had more

of the necessary background information for a clear understanding of what Dietrich meant, whereas for a 21st-century American audience not trained in the German intellectual tradition, some of the references are totally obscure. In particular, Americans might not immediately understand what Dietrich means when he talks about the controversy over defining sociology, or why this is relevant. Americans may also be dubious about Dietrich's use of the term universal to mean something different from our individualistic understanding of it (which I think is also a problem that Americans encounter when trying to understand some of the German Idealistic philosophers).

Nonetheless, I think it is possible to get something out of it. For example, the statement that man is a collective essence (which could also be rendered as collective being), not an individual essence—and that only the community, not the individual, is real—points to the premise of sociobiology or evolutionary psychology, that the gene-pool, not the individual, is the unit of survival and evolution.

One would like to have a fuller explanation of how the new community-based thinking necessitates the reorganization of academic knowledge. There is only the briefest mention of that here: new and different approaches to history, politics, law, and philology from the perspective of race and community. I should add though, that H.S. Chamberlain, in his *Aryan Worldview*, had complained years earlier about the way academic knowledge was compartmentalized into distinct disciplines, which Chamberlain seemed to think robbed the particular disciplines of unity and meaning. The new worldview facilitates restoration of unity and meaning, with some reorganization, according to Dietrich. His use of the term *Einzelwissenschaften* (individual sciences) seems to imply an analogy to *Einzelwesen* (individual being), so that the scholarly disciplines are reunified with the whole of knowledge in the same way that the individual man is reunited with his community, in this worldview.

By the way, the German word normally rendered as "science" (*Wissenschaft*) really refers to any field of scholarship. When science in the usual English sense of physics and biology is meant, the term is "natural science" (*Naturwissenschaft*). Meanwhile, "humanities" (*Geisteswissenschaft*) apparently includes what we somewhat artificially distinguish as social sciences.

Now that you already know some the things that you are likely to find puzzling here, you won't feel stumped when you encounter them! I have written a synopsis of this section to make it even easier to digest.

Synopsis of Part Three

Man cannot exist as an individual, only as a member of a community. Races, peoples, and nations are therefore more real than individuals. Therefore universalistic thought must replace individualistic thought in philosophy, and the organic view of the world must replace the mechanical view. But do not misunderstand what is meant here by universalistic. Community-consciousness that is fundamentally rooted in biology. Sociology was the beginning of an attempt to understand man in his collective nature, but it was in some ways on the wrong track, because "society" is still an essentially individualistic term. "Community" by contrast denotes an organic unity.

Recent thinkers who pointed the way to the new community-conscious thought are Johannes Rehmke and the National-Socialist Paul Krannhals. But really it has been a long time coming, foreshadowed by Meister Eckhart, Kant, and Fichte.

With the turn from individualistic to community-based epistemology, the divisions of scholarship will have to be reorganized in a way that makes sense within the new worldview.

This new mode of thought is valid for all races and peoples, even if not all are yet able to recognize it.

3. The Development of Community-Thought

Underlying individualistic thought is the premise, taken to be self-evident, that man is an individual essence (Einzelwesen). This premise—however firmly it may even be rooted in the universal conception—is false and based on a catastrophic error in thinking. Man confronts us in the world not as an individual essence but as a member of a

community. Man is in all his actions a collective essence (Kollektivwesen), and is utterly unthinkable except in this way. Man by definition therefore lives in community with others; his life actualizes itself only in the community. Community is a concept to which the whole history of humanity is subordinate; it is the form in which human life runs its course from cradle to grave, without which it would be unthinkable.

The actual givens that we find in the world are not individual men but races, peoples, and nations. Man as individual may be an object of research for the natural sciences (Naturwissenschaften). But in the humanities (Geisteswissenschaften) he is an object of cognition only as a member of a community, in which his life has an effect and usefully (praktisch) runs its course.

The humanities, and especially philosophy in its epistemological ground-laying, must take account of this fundamental fact, if they want to assert their prominent position in the intellectual life of the German nation, and to maintain a living, fruitful connection to its evolution. Universalistic thought, community-conscious thought, must take the place of individualistic thought; and the universalistic—or if one wishes, the organic—picture of the world must take the place of the mechanical picture of the world.

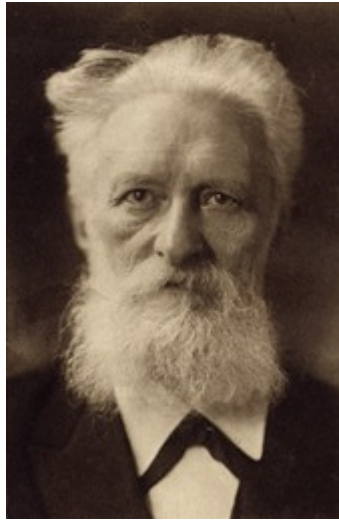
I would like to emphasize beforehand that the term universalistic, which I shall continue to use, is not identical with the empty umbrella-term, human society or humanity, but instead that universalism here stands as the terminological opposite of individualism. The term universalistic represents a concept that is actualized not in "society" (Gesellschaft) but in community (Gemeinschaft)₁. The fact that individualistic thought has misused the term universalistic for its own purposes will not prevent me from restoring it to its actual meaning.

We shall see later how the tremendous ideological and revolutionary happening of our days points toward such a new ground-laying of thought that is founded upon community-consciousness as a fact ultimately rooted in biology.

Now, the scientific consciousness of how strongly the individual is bound to a whole (Gesamtheit) is not in itself a new discovery that I could claim for myself. The social or "gesellschaftlich" mode of interpretation has long been one of the most fundamental but also most controversial problems in many of our individual sciences (Einzelwissenschaften). In the "universalistic conception of the state" as for example Othmar Spann teaches it, in the science of law, in political economy, in social psychology, and so on, it has produced results for decades, but without any inner connection to National-Socialism's universalistic-organic thinking based on race and biology. In sociology, which Comte already established, the growing importance, the rising scientific interest in the problems of society congealed, as is well known, into a special science. How much this problem and the instinctive consciousness of its importance has been occupying minds, one sees from the decades-long scientific dispute over determining the object of sociology as a science in its own right. One faction proclaimed that all sciences of human affairs were only parts of an all-encompassing science of society; everything that was not natural science, they said, should be housed in this new science, "sociology." Others, by contrast, limited sociology's area of knowledge to the forms of human society, while the remainder entirely denied to sociology the right to be a science, and they wanted to have it regarded only as a method of social-scientific research.

As we see, the problem has long been recognized and felt by science. Its solution has been attempted sporadically and piecemeal, but never

radically and comprehensively completed for epistemological thought. While the fundamental distinction between community and society was clarified for science by Tönnies₂, it was Eucken₃, who laid the notional groundwork for it, but without the science having recognized the worthlessness of the concept of society (Gesellschaft) for its ground-laying work. Here the National-Socialist worldview is called to perform the scientific breakthrough, and to raise universalistic, community-conscious thought finally to the throne of true cognizance in the humanities, to which it is entitled.



Rudolf Eucken, 1846-1926

The scientific ground-layings of such a universalistic foundation for philosophical thought, upon which a new construction in the spirit of our age can take place, have been present for a very long time. I name here the philosopher Johannes Rehmke₄, who, in his works *Philosophie als Grundwissenschaft* and *Grundlegung der Ethik als Wissenschaft*, counters in compelling, strongly scientific argumentation, but also in all pointedness, the erroneous view that man is an individual essence. In his doctrine of the community's rules of life he has created valuable

ammunition for a universalistically oriented philosophy. "Every man is indeed individual, but not an individual essence," says Rehmke. "We know that in the world without exception what truly has an effect (das Eigentlich-Wirkende) is a universal," and furthermore, "In science, man the individual essence, as a type, must be placed at the root of all evil. Dreaming and poetizing in philosophy must come to an end. Facts are all that matter even in philosophy." Communities, races, peoples, and nations, as historical and material actualities, are such a fact that cannot be further reduced.

And I would also like to mention here a thinker who has unfortunately left us too soon, the young philosopher Paul Krannhals⁵, who died a few months ago in Munich. It is for me an honor-bound duty to introduce to the broader public this man who in the years of his creative activity was so closely connected to us National-Socialists, and to make a place for his work in the philosophical ground-laying of National-Socialism. His book published in Munich in 1928, *Das Organische Weltbild*, I would like to designate as the first correctly envisioned attempt from a National-Socialist perspective scientifically to clarify and to present the organic or universalistic conception of the world as the one that internally conforms to our German way of life. "The individual as such," as Krannhals also says, "has neither the right nor the duty to exist, since all right and all duty derive first from the community." He demands organic thought as an expression of the German soul's awakening return to mindfulness (Wiederbesinnung) of itself. Not in the rational orientation toward the world does he see the inmost core of the German essence, but instead precisely in that soul's non-rational comprehension (Erfassung) in experience. Instinct and intuition here become active powers of cognition. "The philosophical return to mindfulness of the German present is the return to mindfulness of the totality of our soul. Its goal is the rule of the ethnically distinct soul of our kind (Gattungsseele)," what Rosenberg calls the race-soul (Rassenseele). As Krannhals assigns the crucial place among the powers of the German spirit to the creative power of the German soul-type (Seelentum), of the German folk-soul (Volksseele)

that is the root of German culture, so does he demand education into community-consciousness and the development of all powers of the soul for this. "The creative Nordic soul-type has put its impression on a series of cultures and will do so also in the future." "It is the inestimable merit of the great German artworks that they make us experience most deeply the inner connectedness of all generations of German lineages with each other and with the soil of our homeland." Type-consciousness, on the other hand, which is acquired in the gradual accumulation of hereditary qualities, can be preserved only "if the ethnic character's racial foundation, its biological root, remains vigorous." Krannhals makes the attempt, magnificent in conception, at a national organization of knowledge (Wissen), so that knowledge too is organically connected to life and enters into the process of life. He poses the question: "How must we organize knowledge so that its maintenance and promotion correspond to the material and ideal aspects of the people as a whole, so that the unfolding of all its features to the highest degree can bestow the greatest possible service to the people?"

We see from these few hints how here a young German philosopher, whom the University of Marburg awarded a doctorate honoris causa just a few weeks before his death, grasped scientifically and philosophically the essential content of the National-Socialist worldview, and fashioned it into the foundation of a universalistic-organic picture of the world that does justice to the spirit of our age. It is not a complete system and it did not wish to be one, but it is a beginning and shows the task at which we must build.

Such an organic construction of ideas (Gedankenbau) into a National-Socialist picture of the world originates from the mentality (Geisteshaltung) of the best philosophers of the German tongue, whose German soul-type could not be suffocated by rational and individualistic thought.

In Cologne circa 1300 the Dominican prior Meister Eckhart, the philosopher called by us the discoverer of the German soul (Seele), taught about the ardor of the German soul (Gemüt), about the "pillar of the soul" and about the "will that is capable of all things."

Kant's moral law: "Act in such a way that the maxim of your will is at all times applicable simultaneously as the principle of a universal legislation," is an almost classical formulation of National-Socialist ethics.

The philosopher Fichte is both preacher and prophet of the nation. He demands that the scientific situation be understood not according to the letter but according to the spirit, that it ought to encompass the whole man. His principle, "I do not want merely to think; I want to act," epitomizes the National-Socialist spirit. His demand that the state organize labor so that everyone can live from his own labor, as he demands in *Der Geschlossene Handelsstaat*, is practical National-Socialism in the best sense.

All of that is not individualism, not liberalism, but instead universalistic, organic thought in conformity with the National-Socialist worldview as Alfred Rosenberg has expounded it in his works in so many fields of art and science. Only in this universal turning of epistemology away from individualism to universalism can the revolutionizing of minds be completed also in the field of science. That is because the philosophical spirit of an epoch is also always crucial ultimately for the structure and the systematization of the particular fields of research. From this new ground-laying of thought from the perspective of the community in the age of the national and social revolution, we can access and meaningfully articulate the world of the mind.

"There is no world-history in the proper sense, instead only the history of various races and peoples," says Rosenberg regarding the science of history. Consequently racial doctrine and racial research will necessarily be one of the most important fields of research of the scientific world. The universalistic-organic conception of the state produces its result in the doctrine of the community of the people (Volksgemeinschaft) as the essential foundation of the state. It is from the community, not from the individual, that the science of law derives its principles and tenets. The science of law takes not the individual but the social community as its point of departure. Philology has the mission of educating the youth into community-consciousness, into community-thought, and so on. All these fields of knowledge thus gain their unity from one root, from that root underlying National-Socialist thought and determining its picture of the world (Weltbild): from the community, the only real sphere of human life on this Earth.

Such a new ground-laying of philosophy however hardly remains limited to the confines of thought pertaining to a specific nation, even if it originates from that. It is a universally valid epistemological principle that is valid for all communities and applicable to all nations, even if their political evolution today is still not ripe for such a community-thought. For not only the life of peoples, but also the human power of comprehension is subject to progressive development. The German nation is far enough along to be able to make this ground-laying step in the sphere of scientific knowledge. It matters only that the newly acquired cognition, which today seems to be still impossible for a different kind of thought to recognize, is correct. I believe that I have given some evidence for this correctness.

¹ The distinction between society (Gesellschaft) and community (Gemeinschaft) is very important

in German social thought. *Gemeinschaft*, community, connotes a much deeper kind of relationship than *Gesellschaft*, society. A National-Socialist term that intensifies the distinction is *Volksgemeinschaft*, community of the people. A term that intensifies the distinction in the other direction would be *Aktiengesellschaft*, which means joint-stock company. A *Gemeinschaft* is a group of persons deeply linked to each other, whereas a *Gesellschaft* is a group of persons united by only external, practical considerations such as gaining money. It is important to note that in National-Socialist discourse, society and community are not interchangeable terms.

2 Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936), famous for differentiating *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, has been highly influential in Germany but is practically unknown in the anglophone world. Notwithstanding the seminal value of his work for National-Socialist thought, Tönnies was a Social-Democrat who had friction with the National-Socialists -- which may be why Dietrich, although giving due credit to Tönnies, did not omit to mention that Tönnies' thinking was derivative of Eucken's.

3 Rudolf Christoph Eucken (1846-1926) was a philosopher who was awarded a Nobel Prize for literature in 1908.

4 Johannes Rehmke (1848-1930) was a philosophical psychologist who wrote many books. For his doctoral thesis (Zürich, 1875) Rehmke wrote a critical study of Eduard von Hartmann's theory of the unconscious, and for his Habilitation (Berlin, 1884) wrote a treatise titled *Die Welt als Wahrnehmung und Begriff* (*The World as Perception and Concept*). He joined the faculty of the University of Greifswald in 1885, and became rector of the university in 1898, which he remained until forced into retirement in 1921.

5 Paul Krannhals (1883-1934) having studied chemistry, developed the foundation of his philosophy while a prisoner of war in Russia. In the period 1920-1925 he was a newspaper-editor. His book *Das Organische Weltbild* (*The Organic Picture of the World*) according to Dietrich was published in 1928. In 1929 Krannhals cofounded with Alfred Rosenberg the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* (Alliance for German Culture) and was involved with the National-Socialist students' organization. In 1934 he was a speaker in the National-Socialist teachers' organization, and copublisher of a periodical called *Die Sonne*. The department of philosophy at Philipps-Universität Marburg awarded him an honorary doctorate shortly before his death, in 1934.

National-Socialist thought as described by Otto Dietrich rejects cultural relativism. The community, as a coherent whole, is a universe. "Universalistic thought sets the community as the uppermost principle," says Dietrich. Freedom is defined as "harmony of one's own personal willing with the duties toward the community."

(This is similar to the traditional Catholic teaching that man is free when he is moral.) Freedom therefore presupposes living in a community of shared values, and is fulfilled in becoming a responsible member of that community.

4.

Here grow the new great assignments of German spirituality, not only internally, but also externally, toward the world. One might think that especially liberalism would keep its distance from dogmatically rigid thought, and would at least give free rein to its own principles in the sphere of the mind, where new life begins to bloom. But the so-called immortal ideas of liberalism are the ideas whereby peoples die. In the nations' progress toward becoming peoples however, which we see has already reached a breakthrough today in Germany and Italy, that great cultural restructuring within peoples proclaims itself; this cultural restructuring is destined not only to unfold the nations' inner powers for the welfare of all, but also to guarantee the ordering of the nations in relation to each other, through a natural delineation of their vital needs and interests. The turning from individualism to universalism, which is the way of the future, corresponds to this evolution in the direction of a dynamic order of the nations, instead of mechanical juxtaposition and conflict (Neben- und Gegeneinander).

Today this turning is already more than a European spiritual problem that is exported from Germany and Italy to the rest of the world.

Italian Fascism is akin to the National-Socialist mindset (Geisteshaltung). The first manifesto of the Fascist Party is introduced with the following principle: "The nation is not the simple sum of living individuals (Individuen) but instead an organism that encompasses the endless series of generations, and particular persons

(die Einzelnen) are nothing but transitory elements in it. [The nation] is the highest synthesis of all material and non-material assets of the nation.” And in the first chapter of the *Carta del Lavoro* it says: “The Italian nation is an organism, whose purpose, existence, and means take precedence both in power and in duration over those of particular persons or groups.” Here Fascism takes a position fundamentally opposed to individualism, but the Fascist doctrine of the state, as laid out for example by Guido Bortolotto in his work *Faschismus und Nation*, does not rise to the level of a spiritually consistent, universalistic idea. It repudiates individualism, without however making the universalistic principle into its own; instead it tries to set up between the two principles a third that is supposed to bear the specifically and exclusively Fascistic character: the corporative principle, corporativism. “The distinction for us,” says Bortolotto, “is that with individualism the individual rules over the whole, while with universalism the whole rules over the individual. In between, however, stands corporativism, whereby the individual and the whole exist together in harmony.” Here in the Fascistic doctrine of the state, as described by Italian science, we thus see the attempt, in any case interesting, to affirm the community while saving the individual from disappearing in the community. And if this attempt also involves the endeavor to include certain inconsistencies as part of the foundation, and intellectually to legitimize them, of course it seems necessary to argue against it.

The problem that confronts us here is, how individualistic freedom is possible within the framework of universalistic connectedness (Gebundenheit). And National-Socialism can give an unassailable answer to this crucial question as well. I want to try to formulate this answer.

Universalistic thought sets the community as the uppermost principle, just as National-Socialism treats not the “individual” (das “Individuum”) or “humanity” (die “Menschheit”) but the people (das Volk) as the only real, organically grown totality (Ganzheit). Since the individual exists only through the community, he can derive his personal freedom only through and from the community. The National-Socialist worldview thus consistently not only acknowledges but indeed demands the freedom of personality—demands it for the sake of the community, which means in the interest of the community and its ever fuller configuration (Gestaltung). The crucial salient characteristic (Wesensmerkmal) of the National-Socialist idea is precisely that it induces the unfolding of the configuring forces and creative values of personality within the community, and exerts them on behalf of the community. So-called individual freedom is not something that would in any way be given to man from nature. From nature is given to man community-consciousness, consciousness of duty toward the community in which he is born. The individualistic concept of freedom however wants to liberate the individual from this duty toward the community. The verbal nuance of the German language (das Sprachgefühl) accordingly also designates such a man rejecting the duties to his community as an Individuum. “Every human is indeed something unique, but not an individual,” (“Jeder Mensch ist zwar Einziges, aber nicht Einzelwesen,”) says Rehmke. And we add: as something unique he is a personality, and as “not an individual” he is a folk-comrade (Volksgenosse).



Johannes Rehmke (1848-1930)

Thus we see that natural freedom is the freedom of personality, which means the freedom of the man who creates for his community. This uniquely true concept of freedom was taught as far back as Aristotle, who attributed freedom only to the creative man. One can only be creative, however, for a community. Only he who is conscious of his duties toward the community and acts accordingly can be creative. And therefore the concept of freedom presupposes connection to the community. Whoever possesses this sense of community and acknowledges its moral obligations is free and feels that he is free, since his free activity can never be directed against the rules of the community, but instead runs in harmony with it.

This harmony of one's own personal willing with the duties toward the community however cannot be forcibly and artificially produced through a contrived, corporative system such as occurs in Italian corporativism; rather this harmony results a priori from the actuality of the community, if community-consciousness is cultivated and kept awake in it. On the other hand, whoever does not possess this sense of responsibility toward the community and does not acknowledge his moral obligations places himself outside the community. What he calls individual freedom is not freedom but rather unbridledness (Zügellosigkeit).

We still stand too close to the epoch of individualistic thought from which the National-Socialist worldview has liberated us, or the individual in his thinking is still too much caught in it, to be fully gripped and permeated already by the inner necessity of universalistic thought. The spiritually revolutionary change and transition brings tensions with it, wherein someone still a prisoner to the Individuum may perhaps at times see his mental freedom threatened. But to the degree that, through education into National-Socialist thought, the sense of community will again become something self-evident and natural—and in the young generation that is already the case—the problematic natures of today are relieved of the urge to mourn the passing of an individual freedom that was an error in thinking now hard to imagine, which has become pointless and has been replaced by the true freedom of personality within the universalistic world-picture of National-Socialism.

We see therefore that National-Socialism can guarantee space and free opportunity for action (*Wirkungsmöglichkeit*) within the community, because it teleologically establishes this freedom through the community itself, thus necessarily through its own principle—while the corporativism of the Fascist conception of the state can only achieve individualistic freedom by borrowing it back as needed from the individualism that it had initially conquered. Here National-Socialism shows greater consistency in its worldview and far stronger deep effect than Fascism, as indeed generally the permeation and encompassing of the people with the worldview of National-Socialism, which derives from the deepest experience of the soul, has much wider ramifications than Italian Fascism.

From the perspective thus acquired is unleashed also the controversy over scientific and academic freedom that many do not want to see guaranteed in the National-Socialist state. The National-Socialist state grants and guarantees this scientific freedom as a matter of principle whenever it, for its own part, also fulfills just the most basic requirements demanded of every citizen, in other words whenever this freedom moves within the boundaries that Nature has set for us through our life in the community. We have seen that universalistically oriented, community-conscious thought is the fundamental category of all scientific inquiry, apart from the kind of scientific inquiry that is aimed strictly at matter and has no relevance for the soul. Whoever affirms this community-consciousness thought will also be able to teach within its limits, able in fact to teach freely and without restriction. Whoever by contrast rejects it is intellectually in a dead rut from the start, and the National-Socialist state performs a service to humanity if it does not place a professorial chair at his disposal. Such a doctrine, wrongly oriented from the start, excludes itself from the intellectual life of the nation, since it is no longer science but error.

I would like to adduce as an example from bygone times the Marxist doctrine, the so-called scientific socialism that was built upon the materialistic conception of history, and upon a scientifically impossible economic theory of value, thus upon capital errors in science. Today it is hardly imaginable anymore that this doctrine, this scientific lunacy that sent the entire people to ruin, could be taught for decades in German universities only to cater to the demand for a wrongly understood, individualistic academic freedom that proclaims science without restriction as a goal in itself. In the sphere of private research, especially in the physical sciences, science can be a goal in itself, but to the extent that its results are handed over to the public, and offered to the community accompanied by a value-judgment that they are

universally valid, they cannot possibly stand in contradiction to the laws of life of this community. If they do, they prove thereby that they are wrong. The epistemological point of reference newly acquired through National-Socialism, however, relieves us of all these erroneous paths of thought, since it conquers them from the inside out and makes them impossible. And therefore National-Socialism is in fact the power that also liberates science, since it can give full freedom to science that is relevant to the life of the nation and the foundations of its Being (Sein).

From this universalistic or organic groundlaying of thought therefore must also proceed that new philosophical mindfulness (Besinnung) that can ascend to the loftiest heights of the spirit without running the risk of leaving behind the deep connectedness with life and its practical contents. In this sphere of practical life, just as our Leader teaches us, the National-Socialist worldview has yielded in a unique way the proof of its correctness and configuring force.



