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Book Author(s): RICHARD KUEHNEMUND

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INTRODUCTION

Germany and the Occidental 'Oecumene'

At the outset of the Peloponnesian War Greece was again divided into bitterly competitive camps. Yet Pericles was justified in proclaiming in his great Funeral Oration, "In short, I say that as a city *we are the school of Hellas.*" Thus a great Athenian voiced not only the civic pride of his countrymen despite the turmoil of a fratricidal war: he also gave solemn expression to their common feeling of Athens' mission in Greek history.

The greatness of these memorable words lies in their marked moderation, in their long-range view and in the significant absence of imperialistic implications. The leadership of Athens was predominantly a cultural one, as Pericles and his Athenians well realized, and therein lay their hope.

The presence of such consciousness of a common historic mission on the part of a group-community, be it large or small, is indeed a healthy manifestation of an essential homogeneity beyond all inner division or ephemeral divergence. It portends unity of purpose and destiny.

Such common consciousness, however, is not an inherent group phenomenon but a historical product. Ordinarily of slow growth, it manifests itself most noticeably at moments of common stress, during dramatic crises and triumphs. It may evolve quite naturally or be fostered in an atmosphere of strife and by any kind of propaganda. It may assume political, social, religious or generally cultural aspects; or all of those at once in one sweeping assertion of predestined, innate superiority over the outside world. Of this latter, 'totalitarian' type was, among others, its recent variety in Hitler's Germany, which was at once all-exclusive and all-embracing and, therefore, fundamentally a-moral and a-social.

How such a fanatical course ever became possible among a people once as generally respected for its high level of social and cultural achievement as Germany was, is one of the many psychological problems that beset our chaotic age. No people *as a people* is, morally speaking, ever totally good or bad, though its actions and responses as a group may from time to time

reflect a lower or higher level of civilized behavior. A people may even alter its group character under the impact of extraordinary conditions and unwonted experiences. Such changes have not been infrequent in history.

Yet to attribute the group conduct of nations to racial traits or propensities seems utterly unjust. A nation is a social group; and groups mainly *re-act*. Their so-called actions usually are prompted, guided or even performed for them, by a few. These few, given the opportunity and power, are always able to alter the 'natural,' i.e., expected course of historic events almost at will. The psychic relation between racial traits—a term expressing mere surface approximations—and social conduct is indeed a highly speculative proposition. Rather, the conduct of a nation may reflect the resultant of all those components which contribute to, and shape, its destiny.

The ethical progress of individuals and social groups along the thorny path of so-called 'civilization' may well be gauged by their gradual advancement in a sympathetic understanding for those who live beyond their immediate view and by their willingness to cooperate with them. Primitive man (in all ages) knows only himself, his mate and offspring. From there he proceeds to a participation in the tribal community, to village, 'polis,' and 'civitas'; thence again, as on a much higher level of individual usefulness and social merit, to the quite abstract concepts of nation and race. Only ultimately does he sometimes arrive at a sympathetic understanding of mankind at large and shape his conduct accordingly.

History records this evolution of men and groups, its high-points and low-points, on our road from *Eigenliebe* (self-love), through *Nächstenliebe* (love of one's neighbor), to *Fernstenliebe* (universal love). Actually, we live our lives predominantly within the shelter of small groups and units and feel and act accordingly. With them we share our daily fears, our hopes and aspirations; with them we feel united in a common cause and destiny.

It follows that group consciousness and the assertion of a common mission may vary considerably as to direction, purpose and intensity. At times it may be highly beneficial to its bearers and their fellow-men and be felt as such for centuries. Yet at

some point it may cause stagnation or even retrogression, turning oppressive and destructive by force of its weight or intensity.

It may seem to be a peculiar social phenomenon that Germany, though one of Europe's youngest political nations, should have developed within the span of a few generations the most ardent type of a historical-mission concept. Actually, its roots go far back into history.

For more than a thousand years, Germany has been an integral part of the *Abendland*, the Occidental community. As such she has contributed her share to its spiritual growth and unity and has cherished the common Occidental tradition.

What we mean in this connection by 'Occident' and 'Western tradition' is essentially this: the nations which resulted from the entrance of the Germanic tribes upon the stage of history; a historic event of the first magnitude, for from it ensued a peculiar cultural communion and interdependence of the North, the East and the South through the blending of Teutonic, Greco-Roman and Oriental ideals, forms and institutions. For the conquering and destructive Germanic tribes at once fell heir to the dying world of Greece and Rome.

Moreover, it has been of inestimable consequence that those wandering Teutons became Christianized at the moment of their entrance upon the Greco-Roman heritage. The Oriental mind tended toward death and the beyond; the Greco-Roman, however, toward human self-fulfilment and earthly perfection. The Christian spirit, though supra-tribal and universal in claims and tendencies, is, to be sure, not of itself hostile but indifferent to earthly life. For this very reason Christianity has become the most subtle, the most spiritual and, hence, the most effective of all earthly religions. Even the naive materialism of Egypt had tended passionately towards the mysteries of death and the beyond. The pyramids bear witness to that. Christianity, however, built its fortresses beyond the clouds.

The un-Teutonic passion for death and the beyond seized the peoples of the North slowly, but it gradually filled many with a passionate zeal and ecstasy. Such leanings of the spirit were bound to bring its adherents into conflict with their Teutonic tradition and temperament, as well as with the worldly-minded

spirit of antiquity. In that way, Occidental history has become the story of the fateful and unceasing clashes between those heterogeneous mental worlds. Only at rare intervals, the synthesis between them has been attained. Yet those were armistices at best. What has been termed the period of the Renaissance and Reformation in the customary sense is nothing but one cataclysmic climax of a struggle of a thousand years. Every 'Renaissance' movement strives to renew the spirit of Antiquity, its worldliness and joy of life. Conversely, every "Reformation" aims at the restoration of 'pure' Christianity with its underlying yearning for death and the beyond.

Against this broader background of the persistent struggle with the common Greco-Roman and Oriental-Christian heritage the life-cycles of the components of the Western world have run their individual course. Numerous indeed were the elements making for ideological uniformity—innumerable those which made for subdivision, for estrangement and diversity among its parts.

While those centralizing and decentralizing trends and forces could be kept in proper check and balance, the durability of the Occidental *Oecumene* seemed well enough assured. But where was the center strong enough to guarantee such an overwhelming, unifying force? It was Rome, and Rome alone. Located at first outside, then at the very periphery of the Teutonic world, Rome offered the symbol of religious unity, of superior culture and, in retrospect, the high standard in the art and methods of government.

For a thousand years the centralizing forces going out from Rome, or in her name, prevailed. Yet decentralizing tendencies were always there. Though checked over a period of centuries, they gradually gained in momentum and finally shattered the old, ideological unity. The break was as thorough and final as the fall of Rome twelve centuries before. What remained thereafter was chiefly a nostalgic memory: the dream of a Western European community and of a spiritual solidarity for ever lost.

But in addition to the struggle for spiritual union, Western History, from the time of the Germanic tribes to the days of

Jefferson and Franklin, is also the story of an unceasing contest between authority and liberty—a struggle for individual freedom and local independence.

The old Germanic concept of *authority* meant, above all, the duty to *protect*. It has its roots in the life of the family. Slavery in the Oriental and Greco-Roman sense was quite unknown among the ancient Germans. Aside from occasional war captives there existed but two types of unfree men: those who had lost their freedom temporarily to a creditor through unpaid debts, and those who had forfeited it for ever through felony, a crime against the community ordinarily expiated by banishment or death. Basically, the tribe was a group of free and equal people, a militant body of men in arms. Military leaders and civic officials were chosen by them and supported by voluntary gifts and contributions.

Of all the wandering tribes, the Franks proved themselves most gifted for the founding of states and for creating legal institutions. It is not accidental that the oldest document of Germanic law is the *Lex Salica*, a Salic-Frankish law code. For the Franks were the first of the wandering tribes to exchange their traditional customs on foreign soil for the Roman institutions of provincial Gaul. That was another fateful moment in Western history. Within the span of one short generation, profound innovations had come about: instead of the old Germanic system of free self-administration, there were now crown officials appointed by the king; jurisdiction in the name of a prince, instead of the old Germanic local courts of free men; administration by royal counts and emissaries enforcing royal edicts and ordinances. Conversely, the highly mixed provincial population of Gaul had long been accustomed to a sovereign-subject relationship and to personal allegiance to the emperor in Rome and his functionaries.

Those political innovations profoundly altered the traditional structure of the tribes. The state of the Franks, henceforth, consisted of the king and a group of privileged landed lords with a host of personal retinue, of tenants and serfs. Immense land grants by the ruler to his immediate followers, who in turn parcelled them off to ever smaller tenants, at once laid the foundation for the later medieval Feudal System with its highly per-

sonal lord-and-vassal relationship. Among those privileged holders of vast tracts of land, the foremost representatives of the Roman Church soon occupied the leading place. In this manner, the upper clergy easily grew into the new class of state aristocracy. The clergy soon furnished the first officials and the very pillars of the Frankish state.

Thus the developments within the Frankish domains led to another event of momentous importance: the linking of the concerns of the Church of Rome with those of the Germano-Frankish kingdom. They started its kingship on its fateful rôle in history as the Defender of the Orthodox Christian Faith—a move which found its symbolic culmination in the crowning of Charlemagne at the hands of the bishop of Rome as the first Emperor Augustus of a new and holy Imperium with universal tendencies and claims. Henceforth the Frankish kings and their later German successors knew but one major goal: Rome. Once embarked on their trans-Alpine course, they pursued a dangerously a-national Italian policy which, in the course of time, was bound to estrange the German crown from its immediate national purpose as well as from its people. Moreover, it hastened that ominous process of the secularization of the Roman Church in spirit and aims, just as it promoted the equally portentous spiritualization of the claims and functions of the German crown. Last but not least in historic importance: those trends of their early history planted in the minds of many leading Germans a firm belief in their own historical mission. From now on they viewed themselves as the standard-bearers of a new and supra-national empire and their rulers as the rightful claimants to the imperial crown of the new Rome. And, as a corollary to such convictions, there must have arisen within many minds a firm trust in the other side of their mission: if their rulers were God's appointed defenders of the Faith, then they themselves were called upon to spread it among the heathens to the North and East. Crusading thus became a great spiritual stimulus for that second major phase of early German history, too: Eastward expansion and colonization, the medieval version of Germany's *Drang nach Osten*.

The profound change in spirit brought about by the process of Romanization and Christianization of the Franks in Gaul has

found a striking expression in the introduction to the *Lex Salica* which dates back to the sixth century:

"The noble tribe of the Franks, *called upon by God*, brave in arms and loyal, profound in thoughts, stately in appearance and stature, *dedicated to the orthodox faith, free of heresy* - - - Praised be Christ who loves the Franks - - - For they are the people who bravely cast off the intolerable Roman yoke. It is they who upon conversion have adorned with gold the bones of those martyrs whom the Romans have burnt and cast before wild beasts - -"

In a similar spirit of stern orthodoxy, bishop Gregory of Tours went about writing his story of the Franks at the end of the same sixth century. It was to be the history of the elect people. In those two documents we encounter for the first time in Western history the concept and claims of an elect people after the Hebrew model, expressed in a spirit of intolerant self-righteousness. It was a spirit that struck its roots deeply and often bore bitter fruits for over a thousand years. It lived not only in the minds of monks and priests. It was embraced with equal zeal by many of the secular defenders and propagandists of the Faith and later found its way into many a Protestant church and heart, and in many lands.

While the Franks thus laid the foundation for the future Western European nations, the German tribes beyond the Rhine developed almost independently for about one thousand years.

The inherent weakness of the Frankish state had lain in its constant divisions and subdivisions. The weakness of the German realm lurked from the start in a spirit of antagonistic rivalry among its members and in the mixed application of hereditary and electoral principles concerning the royal succession. In the process of perpetual bargaining and unilateral concessions for the sake of their sons' election, the German kings wasted their royal powers and domains and, therewith, the unifying force of the crown. They played directly into the hands of German regionalism and promoted the further growth of local powers.

Thus at the middle of the eleventh century, while the Saxon king, Henry III, achieved complete control over the Papacy, a German archbishop, Adalbert of Bremen, the great promoter of

missionary work among his northern neighbors, dreamed of a Patriarchate and a German Rome of the North. Since then, the cry 'Away from Rome' has never died down completely in German lands and, more than once, has found its advocates among highest clerical circles. The fierce struggle between Guelphs and Ghibellines, which almost wrecked the German kingship at the moment of its greatest triumph in medieval history, is but a test-case in a maze of antagonistic, domestic trends behind the brilliant façade of the imperial policy.

That the idea of empire has strengthened German national consciousness mainly in retrospect can hardly be denied. For whole centuries it had mostly retarded or even obliterated such feelings. Neither the early monastic period nor the later medieval culture, chivalrous and class-conscious as it was, could contribute essentially in this respect. The reawakening of national pride and consciousness was due largely to the rise of the bourgeoisie with its magnificent civic culture of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. On the whole, German regionalism prevailed for centuries while dynastic and expansive tendencies were confined mainly to high clerical and aristocratic circles.

Yet if an English contemporary of Frederick Barbarossa could ask with indignation, "Who has ordained these Germans as judges over the nations?" we may well assume that, conversely, some national pride must have swelled the hearts of Germans of all classes in view of the imperial splendor that bore their nation's name abroad. For Walther von der Vogelweide, mouth-piece and promoter of public opinion, the emperor is the one true protector of the peace and dispenser of justice, the rightful defender of Church and Faith and the leader of crusades. For Walther, Germany reaches from the Elbe river to the Rhine and, thence, to 'Ungarland.' Within its borders *Zucht, Minne und Tugend*—modesty, love and virtue—reign. Thus Germany's greatest minstrel aims to describe the confines and characteristic traits of his medieval nation and its people, while courtly poets turn again to the ancient popular motifs and sing, together with the praise of courtly *mâze*,¹ the old songs of fiercely conflicting loyalties and of the struggle between fealty and treason.

Thus the vision of a people as a national community with common interests, heroes and traditions gradually emerged. The

evolution of such legends as the one of Frederick Barbarossa asleep in the Kyffhäuser mountain² awaiting the call to lead his people to new victories and glory, bears witness to it. But it was, above all, the turn of the humanists to Germanic antiquity and to the German past which created a new patriotism and laid the foundation for a German national character and for new national aims. It was Hutten who strove to set up Arminius as a national hero; it was the humanists who, inspired by Tacitus, first spoke again of national freedom, of German honor and virtues. They emphasized once more the German emperor's claims to leadership over all Christian nations, thus giving to the idea of empire a new national foundation which lasted through the centuries. Last but not least, Luther and some of the humanists turned to the common German tongue, which meant another basic and unifying bond among all classes of all states and creeds. Moreover, for the German language this meant a new prestige and dignity.

Beside the concept of the Roman empire there gradually appears the new concept of this varicolored federation of states as *The German nation*.³ But even within the states that made up this nation the cultural center of gravity had steadily been shifting to the rising city bourgeoisie—a class left out politically. The great city-leagues, too, bore a decidedly particularistic physiognomy. In short, the German kingship and the German bourgeoisie had failed to become partners in politics, and the mission of the latter had remained a non-political and mainly cultural one. However, this flowering of the middle class had produced the concept of the German *culture-nation*. To this German bourgeois type the humanist scholar preached his four cardinal virtues of bravery, loyalty, simplicity, and chastity as he had recently re-discovered them in his Tacitus.

We can derive quite a clear picture of the basic patriotic views and aims of those humanists from a cursory glance at the historiography of that inquiring age when learning and intellectual achievement were the prized password to highest public influence and dignities. For Germany this meant a first experience in the democratic principle of 'opportunity according to talent'—so rare again in the centuries that followed—when gifted sons of inn-keepers and artisans could become the daily

companions, preferred advisers and confidants of kings and emperors and rise to noble rank.

However, the patriotic ken and polemics of most humanists were quite limited in range. Most of them were prone to attribute nearly every excellent accomplishment in Western history to the efforts or contributions of their own Germanic ancestors.⁴ Almost all of them attempted to relate the distant tribal past to the problems of their own age and were eager to rediscover the vague features of Teutonic antiquity in the character of their contemporary Germany. Men like Thomas Murner, Franciscan monk and decidedly an outsider in the eyes of the professional humanists, attacked and ridiculed their 'patriotic fancies' with little success indeed. These historians were *Aufklärer*—enlighteners in their own peculiar way. The augmentation of German glory and a just recognition of the glorious German past were their chief objectives. With the fight against the prevailing ignorance concerning their own racial background they wished to offset the reproach of German barbarism in past and present. Their main targets were 'the unpatriotic Germans at home' and 'the anti-German bias abroad.'

One could speak of two factions among those first German interpreters of their national past. The more radical ones take every opportunity to emphasize and magnify the German glory, while the others, though fewer in number, adopt a much more critical view and warn of an unscholarly bias for the sake of patriotic propaganda. But they all search diligently for the content and extent of early German history. This means a new departure from medieval views and methods and a new individual approach to their problems and sources, but also a new tendency to exploit the facts of history for moral and propagandistic reasons. For the first time the writer detaches himself from the mode of medieval annals, chronicles and genealogies which had been focused regionally upon cities, bishoprics, monasteries and dynasties. Now, and for the first time, the tendency is towards a total 'descriptive history'—a 'Germania illustrata,' a 'Germaniae descriptio' or a 'Germaniae exegesis,' as one liked to call it. It embraced geographic and ethnical features, the description of the beauty of landscape, of the natural wealth of the land and of the cultural achievements of the individual regions.

In short, an encyclopedic propensity prevailed which often leads to the display of a romantically colored polymathy.

When Enea Silvio⁵ raised, for the first time, the question of the boundaries of the old and the new Germany, and when he commented at length on Tacitus' *Germania*, he gave a new and powerful stimulus to German national historiography. Now, and for the first time, German historians began to draw a line between, and compare, the 'Germania prisca' and the 'Germania recentior'—ancient and modern Germany. Some of their favorite themes now are Germany's transition from a tribal to a national state, i.e., the beginnings of a German nation and of her national history; the Christianization of Germany; the German character of Alsace since the days of Caesar; the origin of the German language; The German origin and character of Charlemagne and his contributions to German literature and culture; the universal policies of the imperial crown and the splendor of the medieval kingship which, viewed in retrospect, now kindles a new patriotic zeal. In this spirit a Sebastian Brant, a Hutten, a Wimpheling, a Celtis and Bebel regard the emperor as the long-established protector of the Faith and, hence, as the lawful head of all Christian peoples. It is his divine calling to lead the Christian nations against the Turkish danger from the East.

Likewise new is the turn to the cultural aspects of history which, naturally, leads to a spirit of keen competition between the nations and to the search for their specific individuality in past and present. In this sense, Franz Irenikus⁶ speaks of the Germans as the most homogeneous and most Christian people: "Germani inter se fratres, Germani vere christianissimi." The Goths are to him the most German of all, whereas the highly critical Bebel⁷ speaks of them as the Gothic barbarians.

Once Jordanus of Osnabrück⁸ had expressed a common medieval view when he attributed priestly leadership (the 'sacerdotium') to the Italians, supreme temporal rule (the 'imperium') to the Germans, and foremost erudition (the 'studium') to the French. But now, each nation, and the Germans among them, claimed all those functions—at least ideally—for itself and strove to outrank the others.

Similarly Humanism, on the one hand, raises the standard of

common cultural ideals and the vision of a supra-national republic of learning while, on the other hand, it arouses a keen awareness of national individuality and, with it, the spirit of international rivalry.

In this spirit, the great Aventinus⁹ emphatically rejects the assertion by the old Roman writers that German liberty had in reality been a state of anarchy. The rule of the Franks, Aventinus holds, had spelt servitude because of the adoption of the Roman church and of the Roman administrative system. But liberty had returned to Germany (i.e., East Franconia) with the advent of the Saxon kingship. While he does not mention Arminius himself, Aventinus states nevertheless that the victory over Varus had saved Germany from becoming another province of Rome. At about the same time (in 1533), Beatus Rhenanus dispelled the old legend of the Varus battle at the gates of Augsburg. He, the good disciple of Erasmus, even bewails the downfall of the Roman empire and the decline of its glorious culture. He does not see at all in the Franks the heirs of Roman culture but merely the successors to the Roman system of provincial administration. Hence he rejects the humanist's favorite theory of the transmission of the Roman empire to the Frankish state—the much-disputed 'translatio imperii' theory. Rhenanus, furthermore, ridicules Heinrich Bebel's favorite assumption that Germany is Europe's *Ur-und Hauptnation*¹⁰—the basic and, therefore, leading nation in European history. Rhenanus does not even grant Germany the glory of an ancient culture, as Celtis and so many others did. Nor does he see in the early Saxon kingship the natural unfolding of the German 'imperium mundi', as Celtis saw it, but merely an expedient union of German tribes. In contrast to most others, German antiquity is for this Rhenanus the a-cultural or pre-cultural period of German history whose culture developed much later, and only in the wake of her Christianization.

Erasmus and Rhenanus are about the only ones among these many humanists who realized and stressed the interrelation between peace and civilization, between religion and progress. They remained indifferent to the lures of such appealing legends as that of the Druids as a class of philosophers and 'monks' among the ancient Germans. Even the mythical descent of the

German kings and their Teutonic race from their divine founders, Thuisco and Mannus, only aroused their scorn.

Yet underneath this layer of unhistoric fancy and patriotic longing among the historic dreamers of this era there still remained the wide-spread, age-old and intense regionalism with its strong consciousness of tribal descent and local affiliation—the German *Stammesbewusstsein* which, with the passing of the great days of Humanism and the outbreak of the religious controversies and wars, asserts itself even more vigorously than before. Wholly overcome by but few of the humanists, it still is discernible even in such ardent national patriots as Celtis and Hutten, the Franconian knight. Here Erasmus, the 'good European,' forms a singular exception. In this point, too, Hutten finally had to part company with him.

However, a few basic beliefs and hopes fired the imagination of almost all these learned patriots; namely their strongly national tendencies, their firm belief in a new dawn of German culture and in Germany's just claim to leadership among the Christian nations and, finally, their firm faith in Germany as the source of true nobility. Here, too, Hutten fights among the first and foremost.

The era of the Reformation and its cataclysmic aftermath, the Thirty Years' War, brought all those anti-Roman, decentralizing and particularistic trends to a highly dramatic climax. From then on, Germany remained divided into two distinct parts: the Catholic West and South, with leanings towards the Catholic world without, and the Protestant North. The empire, henceforth, appeared to most Germans as a remote institution, outside and essentially un-German. Conversely, the true rulers of German lands now were the full-fledged *domini terrae*—the princes of practically autonomous states.

When Luther addressed himself *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*¹¹ with a comprehensive program of thorough reform for the Church, for the nation and every Christian's private life, he appealed to the emperor and not to the Church; to the lay nobility of the various states and not to their citizenry whose national hero he was to become during their short-lived hopes for a complete social and political rebirth of the nation.

But this national church was not to come about. Instead, the new churches attached themselves to the individual states, and Germany's first great national movement ended in the break-up of old political bonds.

Thus the Reformation actually suppressed once more the natural development of those social and political forces which made for national unity. During the ensuing religious wars, the promising beginnings of cultural integration and nationalization were all but wiped out. What was left of Germany after the Thirty Years' War was no longer a body of freedom-loving people, vigorous and proud, with a national vision and high hopes for their future, but a mass of despairing, submissive subjects of lordly potentates and local autocrats. Even the old concept of the German culture-nation was in complete eclipse, as it had no longer any foundation in actual facts. Therefore the literature of that period is so largely either satirical or religious.¹²

The process of a national rebirth following the Thirty Years' War could come neither from "welsch" court circles nor from the people themselves, and, hence, was painfully slow. It arose, as is usually the case in Germany, primarily from patriotic and literary circles; i.e., from the remnants of Germany's once solid middle class. The seventeenth century witnesses, beside the baroque patriotism of the Lohenstein type, the emergence of linguistic societies and learned academies. The bourgeois dislike for the 'welsch' taste and fashion among the members of Germany's baroque society, the indignation over France's high-handed and violent policies at Germany's western borders, together with the German type of 'Aufklärung' (Leibniz), all did their part. A neo-humanistic period was in the making, which strove to take up where Humanism had left off, as denominational contrasts and antagonisms faded into the background. In 1658, we hear for the first time the slogan which must have stirred many a despairing patriot, "Remember that you are a German."

For the trend of the time was toward a number of independent states and away from one unified nation. But now the 'Age of Reason' was approaching and, with the first wave of 'Enlightenment,' the time had come for the moral 'weeklies' which strove to raise new standards in the interest of aesthetic culture

and moral improvement among the reading middle class. It was these periodicals—the aesthetic and moral propaganda from the pen of intellectuals—which also widened the political horizon and laid the foundation for new national interests. But the accent lay again, as heretofore, more on the cultural and moral side than on the political.

Then came the era of Frederick the Great with the meteoric rise of Prussia—the age in which J. E. Schlegel, Moeser, Wieland, Klopstock and Lessing, Goethe and Schiller were born. With this Prussian ruler a great political personality appears again on the German scene; a philosopher-king who fascinated friend and foe alike. His incredible, stoic endurance, his triumphs in the field against desperate odds, filled many Germans with envy or genuine admiration. It moved Prussia into the very center of the national scene. Thus a new national consciousness emerged, and people began to ponder once more the meaning of national pride.¹³ Though this king's cultural and aesthetic tastes were quite foreign to the mass of the people, yet he set the highest standard of personal devotion to a stupendous task, of austere personal simplicity and self-denial. Soon the best German patriots of the age flocked to his standards. Even the cosmopolitan neo-humanists of yesterday now sang his praises and linked their hopes for the future of Germany to the star of this new Arminius.¹⁴

Goethe expressed the attitude of the young generation outside Prussia succinctly when he remarked in retrospect, "We all were ardently pro-Frederick ('fritzisch'), for what was Prussia to us?" The fires of the French Revolution, the purgatory of Napoleon and of the Wars of Liberation were still needed to arouse Germany fully and to lead or force her towards the goal of a political nation.

Schiller's inner metamorphosis reflects the distance that had yet to be covered when, in 1789 and under the first spell of the French Revolution, he remarked that patriotism, after all, was a characteristic of immature nations. But in 1804 he wrote his "Wilhelm Tell"—long after Klopstock had given his national epic to the Germans¹⁵ and after Herder, foremost cultural philosopher of his age, had tried so long to reconcile national patriotism with the ideal of true humanity. For in his generation Herder thought he detected the qualities of spiritual leadership

towards that lofty goal—the re-discovered, sacred heritage of Greece as the classicists were prone to see it. For they, too, were no political realists and lifted their human hopes above the nations and far into the clouds.¹⁶ Their mental world, likewise, embraced both the individual and the human race; but it left out the state. Yet firmly embedded in their hearts was the concept of a nation as an almost sacred community of cultural heritage and aims.

It was left to German romanticists mainly, to open those vistas of a politically united people once more, though under the pressure of stern political events from within and without.

Thus it appears that, by force of historic experiences and memories, the political thinking of Germany has moved in forms which were either too big or too small to make for genuine integration and nationalization of her centrifugal parts. Instead, Germany developed a peculiar type of particularism with a cosmopolitan strain. National integration and political union remained the German dream of centuries.

Thence, perhaps, stems the peculiar psychic exaltation in the German's personal attitude towards his nation's destiny, which has manifested itself so often during Germany's troubled course. For the psychic content of this history has too often been engendered by tremendous inner tensions and—allowing for a few brief intervals comprising less than three quarters of a century¹⁷—one of its basic themes has always been the struggle for a genuine national state. It, therefore, has become a history of political frustrations and phantom dreams as Germany remained too long a Faustian Homunculus—a spirit searching for its final incarnation. Thence, perhaps, stem the disquieting features in Germany's mental physiognomy. Did not even Bismarck fail in the end to create a truly national state founded on the free consent and will of its people? Instead, his labors gave belated birth to a power-state reluctantly accepted and largely feared and distrusted at home and abroad. No, even modern Germany has never been able to become a fairly homogeneous community of uniform political will and direction. Hence the history of this 'Heartland of Europe' was destined to be turbulent and tragic.

