Jewish Treason against the Laws of Life: Nazi Religiosity and Bourgeois Fantasy

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Over the years, psychohistorians have made increasing use of the concept of "group fantasy." Even if the term is not utilized explicitly, reference has been made to a putative state in which a given group of people, due to events of a physically singular or traumatic nature, comes to share or participate in a fantasy, a recrudescence of accumulated myth-grounded responses to historical challenges. Naturally, psychohistorians generally must believe that group fantasies are the products of phylogenetic forces. Their various contents certainly are time-bound and, in some cases, quite singular. Even the most nonreductionist psychohistorian, however, must perceive general, underlying forms, which are representative of phylogensis. In this chapter, the writer, while not concerned with ascertaining phylogenetic origins, has no intention of calling this assumption into question. Rather, assuming that the existence of group fantasies has been determined, we will be focusing upon one that he perceives as being of immense importance for Weimar Germany's bourgeoisie—the fantasy of return to a natural order immune from the challenges presented by military defeat and by the social, economic, and political uncertainties posed by life in Weimar Germany. This order was one in which elements perceived as inimical, or at least alien, to German national life would either have no role to play or would exist as entities to be overcome. National Socialism was in large measure both a product of and response to this group fantasy.

As indicated above, especially for one sympathetic to psychohistory, there exists the temptation to ground a given fantasy in more general phylogenetic concerns. That kairotic "return of the repressed," which has played so important a role in Freudian historical speculations, must come to mind whenever one focuses upon any variety of group fantasy. Ultimately, such an explanation might well be valid. Here, however, we will be
focusing upon the nature and contents of a particular fantasy, leaving phylogenetic concerns for others professionally better able to deal with them.

For some time, it has been an article of faith that there were, from the point of view of politics and ideology, two bourgeois camps in Weimar Germany. One variety, at least at first, was willing to accept the Republic, was generally opposed to those various irrationalities that constituted the substratum of National Socialist beliefs, and, on the whole, displayed tolerance with regard to the Jewish question. The other group, however, conservative, racist, or both, came more and more to prevail, its ranks being swollen by deserters from the first camp. In some respects, this interpretation is a valid one. Bourgeois organizations such as the Center party and the German Democratic party—an increasingly forlorn group—and, to an extent, the Left wing of the German People’s party, were generally more willing to talk the language of political pluralism and were certainly more "tolerant" than right-wing members of the German People’s party and the reactionary German National People’s party, to say nothing of the National Socialists. Further, it is true that the decline of the Republic can be measured in direct proportion to the decline of, say, the German Democratic party. Thus, the two-camps approach cannot be dismissed out of hand. At the same time, though, investigation into what must be seen as fundamental conscious emotional concerns of representatives of the bourgeois class as a whole reveals that there was a general, shared fantasy that cut across political lines; a fantasy which, to no small degree, became actualized in the most basic doctrines of National Socialism.

One could make the argument, of course, that German liberals or, if one wishes, bourgeois moderates, even if they shared certain concerns with conservatives or representatives of the radical right, differed quantitatively to such a degree on such issues as the role of parliamentary government, racism, anti-Semitism, and so on, that to lump them together with their far more stridently intolerant and antipluralistic fellow burghers is unfair. Furthermore, another argument, most particularly with regard to the so-called liberals under consideration, could be made; namely, that, most particularly in a political situation characterized by a more-or-less steady bourgeois drift to the right, campaign rhetoric ought to be distinguished from genuine beliefs. In response to the first potential objection, the author is certainly willing to admit that there were meaningful differences between the radical right-wing and moderate sections of the German bourgeoisie. At the same time, though, the acceptance by both groups of certain fundamental attitudes, at times virtual superstitions, is of immense significance and points to the persistence and power of those elements, which were constitutive of the German bourgeois fantasy. The first objection raises few problems and can be answered with little
expenditure of time or energy. Consideration of so-called private remarks of various liberal bourgeois figures of importance in Weimar Germany will reveal that public statements made in the supposed heat of political campaigns either were actually representative of these private remarks or soon came to be.

Even if one does not totally accept the so-called Fischer Thesis in its entirety, there can be little doubt that Germany's bourgeoisie had an immense stake in victory in World War I. Domestic tensions and sacrifices during the war, the anguish of defeat, and governmental chaos following this defeat took an immense psychic toll. To be sure, the German working class also suffered greatly physically and psychologically. It, however, had several advantages over the bourgeoisie. First of all, there was the comforting balm of a progressive ideology; the hope that, with the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic, the first steps in the direction of a more equitable society had been taken. For Social Democrats, this was of some comfort. Communists, while eschewing republican forms, could derive satisfaction from more strident teleological expectations. Paradoxically, it was the ruling class that, from the point of view of hope in the future, was left high and dry. The so-called revolution of 1913 had turned out to be historical froth, which, nonetheless, had sufficed to drown the Spartacists. Economic power remained in bourgeois hands. Military shame and republican uncertainties, however, could not be fully assimilated. In mitigation, there was unbridled fantasy, and, both for those who as "republicans of reason" (Vernunftsuphülft) evidenced a grudging willingness to work within the framework of parliamentary republicanism and for those who rejected republican solutions outright, this was of immense importance throughout the tenure of the Weimar Republic.

In 1917, the then liberal Ernst Krieck, a leading voice in educational reform, published Die deutsche Staatsidee. This work, completed under the grinding pressures of total war and attendant home-front scarcities, was written in the idiom of German romantic speculation. Thus, when the author spoke of the state in organic terms, as being representative of a whole Volkstum, he was not exactly breaking new ground. Neither was he when he declared that the state had to be grounded in life, which, he suggested "embraced nature and spirit as it did two poles." Krieck—who joined the National Socialist party in 1928—expressed, however, was a concern for holistic immersion in life which, in one way or another, would characterize bourgeois fantasizing during the Weimar period. The results of World War I were hideous and, even for liberals, hard to swallow. A heroic Germany had gone under and, to the liberal Friedrich Meinecke, it was obvious that "No state could rule for long on the basis provided by the protagonists of the Left, with their Jewish, sentimental-soft ideas." In this regard, it is of interest to note the solution to post-World War I problems proffered by the realist, Meinecke—a sort of internal emigration into
the infinite. This proposal appeared in Nach der Revolution, and in this context Heinecke offered the pre-World War I Wandervogel youth movement as an example of how it could be done.

In the hearts of happy, wandering youth, the feeling for the homeland began to grow again. And the most German in our art and poetry was truly none other than the recapitulation of our landscape in the eyes of the artist—that... synthesis of Idyllic Herzlichkeit with ascending, overpowering feeling for the infinite... So, many of us today retain, even in our narrowness, a longing for the innermost recesses of our feeling, after the most German Germany in nature and spirit.3

Heinecke had accepted the formation of a republic on realpolitical grounds. In his eyes, in the realm of politics, Vernunft—reason—had replaced Herz—heart. Yet, the dean of German liberal historiography always retained a certain antiurban and anti-Semitic bias, at least in the social sense. Both conditioning and accompanying this was a tendency which we have seen in the case of Ernst Krieck—an attempt to draw strength from or seek solace in an immersion of life forces, the infinite, or nature. Concern for putative forces of this ilk was not new and was hardly confined to Germany, although it perhaps achieved its greatest resonance in so-called Lebensphilosophie. In Weimar Germany, though, we can see this attaining unparalleled prominence as a fantasy dimension to political and spiritual considerations.

As suggested in Heinecke’s statement in Nach der Revolution, discouraged bourgeois intellectuals often sought our salvation in a sort of "reborn" German youth, one open to life forces of a profound character. Krieck, who, by the early Weimar period was beginning his trek towards the radical right, declared that the most valid philosophy of education always had to bear in mind that "all knowledge, all experience is, first of all, a means in the service of life formation" and that the educational experience was of singular importance because, on the basis of individual experience, one could not arrive at a comprehensive "world picture" (Weltbild).9 The eventual goal of a "life forming" education would be to create the total man, a sort of updated version of Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister and concurrently, there would be an emphasis upon the strengthening of character rather than upon a perceived narrow intellectualism. While Krieck, at this point, did not subscribe to the notion, so dear to many on the German right, that immersion in life forces necessitated submission to nature, he exhibited an almost sentimental attitude towards those who, for one reason or another, remained outside the realm of education. "The human in the state of nature is amidst us and within us; in its purity, he is the new-born child in all its Helplessness."10 This empathy for the children of nature, evidenced in Weimar Germany, contributed to political decisions.
Ernst Krieck became a National Socialist in 1928. In his romanticizing of youth, however, he was at one with many liberals of the period. We have considered Friedrich Neirnecke. It is important to point out that many of Neirnecke's fellow liberals, members of the ill-fated German Democratic party, regarded German youth as somehow embodying rationally inexpressible verities. To be sure, much of this stemmed from efforts to compete with the radical right in drawing young people to their particular political cause. Nevertheless, it is striking that the editors of Der Demokrat thought it perfectly in order that the January 5, 1923, issue of their journal be introduced by quotations from the anti-Semitic obscurantists Heinrich von Treitschke and Paul de Lagarde, quotations in which the writers extolled youth's readiness to fight for concrete ideals. When the German Democratic party essentially sacrificed its republicanism in the name of ill-defined völkisch concerns, this was accompanied by a plethora of articles defending that decision and calling upon all of democratic persuasion to recognize that the fusion with an anti-Semitic Jungdeutsche Orden to form the politically absurd Staatspartei was necessary in order to provide a non-authoritarian outlet for youthful idealism. "The idea of German youth," Kurt Goepel proclaimed, "is simply Germany, Fatherland, homeland." Urban Germany had proved to be too impersonal and mechanistic for Germany's young people. The state had a duty to provide "the expression form of the völkisch will to national community," this was necessary to satisfy the spiritual needs of German youth. This fascination with youth went beyond melioristic political considerations and indeed was the expression of a fantasy that was of immense importance in the psychic makeup of bourgeois Weimar Germany. Somehow, youth embodied both historical and timeless virtues, elements that had been lost in an increasingly urbanized and industrialized Germany. Youth, in its ingenuous commitment to ideals, was Germany and, most assuredly, not the Germany born of military disaster in 1918. It was in this fascination with youth and youth movements that the Weimar liberals were very closely tied to exponents of neo-conservatism and the radical right.

The interest displayed by German youth for the radical right and vice-versa has been the subject of numerous studies. For our purposes, it is of immense importance that representatives of right-wing thinking perceived youth in somewhat the same fashion as did many German liberals.

The German right, opposed to liberalism from the beginning, could be somewhat more consistent in its extolling of German youth, a youth which, in many ways, had been and would continue to be antiliberal. In a virulent attack on liberalism, Moeller van den Bruck, who already had established a name for himself as translator of Dostoevski and as an ardent foe of post-World War I Germany, declared that, with regard to the newly-founded Republic, "the youth in Germany feels the basis of the betrayal." German youth, in its honesty and in its ingenuous commitment to principle,
was willing to declare its opposition to a spiritually dishonest republic and to "recognize the enemy as being liberals." According to Moeller van den Bruck, German youth, in many ways apolitical and naively idealistic, represented Germany. Both liberals and conservatives were thus united in their view of youth as representing a forthright, honest, and, almost because of its apolitical character, significant commentary upon Germany's historical situation. For the right, however, this adulation of youth had a religious dimension. As Karl Bernhard Ritter saw it, youth, as the future of a Volk community (Volksgemeinschaft), was constrained to see that "religion is a matter of the community, and thus, in the first instance, a matter of concrete historical community, a matter of the Volk. Each truly living religion is a Volk religion." Thus, youth was called upon to grasp the fundamental role that was being assigned to it—to be the bearers of a Christian religiosity that was, in essence, Germany itself. Frank Glatze!, editor of the monthly journal Jungdeutsche Stimmen, declared that the society of 1922 lacked "the heart which beats for the whole body." For the youth movement of pre-World War Germany, the Wandervogel, "the point of departure was . . . the degeneration and decomposition of society, as well as the natural Volk feeling." The Wandervogel group, which could well serve as examples to a deracinated society, "had no program written on its banners," nothing but "life . . . and experience." In an interesting sequence of ideas, Glatze! first declared that the summer solstice ceremonial fire, which had been of great traditional importance in the Wandervogel movement and which continued to be prominent in the activities of right-wing youth movements after the war, was part of a new, youthful religious experience, which had to be appreciated as such. The author then went on to concern himself with the antiparliamentary, antimonarchical, and antiparty nature of German youth. To be sure, he concluded, "we know that the social question is the core question of the Volksgemeinschaft; that socialism as idea is the necessary antidote to liberalism." This was not only, however, "a question of correct distribution of goods . . . but just as much a question of condition of soul." In one paragraph full of bromide-laced bourgeois fantasy, Glatze! captured the attitude of the radical right, as well as many liberals, towards German youth. Somehow, in its very lack of concreteness, in its longing for a new religiosity and a nonsocialistic socialism, and in its condemnation of day-to-day party politics, it was the real Germany. Naturally, for some liberals, the antiliberal nature of right-wing German youth, was rather too much to endure. Like many of their ideological counterparts all over the world, however, many Weimar-period liberals felt distinctly uneasy about their social and ideational position—perhaps even a bit guilty. Some of this can be observed in an article written by Gertrud Bühmer and published in the liberal journal Die Hilfe after the disastrous (for the Democrats) May 1923 elections.
Bäumer, noted bourgeois feminist and literary critic, seemed to don right-wing garments as she expressed interest in the Jungdeutsche Orden, placing particular emphasis upon its opposition to the "party essence." Besides paying greater attention to this "Order," Bäumer maintained that the German Democratic party should recognize that Weimar Democracy was rooted "not in the pompous relativism of liberal big-city dwellers, but in many völkisch and soil-bound strengths, . . . and is conservative-bourgeois in all questions of conscience."21

The reaction of Germany’s bourgeoisie to the introduction of parliamentary government is well known and need not be further documented here. They were opposed to it, by and large, and even the German Democratic party, which out of a sense of Realpolitik declared itself in favor of parliamentary government, evidenced a certain degree of suspicion towards the new institution from the beginning, a suspicion which, over the years became translated into a rejection on the part of many of its members.22 Growing distrust of parliamentary government was a general phenomenon in bourgeois circles during the Weimar period. Behind the objections to an imposed parliamentary system was something else—the fantasy of return.

If one examines the statements of Meinecke and Bäumer, one is struck by the thought that, for these liberals, there was a real, somehow more valid, order beyond that of Weimar Germany. For Meinecke, there was the "most German Germany in nature and spirit." For Bäumer, there were "völkische and soil-bound strengths." What these representatives of republican pluralism were stating was that postwar Germany, a foreign-imposed, big-city entity, was not real; that, somehow, behind all of the problems manifest in military defeat and parliamentary bickering, there was another Germany, the real Germany. This point of view was held by other German liberals. For Willy Hellpach, psychologist and the Democratic party’s presidential candidate in the first presidential election of 1925, the ultimate source for German democracy had to be Germany’s farmers, a class indifferent to big-city cries for tolerance in political and religious matters.23 In a word, the most stolid, conservative—timeless, really—element of German social and political life was the source of all things positive, including that democracy to which, at least in its Weimar form, many liberals were only formally committed. Positive national strengths were rooted in a class that fantasy had endowed with well-nigh mystical powers. The real Germany was one that eluded rational political analysis. Nevertheless, there was a natural order, which not only provided foundations for whatever positive elements there were in German public life, but served as a source of comfort for those increasingly alienated from Weimar republicanms. This order, antirepublican to be sure, was nonetheless the basis for democratic republicanism. The implicit contradiction in all of this might well have been obvious to German liberals on a certain level of
consciousness. As we have seen with regard to Blumer's attitude towards German youth, however, there was a stubborn unwillingness to dispense with fantasizing about a real, more natural Germany.

Interestingly enough, one of the most fantasy-obsessed of Weimar Germany's beleagured democrats was Walther Rathenau, at first minister of reconstruction and then foreign minister under Josef Wirth, chancellor between 1921 and 1923. Rathenau, the most prominent Jew in German political life, was assassinated on June 24, 1922, by right-wing terrorists who might well have adhered to some of the same mystical ideals to which this spiritually most confused individual clung throughout his life.\(^{24}\) Rathenau's father, Emil, founder of the AEG electrical firm, had done as much as anybody to bring "modernity" to Germany. Walther Rathenau himself, of course, was a businessman of no mean acumen. Furthermore, as head of the Raw Materials Board during the First World War, he had established a reputation for economic realism. The Treaty of Rapallo existed as proof of his ability to engage in level-headed, well-nigh cold, international diplomatic horse-trading. Yet, throughout his life, Rathenau had exhibited a romantic alter-ego. For this most rational of industrialists, the pursuit of transcendence was of immense importance. Individualistic spirituality was the means by which this spiritually perplexed capitalist sought to bind himself to timeless forces, acceptance of which, in his eyes, represented a rejection of his own Judaism.\(^{25}\)

Rathenau served the Weimar Republic valiantly and well and, in large part, perished because of this service. In many ways, though, Rathenau, like so many of his liberal colleagues, never completely adjusted to republican life and to a new state form born of defeat. Throughout his life, he had combated what he perceived to be grossly materialistic influences. As an example of this, we can consider a 1917 speech. In it he declared that he felt constrained to attempt to fulfill a mission that he thought nature had given him: to combat the "material, which had been tossed into this world like weeds from a strange continent."\(^{26}\) He had to "infuse this unspiritual with spirit."\(^{27}\) Part of this spirit was a spiritual Germany from which he drew strength. "This spiritual Germany lives, it lives in you and it lives in several others and it appears completely different than the Germany of which one hears and of which one speaks."\(^{28}\) The Germany of warriors was certainly "strong and great" but, in the final analysis (a comforting thought in 1917 and even more so in 1922 when the speech was reproduced in the Deutsche Rundschau), it was spiritual Germany which mattered. Peace treaties mattered little, and Germany's future would not be decided on the "battlefield of Flanders" but would be upon "the battlefield of our hearts."\(^{29}\)

Rathenau's message was a gentle one and, unlike many of his countrymen, even some of his fellow liberals, he evidenced little
bitterness over the stalemated course of the war, and cries for revanche were muted, to say the least. In this essay, however, the reader can observe that fantasy of another, more spiritual Germany, one implicitly "natural" in its spirituality. Material Germany might well have been stalemated on the battlefield, and starvation might well be prevailing on the home front; but, there was an ultimate reality behind all of this, the reality of the German spirit. This message was carried into the post-World War I period.

In 1920, Rathenau published a work entitled Die neue Gesellschaft, a piece which offered a guarded prognosis for Germany's future. In this rambling essay, he revealed a lack of enthusiasm for parliamentary republicanism that was characteristic of many German liberals.30 The solutions offered by Rathenau to the problems posed by defeat and disillusionment boiled down to one overriding one: fulfillment of a uniquely German "mission." "The way to the German mission, to German development /Bildung/, which shall no longer be the development of classes, but the development of the Volk, stands open through equalization of labor. The whole land is the same as a team; each stands before the same passage. Physical labor is no longer retarded by the pressure of overexhaustion, spiritual labor no longer divorced from the Volk."31 Rathenau, in brief, was calling for that traditional Volksgemeinschaft, which always had waxed large in the fantasy world of the German bourgeoisie. "We don't need more rulers," he declared in a 1920 address before the Berlin Democratic club. "What we need are stewardships, responsibilities, communities, self-governing, responsible communities."32 He saw an important role for his party in this process, particularly inasmuch as the German Democratic party was "no longer a party of big interests."33 A communal Germany in which, without real societal change, of course, each person had a role in the fulfillment of a spiritual mission—this was Rathenau's fantastic (in the literal sense of the word) conception of how to deal with the seemingly numberless problems that tormented the Weimar Republic.

For Rathenau, as for other liberals, there was a mysterious "other Germany"—one which existed above and beyond day-to-day political life. Inspite of, or perhaps because of, his alienation from much of German life due to his Jewishness, he seemed to have loved this Germany with an intensity that defies conventional historical analysis. In his diary, Harry Graf Kessler described an interview with Rathenau's sister. "The war crushed him," she said, "because his 'beloved' /Germany/ had been overthrown." He had wanted to defend his "beloved," but, being a Jew, he had never been able to obtain an army commission, thus "his Jewishness hung like a millstone around his neck."34

Right-wing writers and critics tended to be both more strident and more consistent in their various expressions of the great
bourgeois fantasy of Weimar Germany. For one thing, they obviously could attack liberalism with greater consistency than the liberals themselves even though, as we have seen, liberals often seemed to be quite eager to shed their melioristic principles in favor of supposedly more heroic ones. In his previously-cited essay, "An Liberalismus gehen die Völker zugrunde," Moeller van den Bruck declared that "liberalism is the freedom to have no convictions, and at the same time maintain that this precisely is conscience."35 Liberalism appeared when a community lost its cohesiveness, it was the expression of a society which is no longer a community.36 People who remained part of nature, the "Naturvölker," "do not know liberalism. For them, the world is a unified experience which man shares with men."37 People who had been able to form themselves into cohesive states also had the ability to keep liberalism under control. Deracinated "society peoples" ("Gesellschaftsvölker"), however, had ceased to be a community, and it was here that liberalism was able to take hold.38 Liberalism, in the eyes of probably one of the most prominent right-wing spokesmen in post-World War I Germany, was a symptom of communal disintegration.

Right-wing thinkers often maintained that liberal or left-wing ideologies were unnatural and hence not worthy of serious consideration. In his 1920 article, "Biologie und Kommunismus," Hermann von Rosen spoke of the necessity of understanding so-called laws of life through studying biology.39 Thus, "any revolution which is possible only through deviation from natural, evolutionary laws appears as an anomaly to us." Nature was "not communist, above all, not democratic."40 Nature was individualistic and aristocratic, and communism, in its appeal to human rights was incredibly naive. There were no rights in nature, only laws.41 Nations had to live according to the laws of life. All who defied these laws, and hence revealed themselves as unnatural, were doomed. Von Rosen sounded almost positivistic in his rather cool appeal to biological laws. Yet, throughout, there was also an implicit utopianism: if a people adheres to those natural laws that express themselves politically in a "natural" aristocracy, this people will have tapped into eternal forces. For von Rosen, as for other representatives of bourgeois right-wing thought, his was an age in which outmoded, transient values were being replaced by new beliefs grounded in timeless values. During this time, Ernst Krieck declared that humankind had "to seek out a new attitude to the powers of life and of occurrences; a new Mythus, as exponent of a new belief and life-feeling, is being born."42

Krieck looked forward to a time in which the individual would attain fulfillment as a "valid member of the community of life with all its forms, values, goals, knowledge, and skills."43 Wilhelm Stapel, editor of the racist journal Deutsches Volkstum and later a strong supporter of Nazism, pressed this point in an openly more völkisch direction, in his essay "Volk und
Volkstum," when he declared that "Volk is an irreplaceable, natural community, differentiated from other forms." 44

Representatives of the German right, like many liberals, were seeking out their nation's salvation in an immersion in nature, or in recourse to certain fundamental "laws of life," as Krieck was fond of putting it. Unlike the liberals, with the possible exception of full-blown romantics such as Blümner, they could be more consistent in their efforts since they felt no need to somehow reconcile their beliefs with republican principles and liberal meliorism. All of them were concerned with some sort of national rebirth or, in Krieck's case, with the birth of a new Mythus. A very specific means of helping to bring this about was provided by Heinz Brauweiler who, in a widely-publicized essay, suggested that Roman law be replaced in its entirety by traditional German law, which he thought was more socially conscious and hence sensitive to the needs of the whole community. 45 "In place of the contemporary artificial and arbitrary division of the Volk, of the state body, through parties and economic organizations, which all are more or less filled with thoughts of class and class struggle, there will be a natural division, grown out of nature." 46 German law, the product of a German spirit apparently rooted in nature, would assist in restoration of this natural order.

Walther Rathenau, in his concern to infuse a materialistic world with spiritual values, came close to offering a religious solution to Germany's problems. In this, he differed somewhat from his liberal colleagues. Right-wing spokesmen, however, exhibited more of a willingness, indeed eagerness, to proffer what one would have to call religious answers to the problems of a deracinated Volk. Some of those who concerned themselves with this issue spoke the jargon of traditional romanticism. Will-Erich Peuckert, in his article "Gott-Natur," blamed the Enlightenment for separating God from Nature. Fortunately, the romantics of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century served to restore the God/Nature synthesis. 47 Peuckert saw the restoration of "Naturphilosophie" as being of fundamental concern. A new "unity of God/Nature" was needed in order to restore spiritual balance for the German people. This could best be accomplished if more attention were paid to "our farmers and ... the 'primitives' on the land." 48 These were the humble possessors of timeless, soil-bound truths. 49 For individuals such as Peuckert, the search for some far-off fusion between God and nature was indicative of a more general concern, which we have seen expressed by both liberals and rightists; his was a concern for totalism, a complete immersion into nature or life forces. Such was the goal of one of the most distinguished existentialist philosophers, Martin Heidegger, who spent a lifetime attempting to pass beyond what he perceived to be linguistic errors and philosophical obscurantism and to embrace the very ground of all speculation, nothingness, as it turned out to be. 50 The great
philosopher's genuine concern to penetrate into the very core of natural being, something which was first evident in his *Sein und Zeit* of 1927, led him to embrace, if only for a brief period, the *Lebensphilosophie* of National Socialism and to reject "academic freedom" as signifying "unconcern." Academic freedom had been "a capricious exercise of intentions and inclinations and was noncommitment." In these remarks, the reader can sense an attitude towards liberalism rather similar to that expressed by Moeller van den Bruck--it was symptomatic of a lack of commitment to the natural, organic community. Some representatives of the right, despairing at what they perceived to be the gap between idealism and day-to-day political chicanery, saw the infusion of religiosity into politics--or, perhaps more accurately, the transformation of politics into a religion of the Volk--as being the only way out of national degradation.

Rudolf Pechel, editor of the Deutsche Rundschau, in an essay which appeared in a 1920 edition of the journal, declared that many Germans were now willing to follow a dictator. All that was needed was the appearance of a "great idea imbued with transcendental strength, deep human love, and great righteousness and purity." Such an idea, or more precisely, one who embodied it, "will immediately find millions of supporters." In this hour of parliamentary degradation (coincidentally, the essay appeared around the time of the Kapp Putsch, but had been written sometime before this occurred), strong personalities were needed, personalities that went beyond matters of state and, in fact, embodied the German spirit. Pechel, whose editorial independence would later get him in a great deal of trouble during the National Socialist regime's rule in Germany, appeared to be actually looking forward to a dictatorship--one rooted, of course, in transcendental national truths. He was calling for a religious transformation of values rather than for dictatorship in the traditional sense of the word. This became crystal clear in his 1922 essay, "Das Wort geht um," in which Pechel declared that "we Germans are now entering the timespan of our fulfillment." In words both hoary and eerily prophetic, Pechel went on: "The duty to Volkstum became a religious challenge. The path to this religion, which is already itself a religion, can be traversed only by individuals." What was needed here, Pechel declared--bringing up an issue considered in his 1920 essay--was a leader. Such a leader would correspond to the figure presented by Paul de Lagarde. This person was one "in which lives the most distinguished quintessence of the German spirit." The leader had to be an individual characterized by "hate against the unnatural Unnatur." In the final analysis, Germany was being confronted by a choice between "God or Satan." Drastic measures were being suggested, but, "the voice of our blood releases us from time-bound laws." This approach was perhaps apotheosized by Paul Kranhals who, in his 1923 work, *Das organische Weltbild*, boldly declared that "for the future leaders of the German soul, politics will be,
simultaneously, religion, and they will have to cleanse the German house of those for whom religion has become politics." 58

For some on the German right, the fantasy of return had to be crowned by a spiritual revolution that was necessarily religious in character. Politics were conceived of as being corrupt, as degrading the existence of the German people. There was, as Pechel stated, an "unnatural" aspect that had to be purged from German life. The future leaders of Germany would be men of deep and abiding faith, ones who could say, as Martin Luther did, "Hier steche ich, ich kann nicht anders" (Here I stand, I can do no other). 59

For bourgeois Germans, the Jews, at the very least, represented a troublesome element, a group whose role in German life was problematical. Even liberals, who could hardly be accused of racism or of harboring mindless prejudices, spoke of a "Jewish problem," some of them even after the massacres of World War II. 60 Meinecke declared that anti-Semitism was the first step to National Socialism and that things would have gone better if the "Jewish problem" had been confronted earlier. Heuss, during the course of an address, "Mut zur Liebe," given on December 7, 1949, before the Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit, spoke of a "Jewish-German and Jewish-Christian problem." While Heuss was hardly anti-Semitic in any systematic sense and, after World War II, went out of his way to lend support to those Jews who remained in Germany and to the state of Israel, his use of the above term points to the power of an idea; namely, that there was—or had been—a "Jewish Problem" of sorts. Friedrich Meinecke, as we shall see, tended to play down German responsibility for how this so-called "problem" was resolved. Heuss never rejected the idea that German responsibility had to be assumed. Both Meinecke and Heuss, however, seemed to be unable to see Jews as being an organic part of the German national community. Few German liberals could be accused of systematic racism. Yet, a strong dose of at least social anti-Semitism was part of the spiritual baggage which they carried into the chaotic Weimar period. In the post-World War I fantasizing in which so many of them engaged, the Jewish role, or better, purpose in German life, became problematic.

On the surface, there was reason enough for liberals, not fully committed to republicanism, to be suspicious of the Jews. Jews, by and large, supported the Republic and one of their number, Hugo Preuss, had played an important role in writing the Weimar constitution. 61 The German Democratic party, which Heuss, Meinecke, and virtually all bourgeois supporters of republicanism either joined or voted for, derived a good deal of its support from the German Jewish community. The Jews appeared to have benefitted from republicanism and, as post-World War I Germany went from crisis to crisis, those who seemed to have advanced their positions through an apparently ineffectual form of
government had to have stood out in the minds of individuals who, liberal or not, always had retained a residue of suspicion with regard to parliamentary government. However, for many of the liberals, as for their right-wing countrymen, the Jews became suspect primarily because they seemed to have no natural role in German life. Certainly, for both liberals and, for that matter, for many on the right, this did not necessitate that violent measures be undertaken to correct the situation. Nevertheless, such an attitude was hardly conducive to sustaining meaningful resistance against those willing to indulge in such unpalatable measures.

As we have seen, Friedrich Meinecke and Gertrud Bäumer fantasized about a deep-rooted, more real Germany—something which lived in a timeless realm, far removed from military disaster and cosmopolitan, big-city cynicism. For both of these individuals, German Jewry during the Weimar period proved to be troubling. Meinecke, originally contemptuous of the German left, with its "Jewish, sentimental, soft ideas," found it particularly difficult to deal with the Jewish, liberal press. Usually, he maintained in an essay of 1926, this press had served the national interests. It could not be denied though, that, from time to time, it had manifested "a somewhat Jewish resentment." Of immense importance for Meinecke was that certain impurity towards the past which had been shown by the left-wing and liberal press. From the time in which it first emerged onto the national scene, Meinecke had attacked the National Socialist party as representing a demagogic and divisive danger to Germany. Indeed, it was in large measure because of these attacks that he was removed from the editorship of the Historische Zeitschrift in 1935. Nevertheless, while criticizing the Nazis for their demagogic style, he was willing to admit, in an essay of December 21, 1930, that he saw certain valuable elements in the National Socialist movement. Besides its concern for a "strong national will, the passionate feeling in regards to our political dependency," there was its "ethical revolt against big-city dirt." For Meinecke, hardly a systematic racist in any sense of the term, the liberal press, "big-city dirt," and that "somewhat Jewish resentment" were a sort of hardened underside of "Jewish, sentimental softness." As we have seen, in his post-World War II work, The German Catastrophe, Meinecke did suggest that, as he saw it, there was a definite "Jewish Problem." In his eyes, the Jews themselves bore a large share of the responsibility for it. As he stated:

The Jews, who were inclined to enjoy indiscretely the favorable economic situation now smiling upon them, had since their full emancipation aroused resentment of various sorts. They contributed much to that gradual depreciation and discrediting of the liberal world of ideas that set in after the end of the nineteenth century. The fact that besides
their negative and disintegrating influence they also achieved a great deal that was positive in the cultural and economic life of Germany was forgotten by the mass of those who now attacked the damage done by the Jewish character.64

In this statement we can see him drawing a sharp line between Germans and a "Jewish character" that often was destructive, frequently expressing itself in a "negative and disintegrating manner." (Millions of those who presumably bore this odious character within them had, of course, been just recently exterminated, something upon which Meinecke placed little real emphasis.) One is compelled to ask just what it was that this Jewish character was "disintegrating." Meinecke was never too clear about this, but we can get a good idea, perhaps, if we pander a statement he made concerning those positive elements he saw in National Socialism. The emergence of liberalism, he said, besides providing for individual liberation "had left society too much to itself and allowed the old ethical ties such as family, custom, and social stratification to relax while no energetic consideration was given to the creation of new ties. Society was in danger of becoming amorphous."65 Hitler appeared to have been sensitive to this and particularly so with regards to the needs of German youth.

For Meinecke, the yearning for that eternal Germany had caused him to fall back upon the Wandervogel experience after World War I. After World War II, there were the "Goethe Circles."66 Part and parcel of this fantasy was the notion that Jews were not really part of this Germany. They were different somehow and, in their "disintegrating" form, dangerous to a sort of natural order that, for Meinecke, represented Germany in its most authentic form.

Otto Gessler, a German democrat who was defense minister between 1920 and 1922, was not one of those relatively rare liberals who greeted the new-born Republic with enthusiasm. Indeed, throughout, he maintained a considerable degree of loyalty for not only the Hohenzollerns but the Wittelsbach dynasty of Bavaria, Gessler's home Land.67 Hohenzollerns, the Wittelsbachs, the pre-World War I orderly society bequeathed Germany by Bismarckian genius—these became increasingly important to Gessler as his bitterness towards Weimar increased. It was partially because of his love of this Germany that he became associated with elements of the anti-Hitler underground in World War II and, after the July 20, 1944, assassination attempt, was arrested and tortured by the Gestapo.

For Gessler, Weimar-period Jewry came to embody everything that was wrong with Germany. The big city was the source of that cynicism, cosmopolitanism, and pacifism that so annoyed him. "I considered it and still consider it today to be one of the
most serious weaknesses of the Weimar system that it, out of its liberal ideology, did not tear out this big-city degeneracy, root and branch.68 He furiously attacked the left-wing Jewish press and literary circles. "With cold cynicism they tore down everything upon which healthy German national feeling depended and treasured each phenomenon of decadence as a sign of the progress of civilization."69 For Gessler, that "upon which healthy German national feeling depended" was respect for time-hallowed institutions such as the army, various forms of monarchism, and the ingenuous wholesomeness of a presumed past age. Far more than Meinecke, and possibly even Bllumer, Otto Gessler, for eight years holder of one of the most important ministerial posts, perceived a singularly negative Jewish spirit, expressing itself in urban degeneracy and unnatural cynicism.

Harry Graf Kessler, a man of extraordinary decency and intelligence, was a strong defender of the Weimar Republic—this, despite his noble background (he was known as "the Red Count")—one of the most devoted of pacifists, and an admirer of Rathenau. He was an enemy of National Socialism from the beginning and, throughout his life, was totally opposed to political romanticism in any form. Nevertheless, on Tuesday, November 30, 1920, he recorded the following in his diary:

Danzig is a little Babylon. Unbelievably international and cosmopolitan in the midst of its Gothic German gables. Profiteers, whores, and sailors. Americans, Poles, and Jews shading off into Germans. Many of the Poles with a veneer of Americanism. At night, drunk as swine, they demonstrate in the dance-halls a charming combination of American and Polish facets of intoxication. Eastern Europe under the influence of Wilson. Money flies; gold delirium. Such a circus hasn't been seen for years.70

Kessler, bitterly opposed to racism and anti-Semitism, cosmopolitan to his very roots, had his own memory of better times. A man of unusual self-knowledge, he had his defenses against such intrusions of fantasy-conditioned hatred (for such it was and, no doubt understandably so) into his cognitive processes. Others, however, had no such defenses and, indeed, might have condemned them as cowardly if they did.

For many of the German right, the fantasy of a unified, Volk-community, grounded in the past and embodying the noble principles of the real Germany, led them to view Judaism as a disruptive, alien, unnatural force. Liberals, as we have seen, displayed the same tendency from time to time; but, for the most part, commitments to republicanism and "tolerance," no matter how tenuous these might have been, served an inhibiting function. No such inhibitions exited on the right. Here, one often heard
the call for a true, natural "German socialism." This variety of socialism, corporate in nature, had been betrayed, Max Hildebert Boehm declared, by a new form of socialism—non-German Marxist socialism. The bearers of this form were not hard to find. "The Jew," Boehm maintained, "has German social history beginning anew in Paris in 1739." German socialism rooted in the German community, was natural; "Jewish socialism," for such it was in Boehm's eyes, was not, but was, rather, grounded in events and institutions foreign to Germany. For those concerned with a strong, deep-rooted state, Asiatic examples of a lack of state-consciousness served as warnings. "Politically, the Jews are typically Asiatic," Helmut Gfring stated in a 1922 essay. Their conception of state-life was limited in the extreme. Judah and Israel seldom were able to get together on anything of importance. "Beyond its law tablets, this indifferent people feels itself uncertain when opposed to the imponderabilities of state; it becomes theoretical and fanciful!" The fear of some sort of Asian incursion into Germany in particular and Europe in general was expressed by Charles E. Maylan in his 1930 essay, "Die psychoanalytische Methode." The Nietzschian author was intensely disturbed by the threat posed to European cultural values by a form of psychology that appeared to appeal to the values of the "herd." While not opposed to some aspects of psychoanalysis, its general tone suggested non-European, Aryan roots. Indeed, Freudian psychoanalysis was representative of a "growing Asiaticism" within Europe, the most prominent representatives of which were Lenin and Freud. The bearers of the Asiatic influence utilized Christian terms such as "equality, freedom, and justice" in a totally disingenuous manner and were primarily concerned with tearing down others in order to elevate themselves, such efforts stemming from a "deeply rooted inferiority complex." There were positive aspects to psychoanalysis, Maylan declared; a new means of "spiritual, creative love" (words which would have turned Nietzsche's stomach) had been made available. However, Asiatic, foreign influences, so visible in Freud, had to be dispensed with before those liberating elements could be efficacious. In his article, Maylan did not use the word "Jew"; but, to people whose intellectual perceptions had been honed on the whetstone of archetyping, the implication had to have been obvious. Contempt for and fear of "alien" influences was generally centered on the Jews. As might be expected, however, the French came in for their share of criticism. An article written by Karl Toth in 1921 was devoted to just such a critique. In large measure this piece placed emphasis upon the womanish nature of French culture as contrasted with the masculine German culture. The weibliche character of the French culture was expressed in its shameful and shameless pursuit of luxury and the entirely artificial and theoretical nature of French freedom. German freedom, on the other hand, was concrete and manly, and this
could be seen in Kant's categorical imperative. The French, Toth declared, were completely unnatural. In fact, they feared nature, and this could be seen in the unnatural aspect of their chateaux and in the shameful way in which defenseless animals were abused on the streets of Paris. Thus, on the one hand there was German culture—masculine, natural, dedicated to good, hard work. On the other one could ponder its French counterpart—feminine, unnatural, dedicated to the pursuit of luxury. In many ways, the accusations hurled at the Jews by Otto Weininger around the beginning of the twentieth century were now being expressed by Karl Toth with regard to the French. In any case, we can see that Toth's 1921 article fit the general fantasy pattern we have considered.

Criticism of the Jewish religion as embodying the character of a soulless, mundane people was not new. In this regard, the writings of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Richard Wagner come to mind. Weimar Germany saw no lack of such criticism. One critic, T. R. von Hoesslin, went so far as to declare that the Jews had had nothing to do with the emergence of monotheism; that this could not have originated out of "the psychic developmental materials of the Jewish people." The distinctly inferior character of Judaism and the Jewish people was revealed in Moses' obtaining the ten commandments. The Jews had to be told to obey. The ethical, good life could not come naturally out of this people. Furthermore, "the transendental feeling which seeks out the divine in the innermost recesses of the world is foreign to Judaism." Emphasis upon the transcendental experience came to the West only through Jesus Christ, who von Hoesslin compared to Lao Tze. In view of the author's attitudes towards Judaism, it is legitimate to ask whether he was concerned with separating Christianity from previously assumed Old Testament roots, something that was hardly unprecedented in German cultural history. In any case, the Jews had been represented as being a mundane, unnatural people who, as to be expected, produced a religion congruent with its character.

When the Nazis came to power, several of the right-wing figures we have considered became ardent supporters of the new regime. Indeed, as we have seen, Ernst Krieck joined the party as early as 1928. Most, however, did not, and Rudolf Pechel, the outspoken editor of the Deutsche Rundschau, offered editorial and personal opposition to such an extent that he eventually was thrown into a concentration camp. There could be no questioning of his courage or commitment to what he perceived to be conservative principles. Pechel survived his experience and, after the war, was one of the first to come out with a history of the German resistance movements against Hitler and to offer, along with Friedrich Meinecke, something of an explanation for the "German catastrophe." If one examines these writings, however, a strange, rather disturbing phenomenon becomes apparent: Hardly any time at all was expended on considering the Nazi solution
to the "Jewish problem." In this regard, Deutschenspiegel is particularly intriguing. On page 7 of the work, Pechel calls upon Germans to undergo a moral revolution in order to lift themselves out of the swamp of the Nazi period, a swamp which has become known through "names such as Auschwitz, Maidanek, Belsen and other concentration and extermination camps." From this point on, however, the author makes no mention of the final solution and, instead, devotes himself to a crude sort of psychohistorical—at times, racist—explanation of why German history took the fated course it did. With great passion, Pechel attacked those elements of the German national character that he saw as being dangerous. Most prominent among them were "disunity, lack of external and inner discipline ... constriction of feeling ... lack of healthy human understanding as regulative of action." These unhealthy characteristics were responsible for the German people remaining spiritually rent asunder, characterized by wide swings between sentimentality and brutality.

Throughout Deutschenspiegel, Pechel gives no indication that he was aware that he himself was utilizing a thoroughly racist approach to attack a racist regime. Perhaps, though, this was due to the fact that, inspite of his supposed concern over the existence of concentration and extermination camps, Nazi racism was not really a pressing issue for him. Ihat seemed to disturb him the most was the shame that had somehow been brought upon Germany. The role of the Jews in all of this did not seem to matter very much. For Pechel, as for the liberal Meinecke, World War II, after all, had been a German catastrophe. If one examines the post-World War II writings of some of those who both sustained and derived comfort from the great bourgeois fantasy of Weimar Germany—the pursuit of that timeless, nonpolitical, unified natural Germany that stood above and beyond military disaster and political confusion—one must be impressed by just how little the fate of Jews really mattered to these people. Certainly, what happened to them was unfortunate, and they never denied that the Holocaust had taken place. At the same time, however, their rather obvious lack of interest in the fate of European Jewry can only assist in illuminating further the prominence of an almost automatic, indeed "natural," anti-Semitism during the Weimar period. Somehow, in the natural ordering of things, the Jews had no real positive role to play.

Until now, we have been concerned with a general bourgeois fantasy, not, in a specific sense, with something that can be viewed as a religion. We have noted, however, that several right-wing thinkers were interested in the restoration of a sort of religion of nature or thought, that politics itself had to be infused with a religious spirit. The National Socialists have been described as maintaining allegiance to no ideals, as being purely pragmatic in character. In one area, though, their allegiance to principle was obvious, and this was both due
to and rationalized by a religion of nature in large measure
grounded in bourgeois fantasizing but, assuredly, much more
consistent.

Many commentators have emphasized the religious or pseudo-
religious character of National Socialism. Few, however, have
described it for what it really was—a religion of nature. Why
this has been the case is not easy to fathom. Perhaps, in
their emphases upon the necessity of living in harmony with
nature and in their extolling of the "natural man," the National
Socialists appear to be too close for comfort to present-day,
liberal environmentalism. In any case, those National Socialists
who mattered—the ones in the upper and middle echelons—adhered
to a weltanschauung that can only be described as being religious
in character.

For Hitler, the National Socialist movement drew its strength
"from a complete and comprehensive recognition of the essential
nature of life." National Socialist adherence to natural laws,
the "laws of life," as many Nazis chose to put it, allowed for
the emergence of a new human being. "The new man is among us!"
Hitler declared. "He is here! I will tell you a secret. I
have seen the vision of the new man—fearless and formidable.
I shrank from him." For Hitler, his role and that of the
National Socialist movement was somewhat uncertain. At times,
he seemed to think that he was the new man, at others he more
modestly viewed himself and the movement, or only himself, as
representing an incubation stage in the emergence of the new man.
One thing can be said for certain: Hitler saw the movement as
embodying laws of life. Thus, it took precedence over any given
political or institutional forms, including the state. If,
he declared in a statement of 1933, "the formal bureaucracy of
the state should prove itself to be unsuitable to solve a
problem, the German nation will set in action its living
organizations in order to assist in the breakthrough of its
life's necessities." The state, that unit hallowed by German
political and philosophical speculation, would take second place
to the demands of a people's "life necessities," demands that
could only be met by those acting in conscious fulfillment of
the laws of life.

The authentic grounding in life, which many National Socialists
saw as the primary strength of their movement, allowed them
to justify the intervention of ideology into all areas of
public affairs. The notion of value-free objectivity in science,
for example, was absurd. After all, according to Bernhard Rust,
minister of education, The National Socialist weltanschauung
emerged from life, and any true science was possible only on
"the basis of a living weltanschauung." These views were
echoed by the Nazi youth leader Heinz Wolff, who declared that
the so-called objectivity characteristic of scientific liberalism
served to make people forget that science was the creation of
Throughout the Nazi writings that we have thus far considered, we can observe a fundamental assumption; namely, that there existed a permanent natural order of things upon which the National Socialists were able to draw. This, in reality, elevated them above political parties and the state and, as Hitler himself often maintained, gave them a religious caste. "Man," Hitler once proclaimed, "is God in the making." This statement has a curiously Hegelian quality about it. For Hitler, however, this new man was not that being which emerged out of reflection upon the World Spirit's peregrinations through history but, rather, that authentic being who was grounded in nature, in laws of life.

It was this emphasis upon immersion in life—a notion which, in many ways, had a pragmatic dimension that made everything done in the name of National Socialism ultimately self-justifying—which had proved so attractive to Martin Heidegger. Such was also the case with Ernst Krieck who, having joined the National Socialist party in 1923, really came into his own as one of the official pedagogues after Hitler came to power. "The age of 'pure reason,' of 'absolutes' and 'value-free' sciences has ended," he declared in a 1933 work. Science now had to be seen as taking part "in the general shaping of life, the technical shaping of the external ordering of life as well as in the internal forming of human beings." A new German humanity had to be created, one in which all elements of life, including science, had to have roles to play. German efforts to carry out those tasks necessary in this process had been continuously threatened. "Rome, the French, Jews, Americans, to the point of niggerification, have attempted again and again to overthrow German fulfillment." The answer to these threats was, of course, Hitler, a man who "has succeeded in tapping a subterranean vein of völkisch life and channeling the spring-source."

The new German human being who Krieck saw as emerging in his time was what he called the gebundene Mensch—literally, the "linked man"—a person tied to the Volk-community through the National Socialist party. Total, natural harmony was his happy lot. The gebundene Mensch sees himself suspended between mother earth and father heaven, between darkness and light . . . and is a living whole in which life and becoming, task and toil fulfill themselves. . . . The gebundene Mensch is the aristocratic man, the man of race, breeding, and honor. To be sure, the problems confronting such a person were immense—degeneration of family ties, decline in the number of children, and the unnatural situation that had been created by the enfranchisement of women. Yet, by 1936, it would appear that Krieck had become positively ecstatic over the role that National Socialism was playing in bringing together all aspects of life.

Immersion in life, in some sort of natural order that was timeless and yet German—a concern that had been so prominent in bourgeois
circles during the Weimar period—was enticing to all manner of folk. The cleric, Friedrich Gogarten, who even in his efforts to reconcile religion with the new order did take pains to differentiate between Christianity and National Socialism, had to declare that the movement came "out of the core of human life" and thus embraced the totality of existence. The person unwilling to accept the fact that true freedom came only with the rule of a state governed by the National Socialist movement was only an "abstract individual." Despite Gogarten's unwillingness to see Christianity and Volkstum as being exactly one and the same thing, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he perceived National Socialism as somehow sanctifying national life.

For the National Socialist minister of agriculture, Walther Darre', there was no need to qualify an enthusiastic approval of blood-and-soil efforts to bind all Germans together in embracing Volkstum. Past and present would become as one "when the farmer's plow again breaks soil over the graves of his ancestors." A sense of community had been tarnished by liberals. In this regard, Darre' attacked the liberal conception of marriage. Such a conception encouraged naked egotism, and racial needs often had been forgotten. The sole purpose of marriage, Darre' declared, was the child. In fact, the child was sacred, and its nurturing was the "ethical demand of our time." In this context, Darre', in his enthusiasm, went beyond German bourgeois taste in declaring that children were so important that circumstances of birth, that is, legitimacy or illegitimacy, were really of no consequence. The role of the woman—presumably either within or out of wedlock—was crucial. Like a farmer, she had to bring things to fruition. If her blood was not of the highest quality, the son would be sickly and not be able to attain the level of his father. Darre', of course, represented an element of bucolic romanticism in the National Socialism movement which, in many respects, had to be dispensed with over time. Nevertheless, in his concern for the maintenance and advancement of an assumed natural order, or a time-hallowed Volkstum rather beyond rational analysis, he shared several of the more prominent concerns of Germany's bourgeoisie. As a Nazi, he adhered to a religion of nature, rejecting Christianity which, he declared, had introduced an unnatural sense of shame with regard to the human body.

It was, perhaps, in the realm of anti-Semitism that the National Socialists went well beyond the expectations of liberal and conservative Weimar-period bourgeois writers and publicists. Certainly, few of them could have anticipated anything quite like the final solution. In one crucial way, however, the Nazis shared—and admittedly elaborated upon—an attitude that was rather general among bourgeois circles in Weimar Germany—this was their view of the Jews as "unnatural," as somehow not belonging to an authentic order of being.

"The Jew," Hitler proclaimed, "is the antiman, the creature of
another god. He must have come from another root of the human race." Aryan and Jew were totally different beings. "The two are as widely separated as man and beast. Not that I would call the Jew a beast. He is much further from the beast than we Aryans. He is a creature outside nature and alien to nature." According to Hitler, the Jew was far removed from that natural world of soil-bound men and ingenuous animal life, which was the life-sustaining habitat of the Aryan. The only conceivable way, as Hitler saw it, in which the Jews could influence the natural world was as a disease; the Jew was a virus, and "the discovery of the Jewish virus is one of the greatest revolutions that have taken place in the world... How many diseases have their origin in the Jewish virus!" For Heinrich Himmler, "the Jew is a parasite which, like the parasites of the animal and plant world, lives from the strengths and productive labor of host peoples. The Jew is the blood-sucker of the world." As Darre', the ingenuous agriculturalist, saw it, even the best soil could sustain weeds (Unkraut), and the hard-working farmer had to be on guard against them. The various decrees against the Jews served a valuable function because, "in the peasant sense," they served to "free us from the weeds of Jewish blood." These weeds--the Unkraut, which was perhaps materialism to Rathenau?--had been responsible for the unnatural shame that people had come to associate with their bodies, something that had come out of a decomposing Jewish influence. "Jewish desecration of German women corresponded to the witch persecution of the church; both have a common spiritual father--Jahwe!"

An interesting link between the National Socialist religion of nature and general bourgeois fantasizing about the natural community was provided by Wilhelm Stapel, the conservative thinker. Stapel had emphasized the natural character of the Volk community. As in the case of Krieck, his star rose when the Nazis came to power, and he produced a number of works on the "Jewish Question" and related topics. On November 21, 1936, he delivered an address entitled "Literarische Vorherrschaft der Juden in Deutschland 1918 bis 1933." In this speech, which was presented at the University of Munich, Stapel declared that the Jews, particularly during the Weimar period, did not want to become "artificial Germans," but rather "attempted to make the Germans into artificial Jews." In this context, it did not matter whether a Jew was an assimilationist or a Zionist. "Assimilation and Zionism were two methods of constructing a domination. They were two ways of a secularized messianism." Jews, he went on to say, produced only mediocre original work and functioned mainly in a negative sense, as critics. Stapel gave several reasons for this, the most important of which was that the German language could never be their language, even if they were raised to speak it from childhood. It was not something which "had come out of the Jewish substance, the Jewish
soul, and the Jewish bodily structure. Furthermore, Jews, living as they have been in the "Galuth," have had "a strong need for discussion and polemic. Through polemic, one attempts to make the other inwardly uncertain in order that he accepts whatever one brings him." Through polemic and through their hold on the publishing houses, the Jews had attempted to interfere with, if not stunt, the natural development of German literature. It was the Jews who were responsible for bringing in the degenerating influence of psychology into the literary world, as well as "denatured" liberalism. In a most revealing attack on Jewish emancipation, Stapel declared that the greatest mistake had been to consider the Jews as a man when, in reality, he remained the same Jew "which he was from the beginning.

There can be little doubt that, in its claim upon "laws of life," in its nature worship, and in its concern to bring about the age of the new man, National Socialism viewed itself in well-nigh religious terms, even though the movement often spoke in a positivistic idiom. Most assuredly, its primary mission—the destruction of a foe that was "an enemy to life"—was a sacred one. In these aspects, of course, National Socialism certainly went beyond the fantasizing of most Weimar-period bourgeois, whose dreams of a timeless, yet naturally German community did not involve the physical destruction of those who were not perceived as having a role in it. At the same time, though, one must appreciate the fact that for many liberals as well as conservative and radical right-wing thinkers of Weimar Germany, Jews were unnatural, deracinated beings who really did not have a positive role to play in German life. For liberals at least, toleration was the rule. This concept, however, had a rather vapid ring to it under the circumstances.

To be sure, the notion of the Jews as being the unnatural bearer of a mechanistic, soulless civilization had a long pedigree in German cultural history. In the Weimar Republic, however, itself born of military disaster and international humiliation and beset by problems of pluralism to which most Germans were unaccustomed, fantasizing about a presumed natural order of things—and about those who were in one way or the other unnatural—did have more sharply defined political consequences than previously. Many of those who fantasized, of course, did not support Hitler, and a few even struggled against him. For most bourgeois Germans, however, the fate of the Jews did not provide much of a rallying point. Indeed, as we have seen, even after the conscientiously carried out slaughters of World War II, it was not an issue which one pondered, except to the extent that the role of the Jews in bringing this disaster upon themselves had to be considered. Nazism attained victory in its most meaningful campaign not entirely because millions of people lent it unqualified support at all times. Of equal importance was the cold fact that in its putatively "life-grounded" religiosity, it represented a concretization of bourgeois fantasizing about
a natural, soil-bound order and a rejection of those who, at the very least, did not belong to this order or at most threatened its emergence. Of course, most bourgeois Germans were incapable of performing those monstrous acts carried out by Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) and concentration camp functionaries. The removal of a people, however, which seemed to exist as an unassimilable entity within the body of the German Volk, was not a painful thing to bear. In the end, the establishment of a natural order would assure that all would be set aright.

In 1920, there appeared a booklet entitled Die Unbesiegten. The work was a collection of sayings and aphorisms gleaned from leading figures in German cultural and political history. It was meant to offer encouragement to a defeated and disheartened German public. As far as the great bourgeois fantasy of return was concerned, an anonymous saying can perhaps be perceived as being of some significance: "Der kommt am weitesten, der nicht weiss wohin er geht." "He goes furthest who knows not where he is going."
NOTES


3 Conventional histories of the Weimar Republic tend to present things in this fashion. As examples, we can point to Erich Eyck, A History of the Weimar Republic, 2 vols., trans. Harlan P. Hanson, Jr., and Robert G. L. Waite (New York:
4 Even here, though, certain qualifications have to be made. See Robert A. Pois, The Bourgeois Democrats of Weimar Germany (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1976) for a critique of the social and political stances of leading members of the German Democratic party. Several of the themes regarding German liberalism developed in this chapter were considered in this work, albeit in a quite different context.

5 Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967). In this seminal work, Professor Fischer placed the major portion of responsibility for this war and for boldly imperialistic war aims upon a military-industrial alliance that he saw as effectively directing German foreign and military policies.


11 Institute für Zeitgeschichte, Der Demokrat, 4 Jahrh., Nr. 1, January 5, 1923, p. 1.


14 Moeller van den Bruck, "An Liberalismus gehen die Volker zugrunde," in Die Neue Front, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 29.
15 Ibid., p. 33.
17 Frank Glatzel, "Die Jungendbewegung," in Ibid., p. 182.
18 Ibid., p. 183.
19 Ibid., p. 184.
20 Ibid.
23 Willy Heilpach, Politische Prognose fUr Deutschland (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1928), pp. 209-10.
25 It must be stated that Rathenau, inspite of his opinion that Judaism was nontranscendental in character, never seriously entertained the idea of conversion. His theological writings have been treated in the previously cited works of Kessler and Pois.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., p. 387.

29 Ibid., p. 383.


31 Ibid., p. 346.


33 Ibid., p. 377.


35 Moeller van den Bruck, "An Liberalismus gehen die Volker zugrunde," in Die Neue Front, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 6.

36 Ibid., p. 18.

37 Ibid., p. 19.

38 Ibid., p. 20.


40 Ibid., p. 184.

41 Ibid., pp. 185-06.

42 Ernst Krieck, "Erziehung und Entwicklung," in Die Neue Front, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 131.

43 Ibid., pp. 138-39.

44 Wilhelm Stapel, "Volk und Volkstum," in Ibid., p. 34.
Heinz Dauweisier, "Ruckkehr zum deutschen Recht," in Ibid., p. 245.

Ibid., pp. 250-51.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid., p. 460.

Rudolf Pechel, "Das wort geht um," in Die Neue Front, ed. Moeller van den Bruck, p. 72.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 74.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Just how important this role was can be seen in Wilhelm Ziegler, *Die deutsche Nationalvorsammlung 1919/1920 und ihr Verfassungswerk* (Berlin: Zentralvertrag gmbh, 1932).


Ibid., p. 113.

Ibid., p. 173.

Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe*, p. 15.

Ibid., p. 73.

Ibid., p. 120.

Ibid., p. 173-74.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 242. Emphasis was Maylan's.


Ibid., p. 13.

Ibid., p. 20.


Ibid.
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32 Ibid., p. 195. Actually, the seeking of divinity within phenomena would suggest a form of immanency rather than transcendentalism.

33 Gertrud Blümer, Sinn und Formen geistiger Führung (Berlin: F. A. Herbig, 1930), pp. 142-44. Walther Rathenau had come down on this point in emphasizing the superiority of the New over the Old Testament. For his discussion of Judaism's lack of transcendentalism, see his letter of June 21, 1912, to Rabbi Daniel Fink. This can be found in Walther Rathenau, Schriften, ed. Arnold Hartung et al. (Berlin: Fischer, 1965), p. 104.

34 The works under consideration are Deutsche Widerstand (Erlenbach/Zurich: Rentsch, 1947) and Deutschenspiegel (Berlin: Wedding Verlag, 1946).

35 Pechel, Deutschenspiegel, p. 7. Emphasis is Pechel's.

36 Ibid., p. 17.


39 Ibid.


41 Bernhard Rust, "Das Nationalsozialismus und Wissenschaft," Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Wissenschaft, Reden Von Reichsminister Rust und Prof. Ernst H. C. Kriek, (Hamburg: Carl Winter, Verlag, 1936), p. 19.


43 Rauschning, Hitler Speaks, p. 242.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 8.


Ibid., p. 36.

Ibid., pp. 56-57.

Ibid., pp. 59-61.


Ibid., p. 13.

R. Walter Darré, Neuordnung unseres Denkens (Goslar: Die Goslarer Volksbucherei, 1940), p. 28.

Ibid., p. 42. Emphasis is Darré's.

Ibid. If one accepted this viewpoint, of course, the question of marriage itself would be superfluous.

Ibid., pp. 44-45.


Darré, Neuordnung, p. 50.

Rausching, Hitler Speaks, p. 238.

Adolf Hitler, Secret Conversations 1941-1944, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1953), conversation of February 22, 1942, p. 269. Here, of course, Hitler was representative of a well-established attitude. Paul de Lagarde, although lacking the former's ideological consistency, had declared: "One does not negotiate with trichinea and bacillus. . . . They will be annihilated as quickly and as thoroughly as possible," The French utopian

112 Josef Ackerman, Himmler als Ideologe (Gottingen: Musterschmidt, 1970), p. 159.

113 Darri, Neuordnung, p. 16.

114 Ibid., p. 54.


116 Ibid.

117 Ibid., p. 15.

118 Ibid., p. 17.

119 Ibid., pp. 26, 41.

120 Ibid., p. 32.