

tradition going back through czarism to Byzantianism and to caesarism. In Russia itself it has typical precedents in Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Paul I, or Alexander III. The chief changes were that the system, through the advance of technology, of weapons, of communications, and of transportation, became more pervasive, more constant, more violent, and more irrational. As an example of its irrationality we might point out that policy was subject to sudden reversals, which not only were pursued with ruthless severity, but under which, once policy had shifted, those who had been most active in the earlier official policy were liquidated as saboteurs or enemies of the state for their earlier activities as soon as the policy was changed. In the late 1920's officials in the Ukraine had to speak Ukrainian; in a few years those who did were persecuted for seeking to disrupt the Soviet Union. As leaders were shifted, each demanded 100 percent loyalty, which became an excuse for liquidation by a successor as soon as the leader changed. The reversals in policy toward the peasants created many victims, as did the violent reversals in foreign policy. Soviet-German relations shifted from a basis of friendship in 1922-1927 to one of most violent animosity in 1933-1939, changed to patent friendship and cooperation in 1939-1941, to be followed by violent animosity again in 1941. These reversals of policy were difficult for the heavily censored Russian people to follow; they were almost impossible for Soviet sympathizers or members of Communist parties in foreign countries to follow; and they were very dangerous to the leaders of the Soviet system, who might find themselves under arrest today for having followed a different (but official) policy a year previously.

Yet in spite of all these difficulties, the Soviet Union continued to grow in industrial and military strength in the decade before 1941. In spite of low standards of living, racking internal tensions, devastating purges, economic dislocations, and large-scale waste and inefficiency, the industrial basis of Soviet power continued to expand. Nazi Germans, and the outside world in general, were more aware of the tensions, purges, dislocations, and inefficiency than they were of the growing power, with the result that all were amazed at the Soviet Union's ability to withstand the German assault which began on June 22, 1941.

Part Nine—Germany from Kaiser to Hitler: 1913-1945

Chapter 26—Introduction

The fate of Germany is one of the most tragic in all human history, for seldom has a people of such talent and accomplishment brought such disasters on themselves and on others. The explanation of how Germany came to such straits cannot be found by examining the history of the twentieth century alone. Germany came to the disaster of 1945 by a path whose beginnings lie in the distant past, in the whole pattern of German history from the days of the Germanic tribes to the present. That Germany had a tribal and not a civilized origin and was outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire and of the Latin language were two of the factors which led Germany ultimately to 1945. The Germanic tribe gave security and meaning to each individual's life to a degree where it almost absorbed the individual in the group, as tribes usually do. It gave security because it protected the individual in a social status of known and relatively stable social

relationships with his fellows; it gave meaning because it was all-absorbing—totalitarian, if you will, in that it satisfied almost all an individual's needs in a single system.

The shattering of the Germanic tribe in the period of the migrations, fifteen hundred years ago, and the exposure of its members to a higher, but equally total ... social structure—the Roman imperial system; and the subsequent, almost immediately subsequent, shattering of that Roman system caused a double trauma from which the Germans have not recovered even today. The shattering of the tribe left the individual German, as a similar experience today has left many Africans, in a chaos of unfamiliar experiences in which there was neither security nor meaning. When all other relationships had been destroyed, the German was left with only one human relationship on which he turned all his energy—loyalty to his immediate companions. But this could not carry all his life's energy or satisfy all of life's needs—no single human relationship ever can—and the effort to make it do so can only turn it into a monstrosity. But the German tribesman of the sixth century, when all else was shattered, made such an effort and tried to build all security and all meaning on personal loyalty. Any violence, any criminal act, any bestiality was justified for the sake of the allegiance of personal loyalty. The result is to be seen in the earliest work of Germanic literature—the *Nibelungenlied*, a madhouse dominated by this one mood, in a situation not totally unlike the Germany of 1945.

Into the insanity of monomania created by the shattering of the Germanic tribes came the sudden recognition of a better system, which could be, they thought, equally secure, equally meaningful, because equally total. This was symbolized by the word Rome. It is almost impossible for us, of the West and of today, imbued as we are with historical perspective and individualism, to see what Classical culture was like, and why it appealed to the Germans. Both may be summed up in the word "total." The Greek polis, like the Roman imperium, was total. We in the West have escaped the fascination of totalitarianism because we have in our tradition other elements—the refusal of the Hebrews to confuse God with the world, or religion with the state, and the realization that God is transcendental, and, accordingly, all other things must be, in some degree, incomplete and thus imperfect. We also have, in our tradition, Christ, who stood apart from the state and told his followers to "Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's." And we have in our tradition the church of the catacombs, where clearly human values were neither united nor total, and were opposed to the state. The Germans, as later the Russians, escaped the full influence of these elements in the tradition of the West. The Germans and the Russians knew Rome only in its post-Constantine phase when the Christian emperors were seeking to preserve the totalitarian system of Dioclesian, but in a Christian rather than a pagan totalitarianism. This was the system the detribalized Germans glimpsed just before it also was shattered. They saw it as a greater, larger, more powerful entity than the tribe but with the same elements which they wanted to preserve from their tribal past. They yearned to become part of that imperial totalitarianism. They still yearn for it. Theodoric, the Ostrogoth (Roman Emperor, 489-526), saw himself as a Germanic Constantine. The Germans continued their refusal to accept this second loss, as the Latins and the Celts were prepared to do, and for the next thousand years the

Germans made every effort to reconstruct the Christian imperium, under Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor, 1519-1555) as under Theodoric. The German continued to dream of that glimpse he had had of the imperial system before it sank—one, universal, total, holy, eternal, imperial, Roman. He refused to accept that it was gone, hating the small group who opposed its revival and despising the great mass who did not care, while regarding himself as the sole defender of values and righteousness who was prepared to sacrifice anything to restore that dream on earth. Only Charlemagne (died 814) came close to achieving that dream, Barbarossa, Charles V, William II, or even Hitler being but pale imitations. After Charlemagne, the state and public authority vanished in the Dark Ages, while society and the Church survived. When the state began to revive at the end of the tenth century, it was obviously a separate entity from the Church or society. The totalitarian imperium had been permanently broken in the West into two, and later many, allegiances. During the split in the Dark Ages of the single entity which was simultaneously Holy Roman, Catholic, Universal, and Imperial, the adjectives became displaced from the nouns to leave a Universal Catholic Church and a Holy Roman Empire. The former still survives, but the latter was ended by Napoleon in 1806, a thousand years after Charlemagne.

During that thousand years, the West developed a pluralistic system in which the individual was the ultimate good (and the ultimate philosophic reality), faced with the need to choose among many conflicting allegiances. Germany was dragged along in the same process, but unwillingly, and continued to yearn for a single allegiance which would be totally absorbing. This desire appeared in many Germanic traits, of which one was a continued love affair with Greece and Rome. Even today a Classical scholar does more of his reading in German than in any other language, although he rarely recognizes that he does so because the appeal of Classical culture to the Germans rested on its totalitarian nature, recognized by Germans but generally ignored by Westerners.

All the subsequent experiences of the German people, from the failure of Otto the Great in the tenth century to the failure of Hitler in the twentieth century, have served to perpetuate and perhaps to intensify the German thirst for the coziness of a totalitarian way of life. This is the key to German national character: in spite of all their talk of heroic behavior, what they have really wanted has been coziness, freedom from the need to make decisions which require an independent, self-reliant individual constantly exposed to the chilling breeze of numerous alternatives. Franz Grillparzer, the Austrian playwright, spoke like a true German when he said, a century ago, "The most difficult thing in the world is to make up one's mind." Decision, which requires the evaluation of alternatives, drives man to individualism, self-reliance, and rationalism, all hateful qualities to Germanism.

In spite of these desires of the Germans for the coziness of totalitarian oneness, they have been forced as part, even if a relatively peripheral part, of the West to live otherwise. Looking back, it seemed to Wagner that Germany came closest to its desires in the guild-dominated life of late medieval Augsburg; this is why his only happy opera was placed in that setting. But if Wagner is correct, the situation was achieved only briefly.

The shift of world trade from Mediterranean and Baltic to the Atlantic destroyed the trans-Germanic commercial basis of German municipal guild life—a fact which Thomas Mann still mourned in our own day. Almost immediately the spiritual unity of the Germans was shattered by the Protestant Reformation. When it became clear that no degree of violence could restore the old religious unity, the Germans, in the settlement of Augsburg (1555), came up with a typically German solution: individuals would be saved from the painful need to make a decision in religious belief by leaving the choice to the prince in each principality. This solution and the almost contemporary reception of the Roman Law were significant indications of the process by which the German municipalism of the late medieval period was replaced by the Germany of principalities (Länder) of modern times.

As a result of the loss of religious unity, the Germanies became divided into a Protestant northeast, increasingly dominated by the Hohenzollerns of Brandenburg-Prussia, and a Catholic southwest, increasingly dominated by the Habsburgs of Austria. Significantly enough, both of these began their dynastic rise as "marks," that is, frontier military outposts of Christian Germanism against pagan Slavdom of the East. Even when the Slav East became Christianized and, by copying Byzantium, obtained a society closer to the Germanic heart's desire than the West, the Germans could neither copy nor join the Slavs, because the Slavs, as outlanders from the tribe, were inferiors and hardly human beings at all. Even the Poles, who were more fully part of the West than the Germans, were regarded by the Germans as part of the outer darkness of Slavdom, and thus a threat to the still nonexistent Germanic tribal empire.

Germany's misfortunes culminated in the disasters of the seventeenth century when Richelieu, on behalf of France, used the internal problems of Germany in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) to play off one group against another, ensuring that the Habsburgs would never unify Germany, and dooming the Germanies to another two hundred years of disunity. Hitler, Bismarck, and even Kaiser William II could well be regarded as Germany's revenge on France for Richelieu, Louis XIV, and Napoleon. In an exposed position in central Europe, Germany found herself trapped between France, Russia, and the Habsburg dominions and was unable to deal with her basic problems in her own fashion and on their merits. Accordingly, Germany obtained national unity only late and "by blood and iron," and never obtained democracy at all. It might be added that she also failed to achieve *laissez faire* or liberalism for the same reasons. In most countries democracy was achieved by the middle classes, supported by peasants and workers, in an attack on the monarchy supported by the bureaucracy and landed aristocracy. In Germany this combination never quite came off, because these various groups were reluctant to clash with one another in the face of their threatening neighbors. Instead, Germany's exposed frontiers made it necessary for the various groups to subordinate their mutual antagonisms and obtain unification at the price of a sacrifice of democracy, *laissez faire*, liberalism, and nonmaterial values. Unification for Germany was achieved in the nineteenth century, not by embracing but by repudiating the typical nineteenth-century values. Starting as a reaction against the assault of Napoleon in 1806, and repudiating the rationalism, cosmopolitanism, and humanitarianism of the Enlightenment, Germany achieved unity only by the following processes:

1. by strengthening the monarchy and its bureaucracy;
2. by strengthening the permanent, professional army;
3. by preserving the landlord class (the Junkers) as a source of personnel for both bureaucracy and army;
4. by strengthening the industrial class through direct and indirect state subsidy, but never giving it a vital voice in state policy;
5. by appeasing the peasants and workers through paternalistic economic and social grants rather than by the extension of political rights which would allow these groups to assist themselves.

The long series of failures by the Germans to obtain the society they wanted served only to intensify their desire for it. They wanted a cozy society with both security and meaning, a totalitarian structure which would be at the same time universal and ultimate, and which would so absorb the individual in its structure that he would never need to make significant decisions for himself. Held in a framework of known, satisfying, personal relationships, such an individual would be safe because he would be surrounded by fellows equally satisfied with their own positions, each feeling important from his membership in the greater whole.

Although this social structure was never achieved in Germany, and never could be achieved, in view of the dynamic nature of Western Civilization in which the Germans were a part, each German over the centuries has tried to create such a situation for himself in his immediate environment (at the minimum in his family or beer garden) or, failing that, has created German literature, music, drama, and art as vehicles of his protests at this lack. This desire has been evident in the Germans' thirst for status (which establishes his relationship with the whole) and for the absolute (which gives unchanging meaning to the whole).

The German thirst for status is entirely different from the American desire for status. The American is driven by the desire to get ahead, that is, to change his status; he wants status and status symbols to exist as clear evidence or even measures of the speed with which he is changing his status. The German wants status as a nexus of obvious relationships around himself so there will never be doubt in anyone's mind where he stands, stationary, in the system. He wants status because he dislikes changes, because he abhors the need to make decisions. The American thrives on change, novelty, and decisions. Strangely enough, both react in this opposite fashion for somewhat similar reasons based on the inadequate maturation and integration of the individual's personality. The American seeks change, as the German seeks external fixed relationships, as a distraction from the lack of integration, self-sufficiency, and internal resources of the individual himself.

The German wants status reflected in obvious external symbols so that his nexus of personal relationships will be clear to everyone he meets and so that he will be treated accordingly, and almost automatically (without need for painful decisions). He wants titles, uniforms, nameplates, flags, buttons, anything which will make his position clear to all. In every German organization, be it business, school, army, church, social club, or family, there are ranks, gradations, and titles. No German could be satisfied with just his name on a calling card or on the nameplate of his doorway. His calling card must also have his address, his titles, and his educational achievements. The great anthropologist Robert H. Lowie tells of men with two doctorate degrees whose nameplates have "Professor Dr. Dr. So-and-So," for all the world to see their double academic status. The emphasis on minor gradations of rank and class, with titles, is a reflection of Germanic particularism, just as the verbal insistence on the absolute is a reflection of German universalism which must give meaning to the system as a whole.

In this system the German feels it necessary to proclaim his position by verbal loudness which may seem boastful to outsiders, just as his behavior toward his superiors and inferiors in his personal relationships seems to an Englishman to be either fawning or bullying. All three of these are acceptable to his fellow Germans, who are as eager to see these indications of his status as he is to show them. All these reactions, criticized by German thinkers like Kant as craving for precedence, and satirized in German literature for the last two centuries, have been the essential tissue of the personal relationships which make up German life. The correct superscription on an envelope, we are told, would be "Herrn Hofrat Professor Dr. Siegfried Harnischfeger." These pomposities are used in speech as well as in writing, and are applied to the individual's wife as well as to himself.

Such emphasis on position, precedence, titles, gradations, and fixed relationships, especially up and down, are so typically German that the German is most at home in hierarchical situations such as a military, ecclesiastical, or educational organization, and is often ill at ease in business or politics where status is less easy to establish and make obvious.

With this kind of nature and such neurological systems, Germans are ill at ease with equality, democracy, individualism, freedom, and other features of modern life. Their neurological systems were a consequence of the coziness of German childhood, which, contrary to popular impression, was not a condition of misery and personal cruelty (as it often is in England), but a warm, affectionate, and externally disciplined situation of secure relationships. After all, Santa Claus and the child-centered Christmas is Germanic. This is the situation the adult German, face to face with what seems an alien world, is constantly seeking to recapture. To the German it is *Gemütlichkeit*; but to outsiders it may be suffocating. In any case it gives rise among adult Germans to two additional traits of German character: the need for external discipline and the quality of egocentricity.

The Englishman is disciplined from within so that he takes his self-discipline, embedded in his neurological system, with him wherever he goes, even to situations where all the external forms of discipline are lacking. As a consequence the Englishman

is the most completely socialized of Europeans, as the Frenchman is the most completely civilized, the Italian most completely gregarious, or the Spaniard most completely individualistic. But the German by seeking external discipline shows his unconscious desire to recapture the externally disciplined world of his childhood. With such discipline he may be the best behaved of citizens, but without it he may be a beast.

A second notable carryover from childhood to adult German life was egocentricity. The whole world seems to any child to revolve around it, and most societies have provided ways in which the adolescent is disabused of this error. The German leaves childhood so abruptly that he rarely learns this fact of the universe, and spends the rest of his life creating a network of established relationships centering on himself. Since this is his aim in life, he sees no need to make any effort to see anything from any point of view other than his own. The consequence is a most damaging inability to do this. Each class or group is totally unsympathetic to any point of view except the egocentric one of the viewer himself. His union, his company, his composer, his poet, his party, his neighborhood are the best, almost the only acceptable, examples of the class, and all others must be denigrated. As part of this process a German usually chooses for himself his favorite flower, musical composition, beer, club, painting, or opera, and sees little value or merit in any other. Yet at the same time he insists that his myopic or narrow-angled vision of the universe must be universalized, because no people are more insistent on the role of the absolute or the universal as the framework of their own egocentricity. One deplorable consequence of this has been the social animosities rampant in a Germany which has loudly proclaimed its rigid solidarity.

With an individual personality structure such as this, the German was painfully uncomfortable in the totally different, and to him totally unfriendly, world of nineteenth-century individualism, liberalism, competitive atomism, democratic equality, and self-reliant dynamicism. And the German was doubly uncomfortable and embittered by 1860 to see the power, wealth, and national unity which these nineteenth-century traits had brought to Britain and France. The late arrival of these achievements, especially national unity and industrialism, in Germany left the average German with a feeling of inferiority in respect to England. Few Germans were willing to compete as individuals with British businessmen. Accordingly, the newly unified German government was expected to help German industrialists with tariffs, credit, price and production controls, cheaper labor costs, and such. As a consequence Germany never had a clearly competitive, liberal economy like the western Powers.

The failure to achieve democracy was reflected in public law. The German Parliament was more of an advisory than a legislative body; the judiciary was not under popular control; and the executive (the chancellor and the Cabinet) were responsible to the emperor rather than to Parliament. Moreover, the constitution, because of a peculiar suffrage system, was weighted to give undue importance to Prussia (which was the stronghold of the army, the landlords, the bureaucracy, and the industrialists). Within Prussia the elections were weighted to give undue influence to these same groups. Above all, the army was subject to no democratic or even governmental control, but was dominated by the Prussian Officers' Corps whose members were recruited by regimental

election. This Officers' Corps thus came to resemble a fraternity rather than an administrative or professional organization.

By 1890, when he retired from office, Bismarck had built up an unstable balance of forces within Germany similar to the unstable balance of powers which he had established in Europe as a whole. His cynical and materialistic view of human motivations had driven all idealistic and humanitarian forces from the German political scene and had remodeled the political parties almost completely into economic and social pressure groups which he played off, one against another. The chief of these forces were the landlords (Conservative Party), the industrialists (National Liberal Party), the Catholics (Center Party), and the workers (Social Democratic Party). In addition, the army and the bureaucracy were expected to be politically neutral, but they did not hesitate to exert pressures on the government without the intermediary of any political party. Thus there existed a precarious and dangerous balance of forces which only a genius could manipulate. Bismarck was followed by no genius. The Kaiser, William II (1888-1918), was an incapable neurotic, and the system of recruitment to government service was such as to exclude any but mediocrities. As a result, the precarious structure left by Bismarck was not managed but was merely hidden from public view by a facade of nationalistic, anti-foreign, anti-Semitic, imperialistic, and chauvinistic propaganda of which the emperor was the center.

The dichotomy in Germany between appearance and reality, between propaganda and structure, between economic prosperity and political and social weakness was put to the test in World War I, and failed completely. The events of 1914-1919 revealed that Germany was not a democracy in which all men were legally equal. Instead, the ruling groups formed some strange animal fording it over a host of lesser animals. In this strange creature the monarchy represented the body, which was supported by four legs: the army, the landlords, the bureaucracy, and the industrialists.

This glimpse of reality was not welcome to any important group in Germany, with the result that it was covered over, almost at once, by another misleading facade: the "revolution" of 1918 was not really a revolution at all, because it did not radically change this situation; it removed the monarchy, but it left the quartet of legs.

This Quartet was not the creation of a moment, rather it was the result of a long process of development whose last stages were reached only in the twentieth century. In these last stages the industrialists were adopted into the ruling clique by conscious acts of agreement. These acts culminated in the years 1898-1905 in a deal by which the Junkers accepted the industrialists' navy-building program (which they detested) in return for the industrialists' acceptance of the Junkers' high tariff on grains. The Junkers were anti-navy because they, with their few numbers and close alliance with the army, were opposed to any venture into the fields of colonialism or overseas imperialism, and were determined not to jeopardize Germany's continental position by alienating England. In fact, the policy of the Junkers was not only a continental one; on the Continent it was klein-deutsch. This expression meant that they were not eager to include the Germans of Austria within Germany because such an increment of Germans would dilute the power

of the small group of Junkers inside Germany. Instead, the Junkers would have preferred to annex the non-German areas to the east in order to obtain additional land and a supply of cheap Slav agricultural labor. The Junkers wanted agricultural tariffs to raise the prices of their crops, especially rye and, later, sugar beets. The industrialists objected to tariffs on food because high food prices made necessary high wages, which they opposed. On the other hand, the industrialists wanted high industrial prices and a market for the products of heavy industry. The former they obtained by the creation of cartels after 1888; the latter they obtained by the naval-building program and armaments expansion after 1898. The Junkers agreed to these only in return for a tariff on food which eventually, through "import certificates," became a subsidy for growing rye. This alliance, of which Bülow was the creator, was agreed on in May 1900, and consummated in December 1902. The tariff of 1902, which gave Germany one of the most protected agricultures in the world, was the price paid by industry for the Navy bill of 1900, and, symbolically enough, could be passed through the Reichstag only after the rules of procedure were violated to gag the opposition.

The Quartet was not Conservative but, potentially at least, revolutionary reactionaries. This is true at least of the landlords and industrialists, somewhat less true of the bureaucracy, and least true of the army. The landlords were revolutionary because they were driven to desperation by the persistent agricultural crisis which made it difficult for a high-cost area like eastern Germany to compete with a low-cost area like the Ukraine or high-productivity areas like Canada, Argentina, or the United States. Even in isolated Germany they had difficulty in keeping down the wages of German agricultural labor or in obtaining agricultural credit. The former problem rose from the need to compete with the industrial wages of West Germany. The credit problem rose because of the endemic lack of capital in Germany, the need to compete with industry for the available supply of capital, and the impossibility of raising capital by mortgages where estates were entailed. As a result of these influences, the landlords, overburdened with debts, in great jeopardy from any price decline, and importers of unorganized Slav laborers, dreamed of conquests of lands and labor in eastern Europe. The industrialists were in a similar plight, caught between the high wages of unionized German labor and the limited market for industrial products. To increase the supply of both labor and markets, they hoped for an active foreign policy which would bring into one unit a Pan-German bloc, if not a Mittel-europa. The bureaucracy, for ideological, especially nationalist, reasons, shared these dreams of conquest. Only the army hung back under the influence of the Junkers, who saw how easily they, as a limited political and social power, could be overwhelmed in a Mittel-europa or even a Pan-Germania. Accordingly, the Prussian Officers' Corps had little interest in these Germanic dreams, and looked with favor on the conquest of Slav areas only if this could be accomplished without undue expansion of the army itself.

Chapter 27—The Weimar Republic, 1918-1933

The essence of German history from 1918 to 1933 can be found in the statement There was no revolution in 1918. For there to have been a revolution it would have been necessary to liquidate the Quartet or, at least, subject them to democratic control. The Quartet represented the real power in Germany society because they represented the